

WHEN HEAVEN BINDS

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

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Thank you and greetings friends from across the nation and the lands far away from us. It is good to visit with you again today after three months away from you as you sit in your homes, ride along in your cars, fly through the air, or maybe in hospitals or wherever you are. Write us today for we appreciate your letters. Let me thank each of you and the many congregations who have had, and who are now having, fellowship with us in this program of reaching the millions by radio and television. Without you we could never accomplish this great work for our Lord. Working together as the family of God we can accomplish so much in our Master's vineyard. May God bless and keep you is our prayer.

Not often do I read letters or excerpts from them but I have one that I would love to read to you that I received from a listener May 15 of this year. "O how I thank God for sending your radio program my way and the wonderful little books that we have received from the church of Christ. You know we always thought we were pretty good Christians but I guess we were just sleeping Christians, for our eyes were sure opened; my husband's and mine." Then she says, "But I asked God to show me the true way and to show me the true church. Well, my prayers were answered, for my husband and I were baptized. We repented and were baptized last night in Groton, Connecticut, by Brother Gary Freeman." Then she adds, "There is no undenominational church of Christ near us, so we are going to begin worship in our home and will you please pray with us that others will open their eyes and wake up as we did before it is too late, for we know not what time we may be called." My good friends why not do as these good people have done, repent and be baptized as commanded in Acts 2:38 and let the Lord add you to His church as He did those of Acts, chapter two, verse 47? Do as did this good man and his wife, start the church in your community.

Today, I am discussing with you the subject announced. "When Heaven Binds." The setting for this lesson is taken from Matthew 16:18-20 where Christ said to Peter, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Then

He charges them they should "tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." In this statement is to be found the key to unlock all our quibbles concerning the things bound upon man in the Christian dispensation. It likewise answers the question concerning the things loosed or from which man has been freed. Christ has promised to bind in heaven "whatsoever" Peter binds on earth. This is not to be misunderstood as though Peter alone had the right to bind, for Christ said in Matthew 18:18, speaking to the disciples, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." To argue that Christ conferred upon Peter, in Matthew 16:18-19, "keys" making him the sole authority as earthly head of the church, to bind his orders upon the church or upon the world, is foreign to that which was meant by Christ as is shown here in Matthew 18:18, for in this passage all were given that promise. They did not have to consult Peter, for each was to be governed by the Holy Spirit. In John 14:26, speaking to His disciples, not just to Peter, He says "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." Again, that you may know that these apostles of our Lord were to be directed from heaven as to what they were to "bind and loose" on earth, I read to you our Savior's words in John 16:13-14. Here Christ says, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come." From this, it is easily seen that Peter was not given sole authority over the other apostles, that not he only should "bind and loose on earth"; not that he alone was God's official voice on earth to the church. That you may know our Lord meant not here to exalt one of His apostles above another; that you may know even today He does not elevate one Christian above another, I read to you from His own words recorded in Matthew 20:25-27. Here Christ said to His apostles, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." You will notice here that Christ says the chief among them was not their "Lord and Master," was not their "King of kings" with power to bind his will upon them. He was not declared to be their "Chief" by a majority vote of uninspired men, deciding after balloting day and night that a certain one of their number should be elevated above all others, to be honored above all as their Lord, their Master, their head, possessing infallible wisdom, with power to speak without mistakes. This was not the "binding and loosing" promised by our Lord to Peter in Matthew 16:19. This I want us to understand, for we shall find what was "bound" upon them by these men of God.

That you may further know that Peter was not elevated by this promise above all the others present then, and those later added to

2:6,7,9—"Of those who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be something in conference added nothing to me: But contrary wise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter . . . And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." Here we see that Peter had not been elevated by this promise made to him by the Lord in Matthew 16:15 to a place of universal lordship over the other apostles and all the world, with authority to make all peoples religious and political bow to His infallible mandates for unto Paul had been committed the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, called here heathen, and that without having to consult Peter at all. The Bible says of Peter, James and John, they "seemed to be pillars." Do you notice the expression, "who seemed to be pillars"? It did not say they were "heads of the church," nor did it say Peter was the sole "infallible voice" of the church. It said he seemed, yes seemed, along with James and John, to be a "pillar" in the church and that is everything other than its supreme, infallible head and dictator.

Another thing in this chapter that throws considerable light on the extent to which the Lord meant to give Peter the power to "bind and lose" as may be claimed, from Matthew 16:19, is found in Galatians 2, verses 11-14. Here your Bible records Paul as saying, "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." (The infallible head to be blamed? who would dare?) "For before certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And likewise the other Jews dissembled with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation." But one might say, Brother Harper, this has to do only with his personal practices and neither Peter nor those who might claim to be his successors, claim infallibility in such matters. Listen now to the next verse. There can be many reasons given for the next verse but one I must believe was intended to stand out above all others. This proves that Peter was not the infallible head for here Paul called him to task over a vital practice in doctrine. It reads, "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, if thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" No, Christ did not confer upon Peter in the text of our lesson today, Matthew 16:19, the power over all other apostles; nor did He confer upon him infallibility save as Peter spake, directed personally by the Holy Spirit. But this same power of infallibility, he conferred upon all the apostles when and only when they spake as they were "moved by the Holy Spirit." Hence, the proper understanding of the "binding and loosing" of Matthew 16:18-20 is very vital.

Last, that we may know Christ in His revelation to His apostles, concerning the great things soon to come upon them, did not mean to elevate Peter above other men as their earthly head, as their earthly Lord, as their earthly master, that He did not mean to confer upon him such power to bind men, I now read to you from the Bible words recorded in Acts 10:24-26: "And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet and (now listen to this carefully) and worshippd him." Now hear Peter's reaction to men falling down at his feet and worshipping him. The next verse says, "But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man." God had not in Matthew 16:18-19 conferred upon him the title "Vicar of Christ"; nor had He told Peter that he was to over all men, all kings, all the churches, for Peter, many years after Matthew 16:18-19, refuses to allow men to fall at his feet and worship him, declaring "I myself also am a man." He did not claim that Christ had made him "King of kings"; "Lord of lords"; "ruler of the world"; "vicar of Christ"; that all men, nations, and churches should bow before him. No such was intended in the expression we are studying in these lessons from Matthew 16:19 on the subject "When Heaven Binds." It is "Heaven Binding" through the revelation of the Spirit. This "binding and loosing" is not that of church traditions decided upon by men, centuries after the revelations of the Holy Spirit. These traditions and council decisions contradict the one the other many times. The infallible revelations of the Spirit do no such, they blend beautifully with each other, though given by different men over centuries of time. It is these revelations by the Spirit, penned upon the pages of your Bible that have been bound in heaven and to them men must give due reverence in humble submission. This is the one great lesson the world must learn before that which is bound in heaven can become a blessing to mankind. This learned, believed, and respected in humble obedience to heaven's commands, and our world suddenly finds itself at peace.

In this verse is also found the expression, "keys of the kingdom of heaven." There must be some meaning of the expression "keys." For this meaning we shall let the Bible be its own interpreter. In Isaiah 22:22 we read, "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulders; so he shall open, and no man shall shut; and he shall shut, and no man shall open." To see that this also applies today as then, we read Revelation 3:7. Here we find almost word for the same statement regarding Christ, where it says, "He that hath the key of David, he openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." In Revelation 1:18, Christ speaking says, "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." From this it is easily seen that Christ simply meant that He would give to Peter the right, or the power, the authority to announce the terms of admission into His kingdom, into His church,

with the assurance that whatsoever He bound on earth would be bound in heaven. Now, "When Heaven Binds," there is no releasing by man. This we must learn. This was literally fulfilled by Peter when he, in Acts chapter 2, used the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" to unlock the doors of admission to the Jews into the kingdom of heaven, into the church of the Lord. And in Acts, chapter 10, when he preached this same gospel to the Gentiles, announcing to them these same terms of admission into the house of the Lord. Guided as Peter was by divine guidance in Acts, chapters 2 and 10, God bound it in heaven. You will remember that Christ said in Matthew 19:6, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Now this applies not only to marriage, but to everything that God has joined, that God has bound. Man cannot "put asunder" anything "bound in heaven" without bringing down upon him the wrath and judgments of God. Man has not the right to unloose that which God has bound and He promised to bind that delivered by Peter in Acts, chapter 2.

We shall learn in our discussion of this great lesson that Christ gave to all the apostles, not just to Peter, His Great Commission which was to be preached to all nations, to every creature in all the world, Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16, promising to be with them to the end of the world, ONLY if they "taught them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them", Matthew 28:20. Now in His Great Commission to all the world, the apostles were to command the people to believe, Mark 16:16; to repent of their sins, Luke 24:46; and to be "baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," with this promise, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16. Remember Christ declared that "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." Peter and the apostles were commanded by this same Christ to preach the things contained in His Great Commission to every creature in all the world. Therefore we are forced to conclude that these commands and obligations are now bound in heaven and, being bound there, no man possesses the power to loose them, for what heaven binds and what heaven looses, no man can loose and no man can bind. Heaven's authority is not playing with man. Heaven means business or heaven would never have spoken, would never have bound. Councils, conventions, societies, all need to learn this great lesson that no power binds but heaven and no power looses but heaven and that heaven has sealed the revelation of these inspired men and no group or groups of men today have heaven's authority to change God's laws; not one of them. When heaven binds, man cannot loose.

May the Lord bless you and help you to obey the Lord's commands and trust Him for His promises is my prayer for you in our Master's name. Come today believing in your blessed Lord, repenting of your sins as commanded by Him, and be baptized in obedience to Him who gave the command of baptism, for that which our Lord commanded has been bound in heaven upon all men. Yes, when heaven binds, man cannot loose man must obey

NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

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Thank you and greetings, friends from around the world.

Today I am discussing with you the subject "NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN" found in Acts 15:9, where your Bible reads, "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." This was a part of Peter's address before the meeting of the apostles, elders, members of the church in Jerusalem and the brethren sent from Antioch for the purpose of settling the contention that had arisen over circumcision. Beginning with verse 7, reading through verse 11, your Bible says, "Peter rose up and said unto them, men and brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they." In this we see plainly that God had given Peter the right to introduce the gospel of Christ unto the Gentiles that they also might believe and be saved. Another thing we find here that is of vital significance is that both Jew and Gentile are saved exactly alike, with them there is "No Difference Between." It is now incumbent upon us to find what Peter preached to the Jews and what he preached to the Gentiles. It must be the same, it can't be different. This being true there need be no highly speculative theory or theories of how God, in some miraculous manner, yet in the future, is going to save Israel another way by returning them to Jerusalem. Here it is plainly stated that God put NO difference between the Jew and the Gentile and that the Jew shall be saved "even as they" — the Gentiles, verses 9-11. That this is true we know from Paul's statement found in Ephesians 2:16, where your Bible says in speaking of the death of Christ and the abolishing of the law of commandments contained in ordinances, that all this happened "That he might reconcile BOTH — that is Jew and Gentile — unto God IN ONE BODY (the Church) by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." This same apostle, as is recorded in I Corinthians 12:13 says "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free."

One thing we have now established beyond successful refutation: The Jew and the Gentile shall be saved alike by the gospel of Christ; that in God's sight, your Bible being true, there is "No Difference

Between." Since therefore there is no difference, since Peter has been chosen to use the keys of the kingdom of heaven to introduce the gospel to both the Jews and the Gentiles, we must find out what he preached to them and then we shall have to obey the truths presented by Peter as he was directed to speak to them by the Holy Spirit. This therefore brings us back to our former lesson, "When Heaven Binds."

Christ in Matthew 16:19 said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This being true, then, whatsoever Peter preached to the Jews on Pentecost, and whatsoever he preached to the Gentiles as recorded in Acts, chapter 10, has been bound in heaven and no man can loose the obligations bound upon these occasions. This we must learn. That which he preached to them, God bound upon man for all time. You ask, How do we know Christ bound them for all time? In Matthew 28:20, Christ said to His apostles, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." My friends, let us find out the literal meaning of the expression, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." This must be correctly understood if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven; if we are to become a member of His church, built by the Savior, promised in verse 18. If not a citizen of this kingdom, if not a member of this church, our labors are all in vain for your Bible says in Psalms 127:1, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Paul, in I Timothy 3:15, calls the church the "house of God." So long as this truth lives, it does make a vital difference what we are religiously; for if the house, the church, to which we belong be not that one built by the Lord, we labor in vain, we are lost. So with this in mind you are able to see why we preach as we do, believing that we are that church, that house, and that our labor is not in vain. It will be too late when we stand before God, if we find out we have been laboring in a house, a church, not built by the Lord. Here in Matthew 16:18 Christ said, "I will build my church." It is "one," singular, not a plurality of churches, all differing, teaching conflicting doctrines, all claiming to be from God. Such could not be.

Dr. Joseph Henry Thayer, in his Greek Lexicon, says Deo, from which this expression comes, means "To bind, tie, fasten - place under obligation - to forbid, to prohibit, declare to be illicit." Dr. Thayer has for generations been one of the world's outstanding Greek scholars. Joseph S. Extel, in the Biblical Illustrator, a complete Treatise on the New Testament, says of "binding and loosing" in Matthew 16:19, that it means "to prohibit and to permit, to determine what was wrong and must not be done, and what was right and ought to be done." Now from these we find the complete significance attached to the meaning of our Lord's statement to Peter. In this we find that it means man is "tied, fastened, placed under obligation to do certain things" while at

the same time there are certain prohibitions, which prohibitions by their very nature tie, bind, and obligate man. With this in mind we are forced to the conclusion that man is obligated to do only what is commanded him by the apostles as they were guided by the Holy Spirit; never any private decisions of the apostles, nor decisions passed by a council, convention, synod, or conference of uninspired men bind man in the field of religion. This being true, then, we are confined to that which is written in our Bibles and bound by the decrees of heaven to obey them, if we are to be saved. Heaven gave no non-essential decrees, heaven bound no meaningless acts upon man. When heaven speaks that is the end of the matter. It is bound upon man and no man possesses the right to loose that which God has bound. Here is where our mistake has been made in the religious circles of today. Men, in human councils, conventions, and conferences, have dared to enact laws, to enforce laws, traditions, to loose laws of God, change God's ordinances for the convenience of man, without the authority of heaven demanding such changes. All such actions by men are forbidden, prohibited and from all such man is "loosed." The religious world must understand this if "Heaven's Binding" is to bless man, for whose good the Lord made these utterances in Matthew 16:18-20. The apostle bound only the revelations given by the Spirit, John 16:13.

That we may find that which was bound in heaven, let us now hear the sermon delivered by Peter to the Jews, for the gospel was first to be preached to Israel and then to the Gentiles. In Acts 3:26 Peter said, "Unto you first God, having raised his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities," and in Acts 13:46 your Bible says, "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." From this we see clearly that the same gospel was to be preached to both the Jews and the Gentiles and that both are to be saved exactly alike, by the gospel of Christ. The first sermon ever delivered, in the name of Christ, was that sermon delivered by Peter, in Acts, chapter 2, on the day of Pentecost. What was that sermon? It was in the city of Jerusalem that this great event took place. Christ had commanded His apostles to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, Luke 24:46-49. They were "filled with the Holy Spirit" and began to speak as the "Spirit gave them utterance," verse 4. Here Peter begins to unfold to them the great lesson they were to learn and that needs to be learned today, namely, that all the hopes and dreams of the Old Testament, promised by their prophets, have now at this very time, begun to be fulfilled. This was it! This was the time! Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven, had gathered there in fulfillment of the promise of God that the Jews would be, a remnant of them, gathered for this purpose, Romans 11:5 and Joel 2:32. This has already taken place. That this is true is further evidenced by Peter's statement found in verses 29-30, where your Bible says, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried.

asked of Paul. When this great man learned he was in error he did not and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ." In verse 33 your Bible declares that God had exalted Him, at that very time, at the right hand of God to sit and reign until His foes had become his footstool, verses 34-35. This Peter bound for all time and eternity. Christ declared it would also be bound in heaven. Heaven has bound, therefore, this great truth that Christ was at that time, and is now, on David's throne as promised by Nathan to David in II Samuel 7:12-14, from which Peter quoted in this announcement of this vital truth. The binding of this truth forever destroys every argument that can be made that Christ is not now on David's throne and will not be until His second coming. It destroys the doctrine that the throne of David upon which Christ was to sit is an earthly throne in Jerusalem. It forever binds the truth that this throne is a spiritual throne, with Christ sitting on that throne in heaven, not in literal Jerusalem. These truths are bound in heaven for they were delivered by Peter with that promise from Christ. This being true, no man can loose them. This is vital to our salvation today!

In this sermon Peter declared that Christ was risen and that they had seen Him after His resurrection, verses 23 and 24. The fulfillment of the prophecies and the resurrection of Christ from the dead were the two great and vital truths that Peter burned deep into their hearts as he addressed the crowd who "with wicked hands had crucified" the Lord. Remember, these truths presented by Peter upon this occasion are bound in heaven and when "Heaven Binds" dare any man or council of men to undertake the loosing of those bound decrees? They are to last to the "end of the world," Matthew 28:20. I now invite your attention to the result of this great sermon delivered by Peter. In verse 36 Peter said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Here Peter bound for all time that this Jesus whom they had crucified, was both "Lord and Christ." Lord means their ruler; Christ means the anointed, the accepted of God. This they now believed to be true. Listen now to the reaction of this first sermon ever delivered in the name of, and by the authority of, a risen Christ, who had been made both Lord and Christ, upon David's throne. Hear it my friends! Verse 37 says, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked to their hearts—that is convicted of their sins—and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Question: What was Peter's answer? Remember that this answer given by Peter is bound in heaven and no man dare loose what heaven binds. Another thing, it is bound for all time, to the end of the world. Peter's answer to their question, as he speaks as the Spirit guides him, is as follows, "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 the Holy Ghost" Here is where our trouble comes in the religious

world. Peter's answer is bound in heaven. He commanded them to "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Christ had said to him, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." By keys Christ meant the right, the power, to "open and no man could shut," to "close and no man should open." To him was given the right to announce the terms of admission into citizenship of the kingdom of heaven, into the church the Lord built. Christ promised Peter that "whatsoever he bound on earth" would be "bound in heaven." He bound repentance and baptism upon the believer as conditions to be met if one should enjoy remission of sins. Christ bound it in heaven. How dare any of us poor mortals loose these orders given by him to whom the keys were given? Remember we found that this word means to "tie, to fasten, to place under obligation," to determine what is right and ought to be done. To misunderstand what Peter obligated them to do, what he fastened on them, what they ought to do, is a mental impossibility. They were to "repent and be baptized every one of them." Your question to decide is very simple. Have you obeyed heaven's orders given through Peter as the Spirit guided him? The plea of churches of Christ is that which Peter taught here in Acts 2. Verse 41 says, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." The number that did this was about three thousand. Verse 47 says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." To what church did the Lord add them? To His and His only. They were not divided. They were "All together," verse 44. This we preach. It can't be wrong!

As I close we have now found that Peter bound upon them faith in the resurrection of Christ, in His having been raised to "sit on David's throne," that He was "both Lord and Christ," that men to be saved, to be added by the Lord to his church, had to repent and be baptized every one of them in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. All this "Heaven Bound." Man must not try to loose one single truth.

We now know what we must do, for in our text today Peter said concerning the Jew and the Gentile, "God put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith," and in verse 11 Peter declared "We shall be saved, even as they." Ah, my friend, there is "No Difference Between" with God. Both the Jew and the Gentile must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Yes, "When Heaven Binds," man dare not loose. There is "No Difference with God." All must be saved alike. My prayer in Christ's name is that you may do what heaven has bound, and do it now, today. Be listening next week as I discuss the subject, "God No Respecter of Persons" Acts 10:24

GOD NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

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What a blessing it is to live in this free part of our world where we are not afraid, where we have freedom to worship God without being molested. Christianity is the only sure safeguard against such tyrannical powers, either religious or political. Any power that would by force endeavor to coerce man into its way of life, or that would by force forbid man to worship God as that man sees proper, is foreign to the principles of Christianity. Christianity does not propagate its faith by the sword of any nation, it spreads and grows by convicting men of sin in their hearts.

In Acts 10:34-35 your Bible says "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." Here is a statement fraught with power, power of dynamic strength! Here it is evident that God looks not upon the color of man's skin, that He looks not upon his station in life, nor his nationality, whether he is Jew or Gentile, as to his being accepted with God. God looks to see if man fears Him and if in this fear he works the righteousness of God. Another thing, so long as this verse remains a part of your Bible, man's being accepted with God depends partly on what man does. There is no answer to this! Only that man who fears God and who works righteousness will God accept. You ask, What does it mean to work righteousness? The Psalmist David answered this when he said in Psalms 119:172 "All thy commandments are righteousness." No man can work righteousness without doing the commands of God. Try, my friends, "doing righteousness" by doing absolutely nothing. Again this verse forever destroys the idea that God before the foundation of the world selected a certain number to be saved and all the rest are left out. This destroys the doctrine that man is born dead in sin and can't do anything to be saved or accepted of God for here, to be accepted of God, man, not God, has to "fear God and work righteousness." That is man's obligation! The truths taught by churches of Christ over the world, that man is a free-moral agent, that is, possess the ability to obey God, that man has to obey God to be saved, and that this salvation is to every man on earth who will obey the Lord, is finding a ready reception in the hearts of men because it is reasonable, it is sensible and men can understand what we mean. By these great truths every man can readily see that he and his family may be saved, no matter what his race or his status in life; whether rich or poor, bond or free.

Some man has said that God is no respecter of person, "no matter about his creed." Now my friends, God did not say that. It does matter about one's creed. If the creed is wrong, man is still lost. This is vital to our soul's salvation. For instance Christ asked the question in Luke 6:46, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?" What Christ says is man's creed, nothing else is. In John 8:32 Christ said, "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." God's truth is man's creed. In John 17:17 Christ said, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." Man must be guided by the word of God. Anything else will damn his soul. That this is true we hear Paul saying as recorded in your Bible, Galatians 1:9: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." In verse 7, Paul says, "There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Any creed not the word of God, not the gospel of Christ, is a perverted gospel and takes man away from Christ for Paul says in verse 6, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." Last, may I quote your Bible to you, this time from Hebrews 5:8-9 where it reads, "Though he — Christ—was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." What do we obey in obeying Christ? Paul declares it is the gospel. Your Bible says in II Thessalonians 1:8-9 that God shall take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Yes, it does make a difference about man's creed. It must be the gospel of Christ. Friends, are you sure what you have done religiously is not a perverted gospel? That it is the gospel of Christ?

One soul-stirring truth found here is that "in every nation," not just in America, but "in every nation" he that feareth God "and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." This is universal in its invitation, its application. God holds no nation, no race, no color above another. He looks upon the heart, not the skin, not the race, not the nation. He said in His Great Commission, "Go teach all nations," (Matthew 28:13-20). He commanded them to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15), not just to certain ones selected from the foundation of the world, but to every creature. That is why we are pleading with our brethren as we do on behalf of this radio and television progrm, for by it millions hear the gospel of Christ, both in our nation and in other nations of the world. It should be doubled, certainly not one station should be dropped unless we have lost an interest in the souls that hear by that station. Here in our text Peter is laying down a truth so vital that it is staggering when we understand the scope of its meaning. It is to "every one" in "every nation." That this is true is further demonstrated by the Lord's all inclusive invitation found in Matthew 11:28 where your Bible records the Lord saying, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Come how many? All who

need His rest. No matter who you are today if you will come to Him, He will give you this rest. He has promised that He is "no respecter of persons" and that "in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." Predestination, foreordination, unconditional salvation, nothing for man to do to be saved? Are these doctrines true as applied to individuals being saved? No, my friends, a thousand times no! Here it is every nation, whosoever will. Let us thank God that our God is no respecter of persons, that He looks upon the inward man, the heart of man, as that heart fears God and works the righteousness of God. Here your Bible says, "He of every nation," "whosoever will," and the man who DOES SOMETHING — the righteousness of God." No answer can be given to refute the truths I have just given! Last, as I pass from this part of Peter's declaration, I quote your Bible as found in Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride — that is the church, good people — say come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." God closed the Bible by showing He is "No respecter of persons," that His invitation is extended to all. Based upon these great truths there is but one conclusion to which we can rightfully come and that is that "All men are saved alike." God does not demand of you one thing and of me another. He demands of all the same. If not, He would be a respecter of persons. This is why every man must obey the gospel of Christ alike or be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God and from the glory of his power," (II Thessalonians 1:9). That is why in Acts, chapter 2, the three thousand all had to obey the same commands. Peter did not give two sets of commands. He did not give two contradictory answers. That is why Paul, when he was sent by the Lord to the Gentiles, did not give different systems by which they became Christians, members of the Lord's church. He gave all the same answers. All did exactly the same thing. Since this was for "every nation," every creature in all the world, since God has decreed that this is to last "until the end of the world," then what they did back then, under the direction of these men, we shall have to do today. For, remember, the text of our lesson says, "God is no respecter of persons," and your Bible is right.

As I conclude this lesson today, I call to your attention the words of Peter, found in Acts 15:11, where he is discussing the salvation of both Jew and Gentile. These are his words, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we (the Jews) shall be saved, even as they," (the Gentiles). This being true, it is evident that Cornelius and his Gentile family and kinsmen and friends will have to do exactly what the Jews did in Acts, chapter 2, for Peter was addressing them (Cornelius and friends) in the text of our lesson today, Acts 10:34-35. That this has to be true there can be no question, for in Acts 15:7, Peter says, "God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." Since Peter opened the doors of admission into the church in Acts 2 to the Jews.

and has now been selected by Christ to bring this same salvation to the Gentiles, we must know that he preached the same gospel to each. What the Jews did in Acts, chapter 2, the Gentiles in Acts, chapter 10, shall have to do. If not, then God is a respecter of person; there is a difference with God. We found that Peter in Acts 2 commanded the Jews to believe in the Lordship of the resurrected Christ, to repent of their sins, and to be baptized in the name of the Lord for the remission of sins. Since Peter declared, in Acts 15, that God saves the Jew and the Gentile alike, putting no difference between them, then we shall find that Cornelius and those gathered with him had to believe in this same Christ, Acts 10:43; that they repented of their sins, Acts 11:18; and that Peter, to whom was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven with power to bind on earth, commanded them to be "baptized in the name of the Lord," Acts 10:48. Therefore, both the Jews and the Gentiles believed in this resurrected Christ, both repented of their sins, and both were baptized by the command of Peter. Christ said "I will bind in heaven what you bind on earth." Yes, Peter bound baptism also. Be listening to my next lesson as I shall give step by step, point by point, command by command, the two sermons delivered in Acts 2 and Acts 10 by Peter, so there can be no mistake in the truths of my lessons being presented to you. Write for them and may the Lord bless you in seeing and obeying the truth is my prayer in His blessed name.



Columbus, Ohio
Aug. 20, 1960

Dear Brethern:

Although we are unable to hear or see your radio & TV programs, we know you are doing a good work.

We appreciate the booklets that you send us each month with the radio sermons in them.

Sincerely,
E. and M. P.



September 12, 1960
Schenectady 7, N. Y.

Dear Brethren:

I want you to know how grateful we are for having the opportunity to hear the truth broadcast here in the North Atlantic. May we have three copies in Italian of your Bible Correspondence Course? I would like to distribute them to my father and several friends. I want to thank you again for this opportunity.

In Christian love,
J. W.

D S If you need any financial assistance, I shall gladly be

SAVED ALIKE

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 456

October 23, 1960

Having discussed with you, my friends, the subjects, "When Heaven Binds"; "No Difference With God"; and "God, No Respector of Persons," I now shall discuss with you the subject, "Saved Alike." In this lesson it shall be my purpose to establish the fact that God, being no repecter of persons, gave to both the Jew and the Gentile, as taught in your New Testament, the same law of pardon. I shall establish the fact that when Christ made the promise to Peter "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shalt be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" that in using the keys of the kingdom of heaven Peter bound on the Gentiles in Acts, chapter 10, the exact sermon, point by point, demand by demand, that he bound on the Jews in Jerusalem as recorded in Acts, chapter 2. This has to be true, else God would be a respector of persons, having bound on the Jew one plan by which they are to be saved and another upon the Gentiles. Acts chapter 2, and Acts chapter 10 are the official records of the binding by Peter, the terms of salvation upon both alike.

Hear the Words of Peter

In Acts 15:9, speaking of the Jew and the Gentile, Peter says that God "Put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" and then concludes by saying in verse 11, "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." Therefore, my subject for today "Saved Alike." Another fundamental truth expressed here is that whatever the Jews and the Gentiles did in Acts chapter 2, and Acts, chapter 10, that is salvation by grace; that is the process by which all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, "purify their hearts by faith." This is "purification by faith." This we must learn, else we may find ourselves standing at the judgment having accepted a perverted gospel, believing our hearts to have been "purified by faith" when as a matter of fact the heart in God's sight became corrupted by the error to which we submitted, and by our having accepted a perverted gospel we stand condemned in the last great day. That you may know this is true will you please read Galatians 1:6-9; Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-22; II John, verses 9:11. You may ask, Why do you not read it to us? I want you to read it, for then you will not forget it and it will make a profound impression on your heart. But this one thing I would have you remember that

what they did in Acts, chapter 2 and in Acts, chapter 10, that is salvation by grace; it is purification of the heart by faith, and nothing else is or can be. Your Bible is right. We shall now see if it were done by "faith only" before and without baptism, or if in each example they were commanded, by divine authority, to also repent and be baptized. Be it remembered also that the sermons delivered by Peter upon these occasions were bound in heaven and to refuse to obey them is rebellion, not against me, not against man, but against heaven itself. Your Bible, in I Samuel 15:22 says, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams for rebellion is as witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou has rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." What heaven binds, my friends, man must obey or be in rebellion to God; disobedience becomes as iniquity and idolatry in the sight of God. We must obey God rather than man.

The Jews, Acts 2:1-47

In this lesson I shall establish the following incidents, facts, commands, are results that are common to both groups.

Incidents

The incidents connected with these official recorded conversions are not essential to man's being saved, but were used by divine providence to confirm to the proper subjects that the things then taking place were ordained of God and by so doing giving unto all men the confidence needed to win man from Satan to God, from sin to righteousness, from the world to the church of the Lord.

Facts

The facts of these two sermons were to be believed, thereby establishing hope in the hearts of both Jews and Gentiles, which hope was to spring from their trust in the promises of God that through this Christ whom they had crucified all men could be saved from sin.

Commands

The commands that are given in these two sermons are to be obeyed by both the Jews and the Gentiles if they are to be saved, for there is "No Difference With God" and "God Is No Respector of Persons," saving both alike.

Results

Last, the results promised in these great sermons, delivered by Peter as he uses the "keys of the kingdom of heaven"; "binding on earth that which was to be bound in heaven" including the remission of sins, salvation, and membership in the church the Lord built.

Now my good people, the plan of salvation, presented to these two groups by Peter, is the only plan ever given by the Lord by which man is saved by the grace of God, and by which man's heart is justified by faith, Acts 15 verses 8 through 11, as quoted already in my lesson. What they did is salvation by the grace of God. What they did is "purifying our hearts by faith"; nothing else is or can be, else God becomes a respecter of persons, not saving all men alike under the testament of Christ, the New Testament as it is called in your Bible, Hebrews 9:15-17.

Miracles of the Conversions

(Incidentals)

In each of these we have the various miracles, which miracles have no direct bearing upon man's salvation. In Acts chapter 2, the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit; it fell upon them—not upon sinners; hence, it was not to save them. When this was done they began to speak with tongues. This the multitude heard, every man in his own language. By such a demonstration of the Spirit working through these apostles, the Lord was able to convince at least three thousand that day that what these apostles were preaching was the truth of God; hence, its purpose was to convince the unbelieving Jews that Christ was truly their longed for Messiah. This done, the rest was easy for they were "devout men from every nation under heaven." Devout men accept the truth regardless of consequences. Now in Acts 10 we have three great miracles, all of which were incidental to the salvation of man. By this I mean man can be saved without these miracles being performed. In Acts 10 the angel appeared to Cornelius to advise him to send for Peter who would tell him words by which he and his house should be saved; the miracle of the sheet being let down before Peter was to convince Peter that nothing was common or unclean that had been cleansed by the Lord, which simply meant to show him that no longer could he call the Gentiles common, unclean, and refuse them the gospel of Christ which was to every creature; the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his house was not for the purpose of saving them, nor for the purpose of showing they were already saved at the time of the baptism of the Spirit, but it was to convince the Jews who had come with Peter from Jerusalem that the Gentiles also had a right to the blessings of the gospel of Christ. Now, all these were incidents connected with the conversions of the Jews and the Gentiles, proving to both Jew and Gentile that Christ is the Son of God and that He is for the salvation of both. By these miracles God's truths were confirmed. This was the purpose of miracles; not that they were essential to the salvation of man. In Mark 16:20 your Bible explains the why of miracles: it reads, "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following." Again in Hebrews 2:33-4 the writer says, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation: which at the first began to be spoken

by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing the witness, both with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." Miracles were for the confirmation of the gospel, never for salvation; nor did they necessarily demonstrate the fact that those upon whom the miracle was performed, or those receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit were already saved, as in the case here of Cornelius. He and his received the baptism of the Spirit before they ever heard the words Peter was to speak to them by which your Bible says they were to be saved. Acts 11:15 reads, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." When did it fall upon them? In the middle of his sermon? At the close of his sermon, after they had heard the "word whereby he and all his house should be saved," or at the beginning of his sermon before he had spoken those words? Your Bible says it was at the beginning of the sermon; before he and his house had heard the words by which they were to be saved. This true, then this miracle did not, it could not have been for the purpose of showing that they were already saved. For if this were true they would have been saved before they heard the words whereby they were to be saved. Yes, this miracle was to convince the Jews who came with Peter that the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. It, like all the other miracles connected with these conversions, was incidental so far as their salvation was concerned. This not true, then it would demand such miracles in every conversion today, else our Bible is not true when it declares "God is no respecter of persons." These miracles recorded in Acts chapter 2 and Acts chapter 10 were for the confirmation of the gospel that those, then and now, who might hear should have complete assurance that we may place our faith in God's revelation as coming from heaven. That such miraculous demonstrations were to end there can be no denial for Paul said in I Corinthians 13:8, "Whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge (that is, the miraculous knowledge being discussed here), it shall vanish away." Now that our Bible, the revelation of God, has been completed, being a "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25), that is a completed law, having already been confirmed by these miracles, man no longer needs such confirmation of God's word. Hence, these days of Biblical miracles have ceased; they have ended. To demand miracles now would be an act of infidelity, demanding of God proof that this is truly His word. We accept it and believe it as it is. Do you? Why not?

Facts to Be Believed

Now in being saved there are certain facts to be believed. The belief of these facts does not constitute full and complete surrender to Christ. The belief of these facts does not make one a child of God. It is here that many times we become confused as to when and how man is saved by faith. We believe man is saved by faith, but not by "works." For James in James 2:24 specifically states that it is "not

by faith only." It is certain that without faith in these facts presented to both the Jews and the Gentiles, salvation by the blood of Christ cannot be enjoyed; but the mere belief of these facts, without obeying the commands given, does not, it cannot, bring about the salvation that is the result of our faith in these facts presented.

The first of these facts I shall present to you is the announcement by Peter that that which they were then seeing and hearing was the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. In Acts 2:16 Peter declares, "But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel," and in Acts 2:25-33 he shows that that which was then taking place was that of which David spoke in Psalms 110:1-4; Psalms 16:8-10, and II Samuel 7:12-14 that Christ was then at that time raised to "sit on David's throne." This being preached to the Jews it must likewise be preached to the Gentiles, that Christ is the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. In Acts 10:43, Peter, this same preacher, says to Cornelius, the Gentile, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." So to both the Jew and the Gentile was made the announcement that Christ was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. This being true we do not have to await His second coming for Him to fulfill the promises of the Old Testament that Christ would sit on David's throne. He is there now. This was, and is a fact they and we must believe, else we deny the sermons preached by Peter to both the Jew and the Gentile.

Another fact they must both believe is that Christ died, was crucified. In Acts 2:23 Peter said to those present, "Him, that is Christ, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands — that is, the Roman government — have crucified and slain." Now in Acts 10:39 Peter preached this same fact to the Gentiles to whom he said, "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree."

Christ's Resurrection

That this Christ was "raised from the dead" was and is a fact that must be believed if one is to be saved, for upon the resurrection of Christ hangs all the hopes and dreams of Christianity. Belief in the resurrection of Christ from the dead is a "must" if man is to be saved, for Paul says in Romans 10:9, "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," then he goes further to explain how and why he shall be saved; that belief of these will lead him unto salvation, for says your Bible, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Not that he has it the moment he believes these facts, but belief of these facts will lead him "unto righteousness." The belief of these facts but refusal to obey the commands given by Peter certainly will not bring to man the bless-

ings promised in Acts, chapters 2 and 10. Now in Acts 2:24 your Bible says, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it;" and in Acts 10:40 Peter to the Gentiles said, "Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly." Yes, my friends, the following are "facts to be believed" if man is saved: that Christ is the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament; that He was crucified and slain on the cross; that He arose from the dead; and that He ascended back to God and is now sitting on David's throne and shall sit there until His foes become His footstool. But man may believe every word of this and be lost unless his faith in these promises is strong enough to cause man to do as did these, obey God's commands.

Commands

They were all commanded to repent and to be baptized. The purpose was that they may receive remission of sins and be added to the church by the Lord, Acts 2:38-47, Acts 10:48, Acts 11:17. Here we find that both the Jew and the Gentile had to believe these facts, to repent of their sins and every one of them was to be baptized. There was not an exception. God made no difference; he "Saved Both Alike."

Be listening next time as I discuss with you the commands they had to obey to be saved. Do not miss this lesson. Salvation depends on its truth. May you today believe these facts as did they. May you repent of your sins as did they. May you be baptized as was each of them, knowing that God being no respecter of persons, He will save you as He did these and will add you to His church as He did the Jews, Acts 2:47, and the Gentiles, Ephesians 2:16, is my prayer for you in the name of Christ our blessed Savior, God's only begotten Son.



Frederick, Okla
Sept. 6, 1960

Dear Sirs:

I am enclosing my contribution for month of September. I am thoroughly enjoying the program and I am constantly hearing nice things about it. I indeed think it is a wonderful way to go into the homes of our friends and neighbors, who otherwise might never hear the truth.

Sincerely hope you can keep the good work up.

Your Sister in Christ,
Mrs. G. M.

"ONLY ONE WAY"

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Sermon No. 457

October 30, 1960

For our study today I should like to discuss with you this subject, "Only One Way." That there is but one way it seems to me is plainly taught in your Bible. In John 14:6 Christ says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Here it is the "way" (singular); "One Way"; here Christ says it is "The Truth" (singular), not many ways of truth; and it is "The Life" (one life). Now, none of us differ as to the meaning of the expression, "I am the life." We know Christ is the only life, just one. What it means with reference to, "I am the life," it has to mean the same thing with respect to "I am the way"; "I am the truth." It would have to mean "one way" and "one truth." Not dozens of ways, nor multitudes of truths. This being true, then I can't have one way and you another. We shall have to have the same way and the same truth, else Christ used the wrong number when He used it in the singular—He should have used it in the plural showing there are many ways and many truths. There is but "one way;" there is but "one truth;" just as there is but "one life." They are all summed up in Christ, for He is the author of them all. What He teaches therefore and what His ambassadors teach and bind upon men is that way, the truth that leads one to that one life, which is in Christ. Again in Acts 9:2 your Bible reads, "And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way whether they were men or woman, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem." Here again it says "of this way"; not "of these ways." The apostles were all teaching, believing and practicing the same thing.

One All The Way

Let us notice that Christianity is built all the way on the foundation of "oneness." In Hebrews 9:15-17, it says Christ is the "mediator of a new testament" (singular), not new testaments (plural). Now, if there is just one it has to teach the same thing to all. In Ephesians 4:4-6 is the Christian's platform. Your Bible says, "There is one body"; not a dozen; not five hundred. This same writer in this same letter, chapter 1 and verses 22-23, says this body is the church. This being true, there is but one church. Then it continues to read, "One Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Not a half dozen Lords; not two; not three baptisms, but one baptism; not five hundred faiths, all differing, but one faith, and faith here stands for the gospel of Christ. Now he concludes this with these words, "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." My good people, may I ask you this question, When does "one"

mean "one"? If it means one when it speaks of "one Spirit"; if it means "one" when it speaks of "one Lord"; if it means "one" when it speaks of "one God and Father"; if we can't change "one" here to mean a number of Spirits that go to make up one universal Spirit; if we can't use "one Lord" here to mean one Lord made up of hundreds of conflicting Lords; if we can't use "one God and Father" here to mean that God is made up of scores of lesser Gods all differing; then how do we take "one" in this some reading when it says "one faith, one baptism, and one body," which is the church, and force "one" here to mean hundreds of different conflicting faiths, hundreds of different churches, and some four or five different baptisms, and claim that they all go to make one great big "universal church" which includes all these warring, conflicting doctrines, faiths, and churches, and baptisms? "One" just means "one" with all these items mentioned. "One body — the church," "one faith — the gospel," and "one baptism — a burial and a resurrection," Colossians 2:12, all the same — all alike.

One Plan To Both

With this before us we can understand why Peter said in Acts 15:9-11 that God "put no difference between us (the Jews), and them (the Gentiles), purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of God we shall be saved, even as they." Here Peter announces the great truth of "One Plan To Both" the Jew and the Gentile, both saved alike; no difference with God. This being true, we shall expect to find the Jews of Acts, chapter 2 and the Gentiles of Acts, chapter 10 being given the same commands to obey and both being made members of the same body, the church. "One Plan To Both." Now what they had to do we shall have to do today, whether Jew or Gentile, if we are to enjoy the blessings promised to both in the New Testament by Christ Jesus. This has to be true, else God is a respecter of persons.

The Plan Offered To The Jews

It now is incumbent upon me to find the plan submitted by Peter to the Jews. If I can do this then I shall know at once what God has required of me, Gentile, since He has saved us both alike. In Acts chapter 2 is recorded the beginning of the gospel of Christ. The Holy Spirit has come from heaven to guide the Apostles into God's truth by which man is to be saved by the blood of Christ. In this sermon Peter declared to the Jews that Christ was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies: that He was crucified by wicked hands, that He arose from the dead, ascended to His Father to be seated on the throne of His father, David. Having preached these great truths to them, he now declares, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Having become con-

vinced that Christ was all He ever claimed to be, they are now convicted of their sins and ask this question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They are now begging for help, pleading for the answer; thousands ready to do anything necessary to be freed from this great sin.

The Commands of Heaven—Peter's Answer

The answer Peter gives to them is from heaven, directed by the Spirit. It can't be wrong. Another thing, Christ promised Peter that He would bind in heaven whatsoever Peter bound on earth. This answer is bound in heaven. To refuse it or to reject it is to rebel against heaven, against God. Now your Bible says in Acts 2:38, and it is right, that Peter command them, to "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." This command a child can understand. We know what it means to repent. We know that the Bible says baptism is a "burial and a resurrection," Colossians 2:12 and Romans 6:4-5. Now the command here was to "every one of you." This included every one who asked the question. What those who asked the question had to do, all had to do, else God is a respecter of persons. This we surely can see. They did not quibble over the meaning of "for"; whether it meant "because of" or "in order to" for they, being Jews, knew the Greek word "eis" always meant "in order to;" that it never looked back to some act already completed. What "for" means to baptism, it also means to repentance for they are both in the same command. If "for" means "because of" with reference to baptism, it would have to mean that with reference to repentance. I shall not discuss this further. It is your soul. If you will study it to know the truth and not to sustain some theory, you may know the truth of this. It does not mean "because of." "Eis" never means "because of." The English "for" may mean either "in order to" or "because of" — the context determines its meaning; but when "for" means anything else other than the meaning of "in order to," "unto," "looking forward," it is from another word other than "eis" used in Acts 2:38.

Now your Bible says in Acts 2:41, "They that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls;" and verse 47 says, "And the Lord added — they did not join the church — the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." To what church did He add them? There was but one then; that was the Lord's church.

If we today should obey these same commands, since God is no respecter of persons, why would we not all be members of the same church? My friends, we are preaching the truth to you as found in your Bible. This is what your Bible says and it makes sense. There was not a modern denomination on earth at that time, yet the Lord was adding to the church He built. We must conclude, therefore, that these denominations are not the church of the Lord. This program is bringing this same sermon of Acts, chapter 2, to the world today. What is

Conclusion

As I now conclude this sermon delivered to the Jews, we find they had to believe in this Jesus, whom they had crucified, as their Lord; that they had to "repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins"; they were "added to the church by the Lord." Hence, they believed, they repented and they were baptized "every one of them," for the remission of sins, just as we on this program are teaching. They were, every one of them, not one exception, members of the church the Lord built. This my friends, the Lord promised Peter He would bind in heaven. To refuse to do what they did is to rebel against the Lord; it is not deciding for Christ. Since Peter, in the great historic meeting recorded in Acts 15, declared, "God put no difference between the Jew and the Gentile"; since he declared that the Jew was saved even as the Gentile, we now turn to Acts, chapter 10, for the answer to the question, "Is There But One Plan For Both?" Did the Gentiles in Acts 10 believe? did they repent? were they "commanded to be baptized"? did the Gentiles have to be "in the church" to be saved, as did the Jews in Acts chapter 2? I say they did. What do you say? Now what does the Bible teach? To the Bible we go for the answer. Please do not turn us off, but prayerfully listen with your Bibles in your hands.

The Gentiles — Acts, Chapter 10

In Acts, chapter 10 is the recorded conversion of Cornelius, the Gentile, his family, his near kin, and his friends. It is not only an obligation enjoined upon me, because of my statement to you that both the Jew and the Gentile are saved alike and that there is "Only One Plan" for both; but it is also a distinct pleasure for me to show you now that Cornelius, the Gentile, was given the same commands to obey as Peter gave to the Jews in Acts chapter 2. It has to be this way, else Peter misrepresented the truth in Acts 15:7 when he said, "Ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe;" and then added, "God put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith;" and that "we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

The Commands

The first thing I shall point out to you is that they were also taught, as were the Jews in Acts 2, to believe in this crucified Christ. In Acts 10:43 Peter declares, "To him—that is Christ—gave all prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall have remission of sins." Here is an invitation that is universal. It says "whosoever will." Peter had commanded the Jews in Acts 2:36 after this fashion: "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly," which means to believe confidently, with full assurance. Now in Acts 11:18, in Peter's report

Cornelius, the Gentile, we have this reading: "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Thy were not saved by "faith only"; they had also to "repent" and repentance is a fruit of, grows out of, a trusting faith in the Lord. This shows that man is not saved the moment he believes. This faith has to act; it has to obey the Lord. It had to repent. But this faith did not stop at repentance. Says one, "Now Brother Harper, can you show where they had to be baptized?" Let your Bible answer this! In Acts 10:48 the Bible says, "And he — that is Peter — commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." He did what? He "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Question: Suppose they had refused to obey this command? Suppose their faith had rebelled against this command from heaven? What would have been the record? Remember, Peter was chosen of God to tell them what they must do to be saved! How many were commanded to be baptized? All of them, just as in Acts 2:38 where it says, "every one of you." In Acts 2:38 baptism was commanded, not requested if they wished to be baptized. It was a command from heaven that day. In Acts 10, baptism was not just a request of them to do something that would be beautiful to obey. It was a command of God. Commands have to be obeyed. Rejecting it constitutes rebellion. I press the question: Had those in Jerusalem, the Jews, refused to obey Peter's command — if those in Acts 10 had refused to obey Peter's command—which command came from heaven, would they have been saved? Remember, the Lord said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." And God selected Peter to deliver these messages! Here in Acts 2 and Acts 10, Peter used the keys to open the kingdom to the Jews and to the Gentiles and what he bound upon them is now bound in heaven. When heaven binds man dare not loose; man must obey. Can't we see this has to be true?

Now, in Ephesians 2:16 we learn that both the Jews and the Gentiles had to be in the church to be reconciled unto God for it reads concerning Christ's death that He died to "reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." From this we learn that both the Jews in Acts 2, and the Gentiles of Acts 10 were in the church, for it was in the church, which is this body, Ephesians 1:22-25, that both were reconciled unto God. Again they were both reconciled alike. "Only One Way."

Summation

Summing up the two conversions of Acts 2 and Acts 10, we find that both Jews and Gentiles believed in Christ, both repented of their sins, both were baptized by a command of God, and both were in the church. After this those in Acts 2 were called "believers," verse 44, and those in Acts 10 were also saved believers after they had obeyed the gospel preached to them by Peter for God is no respecter of persons;

what He demands of the Jews He demands of the Gentiles. From this study I believe we are justified in saying there is "Only One Way" to be saved for both the Jew and the Gentile, as taught in the New Testament. Remember, this is bound in heaven and in Acts 11:14 your Bible says Peter "shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." Had they rejected those words, part of which included the command to be baptized, would they have been saved? Were those words necessary for them to obey to be saved as your Bible stated? If so, then it is also necessary for us today. Will you not come believing in this Christ, repenting of your sins, and be baptized for the remission of your sins, as these did, and let the Lord add you to the church as He did these in Acts 2:47? Yes, when heaven binds man dare not loose. When heaven commands, man dare not rebel, but must submit to heaven's orders. You who are lost and want to be saved, find the church of Christ in your community today and obey your Lord is my prayer in the name of Christ. Remember this, that there is "Only One Way" for both the Jew and the Gentile to be saved — both are saved alike. Yes, both were commanded to "believe and be baptized" as the Lord commanded in Mark 16:16.



STATIONS CARRYING HERALD OF TRUTH TELEVISION PROGRAMS

CITY	STATION	CH.	TIME	CITY	STATION	CH.	TIME
ALABAMA				Denver	KBTW	9	12:30 p.m.
Birmingham	WBRC	6		Gr. Junction	KREX	5	10:00 a.m.
			(Wed.)	FLORIDA			
Decatur	WMSL	23	5:00 p.m.	Orlando	WLOF		
Huntsville	WASG	31	5:30 p.m.	Panama City	WLHD	7	5:30 p.m.
Mobile	WALA	10	9:00 a.m.	GEORGIA			
Montgomery	WCOV	20	11:30 a.m.	Atlanta	WAGA	5	8:30 a.m.
ALASKA				Augusta	WRDW		
Fairbanks	KFAR		5:30 p.m.	Savannah	WSAV	3	
Juneau	KINY		1:30 p.m.	ILLINOIS			
ARIZONA				Harrisburg	WSIL	3	1:30 p.m.
Tuscon	KOLD	13	10:45 a.m.				(Wed.)
CALIFORNIA				Quincy	WGEM	10	11:00 a.m.
Bakersfield	KLYD	17	10:30 a.m.	INDIANA			
COLORADO				Ft. Wayne	WPTA	21	12:00 a.m.

DOES MAN HAVE A CHOICE?

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 462

December 4, 1960

Our subject for today is one that is of vital concern to all men: Does Man Have a Choice? By this I mean does man have a Scriptural choice to decide for himself or is man bound by a "thus saith the Lord"?

Man is being taught today to "join the church of his choice," that is, of man's choice. Prayers, honest prayers, are heard thanking God for the "many churches, that man may choose one most pleasing to him." Our question is, Does the Bible teach that man has such a choice? In this lesson it shall be my purpose to show you that man has no such choice, scripturally speaking. If I am correct in my thinking concerning this subject, then what shall be the fate of those who have been caused to believe such a theory and have therefore made the wrong choice, choosing to do or to be that which the Bible does not authorize? This may not be of interest to you now, but this is a fundamental principle upon which may rest the destiny of your soul. Since the souls of men are of such great concern, I am discussing this subject plainly, but kindly, using only the Bible to sustain my defense of the truth that, scripturally, man does not have a choice of religions, of faiths, of baptism, nor does he have such a choice of churches.

I recognize that in everything man has this kind of choice. Man may choose to do or not to do, to obey or not to obey. This is not the kind of choice we are discussing however. In the Garden of Eden God gave Adam the choice to obey or not to obey when in Genesis 2:16-17, He said to Adam, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat." If he desired to live, he could not eat. In Joshua 24:14,15, Israel was given the choice to serve the true God or the gods of the fathers but said Joshua, "As for me and mine we shall serve the true God." Yes, here was a choice but it was to choose between the true God and that of the heathens. This kind of choice man has always been given, but this is not the kind of choice we are discussing today. These choices were between right and wrong only. Man is told today he has a choice of religions, faiths, baptisms, and churches with God's promises his to enjoy. This is the kind of choice we are opposing as unscriptural. Man can only choose what God has given. For man to have a choice there must be at least two or more objects from which to choose, the choice of either bringing to him the desired blessings. If you enter a store and there is but one ice box, you do not have a choice of ice boxes. If I walk into a clothing establishment to buy a suit of clothes and the store has but one suit, the salesman does not say to me, "Mr. Harper, take your choice of suits." There is no choice but to accept the one he has or reject it. Now this is not the way in which we use the term "choice" in the field of religion. We

know where there is only one object there is no choice to be made. The same is true with religion, we have no choice but to accept that which God has offered us, or reject it. He does not offer to us a choice of two or more plans by which we may be saved, two or more religions or faiths to accept, two or more baptisms from which to choose the one we like best; neither does He offer to us some two or three hundred different churches, either of which we may join with His approval.

In Ephesians 4, verses 4 through 6, we have this reading: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all, and through all, and in you all." This correctly understood there would be no more sermons preached telling man that he has a choice of churches, of faiths, or of baptisms, any more than sermons are preached that he has a choice of gods, or lords, or of holy spirits. Of each of these it is said plainly there is one. Let us study this, beginning with one God. Is there just one? Or, does man have a choice of two or more gods? The Bible must answer this for us. In Exodus chapter 20 and verse 3 God said to Moses, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And in Isaiah 46:9 God said to Isaiah, "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else." From these passages we are forced to conclude that man has no choice of gods that he may serve. In I Thessalonians 1:9 your Bible calls Him the "living and true God."

This God, the only true and living God, was not composed of a score of smaller gods, all different and contradictory, but when taken together, go to make up this one true and living God. It was this true and living God, or else. There was no choice and man can see this. Paul likewise declared there is one Lord, that is Christ, and one Spirit, the Holy Spirit. My question now is, if there be but one Lord, if there be but one Spirit, then does man have a choice of Lords or a choice of Spirits? Or is he not forced to accept this one Lord, this one Spirit or reject them and be lost? Man has no choice but to accept the one God, the one Lord, and the one Spirit, here mentioned by Paul, or reject them and be lost. God gave him no choice of two or more gods; two or more lords, or two or more spirits from which to choose, with God's assurance that it makes no difference which one man chooses, for one is as good as another. When God declares there is but one, it does make a difference if man chooses something different. This we must understand else we may stand before God, having rejected the only things given to us of the Lord. When God says there is but one, man has no choice but to accept that one. This simply means that man has no scriptural choice of his own. He must accept God's order of things.

I shall now put this same examination to test by asking if "one" here in Ephesians 4:4 means "one" when it says, "There is one body"? You will remember this same writer says in Ephesians 1:22,23 that God "hath put all things under his (Christ's) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Since, therefore, the body is the church.

if there be but one body there would have to be just one church. Our question now is, Is this one church made up of three to five hundred different, warring, conflicting religious bodies, all teaching conflicting doctrines, but when taken together they form a "universal church"? Did they have two or more conflicting religious bodies in Jerusalem, in Corinth, in Ephesus, to which Paul wrote this letter? Did they have two or more religious bodies in Galatia, in Colosse, in Macedonia, in Rome, and throughout all Asia Minor, each telling the people a different story, all practicing different religious dogmas? Is such a Babylon of religious cults what Paul had in mind when he said in Ephesians 4:4, there is one body? If no such confusion of churches existed under the direction of the Holy Spirit, then why do we have them now? Who is to blame for such a condition as exists in our day? If there be but one body and that body is the church, then how does man have a choice of churches any more than he had a choice of gods, of lords, or spirits? Does "one" mean "one" in this same reading when applied to God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, but does not sustain that same meaning with reference to the body—the church? No, my friends, just as there was no choice of gods, of lords, or spirits, neither is there a choice of bodies, or churches. Man has to accept the one body of the New Testament or do as did Adam and Eve, disobey God. Christ did not build two or more churches, all bringing conflicting doctrines and ways by which you become members of each, and then say to man, "Now you take your choice, any choice you make is pleasing to me." He built just one church and it is this one or nothing. No inspired man ever thanked God for so many different, conflicting churches that man may choose the one most suitable to him. It is the Lord that is to be pleased, not man. You please the Lord by becoming a member of the church He built, for in Matthew 16:18 He said, "I will build my church," not churches. All churches in the New Testament were of the same faith and practice. To be members of the New Testament church we have to do now what they did then. Change the plan given in the Bible and you become a member of something other than the church the Lord built. There is but one. There is no choice. Man has no choice of churches. Man has no right scripturally to make a choice.

Our next question is, Is there a multitude of faiths from which to choose, with the blessings of heaven to be ours regardless of the faith selected? In this world we have hundreds of conflicting faiths or creeds by which the hundreds of denominations are directed in their action and in their worship. Each of these faiths has its own rules of admission, its own rules of action after being admitted into this certain faith. Now is God the author of them all? Has He given us all these conflicting faiths which when taken together constitute some kind of a universal faith which makes up the one faith spoken of here by Paul? My good friends, can't we see that God is not the author of any such confusion? Christ prayed in John 17:21 that those who believed on Him might be one, for said He, ". . . that they also may all be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Christ knew

that division would cause men not to accept Him. He condemned this division. How can He therefore be its author? Paul said in I Corinthians 1:10, "That ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you." So Paul is not the author of all this division and he was guided in his writings by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:3). How therefore can the Holy Spirit be the author of all this division, of all these conflicting faiths, when it was the Spirit that guided Paul in saying "that there be no divisions among you," and who directed Paul to write Ephesians 4:4 saying there is "one faith"? Just here I should like to show you what this faith is, referred to by Paul. Faith here is a noun, not an adjective, nor a verb. Being a noun it must stand for something, represent something. Let our Bible answer the question: What is the "one faith" spoken of by Paul here in Ephesians 4, verse 4? In Romans 1, verse 5, we read, "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith." This again is a noun. Faith here is something that man must obey. In Galatians 3:22 Paul declares that "The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed." Now this is not our personal faith in God; this was something to be revealed; it was the gospel, your Bible. In Jude, verse 3, your Bible says, "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." From these passages we are forced to the conclusion that this "one faith," spoken of by Paul in Ephesians 4, verse 5, is the gospel of Christ. Since therefore there is but one faith, there is but one revelation from heaven; there is but one gospel plan of salvation. This being true how then could we claim that this "one faith" of Ephesians 4:5 is composed of a multitude of different faiths, when taken together go to make up one "universal faith," which "one universal faith" is a Babylon of conflicting doctrines? For anything to be a part of this "one faith" it would have to be a revelation from God and the revelations from God do not contradict the one the other, as do the doctrines of men. This being true, then the group or groups that do not have the true revelation of God regarding this faith is teaching a perverted gospel and Paul says in Galatians 1:6-9 the curses of heaven shall rest upon them. Yes, it makes a difference what a man believes since God has given us only one faith, which is the gospel of Christ and is to be obeyed as commanded by Paul in Romans 1:5. This is not a laughable question; it is not one to be cast off by the shrug of the shoulders, saying, "that is his interpretation." When the Bible says there is one faith, there is one faith, no matter how man may ridicule such an idea. One means one. This needs no interpretation.

In this same reading it says there is one baptism. If there was but one baptism at the time of this writing then there cannot be three or four, as is taught today. My friends, if there is but one baptism then how do men receive the baptism of the Spirit: the bap-

tism of fire; and the baptism in water? If there is but one, then how do men get sprinkling, pouring, and immersion, all three different kinds of baptism in water? In my next lesson I shall discuss in detail what this one baptism is of which Paul here speaks in Ephesians 4:5. Suffice it to say today that this one baptism is the baptism of the Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15,16. Here Christ commanded them to go "teach all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" and that it was to be preached to "every creature in all the world," promising them He "would be with them always, even unto the end of the world." So this baptism of the Great Commission was to last until the end of time, it is the one baptism of Ephesians 4 and verse 5. This being true then this one baptism cannot be made up of all these different baptisms, which when taken together, go to make up this one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. Remember that one means one with respect to the church, to the faith, and to baptism just as it does with regards to God, the Father; Christ the Lord; and the Holy Spirit. It just means there is one God, there is one Lord, there is one Holy Spirit, there is one faith, there is one baptism, and there is one body — the church. All men who accept this one faith, this one baptism, and this one body — the church — have accepted this one God, this one Lord, and this one Holy Spirit; but all who reject this one faith, this one baptism, and this one body, the church of the Lord, have rejected God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Your Lord asked this question in Luke 6:46, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" May you come today believing in the Christ of this one faith, be baptized with this one baptism and let the Lord add you to this one body — the church—is my prayer for you in the Master's name, for remember man has no choice but to obey God, no choice but to accept that which the Lord has given to man.



August 22, 1960

Kind Sir: Please send me Lesson 447. I enjoy Mr. Willeford's sermons. Also E. R. Harper's too. I listen every Sunday evening. The only thing wrong they don't last long enough, I never get tired listening to the Gospel preached and we need it more now than ever. As ever a regular listener.

Lillie Reagan

THE ONE BAPTISM OF EPHESIANS 4:5—What Is It?

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 463

December 11, 1960

In a previous lesson we read to you from Ephesians 4:5 where your Bible says "there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Now in today's lesson I am discussing with you the subject, "What is this One Baptism of Ephesians 4:5?" In the religious world today there are those who claim to have three baptisms; that of the Holy Spirit, that of fire, and also that of baptism in water. This constitutes three baptisms. If, at the time of Paul's writing in Ephesians 4:5, there was but "one baptism," then those who claim to have three, almost 1900 years later, most certainly have two baptisms too many. To argue with me that you have three, that you have the baptisms of the Spirit, of fire, and of water, is simply to say, "Brother Harper, I do not believe this statement found in the Bible." Isn't it strange that we accept Paul's statement when he says there is "one Lord, one faith," but reject the very next part of this same verse where he just as plainly and as emphatically says "there is one baptism"? Why this difference? Suppose you undertake to explain to someone how you have three baptisms when the Bible plainly says that when Paul wrote Ephesians 4:5 there was but "one baptism." No, my good people, if there is but "one baptism," then you do not, you cannot, have three and your Bible be right. And your Bible is right. People may be, and many times are, honestly mistaken, honestly deceived. This is why I respect every man's religious conviction so long as it remains strictly a religious conviction and that conviction does not align itself with a political system that would use the powers of the sword to destroy my religious liberties. I respect no religion that tries to unite "Church and State." With respect to all therefore who may differ with me today, I now enter upon the Bible discussion of this great subject; and great it is because of the profound relationship it sustains to our salvation, obtained by and through the death and precious blood of Christ.

There are four questions we shall consider before leaving this most vital lesson. They are: (1) By what or whose authority do we baptize? (2) What is this "one baptism"? (3) Who are subjects of this "one baptism"? (4) What is the design or purpose of this "one baptism"? It may take two or more lessons to do justice to these questions, but I shall take the time needed to answer them. We shall let our Bible answer.

Our first question is, "By whose authority do we baptize?" This one baptism must be administered by the right authority or it ceases to be the one baptism of the Bible. My friends, to change just one of

tism something other than the baptism of the Bible. Man can't change God's commands and those commands continue to be the commands of God. They become the commands of men. This we must understand or our lesson will be to no avail. Man can't tamper with God's words. To do so makes it become a "perverted gospel" as your Bible plainly states in Galatians 1:6-9. Here Paul states it in these words: "There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Now how shall they do this Paul? Listen to the next verse. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." To pervert the gospel is to preach something contrary to God's word. If therefore I change the authority by which I am to administer baptism, I have perverted the gospel of Christ; I have changed God's word.

I ask you now to turn with me to Matthew 28:18-20 and here we find by what authority we are to baptize. It reads as follows: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," or Spirit. By whose authority were they to baptize? By the authority of Christ. What authority did Christ possess when He gave this command? "All power in heaven and in earth." That power He has never delegated to any man, or set of men, or to any board of men. There positively does not exist in your Bible a single passage where this power was ever taken out of the hands of Christ and delegated to the Church or to a board of uninspired men before whom man must come, be examined, and if he passes satisfactorily, be licensed then by this board of uninspired men to go preach the gospel with power to administer the act of baptism. There is no command, nor is there any example, where any man ever received his license to preach or baptize at the hands of a board of men. But asks one, Does not the church have the right to license those who are going to represent her? All churches built by man, and not by Christ, have the right to make their own laws just as any human institution would have, but the church of the Lord has no such laws. Christ never delegated such power to His church. It isn't found in your Bible. Since therefore the Bible gives to no man that power, since in your Bible the Lord did not delegate such power to the church, then by what or by whose authority do men, or does any church, sit in judgment upon man to permit him to baptize or to deny him that right? Another thing, to which of the many different denominations did Christ delegate this power? Not one of them was in existence when He gave the command. Not one of them was in existence when the Bible was given. Then pray tell me by whose authority they demand of men that they come before them, stand an examination, that this board of uninspired men may decide whether they may or may not execute this command of God? It shall be interesting to receive from the various preachers listening to me the Bible record of the Lord's commissioning of the Church to which they belong, this right to bring men before them for

examination to pass upon their qualification to baptize since not one of the existing denominations of today was even on earth until centuries after Christ died and His Bible was completed. My friends, in the language of Paul I ask you, "am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" These are facts known to all religious scholars. You can't read of a single one of them, either in the Bible or in secular history, for at least five hundred years after Christ died. How then can they possess the right, the divine right, to demand of men that they come before them and submit to their mandates before they have the right to baptize? Now I know someone is ready to say, "Brother Harper, there is one church that was on earth back then, the Catholic Church." Now with all kindness let me say this, I offer \$1,000.00 to any man on earth if he can find one passage in all the Bible that even mentions a Pope, much less shows him to be head over the entire church of the Lord on earth. If no such is to be found in your Bible, then we must conclude that no such church was in existence during the giving of the Bible. Yes, I restate this fact. Not one of the existing denominations was on earth until centuries after the giving of the Bible. This being true, I again press this question: Where did they receive the power to demand of man that he submit to them, or be denied the right to baptize? We who preach for the church of Christ bow before no such group of men. We receive our authority from Christ alone, Who gave the command to "go teach all nations baptizing them." To change the right of authority to baptize, is to change baptism from that of the Lord's to that of man's. Yes, the authority to baptize comes from Christ and from Him alone. Your Bible gives no procedure by which man or the church is to be guided in licensing men to baptize. It is all man-made and that which is man-made is a perverted gospel, not the gospel of Christ. Now my good people, instead of becoming offended at me because I have told you the truth, sit down with your Bible and see if you can find where Christ ever gave to the church, or to a board of uninspired men, the authority to make man pass an examination before them before man might be licensed to obey the command of our Lord to baptize. Suppose he came before your church, what would your church demand of him that he believe before he could baptize? If he passed your board and your church licensed him to baptize, then why would not this have licensed him to baptize in all churches IF you have the divine right to so license him? And if all denominations were churches of Christ? The very fact that you cannot administer baptism in the other churches is proof enough that such examinations and such licensing is not of Christ, but of man; if it were of Christ one examination would suffice for all churches, if all were churches of Christ. This can't be explained nor can it be answered. Can't we see and understand this truth? Our next question is, "What is this 'one baptism' of Ephesians 4:5?" As I have already stated, it is claimed today that we have three baptisms, that of the Holy Spirit, that of fire, and that of baptism in water. Many people believe they have all three. Now they either do or they do not. Can

task at this time is to find out what what this "one baptism" really is. Which of the three is it?

It is necessary for us to find who is the administrator of each of these baptisms. This is a must in the understanding of this great question. In Matthew 3:11 is our answer. All three are mentioned in this verse. It reads, "I—that is John the Baptist—I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost — or Spirit — and with fire." Now here are the three baptisms mentioned. Here we have the baptism of the Spirit, the baptism of fire, and the baptism in water. There can be no question as to the administrator of each. John plainly declares that he did the baptizing with water, but just as plainly declares that Christ baptized them with the Spirit and with fire. Hence man is the administrator of water baptism and Christ of Holy Spirit baptism and baptism of fire.

I turn again to your Bible, to Matthew 28:18-20. Here Christ commanded His apostles to baptize. Said He to them, "Go teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Christ was not to administer this baptism. It was to be administered by man. Since we have read in Matthew 3:11 that man administers water baptism and Christ Spirit baptism, we must conclude therefore that the baptism here in Matthew 28:18-20 is water baptism.

Our next question is, "How long was this baptism of Matthew 28 to last?" In this same quotation, verse 20, Christ says to them, "And, lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world." Hence this baptism to be administered by man was to last "always, to the end of the world." This being true, we must conclude that if there was but "one baptism" when Paul wrote Ephesians 4:5, and if this baptism of Matthew 28:18-20 was to last to the end of the world, then this "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5 was the baptism of the Great Commission administered by man; and we must conclude that the only baptism man was ever permitted to administer was "water baptism."

That we may know the element in which man baptized was and is water, and not the Spirit, I read to you from Acts 8:36-38. Here it reads, "They came to a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" it says, "They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he — that is Philip — baptized him" — the eunuch. In Acts 10:47-48 we read, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?" and the next verse says, "And he — that is Peter — commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Here baptism in water is a command of God. Holy Spirit baptism is a promise of God. Man cannot obey Holy Spirit baptism; but water baptism is a command of God to which man submits. This true, then this baptism of Ephesians 4:5 cannot be "one baptism" made up of two different

baptism was no longer practiced; it was Holy Spirit baptism; hence, Ephesians 4:5 was Holy Spirit baptism." Turn with me now to I Peter 3:20 and it reads, "wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Here, many years after Paul wrote Ephesians 4:5, Peter is writing about water baptism. A baptism which resembled man's taking a bath. This was the same baptism of Matthew 29:19, Acts 8:36-38 and Acts 10:47-48. To change the element in which this "one baptism" is to be administered is to make it the baptism of man and not of Christ. But we have found thus far that this baptism of Matthew 28:19 was to be administered by man, that it was a command of Christ, that it was to all nations, and that it was to last to the end of the world. This true, the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 has to be the baptism of the Great Commission which is administered by man in water.

As I conclude this lesson, we have proven that the baptism or the Great Commission is this "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5, which was to all nations, is to be administered by the authority of Christ and by His authority alone, thus eliminating the necessity of man's having to come before a board of uninspired men that he may be granted the right to execute this command of the Lord; that this "one baptism" is a command of Christ administered in water by man and cannot therefore be Holy Spirit baptism, nor can it be the "baptism of fire," for these are not commands to be obeyed and they are not administered by man; as we have proven that water baptism was practiced long after Paul wrote Ephesians 4:5, as is recorded in 1 Peter 3:21. Will you not come therefore today and be baptized by the authority of the Lord, and not by man's authority, in water and be buried with Christ in this act as is taught in your Bible, Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12? This is my prayer in the name of Christ our Lord.

Be listening to my next discussion on this great question as I discuss the questions, "Is this one baptism a burial, or sprinkling?" "Who are subjects of this one baptism?" and last, "What is the purpose of Paul's one baptism?"



4118 - 38th St.
San Diego 5, Calif.

Dear Brethren:

Enclosed is a check for twenty four dollars (\$24.00) for the Herald of Truth. We know much good is being done and are praying for its continued success.

Yours in Christ

PROPER SUBJECTS AND DESIGN OF BIBLE BAPTISM

ABC and NBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 464

December 18, 1960

Friends, you will recall that I introduced the discussion on the subject of the "one baptism" found in Ephesians 4:5. It reads as follows: "There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." In that discussion we learned that this "one baptism" was not the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" nor was it the "baptism of fire," but that it is "baptism in water." We learned that this was the baptism of which man is the administrator and not Christ; that the only baptism man could administer was that of water baptism, for Christ was to administer "Holy Spirit baptism" and the "baptism of fire," Matthew 3:11. If for some reason you did not hear that lesson, write for it and the discussion of these vital truths. I also established that this "one baptism" was by the proper authority, that of Christ, Matthew 28:19, and that it is in "water" and shall last until the end of the world, Matthew 28:20; Acts 8:36-39 and I Peter 3:21

Today I shall read to you from the Bible that this baptism is a "burial and a resurrection." There are three acts called, by the world, baptism: namely, sprinkling, pouring, and immersion or a burial. Bible baptism is only administered by a "burial and a resurrection." Never is it by sprinkling or pouring in the Bible. Sprinkling and pouring were introduced centuries after the Bible was completed. There are three words used to express these three different acts, neither of which may ever be confused with the other; neither of which can ever be the other. The first is that of "rantizo," the Greek word meaning "to scatter in drops"; the other is "keo" which means to "pour in a stream," and "bapto" or "baptizo" which means "to immerse, to cover up, to bury." This you may find out if you are willing to honestly investigate for yourself. Now always, not one exception in your Bible, wherever you find the word "baptize" in any of its forms it comes from the word or from some form of the Greek word that means to "immerse" or to "bury" or to "cover up." Not one time will you find a passage where baptism is from either of the words which means "to sprinkle" or "to pour." Now my good people, this is the absolute truth, no matter if millions do not believe it. Bible baptism is not sprinkling or pouring. It is a "burial and a resurrection."

That this is true I appeal to the Bible. In Romans 6:4-5, your Bible says, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For we have been

likeness of his resurrection." Here it just plainly says, "we are buried with him by baptism" and that in this act "we are in the likeness of his death." Nothing but a "burial and a resurrection" in water baptism can fill this description. Neither sprinkling nor pouring can ever be in the likeness of a burial nor of a resurrection. Again in Colossians 2:11-12 your Bible reads, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The colon following verse 11, is an explanation of what the "Circumcision of Christ" is. Now here in verse 12, he explains what this "circumcision of Christ" means.

It plainly says, "buried with him by baptism wherein ye also also are risen with him." Then verse 12 adds "through the faith of the operation of God." Now what was that operation of which he speaks here? It was the operation spoken of in verse 11 where we are said to be "circumcised with the circumcision of Christ," in which circumcision the "sins of the flesh are cut off;" that is, our sins are forgiven. This is one of the greatest and most dynamic passages in all your Bible proving two things: (1) that baptism is a "burial and a resurrection" and (2) that it is absolutely necessary to the "cutting off of the sins of the flesh." No where in all the Bible can we read any such statements as "we are sprinkled with him wherein we have been risen with him." The reason? Sprinkling has never been used in the New Testament for Bible baptism. In the light of the plain statements of your Bible, have you been baptized with Bible baptism? Have you been "buried with your Lord"? Have you been "risen with him"? If not, let no man deceive you. Your Bible is right. Why run the risk of not having been scripturally baptized when the Bible is so plain as to what the act of this "one baptism" is in Ephesians 4:5? Remember man has not the right nor the authority to change one of God's laws. When he does it to God's law, it becomes the law of man. God's law says baptism is a "burial and a resurrection." It is your soul and the souls of your children. Do with them as you will. Obey your Bible or man it is up to you; but I beg of you to always do what your Bible plainly commands. Do it with assurance that the man who obeys the commands of the Bible, just as the Bible directs, shall never stand condemned at the judgement bar of God. Friends do we not know this has to be safe? Do we not know this has to be right? Have you done what the Bible says?

We now come to the question, "Who are proper subjects of this one baptism?" In our religious world churches are doing what they call "baptizing babies." Not long ago I saw on television a man sprinkling a baby and the little baby was crying while it was being held for what was being called "baptism." As it was sprinkled the man said, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Now if this baby were scripturally baptized, then the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit all three had to authorize such a pro-

somewhere shall have to command it. It shall be my purpose today to show you that babies cannot be baptized with Bible baptism for they are not subjects for baptism. Again not one baby can you find in the Bible record being sprinkled, and, as far as that is concerned, you can't find one being immersed or buried in the act of baptism. They are not subjects of Bible baptism. Please listen on to the end of the lesson. I now invite your attention to the Lord's Great Commission, which commission is to all the world and is to last until the end of time, Matthew 28:18-20. Listen to it please, and then be guided by what Christ says for He knows the proper subjects to be baptized. In Matthew 28:19 Christ Himself, in person, says to His apostles, "Go teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," promising to be with them always, even to the end of the world. Here those who were commanded to be baptized were those old enough to be taught. You can't teach a baby the gospel of Christ. Therefore the baby is not a proper subject for the baptism of the Lord, as given by Him in the Great Commission. Can you get baby baptism from Matthew 28:19? No, my friends.

In Mark 16:15-16, the Lord again speaking, says this, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here again they were to "preach the gospel" and the proper subject here for baptism was that person who could exercise faith in the teachings of the gospel. A baby can't hear the gospel and believe it. As in Matthew 28, so it is here. This account of the world-wide commission does not admit babies in its "proper subjects" for baptism. Babies can't believe. The only ones here who could be baptized were those who could believe. Remember, this was to all the world and in Matthew 28:20 Christ promised to be with them "always, even to the end of the world," if they taught the people to do whatsoever He commanded them. This being true, then, babies are eliminated from Bible baptism so long as the world stands. My good friends, this is the absolute truth. I beg of you to read it for yourselves when this lesson is over. Do not wait, do it now.

After Christ went back to heaven and sent the Spirit to guide the apostles, the record shows that in Acts 2:38 when the apostles had been asked the question, "Men and brethren what shall we do," that the answer was given by the apostles as they were "speaking as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4), when Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Here those who qualified as candidates for baptism were only those who could "repent of sins" committed. Now a baby has never committed a sin; therefore, it could not repent of its sins. Again the baby knows absolutely nothing about repentance; it can't repent; it would be a mental impossibility for it to obey this command. There is no such thing as a candidate for baptism in the Bible being held and the act forced upon him. Baptism is a command of God. A command is to be obeyed by man's own volition. If you could baptize a baby that can't be taught, that can't believe, that can't repent and that

into the institutions for the mentally unfortunate and baptize them? Neither can they be taught, neither can they believe or repent.

Thus from your Bible, we have proven that the proper subjects for this "one baptism" are only those who can be taught the gospel of Christ; those who can exercise faith, personal faith in the Christ of this gospel; and those who have grown to the age where they have become sinners and are therefore capable of repenting of their sins. For them baptism is a command by the Lord. If, therefore, you have just been sprinkled for baptism, or if you were baptized when a baby, held and the act forced upon you, the Bible being true, you have never obeyed your Lord in the act of baptism. Why not do it now? Now that you are old enough to do your own believing; now that you are able to realize that you are a sinner? Why not now, with faith in Christ, with a penitent heart, be "buried with your Lord in baptism to be raised with him"? This is exactly, word for word, what your Bible says. Not an interpretation, my good people, it is word for word what it says, just word for word like it reads. Why substitute something no man can find commanded, or ever practiced by any man of God, for that which you may read for yourselves, word for word, in your Bible, God's revelation to man? Why run the risk with your soul and that of your child? Prejudice against me and my lesson today will never make the Bible read, "therefore we are sprinkled with him by baptism into death." It will never make it read, "baptize those who cannot be taught, who cannot believe, and who have never committed a sin for which they must repent." Just remember when you do what I am preaching, you are obeying word for word what your Master has commanded.

I come now to the last of these questions, "What is the design, the purpose, of this one baptism of Ephesians 4:5?" It must have a purpose. God must have had a reason for giving it. That purpose must be found in the Bible. Now our religious world, much of it at least, is teaching you that baptism has no part to play in man's being saved. It teaches that baptism is given to God's children, to the saints of God, just as an act of obedience, but not for salvation; that it is the door into the church, which church they say, many of them, is made of all the conflicting denominations of this earth. Nothing could be farther from the truth than these tragic errors. Again our Bible shall have to settle the question. To the law and the testimony we shall come. Will you take what your Bible says about the place of baptism in the salvation of man's soul? If it teaches contrary to what you have done, will you accept the truth today and be baptized for the purpose God gave it to man?

In Mark 16:16 Christ Himself, in person, said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Now here Christ placed faith and baptism before salvation. Diagram it and see if both verbs, believe and be baptized do not sustain the same relationship to this salvation. Now who is it that shall be damned? It is the man who does not believe God's word. What does God's word say? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Do you believe this? If not, the Lord said you shall be

damned. Why will he be damned? Because if he does not believe the promise of the Lord that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," he will not obey it and will thereby be lost. In Mark 16:16 two men hear the Master. One of them "believes and is baptized" as Christ commanded; the other man would not obey Him. When Christ records the name of the believer, the saved believer, and when he records the name of the unbeliever, under which man's name will He write "saved believer" and under which man's name will He write "unbeliever"? To ask this question is to answer it. You know. It will be the man who obeyed the commands of his Master whose name shall appear as the saved believer and his name only. Let no man deceive you here, my friends.

In Acts 2:38 we find another design or purpose for being baptized. To them said Peter, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here only those who were able to repent of sins were subjects of Bible baptism. Again remission of sins comes after baptism. Remission of sins is the design, the purpose for which your Bible says man is baptized. In Acts 22:16 Ananias commanded Saul to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Here we see "washing away of sins" followed obedience to the command to be baptized. No, it did not say that baptism or water washed their sins away. That is done by the blood of Christ (I John 1:7-9); but the blood of Christ is applied only to those who were baptized in the name of the Lord. Had the world refused to obey Mark 1:16 to "believe and be baptized"; had those in Acts 2:38 refused to obey Peter's command, had Saul rebelled in disobedience to Ananias, would they have been cleansed by the blood of Christ? Think this over.

As I now conclude this discussion on the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5, we have found that it is a command of God; that we baptize by the authority of Christ and by His authority alone, eliminating the right of any man or board of men from sitting in judgment on man's right to obey his Lord's command to baptize; that the element is water; that the act is a burial and a resurrection; that the subjects are those old enough to be taught the gospel, to believe the gospel and to repent of sins. We have found that its design, or purpose, is to bring man to his salvation, the remission of his sins; that, as your Bible records in Romans 6:4, it is to bring man into Christ, into the death of Christ, where the blood of Christ was shed; and last, as we are told in I Corinthians 12:13, that it is to baptize us into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, and this body is the church, says Paul in Ephesians 1:22-23. With this one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 so closely and vitally connected with everything essential to our salvation, how can man, and why will man, refuse to obey this great command of the Lord? My prayer in the name of Christ is that you who have heard this lesson today may come believing, repenting of your sins, and be buried with your Lord by baptism into death, as your Bible says word for word. How can an action like this be wrong? Write for our lesson on this subject.

TOUCH NOT THAT TESTAMENT

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 465

December 25, 1960

Today I close my three months of radio visits with you. It has been a pleasure to discuss with you these vital Bible truths. I have appreciated your letters and your continued fellowship with us in helping make possible this great work of love, trying as we are to reach the souls of men with the gospel of Christ.

As I bring my lessons to a close, I would love to discuss with you what I believe to be a most vital subject — the “Last Will and Testament of Christ.” In Hebrews, chapter nine, the writer is beautifully contrasting the old Jewish regime with that of the regime of Christ. He is showing that the old system of animal sacrifices could never “make the comers thereunto perfect,” Hebrews 10:1. Nor could it make “perfect him that did the service,” Hebrews 9, verse 9. In this chapter we see graphically pictured the inferiority of the testament dedicated by the blood of animals, when compared with the superiority of the testament dedicated by the precious blood of Christ.

Beginning with verse 14, we have this reading: “Now much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. And for this cause, he — that is Christ — is the mediator of a new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is there is of necessity the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.” Christ is of course the testator of this new testament.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

In this reading is to be found, in principle, those great truths of the Bible that could settle our religious differences if we would but respect the testament of Christ. Respect for his testament would forbid man's changing it or adding to it. Man would accept it as Christ gave it without modification. It is with respect to our regard for the testament of Christ that you find the underlying differences between churches of Christ and the rest of the religious world. We believe in adhering strictly to the demands of this testament without addition or subtraction. We respect the force inherent in a testament when sealed and dedicated by the blood and the death of the one who

gave it. We are also mindful of the fact that only the men who submit to the requirements of a testament are entitled to its benefits. This we all know. In Galatians 3:15 your Bible reads, "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a MAN'S covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man — no man — disannulleth, or addeth thereto."

That we may know this new testament has been properly confirmed, I read to you now from the writer of the Hebrew letter, chapter 6, verses 17-18. It reads, "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Again this new testament, the testament of Christ, has been dedicated by the blood of Christ. In Matthew 26:28, Christ speaking said, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"; and in Hebrews 9:12 your Bible reads, "neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" and then in verse 18 it reads, "Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood"; these passages showing that both testaments were dedicated by blood; the first by the blood of animals; the second by the blood of Christ.

A VALID CONCLUSION

Christ being of age, thirty and three years old, when His testament was finished was mentally capable of making His own testament as is confirmed by those who heard Him, in these words, "never man spake this man," John 7:46. He had something to bequeath to those who meet His testament, even heaven itself, as we learn from such declarations as found in I Peter 1:3-4 where your Bible says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptable, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." And He has subjects to whom He may make these promises, bequeath these great and marvelous blessings, as is found in the Great Commission of Mark 16:15 where the Lord Himself says, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believeth not shall be damned." We are not ready to conclude that Christ is in every way, capable of making such a testament as given to us in the Bible. Such a testament should not be thought a forgery for it has all the evidence that

establishing its right to a place of confidence in the courts of the land and in the faith of man's heart.

HUMAN TESTAMENTS ILLUSTRATE

The reason for Christ's testament is that man understands the terms and the conditions relating to such an instrument. When man makes a testament, that testament is not operative until the man who makes it is dead. So long as he lives, his testament is of no force at all. He may bestow his goods before death as it pleases him, but when he dies, his testament becomes effective and no man inherits the blessings of that testament, save those for whom it was made, providing they meet the requirements of said testament. As stated in the reading from our Bible no man can disannul it nor can any man change it. Only the man who makes the will can change its conditions. We all know that children who violate or refuse to meet the demands of the will or testament made by the father cannot inherit the blessings promised them in the will or testament.

Now the will of Christ, His testament, operates in the very same manner. He alone can make the terms to be met by man; Christ alone can name those who are to share in its benefits; Christ alone can change that will. No man dare touch that testament, to alter it or to change it in any respect. When my testament, made by me, is changed or altered, it ceases to be my testament; it becomes a mutilated instrument; the instrument of another man and should my child be proven guilty of changing it or of forging another testament in my name, the courts of our land would try him and meet out to him such punishment as demanded by our laws. Now just so it is with the Testament of Christ. No man dare change it or alter it or forge another document in its stead, claiming it to be the true instrument of the Lord. His testament cannot be changed, hence the subject for our lesson today, "Touch Not That Testament."

THE CHURCH

In this testament Christ promised to build his church, Matthew 16:18. Christ's testament declares that He alone is the head of this church. In Colossians 1:18 Paul says, "He, Christ, is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." No man therefore, nor group of men may ever assume this position in the church of the Lord, for His testament has spoken and no can dare touch that testament. Man has no right to change this testament in the least regard, much less to change its head. My head rules my body. Christ as head of the church is the absolute ruler of the church.

LAWGIVER

In James 4, verse 12, your Bible reads, "One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy." This is Christ. Now, this being true, no man, no set of men, no council, no conference, no convention, no society, has the power to change, to alter, to add to, nor do they have the power to substitute any other document, testament, will, or modern revelation, or human tradition, for this will, this testament or any part of it. It has been sealed and dedicated and consecrated, by the death of Christ and His blood shed on Calvary's cross.

Yes, again I say, "Touch not that testament." Lay not unholy hands of man upon its holy commands to change them or to alter them. You will remember that the mountain upon which was given the Law of Moses, could not be touched by man and if even a beast should touch it, that beast should be stoned, Hebrews 12:18-20. Think you that man can now touch this testament to change it and not meet the wrath of Him who gave it? Herein lies the fundamental difference between churches of Christ and the religious world about us. We respect this testament, this last will and testament of our Lord, to such a degree that we dare not change it in any way nor dare we add to its conditions those things that seem pleasant to us. No man, yea no man, can inherit the blessings of the testament of Christ unless he meets the conditions laid down in this testament given by our Lord. This we must learn. Why give the testament? Why lay down the conditions found in it if man does not have to respect it?

ITS ORGANIZATION

This testament of Christ outlines the organization, or the setting in order the affairs, of His church. He divided His people into local congregations. He placed over them elders, called bishops, overseers, rulers, pastors. Their qualifications and duties are found in I Timothy 3; Titus chapter 1; Hebrews 13, verse 17; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11. In Philippians 1, verse 1, is given the entire organization of the church as to her officers, helpers and congregation. It reads as follows: "To all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Here you have the elders, or bishops, the deacons and the saints who make up the church from whom all workers are selected.

In Acts 14:23 your Bible reads, "And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed." Here they had a plurality of elders or bishops in every church. The testament of Christ makes no provision for bishops, presiding elders, cardi-

gregation. Nor does it make any provisions for an earthly, universal head of the church to be over all congregations. This testament makes no provisions for an earthly, universal, political potentate, who is king of all kings, ruler of all nations, who is to be worshipped as the vicar of Christ, to whom has been given power on earth to forgive sins or to deny to any man those rights by which man is saved. God alone, through Christ, has this power. In all of these things they are either additions or complete substitutions — the testaments and wills of men for the testament of Christ.

PROHIBITIONS OF SUCH ACTIONS

That you may know all such innovations are condemned I read to you Galatians 1:7, where it reads, "only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Verse 8 then declares, "But though we are an angel from heaven, should preach to you any other gospel than that which we preached unto you let him be accursed." Again in II John, verse 9, we read, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teachings of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching the same hath both the Father and the Son." Last I invite your attention to Revelation 22:18-19 where John says, "I testify unto every man — that gets all men or groups of men — that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book; if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book."

Again I say, in the words of our subject, "Touch Not That Testament." Lay not unholy hands upon the will of Christ, which will was dedicated, consecrated, and sealed by His life, His death, and His blood shed on Calvary's cross. Yes, here is where we differ with the religious world. We follow this testament without addition or subtraction.

ITS TERMS IN BEING SAVED

Now this testament gives the conditions upon which Christ has promised to save every creature in all the world. These terms cannot be changed. In Mark 16:15-16 Christ said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature — to every creature — he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believeth not shall be damned." This is to every creature in all the world. This is a part of this testament of Christ, which testament became effective after His death, not before. Again in Luke 24:46 Christ said, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations beginning from Jerusalem." It could not begin in His name until after His resurrection; it could

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

CONCLUSION

Now we are ready to conclude that Christ is the author of this New Testament; that He was competent to make such a testament; that He possessed blessings to bestow upon man if man would submit to His testament, to His will; that no man is promised any inheritance in this New Testament of Christ, unless he complies with the demands laid down in it by Christ Himself; that no man, no set of men, no councils, no conferences, no universal head could change, add to, alter, or substitute for this last will and testament of our Lord. We have found that the testament governing the church made no provisions for any officers to guide her in the teachings of this testament save elders, called bishops, overseers, or pastors; that each congregation had a plurality of these. They were to be married men, with families, I Timothy 3; Titus chapter 1; that they had no earthly universal head; no diocesan bishops; and each congregation retained its local autonomy.

SAVED

To be saved by the blood of Christ we found from this testament that every creature in all the world had to believe in the Christ of this Testament; had to repent of his sins, and every creature in all the world was commanded to be baptized with the promise that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." These are all conditions found in this testament of Christ and were given by Him in person for every creature in every nation in all the world. My friends why not respect this testament? Come believing, repent of your sins and be baptized as commanded by the testament of Christ that you may be saved as promised by Him, is my prayer in His holy name. Yes I say, "Touch not that testament." Soil it not with unholy hands, daring to change its demands, lest you are denied its promises.



San Quentin, Calif.

Dear Brethren:

The Herald of Truth Program is being broadcast in the Bay Area at 9 A.M. Sundays over KGO-TV Channel 7.

The reception is very good the Program is outstanding and we appreciate it so very much. We pray for the success of this Program and that it may continue.

Your Brother in Christ.

W. I. D. H. L.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. Harper

Radio Sermon No. 486

May 21, 1961

When death has kissed your eyes to sleep; when loving hearts have closed down the lid upon your casket; when the flowers have been carefully draped around your grave; when the minister has bowed his head in the final benediction; and the crowd slowly walks away from your grave and there alone in death you sleep, what will be your hope? Will you have a hope? Or, will your family return home never to see you again unless they too are lost? With this in mind, I wanted to bring you this lesson today, "The Christian's Hope."

TWO WAYS OR ROADS

Before every child of God there are two ways that he may travel. One is the flesh, the other the Spirit. We read in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," and verse 4 reads, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." As I have pointed out in previous lessons, the way of the flesh is "death" for, said Paul in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death." To the churches of Galatia Paul wrote in Chapter 5, and verse 21, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The outstanding thing about these letters is this: They were all addressed to Christians. Those in Rome and in Galatia had all been "baptized into Christ" (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27). Yes, Paul warned them that they could be lost.

IS THERE A CONTRADICTION?

In your Bible there is another group of Scriptures which are used to prove that the child of God cannot be lost.

They are called the "Positive Scriptures." The passages I have used thus far are referred to as the "Negative Scriptures." My friends, these passages must blend into one harmonious truth, else the man who knows not the Scriptures may get the impression that the Bible is a book of contradictions. This is the way infidels are being made today. The Bible cannot teach both conflicting doctrines and be a book of reliable integrity.

Our purpose therefore today is to find this blending of truth. When this is accomplished we shall see the beauty of God's Word as it warns the child of God against the impending death for sin, as given in these

negative passages, and at the same time gives to God's child the assurance he must have, as found in the positive Scriptures, which assurance inspires him to surrender to Christ, for he is convinced that he serves a God who is able and who will make good every promise made to him in the Bible.

You are ready to ask, "Brother Harper, if these positive passages do not teach that God's child cannot be lost, then what do they teach? Herein lies the beauty of my lesson today on the subject, "The Christian's Hope."

PASSAGES GIVEN

In John chapter 10, verses 27-30, we have the most renowned of them all. It reads, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and my Father are one." Here it is claimed, is is the passage that guarantees to God's child that no matter what sins he may commit, God will never let go of him. The question is, Does this passage mean to teach God's child that he may commit every sin known to man and that without fear of God's letting go of him? Should it teach this, then we would have a plain contradiction, for in Galatians 5:19-21 the sins of the flesh are enumerated, some 19 of them, with the plain declaration to God's children that "they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

In the first place, let us notice what the Lord has said about His sheep. In Matthew 10, verse 6, after having selected the twelve He said to them, "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and as ye go, preach saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Friends, do we have a contradiction here? In John 10:26-30, Christ said of His sheep, "No man can snatch them out of my hands," but here in Matthew He refers to some of His sheep as "lost sheep" and sends the apostles to bring them back to repentance. They were called "lost sheep." If there be no blending of these passages and if the doctrine of "once saved always saved" be taught then God's word contradicts itself. Now just what is the beauty of this wonderful passage found in John 10:26-30? Here these sheep are they who "hear his voice"; who "will not follow a stranger"; who remain in the Savior's hand. To them is made the promise that no power is able to "snatch them out of His hand."

The word "snatch" is the key word to this passage. If one could snatch us from the hand of the Lord, there would be no hope for any of us, for the wolf might come and while the Lord, who is our Shepherd, is not watching, snatch us away and destroy us. You see I may walk out of His hand, but so long as I remain in His hand, I have the promise that no power is able to snatch me from the hand of the Lord.

Let me show you from this same chapter the truth of what I have said to you. In verses 17-18 Christ talking says of Himself, "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me. but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Here, no one could take his life from him but He of His own accord could "lay it down and pick it up" again. Just so with us. No one can snatch us from the hand of the Lord, but we may walk out from His hand into sin and then, if penitent of that sin, we may walk back into that wounded hand. outstretched as it always is to receive His child back from sin. This passage was not given to teach His sheep they could sin without being lost, but to give them the incentive, the hope, the blessed assurance that they serve a God who is able to make come true every promise made to them if they will but hear His voice, follow Him, and remain in His hand. He made no such promise to those lost sheep who had strayed away. Now in John 10, there were sheep that were not lost. What was the difference? One strayed away, walked out from His hand; the other remained in His hand, they heard His voice and followed Him. Let us thank God for such a hope that no power is able to snatch us from the hand of our Lord, for if there should be a power capable of snatching us from His hand, we would have no hope in this world nor in the world to come. This is "The Christian's Hope!" This blends beautifully the two groups of scriptures, the one showing the danger of straying away; the other holding up to us the blessed hope of life eternal if we but follow Him and hear His voice. Any other explanation and these scriptures become a hopeless contradiction, and infidels are born.

II TIMOTHY 1:12

Another great verse of scripture used to show that God's child can't be lost is that beautiful declaration made by Paul in II Timothy 1:12. Here Paul says, "For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed, for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep (or guard) that which I have committed unto him against that day." Now they say to me, "Brother Harper, can't you see that when once we commit our soul unto God He is able to keep it?" Yes my friends, a thousand times yes. This is why I have committed my soul to Him. It is because He can guard it; He can keep it; no one can pluck me out of His hands. God the Father has given me to Him and God is greater than all and God and my love are one, says Christ in John Chapter 10. But this is a far cry from saying that when I placed my soul in His care that I could then run the gauntlet of sins. So long as I commit my soul to Him. He is able to guard it; He is able to keep it. No power is able to steal into that sacred sanctuary and "snatch it from His care." But I myself may take it from His care and deposit it in the devil's realm and there lives not a man who can present the passage that shows that Christ has promised to guard my soul while it is on deposit with the devil. You know the old argument about my depositing my money with the bank. That if the president of the bank, if the cashier

of the bank, if all the officials of the bank were honest, I may go home and sleep soundly for I could know my money was safe. Then it is said that God is the President of Heaven's Bank; Christ is its Cashier, and the Holy Spirit its Protector and therefore no man could steal that soul deposited in Heaven's Bank unless either God, Christ, or the Spirit were unfaithful. Then such passages are given as II Thessalonians 3:3 where it reads: "But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and guard you from the evil one." This is all wonderful if we do not misunderstand it. But here it is God who is faithful to us. We must also be faithful to Him.

Now my money is safe in the bank if those connected with it are honest, but I walk up to the bank, write out a check, sign my name to it, draw out my money. A man places a gun in my back, robs me of my money; what would you think of me were I to go running back to the bank and say to them, "You promised me if I would place my account with you it would be safe"? They would reply, and rightfully so, "Sir, so long as you left your money with us in our bank we did protect it, but we made no such promise to protect it after you had drawn it from the bank," this we can all understand.

Just so it is with Heaven's Bank. I deposit my soul with Heaven's Bank. I go home and lie down in peaceful sleep knowing that God is faithful and that no invader may enter that bank to snatch or pluck or steal my soul from God. That is the "Christian's Hope"; that is his guarantee; that is the incentive that leads him to deposit his soul with the Lord. But this is far from saying to that child of God who walks up to the Bank of Heaven and draws out his deposit, his soul, and places it in the vaults of the devil's bank for a night of sinful revelry, where he is dancing, drinking and gambling, and possibly killing, that he need not fear, for the Bank of Heaven has guaranteed his deposit, that it shall never be lost. We must remember that in Heaven's Bank, you make no deposits of liquor and beer; you make no deposits on dance halls, road-houses; you make no deposits on gambling dens, all of which are after the flesh and may lead to murder and to the destruction of all that is fine, noble and honorable in men. To cash that kind of check you have to check out your account in the Bank of Heaven, and place it on deposit in the bank of Satan. God has made no guarantees for the deposits of His children, should they withdraw their deposit, which they have committed unto Him, and try to protect it by their own power or to deposit it in the bank of sin in Satan's vaults. Oh, how these passages, beautiful as they are, and assuring as they speak to our souls, are used to teach the wrong lessons.

WHAT IS THEIR STRENGTH?

You ask, "Brother Harper, what then is the strength of such passages?"

How I shall enjoy answering this question. John, chapter 10, and II Timothy 1 are given to us for a hope sure and steadfast; a hope that

will cause us to want to serve the Lord and live for Him. When our bodies lie cold in death awaiting the resurrection, if there were a power that could snatch us from the hand of God; if there were no power to guard that which we have committed unto Him, so long as we hear His voice; follow Him, remain in His wounded hand; then we would go to our graves without assurance that all was well. But I think here of my precious little girl, just 26, who had believed in her Lord, who had repented of her sins; who had confessed her faith in Christ as God's Son and who, with this faith had gone with her Master into the waters of baptism, to be buried with Him and to rise to walk with Him, as she said in her passing, "I am a Christian; I am not afraid to die." Why, my darling, were you not afraid to die?" She heard His voice; she had followed Him; she had committed her soul to His care; she fell asleep in His wounded hands, and those Scriptures, my dear friends, are the Scriptures that give to us "The Christian's Hope" that we serve a God who is able to "keep that which we have committed unto Him against that day." They do not teach His child that he may commit every sin known and die in them and still be saved. They are the passages that are given to encourage him to give up that way of life and follow Christ, for He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Christ. This, my friends, is the blending of these beautiful Scriptures!

If you are not a Christian, come today believing in your Lord and be baptized into Him, Christ, that you may also rise to walk a new life, is my only prayer in the blessed name of the Lord.



Dothan, Alabama
February 28, 1961

Dear Sir:

I have listened with intense interest to many of your sermons, but this is the first request that I have made for any of your messages. I would appreciate you sending me the sermon by Mr. Rocky, when he spoke on the subject taken from Paul's quotation, "For me to die is gain" and any other sermons that you have had on your program in the past.

I would be pleased if you send me a weekly copy of all your messages on the "Herald of Truth," and also some of the sermons Mr. Baxter preached on your program.

Your consideration of this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully yours,

M C C

THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 439

June 26, 1960

Thanks. Let me take this opportunity to thank each of you personally who wrote us and asked for our lessons; also those of you who have had fellowship with us in this great radio and television program that reaches not only this country, but many nations of this world. It humbles us here at Highland and makes us grateful and thankful unto God for such churches and friends as you are. When from this earth we go and on heaven's shores, we all safely meet, we shall then be able to see what a blessing you have been and helped us to be, as we see the multitudes that shall be present because the gospel of Christ was preached to them by this program. May God's grace abound unto the ends of the earth that the word of truth may encircle the world and all peoples have a chance to be saved. Let us pray and work together toward that end. Together we can reach the world; separate and divided, millions that could have heard shall never hear. Thanks to each and all of you.

WHAT A CURSE TO MEN

Friends, the lesson today is one that shall be fraught with much mixed emotion as it reaches the ears of this great audience. I enter it, not without due consideration as to the reactions it shall find in the hearts of those of you who hear. I come not to wound your hearts; I come not to hurt the most sensitive feelings of any person in my radio audience; yet I know some shall be anxious about what I may say. I assure you that what I shall say today is from a sincere heart as is yours. It shall come from one who believes with all his heart what he is preaching, just as you believe what you do. If my lesson today be the truth, then thank God someone loves you enough to speak the truth to you before it is too late to do something about it. That something is wrong in the religious world, I believe we all realize. Many efforts are being made to overcome the tragic results of all this religious division we have today. Nothing seemingly is being accomplished because we believe they are not going about it in the proper way.

Unity, the oneness for which Christ prayed, can never be brought about by an agreement among the religious ecclesiastical hierarchies to tolerate one the other, while each clings to its religious dogmas that makes each of them separate and distinct from the other. The only way

this can rightly be done is given to us in both the Old and New Testaments. Amos asked the question in Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" John, in I John 1:7 wrote, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This is the only way unity among professed followers of Christ may ever be achieved. History supplies all the proof we need to establish the fact set forth in the Scriptures that the only way two may walk together is to be agreed. Churches of Christ admit this as the truth and try to do something about it from the Bible view-point. To oppose with conviction any established rule or custom, is to invite a certain amount of wrath by those who hold tenaciously to those principles. But brethren of mine, the man who believes what he preaches and defends it with the conviction of his heart, in honor, never abusing others, but pleading with them to investigate the principles set forth shall win the respect, finally, of most of those who differ, for they are able to feel the sincerity of his soul as he pleads with them because he loves them. Now I enter this subject today, "The Church of Your Choice," with just that same humble, but firm conviction, that the lesson I shall present is the truth of the Bible and stands beyond the power of any man to impeach its truths.

JOIN THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE

I believe one of the greatest curses today is the slogan we hear constantly, "Join the church of your choice." The Bible records no such statement. No such statement COULD have been made in the first century, during the days of the apostles, for there was only one church. There was not a modern denomination in the world at that time. Until denominationalism started, they couldn't preach it.

In II Samuel 7:13 in speaking of the seed of David which was Christ, the Bible says, "He shall build a house—not houses—for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." Here Christ was to build a house for the name of Jehovah; not for Himself. Christ had no choice in this. The only thing Christ has ever built was the church, Matthew 16:18. It had to be built for the name of His Father. That you may further know that Christ was not at liberty to do just what he wanted to do, I read again to you from your Bible, this time from John 4:34, "But he said unto them—his disciples—my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." What ever Christ did it was not His work, primarily, but it was the work of His Father. There was no choice but to do God's will. In John 17:4 Christ, as He was praying to His Father said, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which THOU gavest me to do." Paul in Ephesians 3:21 makes this outstanding, I might say to some, this astonishing statement, "Unto him—that is unto God—be the glory IN the CHURCH, by Jesus Christ throughout ALL ages, WORLD WITHOUT END." Here we see that the glory is not to be given to the church, but

to God and it was to be done by Jesus Christ, in the church. Outside this church we do not, we cannot glorify God by Jesus Christ. We have no choice in this for God decreed that man should glorify Him, not the church, IN the church BUT that it should be done. This was to last until the end of the world. From this we plainly see that the church was not built by Christ to glorify itself nor to glorify Christ, but to glorify His Father for whom He was to build this house, this church. Since no man can be saved without glorifying God, it follows that no man can be saved who is not a part of this church in which all men are to "glorify God by Jesus throughout all ages, world without end," just as Christ had no choice but to obey his Father's commands. So man has no choice but to obey God in this CHURCH. Man has no choice to make but to become a member of the church the Lord built or die not having "glorified God by Jesus Christ." maybe you wish to run that risk for you and yours, but as for me, the risk is too great for me to so teach my children that they might live and die not a part of this church, built by Christ, in which the world is to glorify God to the end of the world. Man has no other choice! God gave us no other choice!

In Matthew 16:18 Christ said, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church—not churches—and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"—(not them). That this is the house of God promised by Nathan in II Samuel 7:13 there can be no question, for Christ never built but one house and that was the church. That the church is the house of God we have but to read I Timothy 3:15 where your Bible says, "I write unto you that you may know how to behave yourselves in the HOUSE of God, which is the church of the living God." The Father gave His Son the right to build this church. God gave it to Him that the world might "glorify God in it through his Son Jesus Christ, throughout all ages world without end," Ephesians 3:21. Christ bought the church, not churches, with his own blood, Acts 20:28. He gave himself for the church, not churches, Ephesians 5:25. He is coming to present the church, not churches, to Himself, Ephesians 5:27. The church is His bride, not brides, Rev. 21:9; and He will one day present His bride, not brides, to His father, I Corinthians 15:24; and we shall be with the Father forever more. God is now, has always been, and shall continue to be over all things, I Corinthians 15:27-28.

A PARALYZING QUESTION

Just here I present what to me is a paralyzing question for those who would advocate the doctrine, "Join the church of your choice." If Christ did not have the right to "build a church of His choice," but had to build it as His Father gave orders, and for the purpose God directed, how then do the religious leaders of our day arrogate to themselves the right to build hundreds of denominations, and tell the people to find one that suits them and then "join the church of their choice?" If Christ did not have a choice, how then may we have a choice of some five hundred different, conflicting, radically different churches all teaching

different doctrines? If Christ did not have a choice, but had to build only one for the name of His Father, then neither John the Baptist, John Wesley, John Smith, John Calvin, Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, the Pope of Rome, yea, even your speaker, is not only denied the right to build a church, he is denied the right scripturally to belong to any other church, other than the one built by the Lord. Since Christ built only one and it was built that men might glorify God by Jesus Christ, then from whence cometh all these four or five hundred conflicting denominations, not one of which is ever mentioned one time in our Bible? Who gave men the right to build them? But says one, it makes no difference which church you join! Let us see what the Bible has to say about this very thing. It must be right. In Psalms 127:1, your Bible says, "Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it." My friends, this is why we must know if the Lord built the house in which we are. It does make a difference since the Lord built only one and that one was for the name of his Father, THAT the world might glorify God in it throughout all ages world without end. Yes, it makes a difference which church we are in, since all is in vain if we are in the wrong house, built by the wrong person. This is why the slogan "join the church of your choice" is such a curse to the souls of men. There is but ONE church and those who labour in another, labour in vain, says your Bible, and your Bible is right. You never hear preachers of the church of Christ saying, "join the church of your choice," for the simple reason man has no such choice. The Lord built His church for the name of the Father and it is that church or none with us, for all our labour would be in vain, says the Bible, if we labour to build another. Yes, I know this is different, but this is what your Bible says. When we stand by the Bible and will not vary from it, we are always different. Another thing you will not read in your Bible is men of God in their prayers thanking God for all the different churches so man may find one pleasing to him. There was but one. Pleased with it they had to be!

EXPLAIN THIS

If you think me wrong when I ask you who are listening to me, yes I am asking the preachers who are listening, please explain this to me: In Acts 2:47 it says the "Lord added to the church—not churches—daily such as should be saved." To what church did He add them? Which of the denominations of today was in existance on that Pentecost day when three thousand were baptized and added to them by the Lord? Why did not Peter tell them to join the church of their choice? Simply because there is but one. It was the church Christ built for the name of the Father, in which they were to glorify God by Jesus Christ, to the end of the world. Explain why he added to only one church if our MODERN religious confusion be the church of the Lord? The trouble comes at this point; it is because of what these had to do to be added by the Lord to this church. Every one of them had believed in the crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ; had repented of his sins;

and every one of them had actually been baptized for the remission of his sins. When this was done the Lord added each of them to His church. They did not have to "join the church," the Lord added them. Who teaches this today? Does the church to which you belong tell men what Peter told them, or does that church deny that men have to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," declaring that man is saved, has remission of sins by "faith only" before and without baptism? If the world should do just what Peter commanded and remain followers of God's instructions in the New Testament for His church after becoming members of it, why would we not all be together today as were these? They were not divided, for verse forty-four says, "And all that believed were together." Had there been five hundred denominations, this could not have been said of them.

When Paul went to Corinth, to Ephesus, to Philippi, to Galatia, when we read of the seven churches in Asia, yea the church in Rome, were there different denominations present making up the church in these cities and provinces? Do you ever read of the apostles teaching the people in these cities to join the church of their choice? They COULDN'T preach that for there was but ONE CHURCH ON EARTH AT THAT TIME, and it was the one built by Christ for the name of His Father. It was the church of Christ. If not, whose else could it have been? Not until after the death of the apostles did this religious confusion crystalize into separate denominations. During Paul's day they were all "churches of Christ," Romans 16:16.

DIVISION SINFUL

Division is sinful, friends, says Paul in I Corinthians 3:3-4, "For ye are carnal: for whereas there is among you envyings, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men. For while one saith, I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal." Then in Romans 8:6, Paul declares, "For to be carnally minded is death." This division means death; not physical death, but spiritual death; lost. It is contrary to God's will. Paul forever prohibited religious division and declared it to be carnal and in I Corinthians 3:1, he says, "I cannot write unto you as spiritual, but as carnal." Hence to be divided is not "spiritual," it is not Christianity; it is carnal; it is sinful. In II Corinthians 7:7-9, we find Paul's letter to them corrected this sin. He killed its bud before it could blossom. Yes, the slogan, "join the church of your choice" is the greatest curse to the unity of those who follow Christ that could possibly be sold to the nations today. There is no choice but to be in the church the Lord built—and He built but one. In I Corinthians 12:20, Paul says there is "but one body," and in Ephesians 1:22,23, he says this body is the church.

May the Lord help us to see the destruction that awaits our own America if we continue in this divided condition for Christ says in

Matthew 12:25, "A house divided against itself cannot stand," and remember, your Bible is right! Let us come back to the Bible truths concerning the church that there is but one church and that men become members of it by believing in the Lord; repenting of their sins; and by every one of them being baptized for the remission of sins, and all who did this were added by the Lord to His church, Acts 2:1-47. This can't be wrong, for it is the way your Bible reads, word for word, and your Bible is right. May God bless this truth to the salvation of our souls and to the preservation of our way of life before it is too late, is my prayer in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord.

"Join the church of your choice?" The greatest curse to the unity of those who follow Christ that I can think of today. Remember, we have no choice but to obey the gospel and let the Lord add us to His church, as in the days of the apostles.



WHAT IS THE HERALD OF TRUTH ORGANIZATION?

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MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH CHRIST

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. Harper

Radio Sermon No. 487

May 28, 1961

I am discussing with you today a subject, the thought of which should thrill our very souls and inspire our hearts to reach for greater heights in the work of our Lord and to look for brighter hopes beyond the dark and silent confines of the grave. So long as we are in the prime of life or enjoying the blessings of health, death and the grave are words that send chills throughout every part of our earthly beings. All men, women, boys and girls pray to live, for to live amidst the beauties of this world, a world so wonderfully and beautifully prepared by the hand of God for our short journey here, is such a pleasure to us all.

If the hearts listening to me now would only believe your Bible, conform your lives in keeping with its teachings, I believe the hearts of men would be prepared to understand and appreciate my lesson today, the subject of which is "More Than Conquerors Through Christ."

Because they sing the praises of men who have been great conquerors, to reach that goal, that their names may be immortalized upon the pages of history, men have led millions of innocent boys to the slaughter of battle.

Their names soon may die. The cause for which they slaughtered the innocent may be forgotten, but to attain such fame men will again dare to plunge this earth into a sea of destruction; this time, the destruction of the civilized world could be the price they would dare pay, hoping for their names to go down among the conquerors of the world. That kind of heroes I am not discussing. The conqueror of today's message is one that transcends all the conquerors of this earth. The conqueror of this lesson rises to heights never known by the Caesars who ruled the world for centuries as Rome lived in all her glory. It surpasses all fame ascribed to Napoleon of France. The conqueror of my lesson today is one whose praise a Hitler, in all of his glory could not attain, only watch it fade away into insignificance. Not even the conquerors of the ancient world, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Darius and Cyrus of Medo-Persia, sitting as they did on thrones of silver and gold, nor Alexander the Great, who conquered all the world and died at the young age of thirty and three, weeping because there were no more worlds to conquer, could claim the crown of the hero of my lesson today.

You are ready to ask, "Brother Harper, who is this conqueror? What has he conquered? Who is his captain, his commanding officer who has trained him to attain such heights or to be worthy of such an inscription

over his grave, that here sleeps one who is "More Than A Conqueror"? Let our Bible answer this question for us.

ROMANS 8:36-37

In Romans, chapter 8 verses 36 to 37, we have this reading: "Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all thing we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Are you ready to ask, "Who was this man who loved us so?" Happy am I to present him to you or to acquaint you with him. In John 3:16 we read, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Again in I John 4:10 we have these immortal words, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." In Hebrew 2:10 the writer says, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." This is Christ our Lord. From this we must conclude that man alone, apart from Christ, can never rise to heights so sublime, for man of himself possesses not the power to reach that state, that place in life where it may be truthfully said of him, "Here lies a man who is more than a conqueror." If it could have been reached the heroes of the past would have already claimed that title. Their fame had to be proclaimed, standing as they did in a sea of blood from the veins of innocent men and rising to heights on the tragic sacrifice of the youth of nations. Such renown, ascribed to any man, bought at the sacrifice of human suffering, can never be said, truthfully to be the conquerors of those who follow the lowly Nazarene; that great Personality who won the hearts of men, not by human sacrifice for His own personal glory, but by His own personal sacrifice for their good here and for their eternal glory in that world to come.

To have your name inscribed in that hall of fame where such worthies have their name written by the hand of God, is not attained alone by the works of man, apart from Christ. Men cannot buy a place among these honored dead. It is not ascribed unto them because of personal merit of their own, by which merit Christ becomes obligated to them, apart from the blood atonement made on Calvary. This reward comes to the man who surrenders his will, his life, his all to the way of the cross, to the Christ of that cross; to the man who is able to remain faithful to that love that Christ bestowed upon poor fallen man, never allowing himself to be separated from such a love. This man soars above the heroes of the past, mentioned before in our lesson, as does the eagle wing its way above the birds of the air, as he sits atop the highest summit of the snow-capped mountains, looking down upon his fellow-creatures below.

WHAT GROUNDS FOR OUR LOVE

Let us now look at the grounds for our loving Christ to such an extent that nothing could separate us from Him and by remaining in His

love we are allowed to be among the honored dead who can truthfully have said of us, "We are more than conquerors through Christ that loved us." Beginning with Romans, chapter 8 verse 1, we have these words, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus . . . who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." How thankful our hearts should be that today, we are given a law that is able to free us from the original law of "sin and death." That law demanded the death of every man for his sins, for said the prophet Ezekiel, chapter 18 and verse 20, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The patriarchal dispensation knew no power to free man from this law. The law of Moses, in which the Ten Commandments are to be found, possessed not the power to blot out the law that demanded death for sin. Now in Christ Jesus, the captain of our salvation, we have given a law by which we may be freed from that law that demanded our death for our personal sins (Romans 8:1-4). That law is the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." You may be anxious to know why I am stressing the question of our being taken away from this love? In Romans chapter 8 and verse 35 is asked of those who had been "baptized into Christ" (chapter 6:3-4) the question. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The apostles had just told them of all the hopes, dreams, and precious promises that could be theirs through Christ. In view of all these he was pleading with them to know if there were any power on earth great enough to separate them from the love that had done so much for them, one blessing of which was to "free them from the law of sin and death."

In verses 17 and 18 he told them that being children of God they were heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" and that their sufferings here were nothing to "be compared with the glory which should be revealed to you-ward." In this great letter is one of the greatest blessings, I think, ever promised the child of God, made possible by Christ our Lord. Paul says, "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought: but the Spirit, himself, maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercessions for the saints according to the will of God." Forsake a love like that? Be separated from one who loves us to such an extent that the Spirit will make intercessions for us? No, my friends, for through Him and by Him we may rise above the sorrows of this world and become "more than conquerors through him that loved us" and died for us that we might be freed from the "law of sin and of death."

It is in this chapter that we have the promise that "all things work together for the good to them that love God, who are called according to his purpose." To those who had been baptized into Christ by being "buried with him by baptism into death" to "rise to walk in a newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4), Paul told them they were called according to God's purpose that they were foreknown and also "foreordained to be conformed to the image of God's Son." These were they to whom the promise was made that they had been "justified," that they might be

"glorified." Having pointed out all these blessings through Christ, he then asks this question, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" "More than conquerors?" Yet, a thousand times more than earthly conquerors, for God and Christ His Son are with us to bless us and to glorify us, not with earthly glory, but with the righteousness of Christ, our Lord, a glory that knows no end and fades not away with the passing of time. Leave a love like that? No wonder Paul asked of them, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The love of God was so great that "he spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," then promises to give to those who "walk after the Spirit" all things. He promises them that there is none "who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect" . . . "It is God that justifieth." He asked the elect of God, those who were walking after the Spirit, those who had been conformed to the image of God's Son this question: "Who is he that condemneth?" Said Paul, "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Is there any wonder, therefore, that Paul asked them the question in the next verse, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

Having pointed out to them all these marvelous blessings, promising to them if they would walk after the Spirit that no power could condemn them and that God would give unto them all things, he then poses this question to them: "Shall tribulations or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or even the sword" separate you from a love like this, which love is in Jesus Christ? He isn't asking if Christ will cease to love us, but will we cease to love Him? Would you, in order to escape all these things asked Paul, surrender one who loves you so tenderly and who is able to bless you with life eternal in the paradise of God? He declares that they were willing to be killed "and counted as sheep for the slaughter" rather than forsake such a love. This shows clearly that we may forsake a love like this.

THE CONCLUSION

Then Paul reaches the climax of his letter to them in these words: "Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Now listen to the heights to which the Spirit takes him as he says, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." No Caesar, no Napoleon, no Darius or Cyrus, no Kaiser, has ever attained such lofty heights as these saints of God. The love Christ has for them enabled them to suffer all things and in the language of your Bible concerning Moses, the servant of God, it can be said of them, "they accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt (Hebrews 11:26), "for they looked unto the recompenses of the reward" and as it was said of Abraham, verses 10:13 for they "looked for a city

whose builder and maker is God," and by "faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them and confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

This is what makes heroes of men! This is what makes men "more than conquerors through Christ! They conquer not men and nations at the price of innocent blood; they have conquered self and the passions of the world, and now they may look away beyond the grave to a world made ready for the heroes of Christian love, to take their places among the renowned of all the ages past, assured that over their names, in the courts of heaven shall be written these words: More Than Conquerors Through Christ our Lord.

Are you a Christian? If not, will you not come today and as did these to whom this letter was written, believing in your Lord, and be buried with Him by baptism into death, to be raised with Him to walk in newness of life and then to honor Him by never allowing yourself to be separated from Him who has loved you so, is my prayer in the blessed name of Him through whom we become "More Than Conquerors," Christ our Lord.

~

Garfield, Ark.

March 2, 1961

Dear Brethren:

I am enclosing a check for \$5.00 for the Antioch Church of Christ. I think it is really a worth-while program. I thank God that we can have a small part in helping send the truth to so many people.

G. C.

~

Escalon, Calif.

March 11, 1961

Dear Brothers in Christ:

I am enclosing \$5.00 to help in a small way to spread the Gospel of Christ through the Herald of Truth. At the present time we are unable to hear the program over radio and T.V. but we do enjoy so much the sermons we receive each month. Our prayer is that more and more will see the need to help this work, which we think is the best way we know of to reach people with the Truth. May the Lord continue to bless you in your efforts.

Yours in Christ

C. L. E.

Hypocrite MAY GOD'S CHILD BE LOST?

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. Harper

Radio Sermon No. 484

May 7, 1961

My friends, in a former lesson I discussed the subject, "Whom The Law Cannot Condemn," showing that the child of God who walked "after the Spirit" and not "after the flesh" would not be lost because the Bible says in Galatians 5:23, "against such there is no law."

At that time I promised to discuss with you the question of the security of the believer or what will happen to God's child who walks after the flesh. Today I am discussing this question under the subject, "May God's Child Be Lost?" I do not have to convince you that this is a most popular doctrine which is taught by many. Millions now living believe this from honest hearts. Millions now living believe and teach that once you become God's child that no sin you may be able to commit can cause your soul to be lost. It is taught that the soul of a child of God cannot sin; that it is as pure as God Himself.

Yes, it is admitted that the flesh does sin, but that the soul of God's child is not responsible unto God. for what the flesh does, since they claim the flesh is not subject unto God. This is one of the cardinal doctrines of what we call Calvinism. One of the reasons why I am discussing this today is the effect that I believe such teaching has upon the minds of children who are constantly told this from youth.

Now if you teach a child from the day he can remember, that after that child becomes a Christian nothing he may ever do can affect his salvation, that his soul did not sin, could not sin, that it was only the flesh, and that the flesh is not subject to God and teach him that the soul is not responsible therefore for the actions of the flesh. When that child is grown it may stay with him. It is foolish, to me, to say that such reaction will not many times enter into what he does or does not do. If it doesn't, then down go all theories of our teaching system.

Our world is surrounded today with too much temptations to which the strongest many times fall victims, for us to begin at the cradle to teach the child that "once saved always saved," "once a child of God always a child of God," meaning that God cannot or will not disinherit him; or to teach them that once a Christian, their souls cannot sin, that their souls are as pure as God, and that the soul, that part that is born again, is not responsible for the actions of the flesh. It is taught that the flesh is destroyed in death and with that are destroyed all works of man, and the soul stands pure regardless of the life one may live. My good people, this has to influence the youth of our nation, and youth so influenced, will influence the adult, for this youth becomes the adult.

The idea is being taught that man loses only his rewards, but not his salvation. It is my firm conviction that just such teaching, coupled with the fact that some religions, directed by their leaders and ministers, arrange beer parties, dancing halls and various gambling devices for both their youth and their adults, it is my conviction that all this is one explanation for such tragic problems among the youth and adults of this day. All such churches of Christ Oppose and Teach Against. When we think of over 60 million adults out of 180 million population drinking some form of intoxicating liquors, with several million alcoholics costing our government over 20 billion dollars yearly for law enforcement and protection, we must know that somewhere the churches have fallen down in our approach to this thing.

I was eating lunch not long ago in a very fine city of this nation and across from my table sat four fine looking men, men of great mental ability. One of them said something like this in the course of his conversation: "You know, the meeting was a good one. We all had a good time. We mixed our martinis with other drinks and they were just great." The others replied something like this: "We never tried that, bet it would be wonderful." While sitting there a thing happened that called my attention to the man sitting closest to me. He had dropped a paper. He said, "Thank you, that is my Sunday school lesson." He is a Sunday school teacher of young people. Now frankly, that could not happen in a congregation of the church of Christ if we knew about it, but such is a very common thing in some circles. Now I ask you, what influence against drinking can this man have when such a man 60 years old, standing before these young people, is a leader in this type of social activities?

Now I know that not all men who drink a bottle of beer are outlaws. I know that not all girls and women who attend a dance are unfaithful wives or daughters. I know also that not all men who play a game of poker or take a chance on some church gambling raffle are renegades. But, good people, all this is on the wrong side of the Christian ledger. No nation can long live whose population, 60 million of them, are engaged in drinking intoxicating liquors and defend the ballrooms and dance halls. This man, of whom I have spoken, said that after they had had their drinks they then began the dance. Here were church leaders, from the middle age of life to three score years, yes, church leaders, drinking and dancing; thinking, seemingly, nothing wrong as they trained the youth of their classes that such a way of life is harmonious with Christian living.

YOUR BIBLE SPEAKS

Will you now let your Bible speak concerning this way of life? Will you let it answer the question, "May a Child of God Be Lost?" Is it possible for the one who has once been saved, who has been born again, washed in the blood of Christ, to so live as to be lost? Is it possible that the Bible teaches God's child that once he is saved he may lie, get

drunk, even commit murder, die in the act and still be saved because it is the flesh that committed the sin and not the soul, and therefore the soul is not responsible?

BOGARD SPEAKS

That you may know I have not misrepresented this; I now read to you from a debate I have before me—which debate took place as late as 1938: “The reason given why they cannot sin is not because they can’t do it consistently - his seed remaineth in you - therefore you cannot sin! Jesus Christ remains in us! That prevents sin. My soul sin? No—In my soul I do not. I am as perfect as God himself as far as my soul is concerned. Then what about my body? It does sin.” (Hardeman - Bogart Debate, pp 309 - 310). Yes, this man was one of the greatest leaders and debaters of his church that his generation produced. According to him the soul born again could not sin, but was as perfect as God; only in his body the flesh did he sin.

My friends, do you know what you are supporting religiously? Do you know what the religious communion to which you belong is supposed to teach? To our brethren we tell them they should know what they believe, not just support a congregation of the church of Christ because it is convenient for them to be a part of it. How many of you listening to me now believe that the soul of a Christian is not responsible for the sins committed while that soul dwells in your body of fleshly desires?

I met two men in my lifetime who took just such positions. I sat in the home of a man years ago. In that room were his wife, his only son and daughter-in-law. He was the superintendent of a Sunday school. He told me that if he were to rob every bank in that section, kill every man in cold blood, murder and die in the act, he would not be lost because it was the old fleshly man doing the robbing and killing, and his soul was not responsible. Yes, he believed it! Such is the theory of “once saved always saved.” Do you subscribe to such a doctrine?

THE BODY SINS

Now I shall show you from the Bible that every part of a child of God may sin. The first is that of the body of a child of God. In Romans 6:12 your Bible says, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lust thereof.” To whom was he writing? To the Christians at Rome. They could yield their bodies unto sin. In I Corinthians 9:27, Paul says, “I buffet my body, and bring it unto bondage, or subjection, lest by any means after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.” From this it is easily seen that Christians may sin in the body and God’s answer to this is that we bring our bodies into subjection, for if we do not, we ourselves shall be rejected, lost. Before I close this part regarding the sins of the body may I read to you from your Bible again, this time from I Corinthians 6:19-20. It reads, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which

ye have from God: and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your Spirit, which are God's." Here the body of a Christian belongs to God, not to the devil. It is bought with a price. When the Lord bought you, He bought all of you. He redeemed the whole of you from the devil and now your body belongs to God, not to the devil and it is to be controlled by your spirit that dwells in you. It is your spirit that continues to fight against the flesh. (Galatians 5:16-24). When your spirit yields to the desires of the flesh your spirit sins and you are held accountable for that sin before God.

You ask: What is the final result of such a sin while in the body? In Romans 6:23 Paul, writing to Christians, said, "For wages of sin is death." In verse 16 of this same chapter your Bible says, "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Writing this to Christians! This was not physical death, for all must die physically (Hebrews 9:27). This was a death, the direct result of sin, and that is the second death of Revelation 20:14. Christ, speaking to His twelve apostles in Matthew 10:28, said to them. "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." My good people, we can't escape the consequences of sin by trying to salve our conscience with the theory that the soul of man is not responsible for the sins of man after he becomes a Christian, teaching that the soul of a Christian is as perfect as God and therefore cannot sin. You just be sure you and your children do not die that way. Such a theory is not even good to live by, much less die by. For, believing such a theory could cause man to wink at his desires and enjoy them on the ground that his soul is not responsible and that his flesh enjoys it.

THE SPIRIT

I shall now show you that the spirit of a Christian may sin. I read in your Bible, this time from II Corinthians 7:1-2 as follows: "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh, and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Here the spirit of God's children in Corinth had become defiled. There is but one thing, only one, that can defile the spirit of God's child; that is sin. Righteousness can't do it. Therefore, the basis for the doctrine of "once saved always saved" has to be wrong, for here the spirit, that part admitted to be born again, became defiled the same as the flesh and the command was given to both the flesh and the spirit, namely to, "cleanse the flesh and the spirit" and in the place of sin, perfect the righteousness of God.

You will notice that the man whose spirit and flesh had become defiled was commanded to cleanse both his spirit and his flesh! Just how could that be done? In a later lesson I shall answer this question in detail but sufficient to say that it is done by confessing that wrong, re-

penting of that sin, and praying God for the forgiveness of wrongs, and the blood of Christ will cleanse His child of sin (Acts 8:22; I John 1:7-9).

This is God's child, not one who has never been saved. One who has never been saved by the blood of Christ must come as Christ commanded in the Great Commission, which commission was to the world, and every creature in all the world. This is found in Mark 16:15-16 where the Lord said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Christ here plainly says that every creature in all the world, who is capable of being taught the gospel, has to believe and be baptized to be saved. This done and he is cleansed by the blood of Christ. After this, he may sin in body and spirit, says your Bible in II Corinthians 7:1-2. He must again be cleansed by the blood of Christ, but this time he does not have to be baptized again, for by having obeyed the Great Commission of the Master he became a child of God. Now as a child he cleanses himself by confessing his sins, repenting of those sins, and praying God, through Christ, to forgive him and Christ's blood again becomes the cleansing power for sins. But remember, this was the spirit of God's child that became defiled and had to be cleansed.

CONCLUSION

From this we must conclude that God's child may sin both in the body and in the spirit; that the spirit of man is responsible for the sins of the flesh; and that the spirit must overcome the desires of the flesh, else God's child is lost. His child must cleanse himself by the blood of Christ, both in his body and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord or be lost, for your Bible says, "The wages of sin is death." All this was written to Christians. Why this if they can't be lost?

Be listening next time as I show you the "soul and mind" of God's child may be corrupted and God's child be lost. May God bless you is my prayer in the name of Christ.



Kansas City, Mo.

Dear Brethren:

I am enclosing in this letter \$5.00 to help in preaching the truth to the world.

I appreciate the Hearld of Truth and the fine work it is doing. The speakers are the best. I listen each Sunday morning.

Sincerely,
Mrs. C. F.

THE SOUL THAT DIES

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. Harper

Radio Sermon No. 485

May 14, 1961

In Ezekiel Chapter 18 and verse 20 we find this statement, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." This lesson shall be primarily for those of us who believe the Bible story of man, that man was created in the image of God and to that man was given a soul that shall live on throughout all eternity.

Since the Bible teaches that the soul of man shall never cease to be, then what means this expression by the prophet, "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

We must recognize this fact, that there are two kinds of death; one is physical death. That death separates our souls from our bodies and we pass from time into eternity. This is the death the writer of Hebrews 9:27 had in mind when he said, "It is appointed unto men once to die; after this the judgement." In I Corinthians 15:22 your Bible again says, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

From these it is plainly taught that all men must die physically.

TO WHOM DID HE WRITE THIS?

It will be of interest to note that this letter written by the prophet of God was to God's own covenant people, for in verses 30 through 32 the prophet says this: "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel." Then he says, "Return ye, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, wherein ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah: wherefore turn yourselves, and live. Now it was to God's people that God's prophet wrote, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." And, in the closing of this chapter he plainly shows that this is a death which is the result of their iniquities and their transgressions and he begs of them that they make for themselves a new heart and a new spirit that this death may not come upon them, God's people.

WHAT IS THIS DEATH CALLED?

In Revelation 20:14-15, your Bible reads, "And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." Now this second death is the "death of the soul." That soul, whose name does not appear in the "book of life" or

whose name has been erased from the "book of life" as in Revelations 3:5, shall die this "second death"; shall be lost in a devil's hell. This death comes after the death of our bodies.

If you will read Revelations 20:11-15, you will find this second death follows the resurrection of the dead and their escaping this "second death," is to be determined by the thing "written in the books, according to their works."

THIS DEATH NOT ANNIHILATION

There is a theory that declares that the souls of all who are not saved shall be annihilated, that is completely destroyed. The suggestion is made that death means complete destruction. This is an erroneous impression of death. Death means a separation. We speak of a man's being "dead to that way of life." We do not imply that the man has been annihilated, but simply that he has separated himself from that way of life. In Romans 6:11 your Bible says, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." Here we have a death. Both sin and man however still remain. Neither has been annihilated, yet man is said to be dead unto sin. Since both sin and the man still remain, how then is he said to be dead unto sin? He has separated himself from sin.

In James 2:26 we have what to me is a beautiful picture of what death really is. James says, "For as the body apart from the spirit is death, even so faith apart from works is dead." Here death was the separation of body from the spirit, but the spirit was not annihilated; it still lived. Concerning this great subject I read Paul's second letter to the church in Thessalonica, Chapter 1 and Verse 9 where it reads: "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of his power." Your Revised Standard Version reads like this, "Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his power."

"Here, man that is lost for not obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, verse 8, was not to be annihilated, but was to be "punished with an eternal separation from the presence of God and from the glory of his power." So we must conclude that this death, which is called the "death of the soul," is not annihilation. The ceasing to exist, it is but a separation, a banishment from God throughout all eternity together with the punishment to be endured by that soul for either not having obeyed the gospel, or for having sinned after obeying the gospel and having died in that sin as God's child without repenting of the wrongs done. Let no man deceive you, the prophet of God said to God's own covenant people that unless they turned away from their iniquities and made for themselves new hearts and new spirits that every soul among them that had sinned should die—that is to be lost.

NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament is plain concerning the soul of a Christian standing in danger of this second death. I know some are ready to say

to me, "Brother Harper, once a man becomes a child of God, his soul can't sin—he can't be lost."

Will you accept what your Bible says about this? If so, turn now with me to James 5:19-20. The apostle of the Lord has this to say: "My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he that converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." Here it is the soul that has sinned. How has that soul sinned? James says "by having erred from the truth."

This true, then it makes a difference what a man believes religiously. But one thing certain, your Bible says this man "saved a soul from death" and that was the soul of a brother in Christ. Remember the Bible says, "If any among you — not the lost but among you do err." Leaving the truth constituted a sin and the brother who was carried away from the truth by this error was called a sinner whose soul was lost. Yes, the soul of a child of God may be lost!

Speaking to His apostles, the Lord said to them in Matthew 10:28, "Rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." In I Thessalonians 5:23 your Bible says, "And may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Why pray this prayer if neither the spirit nor the soul could appear before God, at the coming of the Lord, condemned? Why specify the "soul and spirit" and pray for them together with the body, if only the body could sin? Why if only the body would appear with sin and the soul and spirit go free? Why would the Lord warn His apostles to fear him who could "destroy both soul and body in hell" if it be impossible for the soul of God's child to be lost in hell? If the doctrine, "once saved always saved" be true, then what mean all these warnings?

In Acts 15:24 we have these words, "For as much as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, Subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment." They have done what? They have subverted their souls. What does it mean to subvert? It means "to ruin utterly; to overturn; to pervert." To whom is he writing? Verse 23 says; "Unto the brethren in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia." Then preach to me that there is no danger in a child of God being lost? Listen to your Bible, this time from Hebrews 13: 17 where it reads, "Obey them that have the rule over you—these are the elders of the church — for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account: that they may do this with joy, and not with grief; for this were unprofitable for you." Why watch over souls that cannot sin: that are as "perfect as God Himself" as was stated by one of the defenders of this doctrine, "once saved always saved," in a debate? Just what, pray tell me, would the elders be looking for? Just what could a soul as "perfect as God," one that cannot sin be doing to cause the elders grief as they reported such a soul to the Lord, or what could be

unprofitable to that soul as the elders gave an account of that soul unto the Lord?

HEART BECOMES CORRUPT

"But," says one, "the heart of a Christian can't sin." Well, turn with me, this time to Hebrews 3:12. It reads, "Take heed brethern" — not the devil's family, but "brethern." "Take heed, brethern, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in **Falling Away From the living God.**" Your King James Version says, "In departing from the living God." Here the heart of a Christian may become evil; may become an unbelieving heart, may actually depart from the living God. Now I ask you, are we to teach our children from the cradle up that once children of God they need not fear, for their hearts cannot become evil; their hearts cannot become unbelieving hearts; that their hearts cannot depart from the living God? My friends, what becomes of the evil hearts of this earth? Of the unbelievers? Of those who depart from the living God? Is it possible they are saved the same as those whose hearts have remained pure, whose faith has never been overthrown, and who have never forsaken the Lord? Ah, my good people, it still remains, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Here the heart may become evil, unbelieving, and forsake the Lord; then tell me: that child of God is saved? No, my friends!

THE MIND CORRUPT

May I now show you that even the mind of a Christian may become corrupt? Turn with me this time to II Corinthians 11, verse 3. It reads, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ." What can be plainer than this? Here their mind could become corrupted from the "purity in Christ." But you ask, "Brother Harper, to whom is Paul writing? Maybe he is not writing to the saved?" Well let the Bible answer. In verse two it reads, "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ." Now their minds are becoming corrupted from that purity in Christ and he fears lest he shall not be able to present them to Christ, — yes, unless they clean up their minds, repent of their sins, confess them to God, and as children of God to forgive them of their sins.

CONCLUSION

You see, these to whom he wrote in II Corinthians 11 had believed and had been baptized (Acts 18:8), those of the Hebrew letter had their "bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22) and baptism is the only place in the gospel where we find water used. The saved in Thessalonica had "obeyed the gospel of Christ" and that gospel teaches

man to "believe and be baptized" (Mark 16:15-16). So, my friends, all these who were recognized as God's children in our New Testament from Pentecost to the closing of Revelation were those whose faith had led them to be baptized as commanded by Christ in His Great Commission. They were all members of the church and yet their "bodies, spirits, souls, hearts, and minds" could all sin and become corrupt in the sight of God. And that is all there is to any man! Yes, God's child may be lost.

I close now with the reading of Galatians 5:4, "Ye are severed from Christ, who would be justified by the law: **Ye Are Fallen Away From Grace.**" How could they have fallen away from grace had they never been in God's grace? Did you know that your Bible said in plain words, "Ye are fallen away from grace?" Now what shall become of the soul of God's child that falls away from grace? It shall die, be lost, unless it repents of this sin.

EXAMPLES

Judas died in sin; Ananias and Sapphira died, lying to the Holy Spirit; Hymenaeus and Alexander were turned over to Satan; some actually departed from the faith. Read Matthew 27:5; Acts 6, I Timothy 1:20 and I Timothy 4:1-4. These could be multiplied.

Your Bible in Galatians 6:7 reads: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life." This was written to Christians, every one of whom had been "baptized into Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

Have you believed and have you been baptized into Christ? If not, why not do that today is my prayer in the holy name of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



Corpus Christi, Texas
March 24, 1961

Dear Brethren in Christ:

A new friend of mine was baptized this morning. The wonderful sermons in your Herald of Truth pamphlet helped to convert her. I only wish we could have your programs in Corpus Christi — in both English and Spanish. The Spanish people are ready for the truth too — if we only had enough workers who could speak to them.

Your sister in Christ,
Mrs. C. H.

WRONG EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 301

November 3, 1957

In the kind providence of our Lord it is a happy privilege again to bring to you another lesson from the Word of the Lord, the greatest book the world has ever had. In this series of lessons on the "World's Most Popular Thief," which lesson I shall close today on the subject of "Wrong Examples of Conversion," I have discussed with you the need to understand the "Proper Division of the Bible"; I have pointed out that the Bible is divided into two divisions, the Old Testament and the New Testament (John 1:17); that these two testaments or laws had two lawgivers. Moses gave the first, Christ the second (James 4:12; Gal. 6:2). I pointed out that the first was to last until Christ should come and set in force His law or His testament; hence the Old Testament or the Law of Moses was done away, nailed to the cross, as Paul says in Col. 2:14; Heb. 10:9,10. I further read from your Bible where these two testaments had two different kinds of blood. The first, that of Moses, had the blood of animals, Heb. 10:4; the second, that of Christ, Heb. 9:17, had the precious blood of Christ, Matt. 26:28 and I John 1:7. I further read to you where the first, that given by Moses, was given only to the Jews, Deut. 5:3-5, while the second, that given by Christ, was to all the world, to every nation. Mark 16:15 and Matt. 28:18-20; that the first was given because of transgression and was to serve as a school-master to bring the Jews unto Christ at which time it was to be done away and the testament of Christ was to become effective, Galatians, chapter 3.

It was here we reached the conclusion that the "thief on the Cross" could not be used as an example of salvation for us today because the thief lived and died under the wrong testament. He lived during the lifetime of one given by Moses, which was taken out of the way by the cross of Christ. We are under the testament of Christ and could no more go back to the testament given by Moses than could the thief have been under ours since he was dead before the "new testament" was ever in force. This is why I have selected to discuss with you today the subject "Wrong Examples of Conversion."

Wrong Examples

When I was a boy back in Faulkner County, Arkansas, I can remember as though it were yesterday, the examples given to us trying to show us how to be saved. I want to discuss some of those examples with you today as kindly as I know how, for in the passing of sixty years those boyhood days and friends are still very near and dear to me. I do not mean ever to hurt my friends nor do I mean to be unkind to you, my listening audience, who may differ with me on some of these things.

Matthew 8:1-3

Now these examples and passages I shall study with you today are mistakenly used for one purpose and one only—that is to convince people that they do not have to obey the Great Commission as given by our Lord, Christ Jesus. In His Great Commission that was to “all the world” and to “every creature in the world” is found the command to be “baptized.” This command is attacked on every hand and millions are being told they do not have to submit to the Lord in obeying His command to be baptized. Now to get around the Great Commission of our Lord, which commission is to every creature in all the world (Mark 16:15), the following are some of the examples and scriptures given. Get your Bibles and follow with us closely.

In Matthew, chapter 8, verses 5-13, is the story of the centurion whose servant was sick of palsy. The centurion came to the Lord and requested that the Lord heal him. Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” The centurion said, “I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” The Lord said of his faith, “I have not found so great faith; no, not in Israel.” Now Jesus said unto him, “Go thy way; and as thou has believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.” Here it is argued the servant was blessed by faith; that baptism wasn’t mentioned, hence we can be blessed, saved by faith without and before baptism. This was used as an example of salvation by faith only without baptism.

Matthew 9:1-8

In Matthew, chapter 9, verses 1-8, is the account of the palsied man being healed. It reads, “And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy: Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.” Again it is argued that here is an example for us today showing how we are saved by faith only before and without baptism. It is suggested that the only thing mentioned here is faith, and since baptism is not mentioned it is an example of “salvation by faith without baptism.” Many are the sermons I have heard delivered across the years using this as a text from which to call sinners to the salvation of their souls. Without studying the truth on such examples you can very readily see how people could become confused by such a statement. I shall show you the fallacy in these examples and passages at the conclusion of having given you one or two more.

Mark 5:25-34

In Mark 5, verses 25 to 34, is one of the great texts of all time to stir the hearts of people to believe they are saved by faith only without baptism. Here is the story of the woman with an “issue of blood.” She had been sick for twelve years. She “had spent all she had” and was no better but “rather grew worse.” She heard Christ was there. She made her way to Him and said “if I may touch but his clothes, I shall be

whole." She pressed her way to Christ; she touched His clothes; virtue, that is strength went from His body to hers and she was healed. The Lord asked, "Who touched me?" She "came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth." Christ simply said to her, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." How I can hear those sermons of yester-years delivered in power and in tears, begging sinners to come to the altar and the Lord would save them just by "faith only." All you have to do is just believe and you shall be made whole, born again like this poor helpless dying woman. Here again they argued: This woman was made whole by faith only without baptism, for baptism wasn't even mentioned. The conclusion was that since baptism was not mentioned, only faith, that we are saved today without having to obey the Great Commission of the Lord which commission was given years after these examples. Well, a man could take this and move an audience to accept this theory if he did not understand the "proper division of the Bible" and had not studied the weakness of arguments.

Luke 23:1-56

The last example that is usually given when all the above have been taken away is the "Thief on the Cross." As we have already stated they argue that he was saved on the cross by faith in Christ without baptism. for say they: "He couldn't have been baptized. He was on the cross. Of course he only died on the cross; he lived all his life on the earth." But again the argument is made: "He was saved without baptism because baptism is not mentioned." Let us keep that one statement in mind. These are given for one reason only: To convince people they do not have to obey the Lord's own commands in the Great Commission where He commanded baptism of every creature in all the world. Mark 16:15, 16. The Lord's commands in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15,16 and Acts 2:38 must be gotten around somehow or churches of Christ are preaching the truth for we are teaching men to obey their Lord as He speaks in His Great Commission to all nations in all the world and to every creature. Hard to beat. this! Let us now look into these illustrations to see just what is wrong with the line of arguments or reasoning used by them. Now the fallacy of one will be the fallacy of all. (1) It is true that in Matt. 8; Matt. 9 and Mark 5 the blessings are based upon faith. In the first two, the faith was not on the part of those receiving the blessing. The centurion believed and because of his faith his servant was healed. In Matt. 9 it says "seeing their faith," the faith of those bringing the sick of palsy to Christ, the Lord said "thy sins be forgiven thee." Hence if these are examples of salvation by faith for us today, it would have to be the faith of the other party or parties. This we all reject! (2) In the second place, while baptism is not mentioned, neither is loving the Lord, repentance, nor confessing Christ mentioned. Now if these three are examples of salvation for us today by faith without baptism because baptism is not mentioned, then they are likewise examples of conversion or salvation for us today without loving the

Lord; without repentance; and without confessing the Lord, for neither are they mentioned. Now that which proves too much proves absolutely nothing. Are we ready to declare man can be saved by faith without loving the Lord, just because it is not mentioned in these places? Or without repentance just because it isn't mentioned? If the argument holds true, that it is conversion by faith without and before baptism, because baptism is not mentioned, then it has to be conversion without these others for neither are they mentioned. As I said before, the only reason these are used is an effort to find some way out of obeying the Great Commission of Christ in which He commands baptism twice and that to "all the world" and "every creature" in all the world. No person actually believes today in salvation by faith only, for that would eliminate loving the Lord, would eliminate repentance, would eliminate confessing the Lord without which no man can be saved, Matt. 22:37; Luke 13:3 and Matt. 10:32. Salvation by faith only is a doctrine unheard of in your Bible. James in James 2:24 says, It is "not by faith only." If salvation is predicated on faith but is not "faith only" then we must understand that to teach it is by faith only is a plain contradiction of God's word. (3) A third thing to understand here is: Not one of these asked for salvation or conversion. Each was sick with a physical malady. In the illustration of the woman diseased for twelve years this was not "the new birth" for the Lord said, "be whole of thy plague." Men make statements that confuse the mind—which statements are nothing more than human opinions. But this one thing I would have you remember. If the centurion's servant; if the palsied man; if the woman sick for twelve years; if the woman at the well (John 4) are examples of conversion without baptism, because baptism is not mentioned, then they are also examples of conversion, of salvation without loving the Lord; without repentance; and without confessing the Lord, for neither of these is mentioned in a single example given. (4) The fourth thing I would suggest wrong with these as examples of conversion for us today is: They are under the law of Moses, they are before the new testament became effective, they happened "under the blood of animals" that could never take away sins, they took place before the testament of Christ was in force (Heb. 9:15-19). They were not at that time under the blood of Christ, they had never heard of the Great Commission at that time. Therefore, they couldn't have obeyed the commands given to us. They were under the wrong testament, under that "nailed to the cross and taken out of the way." The Great Commission wasn't even given back during these examples. My friends, these above statements are as certainly true as God is true!

Thief on the Cross

Now the same is true of the thief on the cross. He died under the wrong testament, during the wrong blood, that of animals, and before the Great Commission was ever given. He never heard the Great Commission at any time during his life on the earth nor his death on the

cross. How could he have submitted to that which had not even been given during his lifetime?

Why the Difference?

In closing I want to ask you these questions: Why give Matt. 8 instead of Acts 2:38 as an example of conversion? Why give Matt., chapter 9, instead of Acts, chapter 8? Why give Mark 5 instead of Acts 9:1-18 or Acts 22:16? Why give the woman at the well, John 4:1-26, instead of Acts 19:1-10? Or the thief on the cross, Luke, chapter 23, instead of the Great Commission of Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16? There is but one reason for this: In Matt., chapters 8 and 9; in Mark 5:25-34, faith is mentioned with no reference to baptism and the world is trying to find a way around this command of the Lord. The same is true with the thief on the cross. No mention is here made of baptism. But in Acts 2:38 we read, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." This says, "every one of you"! In Acts, chapter 8, the Samaritans and the eunuch were all baptized; in Acts 8:1-18 and Acts 22:16 is the conversion of Saul and he was baptized to have his sins washed away. In Acts 19:1-10 these had to give up the baptism of John the Baptist and be baptized with the baptism of Jesus Christ. Twelve men, the record said, were among the number. When, therefore, you come to the examples this side of the cross of Christ, under the New Testament, under the blood of Christ, every one of them had to be baptized, without exception. If we must have someone without baptism, we have to come before the death of Christ under the blood of bulls and goats, for under the blood of Christ and His testament every one was commanded to be baptized.

Now why use the thief on the cross instead of Mark 16:15,16? For this reason: Mark 16:16 says "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" and Matthew 28:18-20 commands all nations to be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. But the thief was dead days before Christ ever gave this Great Commission. The thief couldn't obey it when he was dead long before it was given. But we are under the Great Commission and twice in it we are commanded to be baptized with the promise of salvation for all who believe and are baptized. To get around the Great Commission of our Lord to every creature, we run to the thief. But remember Matt. 8 and 9; Mark 5; John 4 and Luke 23, the thief, were all under the wrong testament, under the wrong blood, under that which was done away. But Acts 2:38, Acts, chapters 8, 9 and 22 and Acts 19 were all under the testament of Christ, under the blood of Christ, and under the testament that is in force today to all the world. This is what the world is going to have to understand if the world is ever brought to Christ. You can't go back to the thief on the cross for an example of salvation or conversion because he died under the wrong testament, under the wrong blood. He was never under the Great Commission of Matt. 28 and Mark 16. If you were in court and had a lawyer trying to defend you and he did not know under which

constitution they were trying you or under which you lived and if he went back to one that had been done away, had been taken out of the way instead of the one you lived under, what would you do with him?

Say, would you, it makes no difference under which constitution he was trying to defend you, or would you try to get one who knew? Now your soul is much more important than your life here. Why not come to those who know under which testament we live today, and who are able to tell you the difference? Why not come to those who know which examples are for us today and which are not? Under the New Testament, sealed by the blood of Christ, is the command to be baptized. The Lord gave it, not man. He said in Heb. 5:8,9 in speaking of Christ, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." Again the Lord said in Matt. 7:21, "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Baptism is in that new will, my good friends. It is up to us now to submit to Christ and His will which became effective after the death of the thief in which is found the Great Commission, or just go on defying that will, trying to follow the thief on the cross instead of your Master, Christ Jesus our Lord. "Wrong Examples of Conversion" most certainly if before the cross of Christ! We must come this side of His death for the correct examples of conversion today and we shall have to abide by them. The first of these conversions is in Acts 2 where 3,000 were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ "for remission of sins." They were said to be "saved" and "added to the church" by the Lord, verse 47. Only those baptized were called believers, verse 44. This we beg you to do today and be just what they were. Come under the testament of Christ instead of Moses; under the precious blood of Christ instead of the blood of bulls and goats. Be just a Christian. May the Lord bless you is our prayer in His blessed name. I shall discuss with you next time the "Golden Text" of our Bible, John 3:16. Tell your friends to be listening and write for these lessons on the "Thief on the Cross" just delivered.

THE GOLDEN TEXT--JOHN 3:16

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 302

November 10, 1957

Thank you Phil! Many years ago while in college in Jackson, Tennessee, a friend of mine and myself were discussing the plan of salvation. He and I differed as to the conditions of salvation. We were both students in this university. Our discussion was centered around John 3:16 the "Golden Text of our Bible" as it is usually referred to by the

world. He thought it taught salvation by faith only. I disagreed with him and the discussion began. He argued that all a man had to do to be saved was mentioned in this verse. It reads as follows, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Soon after I started preaching, I went back to my home town and conducted a meeting. Fifty-four people were baptized in this little town and out of this grew a friendly discussion between me and one of my boyhood friends. Great crowds came and we all had a nice time studying our Bibles. The plan of salvation, John 3:16, came up for its part in the debate. My friend argued as did the man mentioned above, that we are saved by "faith before and without baptism"; saved by faith alone and John 3:16 was given as one of the outstanding passages to support this contention. Again it was argued that all a man had to do was found in John 3:16. In Memphis, Tennessee, I was conducting a tent meeting and I was dealing with the question that involved the converting of an infidel and in this discussion I made this statement: "I do not believe that any man actually believes a man is saved by faith only." I had my back turned to a part of my audience due to my using a blackboard for illustrations. Finally when I looked about me there was standing a man who was a local pastor of one of the denominations of the city. I asked him what he wanted and he replied, "I believe that man is saved by faith only, the very moment he believes." I suggested that he be seated and at the close of the service I would give him an opportunity to present his thinking along this line. He came at the close and began his discussion and his first Scripture was John 3:16 where the only thing mentioned, on man's part, was belief.

Let me ask you now this question, What would you say about this question? Are you on first thought ready to say, Brother Harper, these men are right; the only thing man has to do to be saved is believe, for that is all that is mentioned in John 3:16? Now what would you think of me were I to say to you what I said to each of these good men, that you do not believe faith is all that is required of man to be saved? Well, that is just what I am going to say again: No man, I believe, really believes we are saved by faith only. I believe if you will get your Bibles and follow me, or write for our lessons being delivered in this series, that I can convince you that no man can believe this theory. This is a theory we can argue, but no man who believes in the New Testament as God's will to man can actually believe that man is saved by faith only. The reason for all this is very simple: We are confused as to what it means to "believe in the Lord."

A Bible Debate

Would it seem strange to you were I to suggest that this is not a new discussion of salvation by faith only? If I were to say to you that there occurred a debate on this in the first century of the church's history and that it was settled by an inspired man, and that this speech

made by him is recorded, what would you have to say about it? Suppose I were to read to you from his speech where this theory was condemned—what would you think of it then? If you have your Bibles turn with me to James the second chapter beginning with verse 14. Here James introduces this discussion with this question, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that **faith without works is dead**? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and **not by faith only**. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

In this discussion James opposed those who taught justification was by faith only. Said he. "Shew me your faith without your works and I will shew you my faith by my works." This chapter should be enough to show to us, it seems to me, that man is not justified by faith only, for it just plainly says, "not by faith only" (verse 24). I can't see how it could be plainer than this. There are two kinds of faith mentioned here; one a perfect faith; the other a dead faith. Now this dead faith is what James called "faith alone" in verse 17. Our question now is, Can a dead faith which James says is faith only, justify us or save us? or does it take a perfect faith to bring about our justification before God? James says it takes a perfect faith!

Since man is justified by faith, but not by faith only, it then behooves us to find out what it takes to constitute a perfect faith. There is no argument over man's being saved by faith in Christ; the argument is over its being by faith only when the Bible declares in just so many words, it is not by faith only. Here, because James was teaching them their faith had to obey God before they were justified, they were accusing him of teaching justification or salvation by works while they claimed to teach salvation or justification by faith only. This is the identical situation in our times. Because we teach that man's faith must obey the Lord before man can be saved, we are accused of teaching salvation by works and not by faith. Others claim they are teaching

by faith because they claim the moment you believe, that moment you are saved with no further acts of obedience. It is the same discussion, word for word, as today. Our position is identical with that of James; word for word his position! We do not believe a dead faith, which is faith alone (verse 17) can bring salvation or justification. We believe it is brought by an obedient faith, a faith made perfect in doing what the Lord has commanded us to do that we may be saved (Romans 1:5). The question now is, Who is right? Who is teaching the truth? Is James right in declaring it is "not by faith only" or were those right who opposed him in teaching that you are saved by faith only or faith alone? Both theories could not be right!

John 3:16

Now let us study John 3:16 of our lesson today. It is argued, as I suggested, that this passage teaches salvation by faith only, before and without baptism because faith or belief is the only thing mentioned in this verse. I believe this verse. I do not believe it contradicts that of James 2:24. The Lord is the author of John 3:16 and His Spirit guided James to write James 2:14-26. They cannot contradict each other for then you would have Christ divided. I would like to pose this question just here regarding the faith of John 3:16. I would appreciate hearing from all you who are preachers in my listening audience regarding this question. I am anxious to have your reaction to it. I believe it is very vital and fundamental. I wish you would analyze it honestly and point out to me wherein lies the fallacy of my argument. I have presented it a number of times and so far no explanation has been given showing it to be wrong from the standpoint of logic. The question is, What kind of faith is the faith of John 3:16? Is it an exclusive faith or an inclusive faith? By this I mean, Does it exclude everything not mentioned in this verse, from the plan of salvation, or does this verse include anything not specifically mentioned? That I may get this point clearly before you, let me now return to the three illustrations given in the beginning of my lesson of the three men with whom I talked. I asked them if everything man has to do to be saved is mentioned in John 3:16. At first they said, yes. Then I asked each of them to write down John 3:16 and after it write everything mentioned in this verse for man to do and they did and there only appeared "believe." They looked at this and I asked them if that was all man had to do? What would you say in answer to this question? Would you sign a statement that everything man has to do to be saved is found in John 3:16? Now would you? I pressed these questions: Does man have to repent of his sins to be saved? Does man have to confess his Lord to be saved or can man be saved denying Him? I also asked if man could be saved without loving the Lord? Without godly sorrow that produces repentance? What would you say to these questions? The answer came back of course like you would finally give it: No, man can't be saved without loving the Lord; without godly sorrow; without repentance; without confessing his Lord. Then I asked this question that I ask you today—Where in John 3:16 do you find the com-

repentance; without confessing the Lord; without loving our Lord, for not one of these is mentioned.

Acts 16:31

Acts 16:31 is used to prove that man is saved by faith alone without baptism, for Paul said to them "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Again in Acts 10:43 is found a passage used to prove the same thing. It reads, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." One more that I would like to call attention to here, there are many more, but this is Rom. 5:1. Here it reads, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now these are all used to establish the fact that man does not have to submit to the commands of our Lord in the Great Commission of Matt. 28:18-20 and Mark 16:16 where Christ commanded baptism both times and that to all the world and to every creature in all the world. The passages just given above on faith are supposed to set aside man's obligations to the Lord's commands in His world-wide commission given to every creature.

Now in each of these passages, as in John 3:16, the golden text of our Bible, nothing is mentioned but faith. Do these passages exclude every command of the Lord not specifically mentioned; or are they passages that must include all things essential to man's salvation? I have never seen a man yet in all my life that would sign his name to the statement that "I believe all the commands essential for man's salvation are expressly mentioned in these verses and all commands not mentioned in these verses on faith are excluded from man's obedience in being saved." This would free him from having to repent of his sins for repentance is not remotely mentioned. Yes, I unhesitatingly say, I do not believe there lives a man who actually believes the theory of salvation by faith only. I do not believe there lives a man who believes that these verses given on faith teach that all man has to do is just what is mentioned in these verses. The faith of these verses is that perfect faith spoken of by James, not the dead faith, the faith alone that he was opposing.

All Baptized

There is one thing for us to remember: Every one of these examples given on faith, where they were saved, every one was baptized. Now who is the saved believer of your Bible? It is always the man whose faith has obeyed the Lord. There is no exception to this. No man is ever said to be a saved believer before his faith has submitted to his Master. This has to be right!

Conclusion

As I conclude this lesson I shall now show you that the statement I have just made is true. Turn with me to Acts the second chapter. In this chapter they were "pricked in their hearts" (verse 37). They asked what to do (verse 37). Peter told them to "repent, and be baptized every

(Continued on page 16)

one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (verse 38). Verse 41 says, "And they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Verse 42 says, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Why did they do all this, these three thousand souls in verse 41? Who were those three thousand souls of verse 41? They were those who had repented and been baptized in verse 38. This can't be denied. Now listen to an unanswerable argument as to who is a saved believer. In verse 44 it says, "And all that believed were together, and had all things in common." Who is this "all" of verse 44? It is the same "all" of verse 42; the same "all" of verse 41; the same group that repented and were baptized for remission of their sins (verse 38). Here, only those baptized for remission of sins were numbered among the saved believers. It is always so! The faith that saves is the faith that obeys. Yes, churches of Christ stand with James, in James chapter two that it is by faith all right, but not by faith only. It is by a perfect faith; by an all inclusive faith, that includes everything the Lord has commanded us to do. He said, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Will you not do that today? May the Lord bless and keep you is my prayer in His blessed name.

WHO TEACHES SALVATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST?

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 303

November 17, 1957

Thanks and greetings, friends. To all of you who are so kind to assist us in making this great work possible, let me express to you my personal appreciation as well as expressing to you the thanks of the entire church here at Highland in Abilene, Texas. Without your love for the souls of men and your kindness in this great fellowship, it would not be possible. Eternity alone will reveal the good our laboring together in this great effort has accomplished. Millions hearing the gospel; many thousands surrendering their hearts to the Lord; God's children coming home that have strayed away; and congregations of the church of the Lord established, as well as many others strengthened and encouraged to do greater things for our Lord and His cause. It is wonderful to be a part of such a great fellowship of Christians, working together to rescue poor lost and perishing souls from an eternal banishment from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power. The great reward which I so anxiously await is to see and meet in that land beyond the many thousands you and I and the other speakers on this program have brought to Christ, as they sit with Him and with us in that eternal home made ready by our Savior for the redeemed of this earth. By all of

us, as God's family, laboring together as Paul said in I Cor. 3:9, we shall do our best to carry out the Lord's command in Mark 16:15, Matt. 28:18-20 and Luke 24:46-49, to carry the gospel to every creature in all the world.

All Believe This

And now, my friends, in the discussion of our subject today it shall be my purpose to bring to our hearts the true meaning of "salvation by faith in Christ." Now we all believe—those who believe in Christ as the Savior of the world—that man is saved by "faith in Christ." To accuse any man of not believing this is to falsely accuse him. No church denies the above truth for the Bible declares, "we walk by faith and not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7). Christ said in John 8:24, "if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." In Romans 3:25 Paul declares, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Christ declared in no uncertain terms in John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." He just as firmly declared in this same verse that "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." Let us get that last statement: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life." Now for man to declare that salvation is not "by faith in Christ" but is by his own merits; by his own works, apart from faith; or by any other process than by "faith in Christ," would be to denounce even the Lord himself."

My reasoning for discussing these issues on "salvation by faith" should be apparent to all who are informed in the field of religious controversy. As I pointed out in a former lesson, we are accused of teaching "salvation by works" while others claim to teach "salvation by faith." It is not a matter of which of us teaches "salvation by faith." We all claim to do just that. The issue is, Who are saved by faith in Christ? When is a man "saved by faith in Christ"? and "How is he saved by faith in Christ"? Since salvation is predicated upon my personal faith in a personal Savior, and since James says it is "not by faith only" then there must be some explanation as to how faith saves! Here is the real issue: How does faith save? In a book of sermons and lectures that I had published some years ago, which incidentally are all gone, I discussed a statement that is frequently made like this, "We are saved by faith—minus nothing; plus nothing." My friends, it is not enough just to tell people they are saved by faith; just believe on the Lord. We must tell them what it is to be saved by faith in Christ and how we are saved by faith in Christ. I am sure that no one really believes we are saved by faith alone—minus nothing; plus nothing—for this would eliminate godly sorrow—loving the Lord—repentance and every other request of the Lord. It is argued: If a man has to do anything else other than believe, if anything has to come after we believe then it is not by faith

in Christ; it is by our own works; that we do not depend upon Christ; we depend upon our own merits. Here is the key to much of our religious confusion. This question one time understood and much of our confusion would be eliminated.

Does my repenting of my sins, as commanded by the Lord in Luke 13:3 make salvation not of faith? Does my confessing my Lord as commanded in Matt. 10:32 make my salvation by works and not of faith? Does my loving the Lord as commanded of me in Matthew 22:37 make my salvation not of faith but of merit? Certainly not and yet all these follow faith; they are fruits of faith, they grow out of and are the result of faith which elements have to be present in the faith that brings salvation. Just as these elements have to be present, so does the Great Commission have to be present in this faith that saves (Mark 16:16). Eliminate the Lord's Great Commission from the faith that saves and you destroy Christianity for the Great Commission given by our Lord becomes our world-wide marching orders to take the world for Christ. But in it we are commanded to "be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"; with the promise that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Now the faith that saves has to be a faith that includes having surrendered to the Lord's world-wide marching orders! Dare any of us to eliminate this world-wide commission of our Lord from His plan of saving the world? So it is not: Do we or do we not believe in salvation by faith? It is how and when does faith in Christ save. Let us be fair with those who differ with us: never misrepresenting any man in his religious convictions. I am frank to say to you: If the world would listen to us as to what we believe on salvation by faith instead of listening to those who do not know what we believe or who pervert what we believe, you would at once see that we do believe in salvation by faith in Christ and that we, of all religious people on earth, deny and renounce salvation by works or by merit. No man can do enough work nor can he bring enough merit to save himself from sin. All this comes about through our Lord because of our faith in Him; a faith that takes Him at His word and does what He requests, trusting Him for the blessings. It must be a faith that trusts, surrenders, and obeys the Lord. Remember this one thing: This same question came up before James. They accused him of teaching salvation by works because he taught them their faith must obey the Lord before they could be justified by faith; that it was not by faith only (James 2:24). They contradicted James and taught that man was saved—justified—by faith alone without having to obey the commands of the Lord. That was exactly what is now going on in the religious world. Churches of Christ have continued from James' day until now, everywhere you have found them, denying salvation or justification by faith only—before and without obedience just as did James here in James, chapter 2, verses 14 to the close.

By What Are We Said to Be Saved?

Let me demonstrate further the fact of salvation not being by faith only. The Bible teaches we are saved by a number of things. But we are not saved by any one thing alone to the exclusion of all other things. For instance we read that we are saved by hope in Romans 8:24; by grace in Eph. 2:8; by mercy in Titus 3:5; by Christ's blood in I John 1:7 and Rom. 5:9; by the gospel in I Cor. 15:1-4; by his word in James 1:21; by preaching the gospel in I Cor. 1:21; by repentance in II Cor. 7:10; by calling on the name of the Lord in Rom. 10:13; by works in James 2:24; by baptism in I Peter 3:21. You are ready to ask, Brother Harper, does it actually say baptism saves us? Yes, it does, just like it said these others saved us. Listen to the apostle Peter as he says in I Peter 3:21, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." Now the Bible also teaches we are saved by faith (Gal. 3:27). Last, but not least of these, is the fact your Bible teaches we are saved by obedience (Heb: 5:8,9). Here Paul declares that Christ "became the author of salvation unto all them that obey him."

Questions

Here we have some 12 things that we are said to be saved by; only one of these is faith. Now shall we reach down and pick faith out from all these other things and build us a theory on it that says we are saved by faith only or shall we try to find the place of faith in this great array of things by which we are said to be saved? Shall we not try to find a sensible explanation to the question of salvation by faith in Christ just as we must find a sensible explanation as to how we are saved by hope; by grace; by baptism; or by works and so on until we have found the place that each must play in the salvation of man? Isn't it certain that each of these must have a very vital place in man's salvation for the Bible to just say that we are saved by each of them? If saved by each of them, then somewhere in the scheme of redemption they must be placed and that place we must find not to the exclusion of one single one of them. Suppose I should declare that man is saved by works alone because the Bible says we are "justified by works and not by faith only." What would you say? If I were to say you are saved by baptism only because Peter said "baptism doth also now save us"? How would you react? Or were I to say man is saved by hope alone to the exclusion of everything else, what would you say? Just what does it mean when you say man is saved by each of these? It simply means that it takes them all to constitute saving faith and without these no man can be saved. God's grace and mercy provide the salvation for man; they make it possible. The gospel of Christ is God's power unto salvation; it is that which explains how grace and mercy are to be received. Faith and obedience are man's part in this scheme, for by a faith that obeys Christ, trusting Him for all His promised blessings, do we appropriate to ourselves this promise of salvation by the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is the

cleansing fountain at which all sins are washed away for all who, by faith, obey the Lord's command in His Great Commission, which commission is to every creature in all the world (Mark 16:15,16). The hope of receiving His promised blessings causes us to be "faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10). To leave either of these out, you break the chain. Salvation is not by any one of these to the exclusion of the others. It is our faith that leads us to do what Christ says and when we reach heaven it will not be because we have earned salvation, nor will it be because we have merited it, but it will be because of our faith in God's promises, which faith staggered not at His commands but brought us into submission to His every request. He will bless such a faith and no other kind of faith will He accept.

Example

May I give you an example of how all these various things by which we are saved work together to accomplish our salvation and yet, it cannot be by any one of them alone?

A farmer (and I should know this perfectly for I was reared on a farm at Enola, Arkansas) says to you, I made this crop with a team of mules; to another man he says, I made that crop with my boys; to a third man he says, I made this crop with a cultivator; and to a fourth man he says, I made this crop with a hoe. These men meet and one of them says, Do you know that Farmer Jones made a crop with a pair of mules alone. The other man says, No, you are wrong, He told me he made it with his boys alone. The third man speaks up and says, You men are wrong, he told me he made it with a cultivator alone. Now the fourth man says, You all three are wrong, he told me he made it with a hoe alone. Do you see what was added? Each of them added one little word that turned Farmer Jones' statement into an untruth. Farmer Jones did not add the word "alone"; they added that. Do you see what the addition of one little word can do to a man's statement? Now suppose they meet Farmer Jones and he says, "It was not by the mules alone," what would you think of the first man who would continue telling all he saw, I know he did make it by the mules alone? Now all of us can see that the farmer told the truth but each of these men perverted his statement. He did make his crop with mules; with the cultivator; with his boys; and with a hoe; but not with either of them alone. I would add now these words of James, paraphrasing them, "Ye see now how that with my boys, with the cultivator, and with the hoe was this crop made and not by the mules alone." This certainly does not eliminate the mules but it does eliminate its being by them alone. Now James says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only." This does not exclude faith, but it does exclude its being by faith alone. It was faith plus works said James that made faith perfect (James 2:22). It is by this perfect faith man is justified, says James. Man has added one little word here in the plan of salvation, just as these men in the illustration added one little word. That word added is the same in each example; it is the word "alone" or "only."

Now, may I ask you, what do you think of a man who will now come and continue to declare salvation is by faith only after James has told us plainly it is not by faith only? Yes, Farmer Jones made the crop with his mules, but not with the mules only. Yes, we are saved by faith, but not by faith only. It is by an obedient faith; one that does what Christ has commanded us to do to be saved. Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Remember the verse I gave to you in the very beginning, which verse I asked you to remember? It was John 3:36 where Christ says, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life." Now, just who is it that refuses to believe the Son? Who is it that believeth not? The person who denies that man has to obey the Lord's command to every creature in all the world (Mark 16:15,16). He is the unbeliever. He is the man who believes not the Son. Two men hear the Lord say, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). One man obeys Him; the other refuses, telling the Lord he does not have to obey Him in baptism to be saved. The Lord begins to record the believer here. Which of these two men will He record as the believer, the man who obeyed Him, or the man who refused to obey his Master's commands? When He records the unbeliever here will He record the man's name who obeyed Him and was baptized, or will He record the man's name who said, Lord I do not have to obey you, and refuses to do what his Lord commanded? Now be honest with your soul and tell me. Who teaches salvation by faith, those of us who teach men to obey their Lord, or those who say you do not have to obey these commands of Christ? Now really, is it salvation by faith only—minus nothing; plus nothing—or is it by a faith which faith grows strong enough to bring man to repentance, to the confession of Christ as God's Son, and that will cause him to submit to our Master's commands in His Great Commission to be baptized, which command is given to every creature in all the world?

Conclusion

I conclude by reading to you Paul's words on this subject. In Romans 1:5 he says, "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name." Yes, it is to all nations. He says in chapter 16:26, ". . . made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." We now conclude that we who teach salvation by faith in Christ are those who teach that your faith must obey the commands of God. It has to be this kind of faith! May the Lord bless you is our prayer in His name.

SALVATION BY FAITH AFTER

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 304

November 24, 1957

To our many friends and listeners across the nation and you in other parts of the world where my voice is being heard, I bring you

greetings from the Highland Church of Christ here in Abilene, Texas, and from the thousands who are kind enough to help us make this program possible. We are happy to have you as our guests today and trust you will enjoy listening so much that you will drop us a card and let us have your personal comments concerning the discussions on this most vital subject of "Salvation by Faith in Christ."

While in Sacramento, California, in October, in a cooperative program of the churches in that city, I heard Brother Willeford deliver a wonderful sermon on this program, as I think he always does, on the subject, "What Hinders Me from Being Baptized?" As I continued to think of this I was convinced that one reason for this is the confusion over our subject under discussion in this series of lessons on "Salvation by Faith in Christ." People are being caused to believe that salvation is by faith only and that this faith does not include baptism. The reason therefore for many not being baptized is because they have been taught from the cradle up that it is not essential; that you are saved before and without it; and to have to submit to baptism in water would be denying the blood of Christ as the cleansing power; that it would be salvation by works; that it would be water salvation; and a multitude of other accusations made against obeying the Lord's own command given with all power in heaven and on earth behind it (Matt. 28:18-20). When one time it dawns upon us that the faith that saves is the faith that obeys as I proved in a former lesson, then we shall cease to have any more trouble in getting people to obey their Lord.

Believe on Christ

In this lesson on "Salvation by Faith in Christ After," I shall prove to you that Christ blesses by faith but it is always by faith after that faith has obeyed the Lord—never before. But one is ready to ask me, Brother Harper, when a man believes on the Lord he is saved; right then because the Lord, through Paul, in Acts 16:31 told the Jailor to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house." They suggest there is a difference in believing in Christ and believing on Christ. One may believe in Christ and not be saved for this is just historical faith in the fact that Christ is, but is not a personal, trusting faith, whereas to believe on Christ is to take Him as your personal Savior, to trust Him for your personal salvation from sin. But this is but a play on words, which play confuses the hearers and distorts the truth.

That this is true let us notice the golden text of your Bible, John 3:16. It reads, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Again in John 11:26 Christ says, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Now I ask you, do you believe that? Now salvation, everlasting life and the promise we shall never die are one and the same promise in the final analysis

in that distinction confusing the people, we make tragic statements. For instance, in the statement "to believe in Christ is but historic faith and historic faith can't save you" we show we do not understand what faith is. All faith has to be historic in nature, for faith is the "evidence of things not seen," says the writer of Heb. 11:1,2. Faith is the result of evidence and that is historic faith. Let me give you an example of historic faith bringing man to life. In John 20:30,31 it reads, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." Now here is an unanswerable argument that that which we call historic faith brought man to Christ. Here was a faith, the result of that which was written. That is historic faith. But this historic faith is the faith that brought them to life through His name. We may deny it, ridicule it, or try to explain it away, but here it is. Now the question is, How does historic faith bring man to Christ? When does it bring man to Christ? Is it by faith only, or is it by faith after faith has evidenced itself in surrender to Christ which surrender demands man's obedience to the commands of Christ? I suggest to you it is always after faith obeys the Lord—never before! So we see now that all this confusion over whether a man believes in Christ or believes on Christ is just so much wasted arguments for they are the same. The reason for trying to make a distinction is this: The Bible plainly teaches that "without faith it is impossible to please God." It is a mental impossibility for man to be brought to repentance without any faith in God and Christ His Son. Paul says in Romans 2:4. "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Here the goodness of God is said to lead man to repentance. How can the goodness of God lead a man who is an infidel to repentance? It is impossible. Repentance is a fruit of faith in God and in Christ. Hence, faith will have to come before repentance. This would make it not by faith only; not the very moment you believe, and that would of course destroy all this theory we hear so much about, that man is saved the moment he believes in Christ, or that repentance comes before faith, for his faith has to lead him to repentance. In II Cor. 7:10 it says, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance." But you can't have godly sorrow without faith in God. Hence we would have this order: Faith producing godly sorrow in the heart; godly sorrow producing repentance in the heart; hence, two things here follow or grow out of faith before man can be saved by faith. But if two things may follow faith before faith saves, then three things could or four, and this would destroy the theory of salvation by faith only the moment one believes, and then that taught by churches of Christ would stand unanswerable; and that it does!

I know the argument is made that just believing that Christ is the Son of God is historical faith and historical faith can't save. Now this is made to justify the argument that repentance comes before faith;

it must be, say some, a saving faith and saving faith is a faith that trusts in Christ as our personal Savior. Yes, we have to have a saving faith or a faith that brings us to salvation. Now watch how that progresses: Man hears the gospel (Acts 18:8); hearing the gospel man believes this gospel which tells man of Christ as his personal Savior (Luke 2:10,11; Acts 18:8); believing in this Christ as the Savior causes man to repent of his sins (Acts 2:38); this penitent heart now brings man to be baptized that he may be saved (Mark 16:16). Now that which began as historical faith in Christ as God's Son, the Savior of man has not ceased, but has now grown to include repentance and baptism. It is the same faith that he began with; a historical faith, but that historical faith has grown; it has become stronger; it has now brought man to a complete surrender to Christ and has now reached the point called by James in James 2:22-24 a perfect faith, and salvation is the result; but it is the same faith man started with, now grown to what we call a saving faith. All saving faith has to begin with historical faith, but that historical faith grows into a saving faith. How? After it obeys the Lord—Never before. This is what we need to see and understand. It is always by faith after faith obeys God. There is no exception to this, my friends. So whether you believe in Christ, or believe on Christ, it is all one and the same thing.

Do you know why all this confusion over faith came about? Well, it came about this way. When the theory that man is saved the moment he believes in Christ was brought forth, we began to show this could not be true because man has to love the Lord, has to repent of his sins, has to confess his Lord if he is saved by faith, and to get man to do this, he would have to first believe in Christ as God's Son. Then the argument was made that this is just historical faith and they meant saving faith; not just believe in Christ but to believe on Christ; to trust Christ for salvation, and the moment faith trusted Christ for salvation, that moment we were saved. We then began to press the question, How could this be true if man had to repent of his sins? And there was born on this earth the theory that repentance comes before faith. Will you just think of that statement for one moment? Repenting before you believe! How would you go about getting an infidel to repent of his sins against Christ before you make him believe in or on Christ, whichever way you wish to say it? Go to an infidel and ask him to repent and see what he tells you. In fact, such reasoning is one of the things that has contributed to infidelity, for men know there is no such thing as repentance before faith. It is a mental impossibility! To so argue does not compliment the religion of Christ; but rather turns men against the Bible for they realize that no such thing can take place as repenting before you believe. Again it is salvation by faith after faith obeys God. It has to be that way!

Trust and Repentance—Their Relationship

Let us now take the expression that we are saved the moment our faith trusts Christ as our personal Savior. This is said not to be histor-

ical faith but saving faith and that this trust in Christ comes before baptism, which is the real cause of all this tragic confusion over such a simple thing as salvation by faith. Now if this be true, that man is saved by faith the moment faith trusts Christ, then I shall show you that man is saved before and without repentance. May I ask this question: What makes man repent of sins committed against Christ? Does he not trust Christ before he repents? Does man repent without trusting Christ? Isn't it an unanswerable fact that man's trust in Christ as his Savior is the one thing that causes him to repent? What would a repentance be without any trust, without any confidence in Christ? But, if man is saved the moment his faith trusts Christ, then he is saved before and without repentance, for it is his trusting faith in Christ and His promises that causes man to repent of sins committed against the Lord. Isn't it strange what man will do trying to evade the commands of the Lord in the Great Commission, which commission is given to every creature in all the world? My good people, repentance is a fruit of faith; it grows out of our trusting faith in Christ. Ask your infidel friend if he would repent of sins committed against Christ until he believed in or on Christ and trusted Christ to do what Christ had promised. If godly sorrow produces repentance as Paul said in II Cor. 7:10 then can't you see that in this godly sorrow, which is not repentance but which produces repentance, there has to be the element of trust, else it would never bring that soul to repentance? If the "goodness of God leadeth to repentance" as stated by Paul in Romans 2:4, can't you see this goodness of God has to create in the heart trust in Christ, confidence in Him, a reliance upon Him, or it never could produce repentance in the heart? But, if man is saved the moment he trusts, and if he trusts before he repents—and this he has to do, and no man will deny—then you would have by this theory man being saved before and without repentance. Now this is the argument that is made about baptism; it is argued that you are saved before and without baptism, because you trust Christ before baptism. If the argument is sound it has to work everywhere alike. That being true then it would as certainly eliminate repentance and confessing Christ, for men do not repent until they first trust Christ. We must therefore conclude that the argument is without foundation and that man is NOT saved by faith, the moment faith trusts Christ, for there is but one reason for repenting and that is trusting faith in Christ and His promises. Again I ask, Will Christ accept a repentance that comes from a heart that does not trust God? Now why not cease all this quibbling about salvation by faith only and find out how faith saves, and when faith saves, and who it is that is saved by faith? It is a sensible process and the principle, without exception, is that man is saved by faith after faith obeys the commands of Christ upon which He promises salvation.

Examples of Unsaved Believers

That you may see further into the fallacy of this suggestion made that man is saved by faith in Christ but by believing on Christ. I

now invite your attention to John 12:42 where it reads, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him." Question just here: Were these chief rulers saved? It says they believed on Him. Now does "believe on him" means that man is saved? This is the argument made on Acts 16:31. Listen to the rest of this same verse; it reads, "But because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Now here are some people that the Bible says believed on Him. They would not confess Him; they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Were they saved? If the moment one believes on Christ he is saved, then these were saved. But we know they were not saved because Christ says in Matt. 10:32, "Whosoever therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I also confess 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." Man has to confess his Lord. These would not, yet it says they believed on Him. My friends, why not try to find the truth on this great subject of salvation by faith instead of trying to justify some theory, which theory contradicts every known rule of intelligent explanation of this most vital subject? You are not saved by faith only the moment you believe on Christ; if so, these chief rulers were saved for they believed on Christ. No, you are saved by faith after your faith has obeyed the Lord, to do what He has commanded you to do to be saved. He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Hence, the believer who is saved is the believer who repents of his sins and is baptized for the remission of sins. I know this is true for in verse 44 of Acts 2, those who were baptized for the remission of sins were called the believers and only those who were baptized were called believers. It reads, "And all that believed had all things in common" and the "all" here refers back to those in verses 38, 41, and 42, every one of whom had been baptized for the remission of sins. It is always this way from the death of Christ until the close of the Bible.

Acts 26:28

In Acts 26:27, Paul asked King Agrippa, "Believest thou the prophets?" Then Paul, not giving him time to answer said, "I know thou believest." King Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Here is a man who believes and he is not a Christian. What is the difference in the faith of the chief rulers, the faith of Agrippa and the faith of Acts 2:44? All were said to believe, but only those in Acts 2:44 were saved believers. The others were unsaved believers. Answer this question and you have the difference in the faith that saves and the faith that damns. One obeyed the Lord; the others did not. Yes, it is by faith after faith obeys God's commands—never by faith only.

now invite your attention to John 12:42 where it reads, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him." Question just here: Were these chief rulers saved? It says they believed on Him. Now does "believe on him" means that man is saved? This is the argument made on Acts 16:31. Listen to the rest of this same verse; it reads, "But because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Now here are some people that the Bible says believed on Him. They would not confess Him; they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Were they saved? If the moment one believes on Christ he is saved, then these were saved. But we know they were not saved because Christ says in Matt. 10:32, "Whosoever therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I also confess 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." Man has to confess his Lord. These would not, yet it says they believed on Him. My friends, why not try to find the truth on this great subject of salvation by faith instead of trying to justify some theory, which theory contradicts every known rule of intelligent explanation of this most vital subject? You are not saved by faith only the moment you believe on Christ; if so, these chief rulers were saved for they believed on Christ. No, you are saved by faith after your faith has obeyed the Lord, to do what He has commanded you to do to be saved. He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Hence, the believer who is saved is the believer who repents of his sins and is baptized for the remission of sins. I know this is true for in verse 44 of Acts 2, those who were baptized for the remission of sins were called the believers and only those who were baptized were called believers. It reads, "And all that believed had all things in common" and the "all" here refers back to those in verses 38, 41, and 42, every one of whom had been baptized for the remission of sins. It is always this way from the death of Christ until the close of the Bible.

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HELL -- THE COST OF LIVING THERE!

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 374

April 5, 1959

Thank you and greetings friends. It is a pleasure to be back visiting with you in your homes, maybe riding along the highways, in your business places, in your studies. It is so wonderful to know I am coming into the homes of so many friends in other nations and countries; friends I shall never see nor have the glorious privilege of meeting here in this world. How I would love so much to take you by the hand and thank you personally for being so kind as to listen to us as we try to break to you and yours the bread of life. Then, we are reaching many of you in hospitals, in places of confinement; yes, we get letters from you who have been unfortunate in this life and are spending some of your precious time in jails and penitentiaries. Our hearts go out to you because we know when you were children growing up at mom's and dad's knees, you did not intend for it to turn out this way. But you can be saved the same as those who are not so unfortunate. God will forgive you and will wash you in the precious blood of Christ His Son, and you, though in this confinement, can be as clean and pure in God's sight as the most humble and consecrated saint of earth. Of course, you will have to surrender to Him, but we shall have to do the same. Then when you are out and free to be with your families, those who love you dearer than life, you can know that all has been forgiven by the Lord and in His sight you are as good and pure as though you had never made a single mistake.

Yes, I know the world may not be so kind, but if you know you have paid for your mistake; if you know the Lord has forgiven you; if you know your heart is right and you are determined to forget the past and live for Christ, you will have a strength that you have never known and I promise you that soon the world will forget and forgive and you can face life with a smile and the joys of life will once again come flooding into your soul and you will find it is wonderful to be alive. All you who are bowed in sorrow — sorrow that seems to be greater than you can bear — may I point you to the only physician that can cure you of your heartaches? He is the Great Physician, Christ our Lord, your Saviour, if you will surrender to Him your very life with no reservations. You can't save yourself; you can't of yourself lift the clouds; you can't by yourself gain the strength you need to live happily in this world. You must have Christ in your heart; you must have Christian friends who will understand and help you to see the "joys above the sorrows."

OUR LESSON

With these thoughts in mind, may I talk to you today on the

subject announced, "Hell — The Cost of Living There"? This may seem to you a strange subject, but I assure you it is a Bible subject and a very timely one. You know man pays for everything he receives in this life. Your Bible says in Galatians 6 verse 1, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." From this it is easy to be seen that God, though a God of mercy, is also a God that will allow man to reap corruption, or pay for his mistakes.

NO HELL

You may ask, Mr. Harper, Why are you discussing this question? I am discussing it for at least three reasons: First, millions believe and teach there is no hell. Second, millions believe and teach that the unregenerated man has no soul and, therefore, cannot be punished after death; and third, I am trying to get all to see what an awful thing it is to die without hope, to be punished in a Devil's hell, all because they would not listen here to the pleadings of those who loved them. My good friends, it is a terrible thing to die without hope; to go into the unseen world, into the great beyond without preparation to meet God. Just what do you have to gain by NOT making preparation to meet God at the judgment? Just what do you have to LOSE if you make NO preparation to die? Last, ask yourself this question, What do my family and I have to GAIN if we DO surrender our lives to Christ? One thing certain; When death comes and your lifeless body sleeps in the grave, if you die a Christian you haven't LOST ONE THING for you have been happy here, respected in this world, and you have the promise of everything beautiful in the world to come. Can you afford to go to hell when you die or to even run the risk of going there with your family? You think this over as I discuss the subject just now, Is there a Bible Hell? Or does the Bible teach there is a place called hell?

TO OUR BIBLE

There are three words we must discuss just here. One is the word Sheol, found in the Old Testament, which means the grave or the unseen world. The next is "hades" found in the New Testament which has a similar meaning. Hades is the place of the departed dead; where they await the resurrection as is accepted generally by the scholarship of the world. This you may know if you will take the time to examine most any Bible dictionary or commentary. Neither of these words express the idea of the hell that I shall discuss with you today. The next word in our study is the word "gehenna" which means the place of "punishment." It derives its meaning from the "Valley of Hinnom." On the south and west of Mt. Zion lies the "Valley of Hinnom." Here is where it is said children were sacrificed in fire. It was a place for

burning refuse, causing the place to become the symbol of punishment and hence we have the word "gehenna," meaning a "place of torment." That the Bible teaches there is such a place for the wicked I shall now proceed to prove to you by your Bible. Suppose I establish this fact, will you believe it?

GEHENNA — THE BIBLE HELL

Our Bible is our only guide from this earth to the world beyond. Without it, we are like a boat without a sail, or a ship without an anchor. We are like a man who has lost his way in the fog; like the stranger lost in the desert, in the midnight darkness. Without the Bible we do not know from whence we came, nor do we know our final destination. With it our road becomes the "White-way to heaven," adorned with beautiful thoughts, wonderful deeds, and lovely people, for the hand that directs the traffic on the "white-way to heaven" is the wounded palm of a nailed, pierced hand, guiding us on lest we miss the way and the "Bible hell" become our eternal home.

MATTHEW 5:21-22

In Matthew 5 verses 21-28 we have this reading: "Ye have heard it was said by them of old time, Thou shall not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council, but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of HELL FIRE." This is the "gehenna," the place of punishment; not "sheol," nor "hades," the "grave."

MATTHEW 10:28

In Matthew 10 verse 28 we hear our Lord saying to His apostles, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy BOTH soul and body IN HELL."

This is not from "sheol" nor is it from "hades," meaning the grave or the unseen; it is from "Gehenna," also, the word that means a "place of punishment." You may not believe this, but to deny this is to deny your Bible. Why believe John 14:1-5 where Christ has promised to prepare a place for us, and deny Matthew 10:28 where He says to His own apostles, they can lose their "soul and body" in "gehenna" the "hell of punishment" for the wicked?

MARK 9:43

In Mark's gospel, chapter 9, verses 43-48 Christ says this to His apostles; not to alien sinners, but to His very own, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go to HELL, into the fire that never shall be

quenched; where the WORM dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. If thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life halt, than having two feet to be cast into HELL, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their WORM DIETH NOT, and the fire is not quenched. If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into HELL, where their WORM dieth NOT and the fire is NOT QUENCHED."

Here, my friends, the word from which we have "hell" is not the word that means the grave or the unseen world; it is the word "gehenna" that means a "place of punishment." Another thing; Christ, in all these places, is warning His very own lest they go to the "gehenna," the "Bible Hell of Punishment."

MATTHEW 23:26-33

There are many passages that prove the "gehenna hell" of the Bible but one more shall suffice for today. In Matthew 23, verses 26 through 33 we have this reading; Christ is talking to His own, the Pharisees, and He says, "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness, Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers. HOW CAN YE ESCAPE THE DAMNATION OF HELL?"

Deny this, my good people, if you must, but remember this word "hell" is from the "gehenna" of your Bible; not from "sheol," nor is it from "hades," meaning the "grave," or just the "unseen world." This word symbolizes a "place of punishment." What could Christ have meant when He asked "How can ye ESCAPE the DAMNATION OF HELL?" Did He mean to just ask them, How can you escape death? or How can ye escape the grave? or How can ye escape the unseen world? The writer of the Hebrew letter says in Hebrews 9:27, "It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment." All must die and pass into that "unseen world"; all must die and go to the "grave" or its equivalent! Hence the Lord could not have meant to ask them these questions. Here was something they were to experience because of their hypocrisy. They were not to ESCAPE THE DAMNATION OF HELL — The Bible Gehenna; the place of punishment for sins committed.

HOW CAN THEY DENY IT?

With these plain passages before us I ask you, How can religious orders be so bold as to emphatically deny these statements by our Lord? Did you take notice that each of these — Matthew 5:22, Matthew 10:28, Mark 9:41, and Matthew 23:26-33 — were all uttered by Christ Himself? Did He make a mistake? Is it possible He did not know, being our Saviour, who shall be one day our judge? If He doesn't know, I promise you we are of "all men most miserable" as said by Paul in I Corinthians 15:19. Shall we believe Christ or man? Another thing, did you notice all these passages were directed to HIS PEOPLE? not one of them was given to an audience of "alien sinners" who had never been in covenant relationship with God. These were His chosen people. Do you think the "price too great to pay" for the "damnation of their souls in hell?"

HOW LONG DOES HELL LAST?

Having now proven by your Bible that there is a "hell," a place of punishment for the wicked, a place called "gehenna" which is NOT the "grave" nor the "unseen world"; we are concerned with this question: How long does this punishment in this "gehenna" — this "hell of the Bible," last?

POSITIONS TAKEN

There are at least three positions taken concerning the duration of hell or when it is. First, there are those who deny there is a "hell," other than the grave. Second, there is that group that believes "hell will be a quick destruction" for those who do appear before God in judgment; an annihilation of the soul. Then there is a third position which teaches that "hell," or the punishment of the wicked, is everlasting — that it never ends. These can't all be true. Two of them, at least, have to be wrong. I need not try to prove that these three theories are taught; you who are students of the Bible know this to be true and there are, no doubt, scores of you listening to me just now who believe one or the other of these positions. I shall be receiving letters from you trying, as best you can, to prove the passages given do not teach the "gehenna hell" and you will endeavor to let man decay in the grave and be forever annihilated. I could call the names of churches in America, whose members actually deny there is a hell; who deny that the unregenerated man has a soul and will not therefore be punished beyond the grave. I try as best I can to make my lessons deal as completely with principles, stripped of personalities, as it is possible. It can't be done at all times, but in this I feel it can. So, whatever position you hold concerning the question — **How Long Is Hell To Last** — will you please listen to these passages I shall now give from your Bible? In Mark 9:43 we read, "It is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into HELL — GEHENNA — into the fire that NEVER SHALL BE QUENCHED."

Where THEIR WORM DIETH NOT, and the fire is not quenched." From this we are forced to conclude there is a hell; men are cast into this hell—this gehenna of punishment—and their WORM, their lives NEVER DIE. It is eternal, everlasting! That the expression "their worm" refers to persons I read to you from Job 25:6 where it reads "Yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, a WORM? and the son of man, a WORM?" Here "worm" refers to man and Christ said plainly "their WORM DIETH NOT" in this gehenna hell. This fits perfectly with the Lord's statement in Matthew 25:46 where He says, "These shall go away into EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT; but the righteous into life ETERNAL." This punishment is of the same duration as "life ETERNAL." In Rev. 20:10 John says, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophets are, and shall be TORMENTED DAY AND NIGHT, FOREVER AND EVER." Again in Rev. 14:11 we read "And the smoke of their TORMENT ascendeth up FOREVER AND EVER; and they have no rest DAY NOR NIGHT, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." This beast is the same as that of Daniel chapter 2 and Revelation chapters 12 and 13, which is clearly pictured to me in Rev. 17:3-18 as centering around Rome. Now this beast and those who allow themselves to be deceived by her, John says, shall be cast into this torment and that torment shall continue day and night FOREVER AND EVER. This being true we had better know we are connected with nothing dominated by this Roman beast. One thing certain, these passages cannot refer to the church for which I preach for we have never been connected with this Beast of Rome, pictured in Daniel and Revelation. This is worthy of your consideration since this beast and those who are deceived by her shall be tormented day and night, FOREVER AND EVER! In 2 Thess. 1:8-9 your Bible says that those, "who know not God and who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ" shall be "punished with EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION FROM THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND THE GLORY OF HIS POWER." Not "everlasting annihilation" but destruction "From the presence of God." Christ says in John 8:21, "ye . . . shall die in your sins: Whither I go, ye cannot come." Death is the dividing line. Death seals your fate. It is too late after death. Were you to die what would be your fate? Would you beg for help, only to be told it is too late?

CONCLUSION

On and on I could go, but I shall have to close for today. Remember we have read to you from your Bible that there is a "hell," a "gehenna," the place of eternal punishment; it is not just the "grave" nor the "unseen world." It is a place where "their worm dieth not;" where the "fire is not quenched;" where the "smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever;" where they are "punished FOREVER, DAY AND NIGHT"; where they are "banished from the presence of God and the glory of his power" forever and ever! Yes, they are

ALIVE in this place for they "rest neither DAY NOR NIGHT." Deny it if you will; laugh at me if you care to, but your Bible is the source of my information and it is right.

Do you not think this is "too great a price to pay with your soul" that you may live in hell — in gehenna, FOREVER AND EVER? It is your soul! What Price Will You Pay To Live In Hell Forever And Ever? It is your decision! There is a "hell"; "men are going there"; it shall "never end"; its "torment is forever." Will you not come today and obey the gospel as commanded by Paul in 2 Thess. 1:8-9 believing in Christ, repenting of your sins, and being baptized for the remission of your sins as commanded by your Lord in the Bible, Mark 16:16; Luke 24:46 and Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5, is my prayer in His holy name. Listen next time as I discuss the subject "What Is Hell?" Is it a "Literal Fire"?

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HERE ARE THE FACTS CONCERNING A MILLION DOLLAR OPPORTUNITY

(But it won't cost that much!)

Did You Realize . . .

Every 21 seconds someone somewhere in the United States dies in a lost condition.

There are 70,000,000 people in the United States who are not affiliated with any religious organization whatsoever.

What Has Been Done . . .

The HERALD OF TRUTH Radio and Television Program is now being carried over 236 radio stations and 40 television stations. It is heard in all 49 states by millions of people.

The Response . . .

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Over 2,000,000 copies of sermons have been distributed to those who have written inquiries to the program.

Many have obeyed the gospel as a result of having heard it for the first time on the network. Many congregations have been established.

An Amazing Opportunity . . .

The Mutual Network's 250 affiliate stations will give us an opportunity of reaching millions for Christ each week at a cost of only 30¢ per 1,000 people reached.

We Need Your Help However . . .

This "million dollar" opportunity will pass us by if we do not raise the needed funds. Approximately three-fourths of the required budget has been raised or assured. Will you help us obtain the other

"What Is Hell? Is It A Literal Fire?"

BY E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 375

April 12, 1959

My friends, I assure you again that it is always a pleasure to speak to you. I realize many of you differ with me, but I do not think unkindly of you for this for I reserve the same right to differ with you. It is true that somewhere, someone has missed the truth of the Bible or we would all be essentially together and there would be no serious differences on these vital questions. So will you continue to listen and study with us the Bible? Write and let us know your views on these questions and if you believe the passages I gave last week on this broadcast. Every one was from your Bible.

When I Was A Boy

Friends, when I was a boy the preachers not only preached about heaven, how beautiful it is, but they also described the horrors of hell. They made us not only love God for providing for us such a beautiful place as heaven, but they caused us to love and respect Him because He was willing to save us from such an awful fate as having to live in a Devil's Hell for all eternity. They preached "hell fire and damnation" and men feared the hell of the Bible. The average boy or girl, yea the average man or woman has not the fear of hell today as in the generations past. Many do not even believe in hell, yet I read to you in my former lesson passage after passage that told us of the hell of the Bible; the gehenna spoken of by Christ Himself in Matthew 5:21,22; Matthew 10:28; Mark 9:43-48; and Matthew 23:27. The "hell" in these passages does not mean the "grave" or the "unseen world." The hell of these passages is "gehenna," the "place of torment." To deny this is to deny the Bible and that is an act of infidelity which leads on and on to other denials of God's word.

How Long?

In our last lesson we found the "Hell" of the Bible is "forever and ever"; that "their worm—their lives—never die"; the "smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever"; and they "rest neither day or night"; and that they are banished "from the presence of God forever" (Mark 9:42-48; Rev. 14:11, Rev. 20:10; and II Thess. 1:8,9). These truths we either accept or deny. Which shall it be? As for churches of Christ, we accept them!

What Is Hell?

Concerning the nature of hell there are many and varied explanations. I shall not take the time to discuss them, but shall confine my study to the Bible descriptions of the "Hell." I may not convince all my auditors that the Bible Hell is this or that, in particular, but if you believe the Bible, I believe I can convince you that it is a place so terrible that you do not want you and your children to live there forever and ever. If I can accomplish this one thing, then the 18 to 20 minutes spent have not been spent in vain.

Exercising Good Judgment

If we will enter this study with the same good judgment we exercise in all our studies of the English language, not determined to force some peculiar hobby of our own upon the people, I believe we can understand what the Lord has in mind by the various descriptions of hell given in the Bible. Unless we do so study our Bible on this subject, we shall find the Bible a bundle of contradictions. But trying to use the same good sense of reasoning and understanding that we follow in reading our newspapers or books in the library,, we shall have little trouble in harmonizing all the various descriptions of hell found in our Bible. Our English language is made up of various symbols, figures, parts of speech, all used to convey to our minds the lessons intended, without which our English language would be meaningless. In rhetoric we have various divisions such as a metaphor, a simile, a hyperbole and many others. A metaphor is a figure of speech founded on the resemblance which one object is supposed to bear in some respects to another, such as we say "that man is a bear." A simile is very similar to this, but expresses it in a little different respect, as in the following, "that man is like a bear." In one he is said to be a bear; in the other to be like a bear. Then we have the hyperbole which is used in so many places in your Bible. The hyperbole is that part of rhetoric used in what we might call a magnified sense, to impress the mind with the seriousness of the thing under discussion. For instance, I might say to a man, "That will mean death to you," when I might not mean he will actually die, but simply wish to impress upon him the seriousness of the matter under consideration. Now with this in mind let us study the various figures, symbols, or descriptions of hell as given to us in the Bible. Only a few should suffice for today.

Matthew 25:30

In Matthew chapter 25, verses 14-20, is the lesson on the talents given to the Lord's own servants. As you remember, He blessed two of them because they had earned other talents. The third man, to whom He gave one talent, hid his talent; refused to use it that he might gain another. To this servant the Lord said, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be the weeping

and gnashing of teeth." Here the punishment of the Lord's own servant is said to be "outer darkness." Outer darkness means a total absence of light. Can you think of a more severe punishment than being lost in outer darkness, not knowing where you are and all around you the "gnashing of teeth"? Under such circumstances men lose their minds; dash headlong to destruction; suffer a million deaths in seconds. If hell is so awful that it must be pictured in such symbols, figures, hyperboles, or whatever you wish to call it, as is here given, then I know it is something I do not wish my children to suffer. Just think this over; Outer darkness; gnashing of teeth; and that punishment forever and ever! There is something so horrible about hell that caused the Lord to picture it to us in such language that we might be brought to so dread it as to make preparation to escape the damnation of hell, (Matthew 23:33).

Furnace of Fire

In Matthew 13 verse 42 through 50 we have this statement concerning the lost, "and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." About whom is He speaking? and when is this to take place? In verses 49,50 we read, "So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous and so shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Hence at the end of the world this shall take place and the wicked shall be punished. But here it is pictured as a furnace of fire. In Matthew 25, this same writer said it was outer darkness. Both illustrations show there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth; so terrible is this punishment! If it is outer darkness then how can it be a furnace of literal fire? Such a furnace would glow with a tremendous light; there could not possibly be outer darkness. Do you now see what I meant before when I said unless we understand the parts of speech, the rhetorical divisions of our language, we could never express ourselves in an intelligent manner without contradictions? One may not know if this or that expression is in rhetoric a simile, a metaphor, or a hyperbole by such a name, but he does have to understand the principle by which our language functions. This is why the most unlearned man can understand the simplicity of the gospel, once it has been taught him if he will listen to it as he understands his newspaper. Here the punishment to the lost soul is comparable to the illustration given: A "furnace of fire." Surely you do not want that to happen to you and yours!

Rev. 20:14,15

John says in Rev. 20: 14,15, "This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire," (American Standard Version). In Rev. 21:8 John calls it a "lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." Now, if it be a "furnace of fire," it can't be a "lake of fire" for a

furnace and lake are as different the one from the other as night from day. Does John intend to contradict Matthew or does Matthew mean to contradict himself in Matthew chapters 13 and 25? Again I say we must understand these are figures of speech, found in our English rhetorical system of conversing one with the other or we become lost in the midnight darkness of confusion. If we do understand our own language, then all these figures or pictures (or should we say, descriptions of hell?) mean something to us and all thoughts of contradiction fade away. The Lord is striving to teach us what it would mean to be lost and therefore He uses every means at His disposal, which means He feels are adequate to warn us of the awful impending torture to the souls of men if they are lost. Just think for a moment of being cast into a furnace of fire, of being thrown into a lake of fire; or being cast out into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth caused by the created fear in your heart at that moment! Now Christ is trying to picture to us what it will mean to miss heaven with all its beauty. If to miss heaven will mean to us throughout all eternity what it would mean to experience such pain and fear under such circumstances as described above in the Bible, then surely you do not want your children to go to such a place and that forever! Deny it if you will; say it is not true if you must; but your Bible is the authority for what I am saying today. If we are to accept any part of the Bible, why refuse to accept these warnings? It will be too late at death.

The Rich Man

In Luke 16:19-31 is the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the beggar. They each died. Lazarus was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom, picturing beautifully the rest into which a child of God passes after death. The Bible says the rich man also died, and was buried and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom and he cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Here they are both dead; are in the unseen world. One is in Abraham's bosom; the other in torment. This shows that in the unseen world there are two distinct places, at least conditions: one of rest and peace, the other conscious torment. Argue about this as you will; say it is just a parable; deny there is any punishment to it; it still stands as a fact the Lord said "there was a certain rich man" who suffered this torment. Call it the grave; the unseen world; call it anything, but when you are through calling it and trying to explain it away, we still have a man in torment beyond death, begging for help and the punishment is conscious punishment, comparable to being cast into flames of fire. Here he is begging for water. He may have fought water on earth, but now, in hell, he is not shouting, "water salvation", "trusting in the water," "water not your saviour;" he is begging for water in hell! I read in

Luke 7:30, this same book, this same writer, where it says, "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves being not baptized of him." Could this man, way over in chapter 16, be one of that number? He was Abraham's seed you know! There will be no hydrophobia in hell. They will not be afraid of water there, but will beg for it. Friends, we get our water here on earth for the Bible commands water baptisb, Acts 10:47,48. Read it, please! So whatever you say we still have this rich man in torment begging for help and there is no help, for the time to make that preparation was here on earth. So great is this punishment he is begging for Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers to warn them lest they come to this place of torment. The time to begin with our loved ones is now! It is too late after death! It is too late when in hell!

Abraham said unto this rich man, "Son, remember that thou in thy life time received thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou are tormented." Try to explain this away; try to rid it of conscious punishment; try to destroy the hell of this passage, but when you read it again, you have two men in hades, if you wish it; one in Abraham's bosom at rest, the other tormented, begging for mercy and it is all brought about because of one thing—the rich man remembers! O, the lashing, the burning, the cutting, the whipping pains of memory as this man in hell, in torment, goes back through memory's lane, seeing all his wealth, his living in luxury, hearing the pleadings of the poor lying at his door, eating the crumbs from his table and having to accept the mercy that came only from the dogs that licked his sores; last seeing his brothers coming to that place of torment! My good people, we know what memory does for us here; how much more, think you, will it do for us in eternity when we suddenly become conscious of the fact we are lost and that forever and ever, with no means of escape! It is then memory, conscious memory, will bring to our poor benighted souls the pains comparable to these pictures of hell the Lord has given us.

Is It Literal Fire?

The Bible no more means to teach that hell is a literal fire than it does to teach hell is a literal place of outer darkness. The Lord does not mean to teach that He has furnaces heated with fire and brimstone, nor does He mean to teach that He has lakes filled with such burning elements prepared for our fleshly bodies, in which they shall burn for all eternity. That you may know this is true, if it were literal fire and fleshly bodies, they would be consumed shortly, which is the belief of some. If it be literal fire then it could not hurt bodies raised, immortal bodies, for literal fire is not to burn immortal objects. Should you wish to create a hobby, making this to mean literal fire, then I could just as scripturally create me a hobby forcing it to mean a place of outer darkness. Should you wish to force a literal interpretation of this and try to make this a literal furnace of fire, I could

just as well try to force it to mean a literal lake of fire and brimstone. Are we ready to try to understand this thing sensibly and reasonably or are we determined to force a private interpretation upon certain passages reducing the Bible to a book of absurd statements and contradictions? One thing sure, these illustrations of hell teach the punishment is real and never ends.

What Does It Mean?

As I conclude this study, may I say that these various illustrations, picturing to us the horrors of hell, are given simply to warn us of the impending dangers and of the terrible sufferings of the soul if we go there. The Lord is trying, by every avenue needed, to keep us from sending our souls to a place of conscious torment. For our souls to be lost forever would mean, to the soul of man throughout all eternity, what it would mean to the minds and bodies of men here to undergo such punishment as pictured in these pages.

Conclusion

We have now proven there is a hell; men will be sent there by the Lord; it is to last forever and ever; and it is a conscious torment, as severe to the soul that is lost as the physical punishment pictured in our lesson today is to our bodies here. Is the price you will have to pay to live in hell forever worth it? This is what you must decide for you and yours! Your soul! What a terrible price to pay for it to live in hell, day and night! Weeping caused by the lashings of a conscious memory! Remember now the pleadings of the rich man and prepare to shun the damnation of hell.

Will you not forget what man has said that there is no hell, and obey the commands of your blessed Lord? He asked us to believe on Him (John 3:16), to repent of our sins (Luke 13:3), and it was He who commanded us to be baptized (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16), and sent His apostles to tell men what to do and Peter said to them on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38), "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 last verse says, "and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Will you not do this is my prayer in the blessed name of our Lord.



ARE WE KEEPING OR GIVING THE TRUTH?

Brethren, we have the truth and we cannot afford to deliver the souls, of the lost into the hands of the enemies of truth by not accepting every opportunity to give them the gospel by use of radio and television. Remember, their blood will cry in the judgement asking, "Why did you not use every opportunity to bring us the gospel of Christ?"

"The Population of Hell"

By E. R. HARPER

Sermon No. 376

April 19, 1959

As I sit at my desk preparing this lesson today, my heart again is burdened with sorrow as my only son is in a hospital unconscious as the result of a severe car accident that all but took his life. The outcome even now we do not know; we can only hope and pray. As we sit by his side, he keeps thinking he is dead and in the morgue. What an awful thing you say! Yes, but not half so tragic as those of this lesson today. Losing your physical life is not to be compared to the loss of your never-dying soul. As in my former lesson on this subject, we have found that the lost live on and the punishment is everlasting. If you do not have those lessons write us for them.

THE POPULATION OF HELL

This subject may sound horrifying to you, but Hell is to be populated with human beings who have, do now, and shall in the future live on this earth. Let us pray that neither you nor your precious children go to this awful place of torment. To find the answer to this most vital question we have to come to our Bible. It has to be our final court of appeal. Never has there been a time in the history of the world, I am convinced, when the Bible, that precious book now lying dusty perhaps upon your table in your home, is so little regarded, respected, and revered as God's way of life for the down trodden of this earth on which we live. It could settle all our labor troubles; all our national problems; and could transform the United Nations Conferences into "tables of peace"; could make of our world a "garden of love"; and could change our world's society into a "human paradise." Our dreams of the "Garden of Eden" would almost fade from our minds as we beheld the glory and the unspeakable peace created anew by the God of heaven in this our new "Eden of hope," as the glorious gospel of Christ lived in the hearts and lives of men. So far as our human relations go, the Golden Rule as found in Matthew 7:12 where Christ says, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" would restore peace to our world. Now this cannot save your soul from Hell but could adjust all our personal difficulties.

I am happy to say to you, If you will obey the gospel of Christ (II Thess. 1:8,9), worship and serve Him as commanded by your New Testament (John 4:24), and practice the Golden Rule between you and your fellow man, Hell will not be your home beyond the grave. Is there a man listening to me today who would deny the above? If so, why? And if the above will not transform this world of human beings into a Christian society, then what will? Think of the church

of Christ as you will, but the above is the simple truth for which we plead that you and yours may be saved from a Devil's Hell. Above all, remember, your Bible, your New Testament must be respected and obeyed by you. There can be no substitute, Gal. 1:8,9; no one can take your place, II Cor. 5:8-11, Romans 14:11,12, Revelation 20:11-15. Read these!

YOUR BIBLE SPEAKS

Concerning the "Population of Hell," your Bible must speak. It and it alone can reveal the answer. That Hell will be populated is a truth too obvious to be denied by Bible believing men. That men shall be punished for their deeds, for their refusal to obey the gospel, and for their willing ignorance of God's word I will prove to you today. Hell is a Bible doctrine. There is as much said about the punishment of the wicked after death as there is about any subject in your Bible. Think not that you can run roughshod over God's warnings and not meet His judgments. If you do, read Rev. 21:8, Galatians 5:19-21, and II Thess. 1:8,9.

MATTHEW 7:21,22

If you have your Bibles, turn with me to Matthew 7:21,22. Here the Lord said, "not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful things? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."

Here are people debating with Christ at the judgment; begging to enter and He denies them. Why? They had not **done the will of God**. You may be one who has been taught "there is nothing to do to be saved"; if so, this verse forever destroys such a doctrine. Here they had to do the will of God or be rejected. Remember, the will of the Father includes more than faith alone. The doctrine of justification by faith only is not a Bible doctrine for here it includes doing the will of God, all His will, not just the part you and I may like. Have you done the will of God? If not then you are lost and will be among the population of Hell, your Bible being true and it is! Those claiming today to perform these miraculous healings had better study this verse, for here were some people who had been caused to believe they had performed these very things and were told they had been rejected because they had not done the will of God. Today no miracles, the kind performed by the apostles and by Christ, can be performed. No "incurable case of cancer," no "completely withered arm," no "eye completely destroyed of its sight" has been miraculously healed or restored in this generation. No corpse pronounced dead by the undertaker and leading doctors has ever been raised in our generation. If men possessed the power enjoyed by the apostles, these things could

be done. In Acts 9:36-40 we have the record of Dorcas' death. It reads, "But Peter put them all forth and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise, and she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up." No such thing has been done in this age. Now in Matthew 7 we have some people believing they had done these things and they were turned away by Christ Himself. I beg of you from my heart to study this. These of Matthew 7:21,22 are to make up a part of the population of Hell. They did not do the will of God.

THE MORAL MAN

One of the most difficult problems facing us today is the destiny of the moral man. To tell a man who is a good moral man, that he is lost, makes enemies of men oftentimes. Now we do not mean it that way. If morality alone were sufficient to save men from sins, then Christ has shed His blood in vain. It takes morality, do not misunderstand me, but it takes morality plus the blood of Christ. Morality alone is not Christianity. Christianity must include morality, but Christianity must include morality, but Christianity is more than just being morally honest, just, and upright in your dealings with mankind.

In Acts 10 we have the story of a man who is both religious and moral. It is the life of Cornelius. It reads as follows, "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band. A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms, and prayed to God always." On first thought the average man would say, This man is a saved man; were he lying cold in death, his funeral services being conducted, many would pronounce such a man saved, ready to be ushered into the presence of his Lord. May I ask you, What would you say about such a man? I know what my heart would love to say, but my heart is not the judge. Again we must come to the Bible for the answer to the question — Was Cornelius a saved man? If not saved, he was lost; if lost, he misses heaven; if heaven is missed there is but one other place—the Hell of our lesson. Remember, I did not write the Bible. I did not make man. I do not have the right to announce the terms by which man is to be saved. Again Christ and His word must be our sole guide.

In Acts 11:13 Cornelius says that the angel who stood by him said, "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter: who shall tell three words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." He was not a saved man, though devoutly religious and moral. He had to have the gospel of Christ preached unto him, Acts 10:42. Had he refused to obey this gospel he would have been among the number that makes up the population of Hell. In Acts 10:48 Peter "commanded them (Cornelius and his house) to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Question, Had Cornelius and his house refused to obey this command, would they have been saved by "faith only"? This

was a command, not a request. It came from the man sent by the Lord to tell him words by which he could be saved. Make any excuse you please, trying to show man is saved without baptism, then ask yourself this honest question, What would the Lord have done with Cornelius had he refused to obey this command to be baptized? Now, ask yourself the question, What will He do with me if I refuse to obey this same command as found in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:16, and Acts 2:38? Hell is an awful place to go. Better obey your Lord! As we pass from the "moral man" and his condition at death, we have found in this man, Cornelius, a man both moral and religious. This lesson we must learn from Cornelius: If a man's religion is wrong, he is still lost; though he is moral, not having obeyed the gospel he is lost. We must obey the gospel as delivered and recorded in the Bible; and that gospel commands faith in Christ (John 7:16), repentance (Acts 17:30), and baptism (Matthew 28:18-20). Religion is not enough; morality is not enough. The Christianity produced by obeying the gospel of Christ is man's only hope of not being among the population of Hell. My friends, have you obeyed it? Remember the "good moral man" who will not obey the gospel of Christ will help to make up the population of Hell.

THE WICKED

In Psalms 9:17 the Psalmist says, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God." If you are a wicked person then you will be among the population of Hell; nations that forget God will find themselves living in the Bible Hell. This is more than just the grave or the unseen world. It is the meaning attached to sheol that signifies punishment. May I read to you Adam Clark, the great Methodist Commentator? He says, "The wicked shall be turned into hell — headlong into hell, down into hell. The original is very emphatic." End of quotation. Whendon's Commentary says, "David now proceeds to a further prediction of their overthrow, and vindication of the oppressed righteous. HELL, this is unquestionably one of the places where sheol signifies a place of future punishment, and will fully bear the translation here given. Nothing less could suit the sense. The righteous, no less than the wicked, will be turned into the grave, but not into hell." End of quotation. Object to sermons on hell if you will, but remember hell is a Bible subject; it is discussed in both the Old and New Testaments. There will be someone in hell. Might as well reject the promises of heaven as to repudiate the doctrine of hell, for the same Bible teaches us of both. Just do not make the fatal mistake of going to hell. This is one thing I know is safe for your soul. Yes, the wicked will make up the population of hell!

WALKING AFTER THE FLESH

In Galatians 5:19-21 we find a group who will be in hell. It reads, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery,

fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." Now Paul, what is the fate of these people? "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God!" There are but two places after death: Heaven and Hell. Those who practice the above cannot go to heaven; hence, here writing to Christians, not alien sinners. He was showing to the they must make up the population of Hell. Another thing — Paul was saved if they do such things, they are to be lost. This passage alone destroys forever the doctrine of the "impossibility of apostasy" of the doctrine "once saved always saved." Let me ask you this question, Do you teach a Christian may practice all these sins and die in them and be saved? No, it will not suffice to answer with the old argument: But a Christian will not want to do this! These were Christians and Paul was warning them against such lest they be found guilty. To the young people and young married people who may be listening to me today, let me say: Here is where you are forbidden to dance and drink. The definition of "revellings" includes dancing. Dancing is revelling. Then the expression "such like" will take in all "like practices." Fight the Bible if you will, build dance halls in your church buildings if you must, teach and train our youth to dance and to revel, which includes dancing in its meaning, if you will, but every time you erect a dance hall in your church building, please place over its door not inherit the kingdom of God." Keep this warning over that dance these words of Paul in which he says, "They who do such things shall hall door in your church building and watch your dances die!

Here is one of the many passages that could be used to condemn drinking. Here he says those who practice drunkenness shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Now have your beer parties in the church if you just must drink; have your preachers lead the youth of your church in these drinking parties of the church if such a religion you desire; make alcoholics of your preachers and of your young men and women by such participation with them, but write over your beer parties, "They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" and see how long such parties live. This is why churches of Christ do not have such things as dance halls and beer drinking parties. Paul says, "They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." We pray that our children, if possible, inherit the kingdom of God and not be among the number who make up the population of Hell. Lead yours to do such if you will, but remember your Bible teaches you that you are leading them to a Devil's hell. One thing I know — teach them not to do such and you do no wrong.

Obey Not The Gospel

Another group that will make up the population of Hell are those who will not obey the gospel of Christ. In II Thess. 1:7-9 Paul says, "To you who are troubled rest with us, when 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 the glory of his power." One thing certain—Whatever the gospel is and includes, it must be obeyed or that soul who refuses will be among the number that will make up the population of Hell. Friends, we might as well make up our minds that we are going to have to obey the gospel of Christ (II Thess. 1:8,9) and that gospel contains more than just "faith only." How can you have a complete gospel of Christ and eliminate from the gospel the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15,16, where the Lord Himself has commanded us to "believe and be baptized"? Think this over before you make up your mind you are not going to believe and be baptized as commanded by Christ, for those who obey not the gospel of Christ will make up the population of Hell. I do not mean to be your enemy; I am pleading with your souls before it is too late and you find yourselves at the judgment lost, on your road to the Bible Hell—and remember, your Bible does teach there is a hell and that most of the world will make up its population (Matthew 7:14). May I ask you this: If you and yours live as churches of Christ are preaching, do you believe you and yours would populate the regions of hell? Think this over before you begin condemnation of my sermons on the subject, "Hell—The Cost of Living There."

Church Presented To Christ

In Eph. 5:27 Paul says that Christ will "present unto himself a glorious church,—holy and without blemish." Christ is its builder, Matthew 16:18; He is its head, Eph. 1:22,23; He, not Peter, is its foundation, I Cor. 3:11; He is its High Priest, Heb. 10:21; He is her husband, Rev. 21:9; John 3:28-30; Romans 7:4; and II Cor. 11:2, and in Ephesians 5:26,27 Paul says Christ "sanctified and cleansed—the church—with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle." In Acts 2:47 we find the Lord is adding to the church all such as were being saved. Since the church is the saved and it is the church being presented to the Lord, then it has to follow as the night the day that only the church shall be saved. This being true, all accountable souls out of the church, therefore, would have to make up the population of Hell. No, babies are not lost—they are already safe. Never having been lost they are not subjects of the gospel call nor can they be members of the church the Lord built, for the church is made up of lost sinners, saved by the blood of Christ because they have obeyed His precious gospel (Acts 2:38-47). Sinless, all the baby needs to go into the presence of God is a resurrection from the dead and this they will receive, I Cor. 15:52,53. As an accountable being, why run the risk of being lost out of the church of the Lord when He is to present it to Himself. Why trifle with your soul or that of your children? Why not be safe?

In Conclusion

We have found there is a hell; that it is a place of eternal punishment for the wicked, that those who do not the Father's will, who depend on their morality alone, the wicked, those who walk after the flesh, all who obey not the gospel of Christ, and those who reject the church the Lord built are to be among the population of hell. I beg of you to come believing in Christ (John 8:24), repenting of your every sin before it is everlastingly too late (II Peter 3:9), confess the precious name of God's Son (Romans 10:9,10), and obey Him in baptism as you know your Lord has commanded (Matthew 28:18-20), let Him add you to His church (Acts 2:47), and then live for Him until death (Rev. 2:10), and I promise you and all yours that not one of you will make up the population of hell. How can this be wrong? May God bless you before it is too late by helping you, through His word, to see the importance of becoming and living a Christian, is my prayer in His holy name.



PROVEN BY EXAMPLE

The most graphic demonstration of the worth of the HERALD OF TRUTH program can be seen in the thousands of lives that have been changed as a direct result of hearing the gospel by this method.

One of the most notable examples of the power of this work is found in the conversion of Edward Rocky of Bethpage, New York. Ed Rocky was a pastor of a Baptist Church in New York and while living in a Baptist parsonage heard the Herald of Truth program. With this first introduction to the church of our Lord, he was led through study and prayer with Jim Oldham and E. J. Sumerlin to obedience to the gospel. Since his conversion, Ed Rocky has led his wife, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law and brother-in-law to Christ. He and two of his converts have baptized more than 200 in the last 2½ years.

We have had reports of congregations that have been established in North Dakota, South Carolina, Georgia, Wyoming and Kansas as a result of this radio and television program. The church in Riverton, Wyoming, is an outstanding example of these new congregations. Recently this congregation completed a nice brick building and though only five years old is now self-supporting.

Only the Lord knows how many doors have been opened, hearts touched, souls led to Christ, wayward Christians restored and congregations established in the last seven years as a result of the Herald of Truth radio and television series. The value of one soul cannot be estimated, so who could say these efforts have not been worthwhile.

HELL -- THE COST OF LIVING THERE, No. 4

"What Price Hell!"

By: E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 377

April 26, 1959

A true story that is told, and true it is, happened like this: A son said to his father, "Dad, I do not want to go to hell." Weeks passed and in a moment, beyond human control, this boy missed eternity only by what those close to him are caused to believe was an act of the providence of God. The doctors, those who knew of the situation, all said, "It had to be an act higher than man for the life of this boy to be spared." Now whether this is true or not, maybe we shall never know; at least the young man lived to have another chance.

This is a true story of millions on earth throughout the centuries past and gone. Some thanked the Lord for His act of providence, changed the course of their lives, became Christians, and the world has been blessed by their lives; others did not. You, who are listening to me today, some of you, may be in this very condition, wanting to right your lives, but caught in a vise, from which you seem to be unable to free yourself. We get our lives all mixed up sometimes until there seems to be no way out and we just surrender our souls to the devil, refusing to listen to those who love us and who could help us, and go on to the grave to be lost—eternally lost.

With this setting before us, I pray that you will remain with me as I discuss with you the subject announced, "What Price Hell!" Thus far I have established the following truths from our Bible: First, Third, that hell will be populated by those who obey not the gospel from the presence of God where there will be conscious punishment; there is a hell; Second, that hell is a place of eternal banishment and whose lives are sinful and wicked. Now, today it shall be mine to show you what it will cost you to live in hell. It is my prayer that I may be able to get you to see that the cost of living in hell is too great; that you can't afford to pay that price to live in hell forever. With this before us you can better understand why today I am discussing the subject, "What Price Hell." Can you afford the price will be for you to decide.

Destroys Your Home

The subject, "What Price Hell," may not be a popular theme, but it is one the world needs to give prayerful consideration. To live a life of sin here that will cost you your soul in hell may mean, and often has meant the loss of your family. Sin has, is, and will continue to destroy more homes than the mind of the average man

or woman stops to consider. Every divorce in this world is the direct result of sin somewhere, else they would have remained together; every murderer, every drunkard; every house of correction; our penal institutions where our own American boys and girls are now incarcerated all trace their origin to sin in their lives. Brokenhearted fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters are the tragic result of sin. The little orphan boys and girls from broken homes—no fathers, no mothers to guide them—left to the mercy of the world, maybe to become criminals, food for the electric chair, are the result of fathers and mothers walking after the flesh, living for the Devil, betraying innocent children. Even our loved ones sleep in the silent cities of the dead—sleep there bcaus of sin, not their own sins, no, but the curse pronounced upon mankind as the result of Adam's sin (Romans 5:14-17; I Cor. 15:22). From these passages we see the destructive force of sin in the lives of men. This alone is a mighty price to pay when the price is that of the loss of your own loved ones; a broken home; orphaned or discouraged children. It is a mighty price to pay to live in hell throughout a never ending eternity. Can you afford the price? Isn't it too high?

Forfeits Life Eternal

In I Tim. 6:12, Paul says, "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." Hell, my friends, will cost you your life eternal in the presence of God. Think you that you can afford to exchange this eternal life with God for a life with the Devil and his angels forever? Is there a sin so alluring that when you sit down by its side to consider its cost you are ready to say, I am willing to exchange my life eternal with God and all the redeemed, for a home everlasting in hell? Life eternal for a Devil's Hell? What a mighty price to pay to live in hell forever! Yes, we ask, What Price Hell? Can you afford to pay it?

Crown of Righteousness Means Nothing?

In II Timothy 4:7,8 Paul writes "the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day: and not to me only but to all them also that love his appearing." Here this man of God, now grown old in years, but strong in faith and hope, through the mists sees the shores of another world from whose bourn no pilgrim has ever returned. The man who above all others has so beautifully and so lovingly stamped upon the hearts of men the hopes of the Cross of Calvary is writing to this young man, Timothy, his last letter of loving advice. These words are of such significance, of such tremendous importance, for in them is to be

found the wisdom of a lifetime of Christian experience. Here in thunderous tones that have, still are, and will continue to be thundered through the annals of time, a mighty warrior, ready to lay down his battle-scarred armor for a crown of righteousness to be bestowed upon him by Christ his Lord, looking only toward the future, shouts his defiance to the powers of Rome and says, "I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand." His eyes now penetrate the heavens beyond as he gazes, by faith, into the New Jerusalem. He no longer hears the bitter accusations of a Tertullus, standing before Governor Felix, demanding his life; he no longer feels the hand that smote his mouth, as Ananias, the High Priest, sought to wreck his cowardly vengeance upon this humble servant of God; the stripes placed upon his bleeding back by his enemies; the stones that pelted his bruised and bleeding body, as he lay outside the city to die: all these have now faded from his thoughts. He now, as in the distance, can hear the voices of the redeemed, reverberating throughout the halls of that eternal city "whose builder and maker is God," singing the praise of Him who had "redeemed them by His blood from every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation." He sees the hand of a loving Father crowning him not with a monarch's crown, but with the victor's crown of righteousness; rewarding him for a battle well fought; for a course now finished; and for a faith unwavering.

This, and more too, Paul longs to enjoy throughout a never-ending eternity! May I ask just here another question—one quite different from the question under discussion? Did Paul pay too great a price for the hopes and dreams that burn so brightly in his heart as at the end of his journey he awaits the day when he will have the honor of giving his head to the executioner? This was a part of the price he was willing to pay for the cause that means the salvation of all men and by such martyrdom be entitled to an "entrance abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Saviour"? Would you have him now, as he faces death, exchange these hopes for a place in a Devil's hell? The surrender of all these hopes of future joys is a part of the price you will pay to live in hell. Would living in hell forever be worth the price you will have to pay? Yes, we pay for everything we receive. Hell, to you, must be a wonderful place if you are willing to miss all the promises made the Christians just to go to hell! Again I say, What Price Hell? Can you afford to pay it? When you come to die, what would you give for the dreams of this great soldier of the Cross who has fought a good fight; who has finished his course; and who has kept the faith and now awaits with joyous anticipation the victor's crown? Well, it can be yours if you are willing to pay the price this humble man was willing to pay. Believing its worth, he falls upon the Christian's battlefield, not just for his own victory, not just to go down in history as a martyr, but he fell in the thick of battle that you and I today might have for us and our children this same victor's crown. What are you doing about it? Ah, my friends!

Bid good-bye to all these hopes beyond the grave? What a price to pay to live in hell throughout all the endless cycles of eternity! Good friends, The Price Is Too Great To Pay!

To The Faithful

John, on the lonely isle of Patmos, was directed to write, "be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). Christ, speaking to those in Matthew 25:30-46 who had heard the cries of these who hungered, who were thirsty, who were naked, in prison, and sick, said, because His people had administered unto them they should go into life eternal. In Heb. 9:15 Paul speaks of those who should receive the promise of eternal inheritance. Looking back through the centuries the writer of Hebrews in chapter 11 and verses 8 through 9 speaks of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as being "heirs of the same promise." Verse 10 says, "for they looked back for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" and in verse 16 he writes, "but now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." Peter, the apostle to whom the Lord said "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom" (Matt. 16:19), wrote these immortal words recorded in I Peter 1:3-5, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Exchange this for an eternity in hell? Nay, not for a day, much less an eternity!

This Home

In these passages we have the promise of a crown of life; life eternal; an eternal inheritance; a city whose builder and maker is God; an inheritance that shall never fade away. May I have your minds for a moment that they may walk with me into the future and gaze in splendor upon that reservation, that city, that home of the soul prepared for those who obey their Lord? Then ask your heart the question, Can I afford to exchange all this for an eternity in a Devil's hell?

23rd Psalm

The sweet singer of Israel, as he let his mind dwell upon the passing from time into eternity says in the 23rd Psalm, "yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Then as his hopes transcend time and timely things, he sings of a home where he may dwell forever in these words, "surely goodness and mercy shall

follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." With such hopes his to enjoy, the grave, not even the passing to the grave, held any fear for him. O, for a faith like David possessed! Such faith would give me the power to see that the price I shall have to pay to live in hell forever is too great. Which will be your choice, to dwell in this house of the Lord forever, or to live in hell throughout all eternity? It is yours to make!

John 14:5

In John 14:1-4 Christ, speaking to the hearts of His sorrowing disciples, says to them, "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." This was the house of which David sang I am certain. It was the place to be prepared for the saints of God; Christ promises to come for them. Can we afford to exchange this for a Devil's hell? No price is too great to pay that we may enter into this place prepared for us by the Lord. Any price is too great to pay to live in hell forever!

City With Foundations

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob longed to see this city and the writer of this book says, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" and verse 16 shows it is a "heavenly city," not an earthly one. Send my children to a Devil's hell, in exchange for a heavenly city whose builder and maker is God! Have them suffer a never-ending eternity with the condemned when they might have sat down with the saints of all ages to voice their praise with that angelic chorus in a home where sorrows never come? No wonder we ask, "What Price Hell?" No sin here is worth missing all the joys and pleasures of the home of the soul, prepared by Him who has created us and made for us such a wonderful world in which to live these few short years as we prepare to live with Him forever.

Rev. 21:9-27

May I now let you gaze upon the beauty of the people of God, the church, in their heavenly, glorified state? Here John in Rev. 21:9-27 saw the "Bride the Lamb's wife" in all her splendor, in all her glory, in all her beauty. This is our heavenly abode. It is pictured as a city having the glory of God, with walls great and high and the names of the twelve apostles written thereon. As he measured the city with a golden reed, its length was that of its breadth. Its walls were of jasper and the city pure gold, life unto glass. The foundations of this city were garnished with all manner of beautiful and precious stones.

The gates through which the redeemed are to pass were of solid pearl. As the Lord thought of the light that should illuminate this eternal city of the saints, He might have thought of the sun that rises in the east and rides across the sky to hide its majestic splendor in the golden setting of the west; He could have dreamed of the beauty of the moon, shedding its halo of light upon our weary pathways here below; He might have looked away to the stars that twinkle to us from so far away singing as they shine, the hand that made us is divine. But all these pale away into insignificance, for the light that shall shine upon this glorious city pictured here is the glory of God, for the "Lamb is the light thereof." It is He who is the "light of the world" now and it is He who will be our guiding light throughout all eternity. In this home there will be no more death; all tears will be wiped away; all sorrow and heartaches are past. From the throne of God will flow the river of life, in the midst of which and on either side of which will grow the tree of life from which we may eat and drink and live forever. No sin shall enter this golden city, the gates shall not be shut, and there shall be no night there. What a contrast to the horrible pictures of hell, where their worm lasting, and where the weepings never cease, and our pleadings go never dies, where the fire is never quenched, where torment is ever-unheard all because we would not obey the Lord who died for us and live for Him.

To my children who may be listening to me today: Whatever trials or temptations may be standing in your way today that would deny you this wonderful blessing of living in such a wonderful city forever, please rid yourselves of it and let us come to the grave, one by one, to meet our blessed little Teenie girl who has already gone on and now awaits us on the shores of such a wonderful city that we may see her and sing with her the praise of Him who died that we all might live together in a world yet to come. Mom and I, as all fathers and mothers, want to pass from time into eternity believing we have hopes of our family being reunited in this city of God. Again I say, "What Price Hell?" It means the loss of all the wonderful promises of God: The price, children, to live in hell is too high!

Your Soul

Christ, in Matthew 16:26,27, asks this question, "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Here the soul of man is worth more than all the world. That is your soul! Moses in the long ago said to the children of Israel, "Be sure your sins will find you out," Numbers 32:23. In Galatians 6:7 Paul says, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." In Romans 6:23 Paul declares "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life" and in Ezekiel 18:20 we find this statement, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." This is the second

death, mentioned in Revelation 20:14. It is the punishment of the soul of man from the presense of God for all eternity.

Yes, to live in hell will cost you your never dying soul. Do you think your soul is too great a price to pay to live in hell always? We can now see the importance of my general subject, "Hell—The Cost of Living There." I ask you, as did the Lord, if in hell what would you give for the freedom of your soul? Again I say, What Price Hell? Its price is my crown of righteousness, my crown of eternal life, my home of the soul, heaven itself, and last my own precious, never-dying soul! Are you ready to pay such a price that you and your children might be cast into hell where the smoke of your torment shall never cease? Yes, "What Price Hell?" I pray may never cease to ring in your ears until you have obeyed the gospel of Christ and become and live a Christian. Mark 16:16 says, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Christ knows the way. May God bless you is my prayer in the blessed name of Christ. Listen to our next lesson on "How Shall We Escape the Damnation of Hell?"



BEGINNING EIGHTH YEAR!

With the February 1, 1959, broadcast the HERALD OF TRUTH entered its eighth year of consecutive weekly nationwide broadcasts. Its story is an unusual one of determined effort on the part of a few men who roused the interest and support of thousands of their brethren, causing it to grow from a six-station hook-up in 1951 to one that has included a total of 431 radio and 174 television stations in all 49 states and many foreign countries.

The HERALD OF TRUTH is well known for the beautiful renditions of familiar hymns by the Abilene Christian College A Cappella Chorus. Chorus groups from several congregations across the nation have also been used.

The great appeal that it has for its listeners and the unusual story of the faith of those who made it possible have prompted articles of acclamation in many newspapers and such national publications as Time Magazine.

The help of faithful brethren has made this world-wide radio ministry possible and its future depends upon the continued support of sister congregations and faithful brethren. No appeal for funds is ever made on the air.

Edward J. DeGray, Vice President in charge of the Radio Network for the American Broadcasting Company, said, "We are very happy to have the Herald of Truth for the eighth year. We feel that this broadcast is an outstanding one and has a very large and loyal listening audience."

Thus, when the eighth annual contract was signed with this great national network, it began another chapter in the story of faith that moved mountains.

WHY INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

MBS

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 280

April 26, 1959

The story is told of a train that was passing through a rather severe storm. The people were frightened and fear filled every heart. A little girl was sitting, playing with her doll, seemingly unafraid. They asked her, "Why are you not afraid of this storm?" She very calmly replied, "Because my daddy is the engineer on this train." She had a reason for her confidence and was able therefore to give them a sensible answer to their question, "Why are you not afraid?"

Now we must have a reason for asking you to investigate the church of Christ. It must be a valid reason. It must be a different reason. It must be one that justifies our right to live as a separate religious institution. It must be one that makes our existence necessary to the salvation of mankind. If it is not essential and man does not need the church of which I am a member, then it only adds to the confused condition that now exists in the religious world.

Not a Denomination

The first reason I shall give for investigating the church of Christ is: The church of Christ is not a denomination in the sense the world uses that term. The term denomination as thought of today simply means "one among many religious groups going to make up the church of the New Testament." It has come to represent "one of many religious bodies equally related to Christ, one as near the truth as the other." Now the church of which I am a member does not share this concept of the New Testament church or body of Christ. We are often spoken of as "one of the Protestant bodies," hence we are classified by the world as a "Protestant religion." Now we are not "Protestant" in the sense the word is used today. We are protestant in that we protest all error but not that we protest one particular practice that we feel to be wrong. Neither are we Catholic in the sense in which that is used, yet the church of the New Testament is a universal institution in that it is made up of all the saved of the earth. Neither are we Jewish as all understand, for our religion is not after their customs.

Christ Is Her Builder

The reason for this investigation of the church of Christ is that Christ built it. David in Psalms 127:1 says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build." This is a truth we need to ponder well before we make a decision that has to do with the eternal destiny

of our souls. To get into a house the Lord did not build means that our labours, our efforts are vain; that is they will not profit us. I must not therefore get into a church or religious institution the Lord did not build. This is why we believe in thoroughly investigating that which you do religiously. Try what it is, what it does, and how you enter it. Try it by the church of the Bible. The way to do that is to read your Bible and see if it is in harmony with its teachings. If it isn't, it can't be the church the Lord built. In Matthew 15:13 Christ said "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Here He was speaking of the "doctrines and commandments of men," verse 9. This being true we ask you to investigate the church of Christ where you are to see if we are that church. If we are not, then we have no scriptural right to exist, for listen to the words of Christ Himself in Matthew 16:18 where He says to Peter, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church." If we are not that church, if you are not that church, then whose are we and who is our builder?

Purchased by the Blood of Christ

The third reason for this investigation is found in Acts 20:28 where Paul says to the elders of Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God (or as your Revised Version says, "church of the Lord") which he purchased with his own blood." Now here we find the church of Christ was purchased with the blood of Christ. Hence the church is the only institution ever bought by Christ's blood. This being true, the church of Christ is that church that belongs to Christ by virtue of the fact that He bought it by His blood. The church Christ built did not come into existence by accident, nor by some man or groups of men deciding to start a religious movement; it came as a deliberate, planned and predestinated purpose of God and Christ His Son, through which and in which to save the world. It is by being a member of this blood bought church that man is redeemed by the blood of Christ. Peter in I Peter 1:18 says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." To whom is he talking here, saying they have been redeemed—bought back by the precious blood of Christ? It was the "house of God" which Paul calls the "church" in I Timothy 3:15, for Peter says in the second chapter and verse 5, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, a chosen generation, a holy nation." In chapter 4, verse 17, Peter further says, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God"? In chapter 5 and verse 1 and 2 he says, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glor that shall be revealed, feed the flock of God which is among you." Here there is no

doubt but that he is speaking of the church, for only the church had elders. We conclude therefore that the church of Christ in your city is correct when it teaches that all those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ are those who are in the church the Lord built.

No Creed but the Bible

A fourth reason for asking that you investigate the church of Christ is that we have no creed but the Bible. Creeds would divide us into factions for they are written by man and they are documents setting forth man's wisdom and they differ as widely as the thoughts of men differ. God's creed to us, the Bible, given to us from heaven, is united in its desires and its demands. Peter in his second epistle, chapter 1 and verse 3 says, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Since the divine power has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness then nothing can be added by a latter day revelation. I press this question: If that divine power has already given us "all things that pertain unto life," what more do you have to offer? What would a modern day creed or revelation add unto that which gives us life? Yes, the church of Christ in your community is that we give Christ the preeminence in all things. reject all creeds, all modern day revelations, and all traditions of men or churches since none of them can add to that already given. We humbly ask you therefore to investigate the church of Christ in your community for you will find a refreshing difference if it is a strict adherence to the word of God you are looking for. We accept it as our sole guide and final authority in all matters religious.

It Is Found in the Bible

A fifth reason why we ask you to investigate the church of Christ in your community is that we give Christ the preeminence in all things. In Col. 1:18 Paul says, "And he, Christ, is head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." this is the reason why we answer as we do when you ask us, What are you religiously? We reply, We are Christians. This is not to be arrogant, it is not to be spiteful. With us it is serious. That is just what we are and nothing else, for there can be nothing better. I realize sometimes our friends become offended by this answer but now really there should be no offence in such an answer. We were not asked what somebody else is? We were asked what are we religiously? Now Paul said Christ should have the preeminence in all things and we give Him the preeminence by wearing His name. We feel to wear any other name and to be called by some other name is exalting some man or some act, or some method, or some form of church organization, above that of Christ.

In Acts 11:26 it says, "And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." The church was but a few years old now but in the very

beginning of it, as quickly as they could be well rooted and established, they began giving Him the preeminence. In Acts 26 and verse 28 Paul was persuading King Agrippa to be a Christian, for the Bible reads, "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," and Paul replied, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am save these bonds." Here Paul acknowledged he was just a Christian and that he was persuading men to be just Christians. In fact there was nothing else back there. Human names were unknown then. They have been added years later. In I Peter 4:15,16 Peter says, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this behalf" and your Revised Version says, "In this name." Here Peter commands us to glorify God in the name Christian. It was not given by the enemies of the Lord for here Peter is not an enemy, he is an apostle. The Holy Spirit, guiding him to write this, was not an enemy, not a heathen, and He guided Peter to command them to glorify God in the name Christian. We shall give Christ the preeminence in all things.

The Church

Now when we are asked, What church are you a member of? we meet with the same reaction from our friends. We mean no harm. We do not do this to throw off on someone else. It is not to be insulting to others, really it is not. Because of the way some of our friends at times feel about our answer, many of our people dread to tell them which church they are a member of, and sometimes have been known to call it by some less irritating name, which name I shall not call here. They feel that it will lessen the criticism. But now, really, why should our telling the people that we are members of the church of Christ irritate anyone? We were not asked what they were; we were asked, What are we? Now that is what we are. We are members of the church of Christ. That is the only answer we can give. Were we to drop the honor given to Christ and call the church of which we are members by some man's name or just by some human name that has no relation with Christ at all, we would be accepted. Now why drop the name of Christ? Why demote Him and honor some man by giving his name to the church just to appease the feelings of some friend?

Now friends, really these questions can't be answered in the light of Paul's command that "in all things" Christ must be given the "preeminence." This is why we call it the church of Christ, with a little "c" in church, because the word church is not a proper name. The expression church of Christ simply signifies whose it is.

When you ask what church we are members of we could answer, "We are members of the body of Christ." Well, this would only confuse the average man today. He would have no earthly idea of what you are

a member. In the first century of our New Testament times, that was enough, for there was only one church and that was the church of Christ. It was and is today the "body of Christ." In our confused state today we have to be specific so when you ask us from that standpoint, we simply tell you we are members of the church of Christ. We could say we are members of the family of God, or of the household of God, the kingdom of Christ, and this should be enough; it would have been in the first century for there was not a single modern denomination back there. When they said then, I am a Christian, or a member of the house of God, they understood it meant they followed Christ for there were no denominational bodies to confuse the minds of men. If we were all following the revelation of God today as then, we would not meet with the embarrassment that confronts us when asked, "Of what church are you a member?" when we reply, "We are members of the church of Christ." Why should such an answer confuse or upset people if we are all following the Bible? It did not upset people then unless they were against the church. Where is our reasoning wrong in this?

In Romans chapter 16 and verse 16, Paul in referring to the local congregations of the church says, "churches of Christ salute you." Now these were not conflicting denominations for not one is mentioned back there. They were all of the same faith and order. Paul, Peter, John, Luke, Timothy, Silas and all were welcomed in every church and they were all just known as Christians and called churches of Christ. That is what they actually were. Now that is what we are today and that is all we are. We will not set aside the blessed name of Christ and call His church by the name of some man for we respect Him above them all and Paul said Christ should "have preeminence in all things" because God made Him to be "head over the body which is the church." This can't be answered. It may be ridiculed and the minds of men may be blinded to this fundamental fact but the right of it, the truthfulness of it, the beauty of exalting the church above all cannot be improved upon. Hence, we ask you to investigate the church of Christ in your community for it is different. It is following your Bible. We believe the Bible to be God's word and by it we must go and it is our sole authority. If it is not, then let us cast it aside and grope our way in darkness to the grave. If the Bible be God's word then go by it and trust the Lord for the promises and He will never forsake us. He did not those back there. But I will conclude this sermon next time. May the Lord bless you is our prayer in His blessed name. Brethren, let me thank you for your fellowship in making these lessons possible. Write us today.



The HERALD OF TRUTH radio program, now in its eighth year, was begun February 10, 1952. Speakers have been James W. Nichols, James D. Willeford and E. R. Harper along with numerous guest speakers through the years.

IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST — RAGS OF FILTH?

ABC and MBC Network

By E. R. Harper

Radio Sermon No. 431

May 1, 1960

Friends, today I continue my study of Isaiah 64:6. I do this with no apology for this exhaustive study of this passage, for it has been used for generations to prejudice people against having to obey the commands of God to be saved. It is being taught if man has to do anything to be saved he is depending upon his own works; upon his own righteousness to be saved. It is said he is denying the blood of Christ; that he is trusting his baptism for salvation; that he is trusting his church membership for salvation; that he is trusting the Lord's supper for salvation; and that he is trusting in his own selfrighteousness to save him if he has to live right to be saved. Then usually follows this statement, "All our righteousness is as filthy rags before God. Just trust Christ for salvation. Not baptism; not your church membership; not your Lord's supper; not your righteous acts of living." Riding along the highway the other day, I had my radio tuned in on a man preaching and he said something like this, "you are saved by Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Not by Jesus Christ and baptism; not by Jesus Christ and your church membership; not by Jesus Christ and living right; but by faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Then he added, "My friends all our works are 'filthy rags' in God's sight," meaning baptism, church membership, Lord's supper, and righteous living. Just trust Christ and Him crucified for your salvation, said the speaker. It was then I decided to study with all who would listen to me, this statement of Isaiah 64:6 that is being used by men all over the world, branding our obedience to God's commands as "filthy rags." I deny that God our Father or Christ our Savior ever gave to us any command, when obeyed by us from honest and sincere hearts as directed by Christ and for the purpose He gave, that were as "filthy rags" in God's sight. God rejected these "filthy rags" of Isaiah and hid His face from Israel and cursed them for such acts. Read Isaiah chapter fifty-nine, sixty, and sixty-one and see for yourself if this is not true. Is God rejecting us? If so, why did He command us to do these things found in His New Testament? Why give us the New Testament if everything in it we are to do, is as "filthy rags," except to "believe?" Will you write for these lessons and then prayerfully compare them with your Bible? If so, you will find we are preaching the truth of God given for man to obey during the New Testament age.

The argument is made that if man has to do one thing to be saved that he is trusting his own works to save him. That he is denying the Lord as his Savior. Friends, if Christ requires one thing for man to do

to be saved and still Christ becomes his Savior, and not the thing done by man, then Christ may require two or more things to be done by man and still be the Savior of man. In 1 Peter 1:22 your Bible has this to say, "Seeing ye have purified souls in obeying the truth." In Hebrews 5:8-9 your Bible says "though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." Again it was Christ who asked in Luke 6:46, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say." Is faith the only command of God to be obeyed? Since therefore God may require of man obedience to His commands and the commands obeyed not become man's savior, not be that in which man trust for his salvation, but Christ be man's savior; and Christ be the one whom man has trusted for salvation, then the whole of such arguments as presented by the world is wrong. We are now justified in saying that Christ is the Savior of only those who obey him. Obedience to His commands is something man does that Christ may become his Savior; may give to him eternal life. Did the writer of Hebrews 5:8-9 mean to teach that men obeying Christ were denying Christ as their Savior and trusting their "works" to save them? Friends, we trust CHRIST as our Savior, BUT we know He saves ONLY those who OBEY Him. I ask you, is baptism a command of Christ? Did He command us to commune with Him? Did He build the church for man to stay out of, OR for man to become a part of? Read Matthew 28: 18-20; Read Luke 22:15-30, also 1 Corinthians 11:20-29; and Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23-27. Read these my friends, Please!

Did John on Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ pen these words in Revelation 2:10, by the direction of the Lord, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life?" Since Christ is the Savior of only those who obey Him how can man lay claim to Christ as his Savior until man has obeyed the blessed commands of God? One thing certain: If we become and belong to that which our Lord has built for us, the church; if we serve Him faithfully 'til death shall kiss our eyelids to sleep, Christ will be our Savior and we shall be saved. Who of you, preacher or others, listening to me today will write me and say, Brother Harper every man who obeys the commands of his Lord to "believe and be baptized" as He commands in Mark 16:16; every man who becomes a faith member of the church the Lord built; and every child of His who will serve Him humbly until life's little day has come to its close, will die and go to hell for all such obedience upon our part, is "trusting our own works for salvation;" and not trusting Christ; they are all as "filthy rags" unto God. My good people, Why do we obey Christ? It is because we do believe in Him and trust Him to fulfill His promises made to all who obey Him. We do not trust what we do to save us; we do not trust any good work of ours as our savior. We trust God. That is why we obey Him. Now if you can be saved without obeying Him, then it is you who are trusting your own ways to save

you, and not those who obey their Lord. The saved believer of your Bible is always the obedient believer. There is no exception.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST — FILTHY RAGS?

Now let us study our lesson for today. It is said that if you have to be a member of the church that you are trusting your church membership for salvation and not the Lord. It is being taught that baptism and church membership are as "filthy rags" in God's sight. I deny that the Bible teaches that membership in the Lord's church is as "filthy rags" for the church is the bride of Christ.

In John 3:29 John the Baptist says of Christ, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." Then in verse thirty John says "he, that is Christ, must increase, but I must decrease." Who is this bride? To become a part of this bride of Christ, do we become as rags of filth? In Romans 7:4 Paul says "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead" and that is Christ. Now why married to Christ? "That we should bring forth fruit unto God." Is this fruit, which is the result of this marriage to Christ, fruit born of the "rags of filth"? In writing to the church in Corinth, in 2 Corinthians chapter eleven and verse two, Paul says, "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Here Christ is the husband and the church the bride. Could there be anything comparable to "filthy rags" connected with this chaste virgin being espoused unto Christ, her husband? Last, I read to you from Revelation 21:9, there came a great voice out of heaven saying to John, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." The church is pictured as a woman in your New Testament. Her relationship with Christ is pictured as that of a husband to his wife; as that of a bridegroom to his bride. Now this voice from heaven says it is his "wife."

Our next question is, who makes up this "bride, this wife" of our Lord? Paul shows in his letter to the church at Rome and to the church in Corinth, that those who have obeyed the gospel of Christ, who have "believed and been baptized" make up the church, the bride of Christ, his wife. But those at Rome had been "baptized into Christ;" had been "buried with Christ by baptism into death" and those in Corinth had all "been baptized into one body." Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:13. From this we are forced to conclude that those who make up the bride; the wife of Christ are only those who are baptized believers. Baptism into this church, the bride of Christ, "filthy rags?"

NEVER!

Calling membership in this beautiful church which is the bride of Christ, "filthy rags?" What a shame! Again your Bible says in Ephe-

sians 5:23 that Christ is the "savior of the body" and that body says Paul, in Ephesians 1:22-23, is the church. Think you that Christ would be the Savior of anything that would be to Him as these "filthy rags" of Isaiah 64:6 were to God?

CHRIST PRESENTS THE CHURCH TO HIMSELF

Now let us see what the Lord is going to do with this church, this bride of His? In Ephesians 5:25-27, the Bible says "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Read such passages from your holy Bible and then brand our membership in such a glorious body; a body sanctified, cleansed and holy, presented unto Christ as His bride, His beloved wife, as "filthy rags." Ah, my friends! Such an accusation against membership in the body, the church of the Lord, is blasphemy against the bride of Christ. Would Christ give Himself for "filthy rags?" Just remember when you make such remarks as "your church membership can't save you; it is as filthy rags," and by such statements cause people to live and die not a part of this glorious church of the Lord that He has sanctified, cleansed, and for which He is coming back to receive unto Himself, that you are making light of the bride of Christ. No man can do this without bringing down upon him the wrath of the bridegroom, which is Christ. Instead of such remarks, which remarks reflect upon the church, tell them the church is the bride of Christ; that it is the Lamb's wife; that He gave Himself for it; that He is the Savior of the church; that He is returning for the church glorious, holy, sanctified and cleansed and beg them to become members of that glorious church so that when the Lord does return for the church, they will be among that number.

Now honestly what do you think of men who are branding "church membership" as "filthy rags?" Do you think membership in this church; this bride of Christ; this wife of the Lamb; is as the "filthy rags" of Isaiah 64:6, which came up to God as acts nauseating and repulsive to Him; which caused Him to turn His face from them and to curse them because He said they were blaspheming Him on every hill? Fathers and Mothers, I beg of you to cease listening to such men and bring your family to obey the Lord and let Him add you to this church, which He loves as a man loves his wife. Be not deceived into believing that when we beg you to come into such a wonderful church that we are trusting the church to save; that we are rejecting Christ as our Savior, for your Bible says CHRIST IS the "SAVIOR of the body — the church." Since Christ is the Savior of the church, then to be in the church; a part of this bride of His, for which He is returning, is to trust Christ and to have Christ as your Savior. It is the only way to have Him as your Savior for He is the

Savior of the church; His bride; His wife. Remember that from the church in Jerusalem, Acts two, to the seven churches in Asia, Revelation chapters two and three, they were all baptized; there is not an exception. Now are you ready to say that baptism; church membership; the communion of our Lord; and righteous living are all "rags of filth," nauseating and repulsive to the Lord? Shamefully tragic is such a charge! Would Christ sit down to eat with us at a table where the act was as "filthy rags?" Read Luke 22:16!

CHRISTIAN LIVING — FILTHY RAGS?

I close this discussion on this subject by asking you if you believe that your Bible in Galatians 5:22-25 where Paul says "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live by the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit," that he meant here to say to us that all this is to God as "filthy rags," obnoxious and repulsive to Him? This last one passage for your meditation as you hear men branding what we do to be saved as "filthy rags." In Matthew 12:50 Christ Himself says, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Who is the brother of Christ? Only those who "do the will of his Father in heaven." Remember this is something WE do! This is what they are branding as "filthy rags" for it is what WE do. Remember the Psalmist David said in Psalms 119, verse 172, that "all thy commandments are righteousness" and these commandments we do. The beloved John says in 1 John 2:29, "If ye know that he — Christ — is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth — yes that doeth — righteousness is born of God." Since "all the commandments of God are righteousness;" since only those who "doeth righteousness are born of God;" it follows therefore that only those who obey, yes do, the commandments of God are those who are born of God! "Filthy rags," these commandments of God! NAY A MILLION TIMES!

CONCLUSION

Now, I ask you is baptism in the name of the sacred Three; is membership in the glorious church of the Lord, His bride, His wife; is sitting and eating with our Lord at His table, commemorating His death till He comes again; is living righteous lives — yes, that which we are to do; is all this coming up to God as the "filthy rags" of Isaiah 64:6? Remember Christ is the author of baptism; He is the builder of the church; He instituted the Lord's supper; and He sent the Spirit to lay down to man the Christian way of life. Now can it be possible that when man humbly, from his heart, believing and

trusting the Lord as his savior, and his precious blood to cleanse him from all sin, does all this mean that he is offering up "filthy rags" to God to be condemned by the Lord for so doing, as were those of Isaiah 64:6? If not, then the argument based upon Isaiah 64:6 has been a perversion of the Scriptures and such perversion of the truth is leading men and their families to die never having obeyed the Lord, that they may be among the saved presented to Him as He comes for His bride the church. The church, rags of filth? Membership in that church as "filthy rags?" No, my good people. May you and your family obey the Lord, come believing in Him and be baptized that He may make you a part of His glorious church, His bride that you may be presented to Him with your family at His return, is my prayer in His blessed name. I ask you, can THIS be wrong? Can THIS be as "rags of filth?" "Will living as I have preached today damn your soul in a Devil's hell?"



The Herald of Truth

P. O. Box 1858

Abilene, Texas

Dear Brethren:

Your excellent work and cooperative spirit is to be commended highly. I want you to know that I and my family appreciate immensely your effort in the promotion of Christianity and the edification of the Church. Please believe me; I would love to help in a measurable amount, but I'm not withholding the little I can do just because I cannot give a large sum. We're praying in your behalf and will do all we can to encourage others to have a part in this great evangelistic work.

In His service,

Clifford M. Smith

P. O. Box 132

Fort McClellan, Alabama

P.S. We enjoy and appreciate the printed copies of the radio sermons.

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. Harper

Radio Sermon No. 432

May 8, 1960

My friends, today I am discussing with you one of the most misunderstood passages in the entire Bible. It is that of the "washing of regeneration" of Titus 3:5. Will you continue to listen to the discussion of this passage until I have concluded it? Will you then write us for it? A proper understanding of Titus 3:3-7 will clear up many misunderstandings that are in the religious world today and will become one of the greatest blessings to your life that you may ever enjoy. Paul having admonished them in the verses above to be "gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men"; says to them, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

The particular thought with which this discussion shall deal is that which says, "But according to his mercy he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration." Just what is meant here by the expression, "washing of regeneration?" What ever this expression means, one to be saved according to God's mercy must have it. That is one undeniable fact we all must admit. The "washing of regeneration" is one of the things by which the mercy of God has saved us. To eliminate the "washing of regeneration" from God's plan of saving mercy, is to cause man to be lost.

TRANSLATIONS ON TITUS 3:5

I now invite your attention to various translations of this passage by learned men. One may say, I care not what the Bible says or what the translations say, I know when I was saved. I know how I was saved. This does not flatter man's intelligence for we must respect the unprejudiced scholarship of the world on such matters. By unprejudiced scholarship, I simply mean, we are taking men from various religious affiliations and without respect of religious denominations, giving you what they, as scholars, say this passage means and how they translate Titus 3:5. I assure you it will be one of the

most astonishing revelations that you have ever had dawn upon your thinking. These translations; these scholars, from the first century until our modern time, shall open your eyes to a truth that, at first, may be shocking. So great is the truth of Titus 3:5, that you may stand at the judgement bar of God, lost for not having understood the meaning of this great passage. You can't separate it from the meaning of John 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17; of Romans 6:4; Acts 2:38; Acts 22: 16; nor can you separate it from any passage that has to do with man's being saved, for Titus 3:5 says "according to his mercy he SAVED us, BY the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." Everything necessary for man to become a child of God is incorporated into this expression, "saved us." I recognize this fact, that the mind of man is so confused by all these modern conflicting theories and claims of "personal salvation," until people become today as Paul said some of them were: They were disobedient and deceived. Paul was a devoutly religious man but being ignorant of the truth, he was disobedient and deceived. Will you now listen to the translations, some of them, of Titus 3:5?

KING JAMES

The King James says "washing of regeneration." The American Standard says in a footnote, "the laver of regeneration." Murdock's translation of the Syric Translation reads, "by the washing of the new birth." Young's Bible Translation says "through the bathing of regeneration." Living Oracles reads "through the bath of regeneration." Dr. Charles B. Williams, Professor of Greek at Union University, Jackson, Tennessee, (whom I know personally, having spent four years at Union) says in his translation, "through the bath of regeneration."

From these 155 scholars, renown for their learning, we find that the expression found in Titus 3:5 means a "washing, laver, bathing, and bath." These are standards translations from various religious faiths. Their scholarship was at stake. I could stop here and the meaning of Titus 3:5 should be evident to all who will accept scholarship when it speaks, especially when it is a subject that affects so many denominations. They forgot their denominational peculiarities and when all are taken together, gave us the truth. I shall not however give you my observations concerning its meaning just here, for now I shall begin and trace the meaning of this passage to see what those who lived during the first four centuries and those of our time, say it means. This should carry with it weight; that kind of weight that all will cause honest men, who love their children, to give serious consideration to what they have accepted or what they have done in the matter of being "saved by the mercy of God, by the washing of regeneration."

REGENERATION FIRST FOUR HUNDRED YEARS

Now I shall discuss with you the meaning of 'regeneration' and its 'relation to baptism by immersion' as understood by those who

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REGENERATION FIRST FOUR HUNDRED YEARS

Now I shall discuss with you the meaning of 'regeneration' and its 'relation to baptism by immersion' as understood by those who

lived during the first four hundred years after the church had its beginning. I now introduce Dr. W. Wall, one of the world's greatest Pede-baptist of his day. He was asked this question (as recorded in The Christian System, page 191), "Did all the Christians, public and private, and all the Christian writers from Barnabas to the times of Pelagius (419) as far as you know, continue to use the term REGENERATE as only applicable to immersion?" Dr. Wall's answer was "The Christians did, in all ancient times, continue the use of this name 'regenerate' for baptism; so that they never use the word 'regenerate' or 'born again' but that they mean or denote by it baptism." Dr. Wall further says, "For to baptize they used the following words: to regenerate, to renew, to sanctify. Sometimes they call it the seal; and frequently, illumination as it is also called, Hebrews 6:4; and sometimes initiation." St. Augustine, not less than a hundred times, expresses baptized by the word sanctified.

JOHN 3:5

Let us now see what this noted scholar has to say about John 3:5. We shall see that all of them understand John 3:5 and Titus 3:5 to have the same meaning with respect to baptism. The question is asked, "Pray, Doctor, have you examined all the primitive writers from the death of John down to the fifth century?" Dr. Wall's answer was, "I have." Then this question asked him, "And will you explicitly avow what was the established and universal view of all Christians, public and private, for four hundred years from the nativity of the Messiah, on the import of the saying (John 3:5), 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God?'" The Doctor answered, "There is not any one Christian writer of any antiquity in any language but who understands it of baptism."

Another great scholar says (Christian System, page 174, following quotation) "that John 3:5 and Titus 3:5 refer to immersion, is the judgement of all the learned Catholics and Protestants of every name under heaven." Another scholar says, "regeneration, as detached from baptism, never entered into any creed before the seventeenth century." The seventeenth century was about the beginning of all this denominational confusion that has resulted in so many conflicting religions of today. "The authors and finishers of the Westminster creed," upon being asked "What is baptism?" quoted John 3:5 and Titus 3:5 to prove baptism is a bath or washing in water and a "sign of remission of sins." Of this number, there were one hundred twenty what are called "divines;" ten lords; and twenty commissioners of the Parliament of England. So we are now able to tie together the two great passages, John 3:5 and Titus 3:5 as referring to the same thing, "baptism," and Titus 3:5 being used interchangeably with regeneration by the scholars of the religious world for seventeen hundred years after Christ. This being true, then the "washing or bath of regeneration"

can mean nothing else other than "baptism." Baptism is therefore the "washing" of "regeneration."

My friends, what is there in all the Bible comparable to a "washing" or a "bathing" or a "bath" other than in water baptism? Was it not the apostle of our Lord who wrote in 1 Peter 3:21 of baptism as follows, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save you, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ?" I ask you, what did he mean here by the expression, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh" when he referred to their baptism? Only one thing it could mean! When they were baptised it was in water and being completely covered in the water it had, to those who did not know what was taking place, the impression of one taking a bath to wash off the filth of his body. Here is the identical picture of baptism as a "bath;" as a washing;" as a "bathing," exactly as these scholars say (John 3:5 and Titus 3:5) was so understood and practiced in baptism for seventeen centuries. To you who are teaching that after Paul was converted, water baptism ceased and no mention of it can be found and that now it is Holy Spirit baptism, you would do well to study the statement made here by the apostles of the Lord some thirty years after Paul had been preaching. Here Peter is still connecting baptism with water. Here he is showing that what they were doing in being baptized was an act that resembled a man's taking a bath in water to remove the filth from his body. No such argument, as is being made by these modern teachers of our day, striving with all their power, to eliminate water baptism from God's plan of salvation, after the conversion of Paul could have been deduced from Peter's statement found here in 1 Peter 3:21.

CONCLUSION

As I conclude this lesson concerning the meaning of "washing of regeneration" in Titus 3:5, I wish to call to your attention this fact: the "washing of regeneration" and the "renewing of the Holy Spirit" are two different acts but both are essential in our being saved by the "mercy of God." No where in all your Bible accounts of the operation of the Spirit is there anything connected with the spirit comparable to man's taking a bath in water to be cleansed of the filth of his body. This being true then the baptism spoken of by Peter could only refer to water baptism, not to Spirit baptism at all, and since this "washing of regeneration" means the "bath of regeneration" or baptism, it follows without successful contradiction that baptism becomes a vital part of our salvation by the mercy of God, as taught by Paul, for Paul says, "But according to his mercy he saved us, BY the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit."

Another thing now we have found; this "washing of regeneration" is not considered a part of man's works, our works, nor works of righteousness which we have done, that would obligate God to save

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Another thing now we have found; this "washing of regeneration" is not considered a part of man's works, our works, nor works of righteousness which we have done, that would obligate God to save

just as positively declares that God, by His mercy, has saved us by this "washing of regeneration," which we have found means water baptism and was never taught otherwise for seventeen centuries after Christ. No longer, therefore, can we cry, "baptism is a part of our righteousness" and is as "filthy rags" for here that accusation is plainly refuted. It is a part of God's plan of mercy; of God's righteousness by which He is saving the world. Deny it if you will; reject it if you must; but one thing remember, when you do you have rejected the merciful plan of God by which He is saving the world. The "water" of and the "washing" of John 3:5 and Titus 3:5 can mean nothing other than water baptism, which act is applied to a penitent believer only, never an innocent baby. It is a burial, a washing, a bathing, a bath; not a mere sprinkling of a few drops of water upon the candidate. Baptism is something we obey, Acts 2:38, Acts 10:48, and Acts 22:16; not something that is forced upon us against our will, while we are not old enough to even know what it is.

But be listening to our next lesson as I conclude our investigation on Titus 3:5 continuing to give you many outstanding scholars of the religious world as to its meaning. Remember Christ, not man, gave the command for us to believe in Him: Christ, not man, gave the command for us to repent of our sins; Christ, not man, gave the command for us to be baptized, with His personal promise that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" and that He would be with those who so teach "always even to the end of the world," Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-49; and Mark 16:15-16. When man comes therefore, believing, repenting of sins, and is baptized, acknowledging his Lord, he is then "regenerated — made a new creature — born again," and having been renewed by the Holy Spirit, his regeneration is complete and he has been saved by the mercy of God. And now I close with this prayer in the name of Christ, our Lord: May God bless you that you may submit to the "washing of regeneration," and the "renewing of the Holy Spirit," that God by His mercy and by His grace may save you, for without this "washing of regeneration — this bath of regeneration — this baptism, which IS this washing of regeneration," man is lost, your Bible being true.



March 15, 1960

I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to express my appreciation for the television broadcast in this area. The two films shown so far are both well done and convincing. There are several million souls in this metropolitan district, and surely, there must be some that will give themselves to the Lord when they see and understand what they must do to be saved. May our Father bless this method of spreading the gospel.

HAVE YOU BEEN REGENERATED?

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. Harper

Radio Sermon No. 433

May 15, 1960

Thank you and greetings friends across the nation and around the world where my voice is being heard today. The setting for our subject today, "Have You Been Regenerated?" is taken from Titus 3:5 where Paul says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Here Paul explains how God, according to His "mercy" saves us, and by His "grace" justifies us, and makes us "heirs" according to the "hope of eternal life." Whatever this "washing of regeneration" is, it is not considered as a part of "our righteousness;" nor "works" of our own. It is made a part of God's "goodness;" of God's "mercy;" and of "God's grace" therefore of "God's righteousness," by which He saves us. Paul says in Romans 10:2-3, in his prayer for Israel, "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, for they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God." It is evident that the expression "washing of regeneration" in Titus 3:5 cannot be a part of man's righteousness, which is not according to knowledge, as stated by Paul; it cannot be a part of the "righteousness" by which Paul declares in Titus 3:5 God did not save us, for your Bible expressly states that God by His mercy has saved us "by this washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." From Titus 3:4-5 we find that God was not obligated to save man because of any righteous act of man; that man did not by his own righteousness, his own goodness, place God under obligation to man to save him. Therefore, this salvation was purely an act of goodness; of mercy; of grace upon the part of God. This grace now saves us however, "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit" whatever this expression means. From this we see that man is not saved by grace alone without any obligation upon man's part, but that grace saves man "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." It shall be my good pleasure now to discuss with you the meaning of this "washing of regeneration." If we can arrive at the proper understanding of what this "washing of regeneration" in Titus 3:5 is, then we clear away much of the confusion that exists in the religious world on the subject of regeneration. I feel that when you hear what the scholars of the religious world from the first century

until now, have to say about its meaning in Titus 3:5 that it shall be so shocking a revelation to your minds that you shall wonder why you have never discovered these great truths before.

WHAT IS REGENERATION?

Have you ever asked yourself the question, what is regeneration? Regeneration is not some mysterious experience that can't be explained. It isn't some "better felt than told" something. All such expressions are but the confused state of a temporarily upset emotional feeling that closes our hearts and minds to an honest and intelligent investigation of its true meaning. Many use the word incorrectly, as separated from the "new birth" of John 3:5; as different in its meaning from such expressions as "newness of life" in Romans 6:4. A truly regenerated people are those saved; washed; and sealed by the blood of Christ. We do not speak of a "generation of people being wiped out," who have never lived. Again when we speak of a "new generation of people living at a certain place;" we are not speaking of "unborn babies" who have never lived. Should we so do we would corrupt the true meaning of the word for when we refer to a "generation" of people, we refer to people who have been born and who actually live. Now just so in Titus 3:5. It is wrong to say, "I have been regenerated and born again" trying to make a distinction between the two expressions. The truly regenerated person of Titus 3:5 is that person who is "born again" as in John 3:5. Were regeneration not to mean this then you would have regenerated people living until death, yet never having been delivered, and lost. Such would be absurd. Such prostrates the truth of Titus upon the altar of complete confusion and leaves the minds of men to grope their way in midnight darkness. I shall now show you that the regenerated man of Titus 3:5 is the man "born again;" that it is the act completed; the salvation of man.

DR. LINSKI—COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS

Dr. Linski, one of the great scholars of the Lutheran church, in his comments on this verse has this to say, "It seems to make little difference whether these genitives are regarded as possessive: 'bath belonging to regeneration;' or quantitative; 'regenerating bath;' or objective: 'bath effecting regeneration.' Any one of these genitives retains the main point, namely that this bath and this regeneration plus the renewing are inseparably connected; where the bath is, there the regeneration and the renewing are." So, no matter how one may try to use this expression you cannot separate them and have one "regenerated" but not "renewed." You can't separate them and have one "regenerated," before and without the "bath of regeneration." the completed act: the child born,

all three acts mentioned here are present in man's salvation by the mercy and grace of God.

WEBSTER'S NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY

That you may know this is what scholars of all faiths have so understood and those, possibly, who are not religious, I now read to you at length from Webster's International Dictionary as to the meaning of "regenerated" and "regeneration." I want you to know it means the completed act. He says it means "spiritually reborn or converted; become a Christian or Christians—the entering into a new and spiritual life—regeneration is often referred to symbolically as the new birth, as being born again, or as being born of water and Spirit, to SIGNIFY THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM by which one is reborn as it were into a spiritual family, the Christian church. Historically, REGENERATION by BAPTISM has been regarded as the bestowal by God of an indelible spiritual mark or 'character' of the soul." Here he gives its true meaning, that of baptism; also its meaning as understood by the religious historians through the ages past. He shows that they understand regeneration as a completed act; that act by which man is born again; becomes a new creature; and not just some mysterious act of the Spirit that after regeneration, leaves an unborn child to die, regenerated by God's Spirit, but never born.

Again, Webster shows that this "bath of regeneration" has been understood by the historians and the scholars of the religious word to mean "baptism." It is this "bath of regeneration" meaning baptism, that the world is rebelling against. If it means baptism then there must be some changes made across the nation and through out the world, for baptism is being attacked on every hand as being nonessential to salvation. Men are teaching that they have been regenerated and born again, before and without baptism. Not so if the scholars for seventeen centuries after Christ or the church people during all these centuries correctly understood its meaning, for they all taught as my lesson today, that the "washing of regeneration" is baptism. Baptism separate and apart from regeneration, from the new birth is of RECENT origin, as compared to the nearly two thousand years that have elapsed since Pentecost. This you need to know. One may say, "I do not care what the scholars say, I know when I was saved; I know how I was saved; I know when the regenerating power of the Spirit came into my heart and saved me without any 'bath or washing of regeneration;' without any baptism; I would not give what I feel within my heart for all the Bibles; for all the scholars."

My good people, honestly, I have heard all such remarks from the time I was a child. We can't throw aside the actual meaning of these terms; we just can't reject the truth of the Bible because it contradicts what we have been taught for generations. Churches of Christ have

tried so very hard to get the people to see what the true meaning of Titus 3:5 is.

DR. LINSKI

Let us hear Dr. Linski again. He says "To reject baptism is to confess the absence of regeneration. Baptism seals regeneration for the adults—." Again he says, "baptism is a bath of regeneration and renewing, in both of which the Holy Spirit is the actor. That is why God could use baptism as such a means; why baptism is by no means a mere symbol or picture, but a sure means of divine grace." No my good people, baptism is not just a "mere picture" of salvation before men. Paul plainly says that whatever this "washing of regeneration" is that God by His mercy has saved us by it. Dr. Linski asks this question, and it is extremely timely, "How can any man think Paul would say, 'God save us by a picture of regeneration'." Since therefore my friends this "washing of regeneration" means nothing other than water baptism, then if man is not baptized, he is not saved by the mercy of God, he is not saved by the grace of God, else Paul was misled by the Spirit, for the Spirit directed him to write in verse five, "According to his mercy he saved us, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit" and in verse seven he says they were "justified by his grace." This "washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit" IS salvation by His mercy! This IS justification by His grace! Baptism being this "washing of regeneration," then baptism becomes a part of God's "salvation by his mercy;" a part of God's "justification by grace." When the damnation of man's soul, and that of his children are the price to be paid, we cannot let prejudice; we cannot let pride, we cannot let relatives, cause us to be afraid to accept the salvation made possible by the "mercy of God" which mercy says Paul has "saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit," and remember, this "washing of regeneration," is baptism. Baptism is the only act in all your Bible that resembles a bath. Why not submit to it when we know our blessed Lord was baptized Himself, and gave the command in Matthew 28: 18-20, "Go teach all nations baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The command came from heaven. Paul says in Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12 that it is a "burial and a resurrection." This is how your Bible reads, my good people. If we are to follow it, then it is time the world is beginning to do just that. Three thousand were baptized on Pentecost; are we better than they? Saul was baptized; are we better than he? Cornelius, Lydia, those comprising the church in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, Colosse, Macedonia, were all baptized; all received this "washing of regeneration;" this "bath of regeneration." Yea, even the Hebrew Christians to whom the letter of Hebrews was written had their "bodies washed with pure water," Hebrews 10:22.

and save us without this "bath of regeneration" which he demanded of every one of these? Yes, I ask, "have you been regenerated?" Have you had this "bath of regeneration?" this "washing of regeneration?" this "baptism of regeneration?" or as Dr. Linski says, "this regenerating bath?" No "washing or bath;" no regeneration; no renewing of the Spirit; no salvation by God's mercy. This is what Paul here in verse seven called being "justified by his grace." Reject this "washing of regeneration" and you reject God's saving mercy — His saving grace; for it plainly reads that God, "according to his mercy hath saved us BY the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." Now why all this? Verse seven tells us, "that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." My dear friends! If we reject this "washing, this bath of regeneration," which the scholars for 1700 years have taught was baptism; this washing which is even to this day acknowledged by the leading scholars of the world to mean baptism, if we reject it now, we have rejected the mercy and grace of God; we forfeit our right as heirs of God; we lose our hope of eternal life. Remember He saved us by His mercy; He justified us by His grace; we become heirs of God; and possess the hope of eternal life, says Paul, "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." Not one of these without the other.

OTHER SCHOLARS

Before me are many more great scholars of the religious world who agree with those I have quoted today. Among them, John Calvin, founder of the Presbyterian church; Adam Clark, great Methodist commentator; Hovey, Baptist; and McKnight, Presbyterian, and others. Let me now quote to you from the learned Dr. Mofitt, from his book, *Grace In The New Testament*. "After the kindness (or goodness) and love of God our Savior he saved us, not for any good deeds of ours but out of his own pity for us by the WATER—that means regeneration—and renewal of the Holy Spirit—" Dr. Goodspeed in his translation says, "Through the bath of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." The New Catholic Translation says, "saved us through the bath of regeneration and the renewal by the Holy Spirit." The Twentieth Century Translation says, "He saved us by that washing which was a new birth to us and by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit." Last is from Waymouth's translation, "By means of the bath of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." To you theological students and professors, these modern scholars, together with Dr. Linski, should challenge your honest investigation of this subject. These men are not to be relegated to the background.

I close now by asking you in the light of such scholarship for, lo these nineteen centuries with one voice declaring that the "washing of regeneration" of Titus 3:5 means baptism, Have You Truly Been — — — — — taught by Paul? Remember regeneration: new birth:

salvation; remission of sins; heirs of God; newness of life; are all the same blessing from God. They give us this "hope of eternal life." Why reject the truth? Why not come now believing the Christ; repenting of your sins; confessing the name of Christ; be baptized for the remission of your sins, remembering that this "washing of regeneration" of Titus 3:5 is baptism. I close by quoting to you again Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he hath saved us,—yes BY—the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." Come, come today as penitent believers and receive this "washing of regeneration" which we have proven is baptism and become heirs of God that you may be saved by His mercy and by His grace that you may have the "hope of eternal life" promised in Titus 3:4-7, is my prayer in the holy name of Christ our Lord.

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March 30

Dear Friends:

Enclosed is a small check to help with the Herald of Truth. I hope to send you more later.

We have been getting the HERALD OF TRUTH on TV for just four weeks. This new series is marvelous! I thought the second one—in which the reporter interviewed Brother Baxter—was especially suitable for this area, since very few people have even heard of the church.

I am a recent graduate of a Christian college and am teaching in the public schools here. I have several friends who are not Christians, who have been watching the program, and are very impressed. Several also have attended church services with me and asked many questions as a result of the program.

I am so thrilled that at last we can get the program up here! It is doing a tremendous amount of good and our hope and prayer is that it will continue after the thirteen-week contract.

It is a pleasure to contribute to such a wonderful work.

Sincerely in Christ,
Sally Rogers

WHAT IS WRONG WITH DANCING?

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. Harper

Radio Sermon No. 434

May 22, 1960

I was visiting in a home one time and this conversation took place. They said to me that a friend of theirs, whose name they called, had a very good friend in a certain city where this man visited. When in that city he would come by to see his friend. His friend began trying to get him to join the church to which he belonged. This man told him he was not ready just then. He went home but returned again, and again visited his friend. His friend still insisted on his coming into the church of which he was a member. The man said, I am not ready yet to join any church. I like to play poker. His friend replied: Well, if that is all, come right in; I like to play poker. He went back home not a member of his friend's church. Again he returned and a third time his friend approached him to join the church. This time he said, I can't come into the church for I like to go to dances. To this his friend said, Do not let that bother you, our church has a dance hall. The man still refrained from coming into the church. Not long after this he was back again and his friend this time **INSISTED** on his coming into the church with them, telling him that he **NEEDED** to be in **SOME** church. This time the man, believing he was not prepared for membership in any church said, But I must tell you this: I can't come into the church for I like to drink and before he could go further his friend said, we have our men's fellowship meetings in which some times our preacher drinks with us. Don't let that keep you out. The man was quiet for a while, then said to his friend, "I actually believe you would let me die and go to hell." This ended the affair. The man out of the church believed church members should not gamble, get drunk, and dance. All this world does and such is condemned, as he believed and as we believe, by the Bible. The Devil and all his works advertise gambling, drunkenness, and dance halls; not Christ!

DANCING A SIN

Today I am digressing from my usual line of discussions to discuss with you a most needed lesson, "What Is Wrong With Dancing?" Christianity, we believe is not compatible with dancing. The one is contrary to the other. A number of years ago I was conducting a meeting in a certain city. I went home with some people for lunch. They had quite a large crowd for lunch. We soon began discussing the dance. This certain person, a married lady attended the dances. I had spoken against it publicly. She took me to task for she wanted to dance. The discussion moved along in a rather spirited manner. A lull came and

other things were discussed, but finally the discussion drifted into that of the elders of the church. This lady did not especially care for one certain elder and she said, Brother Harper, he can't serve as an elder; his son attends dances; he was at the dance the other night. She saw what she had done when I asked, "Why can't he serve if the dance is all right? Why should not his son attend as well as you and yours?" That broke up the conversation. She had lost her own argument.

In a city east of the Mississippi River, some thirty years ago, I was conducting a meeting. Across from the meeting house, the Girl's Dance Club had rented a hall for a dance to be held during our meeting. Some of the leaders in that dance club were from the families of that congregation. Of course, I preached about the evils of the dance; I did not abuse the children, but tried to show wherein I felt it was wrong. The mothers said to me, Brother Harper, this dance is chaperoned. There will be no drinking; they will not be allowed to sit out in their cars; We mothers are selecting parents to look after our daughters. I said to them this, You can no more chaperone a dance than you can continue to stroke the head of a rattlesnake without the snake after while hanging his fangs into your arm with its poisonous venom. They were upset at me, but not for long.

The next morning I was handed the whiskey bottles thrown from the cars of those who were at that dance. Things went on that broke the hearts of some of those mothers. I took the whiskey bottles that night and spoke out against it with a fervor that was caused to be felt. Years passed and one day I met a father and mother from this place who said this to me, Brother Harper, we lived to regret the stand we took against you, for we lived to see some of the daughters who were rushed by anxious mothers into those dance clubs while they were young, driving miles to dances and not coming home until way late in the morning hours. They said you would be welcome there now. That is the history of many who follow this kind of recreation or pastime.

I am not unmindful of the fact that scores of you listening to me have attended dances and have come out of them without having made too permanent a mistake, in acts of this kind, but the danger is too great as I shall show you for any person to participate in such. I know many young people have gone to a dance or two or maybe more and have, seemingly, not been hurt so far as we outwardly can detect, but they have been warned and have not been allowed to follow this kind of practice too long. This you must keep in mind.

Says one, The square dance is all right for there is no CONTACT of the BODY. Now my good people, I was reared in the days when square dance was in its bloom. It was there you found the roughnecks with their whiskey bottles, and it was there they had their fights.

pulpits were long and loud against such practices. I remember the little church in our little town withdrew from those who would not cease such activities. I was a young boy, but I never forgot that action. Your public square dances today are fraught with just such dangers for it is there you often find the drinking and the troublemakers. Just now I think of a man who, after hearing my lesson on "Dancing In Our Public Schools," came to me rather enraged and said, Brother Harper, I will agree with you on the modern dance where the men take the women and girls in their arms and hold them tight to their bodies, but said he, I operate a "square-dance" and we do not have such where I am. I asked him how long he had been operating this place. Not very long said he. I asked him why he began this dance hall there. Then I got the truth. He said he operated one in another town but it got so rough with those who drank and wanted to cause trouble that he gave it up and moved to this other city. He proved my point and then he said, "I guess you are right. Dancing, drinking, and trouble go too much together for the youth of our nation to be caught in the clutches of the dance craze." Men must speak out against its evils. Many schools have outlawed the fraternities and sororities because of the drinking being carried on in them by the youth of our schools. I could continue for the entire time of this broadcast relating actual happenings with which I am familiar but I want to give you what the Bible says on this vital subject and also the record of men who have operated dance halls and those who have interviewed heart-broken girls. I am happy to take my stand today on the side that Christianity and Dancing are not compatible.

GALATIANS 5:19-21

Some will say, You can't find where the Bible condemns dancing. Now suppose I do find that, What will you do about it? Will you continue? Will you try to evade it? If you have your Bibles, turn to Galatians 5:19-20 and follow with me as I read from your Bible to you. It says "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, LASCIVIOUSNESS, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, DRUNKENNESS, REVELINGS, and such like." Was Paul in the letter upholding the doing of such things? These are given as contrasted with the "fruit of the Spirit," the next verse. The things just read are not compatible with Christianity. They are contrary to Christianity; they are the very opposite.

MEANING OF THE TERMS

One is ready to say, You never found the word DANCE in these verses. Let us see if it is included in these verses. The definition of

"wanton, lewd, lustful - tending to produce lewd emotions; the synonym of licentious, lecherous, salacious - the antonym of CHASTE." The word "lasciviousness" is a much more far reaching word than the word dance; it goes deeper; it destroys the dance at its very tap root. Nothing that tends to stir the lewd lustful emotions of men and women is allowed by your Bible. There lives not a man on earth who is a normal healthy man who can continuously take into his arms and hold close to his body a beautiful woman and not after a while find one that does not stir the lustful desires of his nature. The man who says it never affects him in this way, I am convinced, is either dead physically to such emotions or is a liar. You may overcome them and subdue them and never surrender to them, but never to have them, if you continue this kind of pastime, we all know is not a normal reaction of either the male or the female. God did not make us this way! The desire for each other is not sinful when that desire is directed in the right way; it is beautiful and completes the true happiness of each and is pleasing unto God, not just the dance only, but that which produces the unlawful lusts of human passion which many times is produced by the dance, is here condemned by your Bible. You men listening to me today; we are not made of stone who speak thus. We are human beings made up of the same emotions as you are. We know how you are made. We know your desires. We know the dance creates such emotions, else why do multitudes dress as they do when going to the dance?

REVELINGS

Again the word "révelings" forever forbids the dance. The original meaning of this word is likewise an all-inclusive term. It primarily means the all night festivals where men and women were drinking, dancing, and carrying on as they do at our night clubs, dance halls, and road houses. In this, dancing of course usually played its degrading part. So the true significance of this word includes, not only the dance, but all such acts that would excite to unlawful desires the passions of those participating. My friends, whatever the word "revelings" left out, the expression "such like" would certainly include. The modern dance, by its "fruits" I shall now show is condemned. Its vital association with "lasciviousness" and "revelings and such like," cannot be dissociated. They are a vital part of each other.

BY ITS FRUITS

In Matthew 7:19-20, Christ says, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." If the Bible did not speak out so plainly against such worldliness that we might know such is wrong, then we have still another way of judging them as to their

ciety, especially our youth. Let us see if the dance halls produce good fruit or bad? If good fruit, then God would not have condemned it. I now invite your attention to the testimony, not of preachers, but of those cursed by the dance; of the men who operate the dance halls. They should know if the fruit is good or bad.

TESTIMONIALS

A prominent doctor reveals a letter which said "Monday will see me out of this world forever unmissed, unloved, unmourned. O, that someone really cared; that God could reach me now and help." A second letter to this man says, "This letter will be sent to you one week later, one week after I am dead, for tonight I cease to exist. I am leaving this with friends to be sent one week from now. My object? To speak to you as though from the grave and that what I say will be the more impressive. I have not always been degraded. I once knew the price and joy of a surrendered life, and good society; people of refinement and education were my friends; but the pleasure of the world allured me, the DANCE, the CARDS, the WINE, and I was swept off my feet into the whirling water of sin and suffering and now SUICIDE. Mr. - - - -, this is to you my very last word. I am going to tell you why I am going to kill myself - I am a prospective mother - the only decent thing left to do is to put my soul out of the way," Signed, A LOST SOUL. The fruit of the dance, "good?" These shall not think so as they spend eternity with the lost.

WHAT IS THE END

I close with Paul's statement in Galatians 5:19-20 which I read in the beginning. Here it says of those who practice such things "they shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Your Bible says in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death" and Christ said of that tree that brings forth evil fruit "it shall be cut down and cast into fire" and certainly I have established the fact that the fruit of the dance is evil. I ask you now, is Christianity compatible with Dancing? or is "dancing compatible with Christianity?" Do they both go hand in hand? Be listening to my next broadcast when I shall discuss with you the subject, "The Tragedies of the Dance." I should like to close with this final statement: to those of you who are teaching our youth that once saved none of these things can cause them to be lost to the churches that have your gambling, dancing, and drinking parties, I beg of you to cease such soul destroying doctrines and practices and join hands with us to show that the road of such leads many to be damned. Will you not come believing in your Lord, turn from your sins, confess your blessed Lord before men and be baptized and cease your opposition to the Lord's command to be baptized, knowing the promise from Him that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" is my prayer in the name of Christ our Lord

TRAGEDY OF THE DANCE

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. Harper

Radio Sermon No. 435

May 29, 1960

My friends, words fail us in trying to express to you our grateful thanks for your letters and your continued fellowship with us in this great work. We wish to say to all of you who have had fellowship with us in this great work, Thanks to you from our hearts. To the congregations that have remembered us in this effort to reach the lost with the gospel, let us say, Thank you, for without the help of all, this program could not be heard on radio and television by a potential audience of some seventy-five to one hundred million people in this country and other nations of this earth.

OUR LESSON

I am continuing our lesson on dancing. The subject for today is, "The Tragedy of the Dance." We make no apology for our opposition to the dance halls of today. We are willing to defend our convictions regarding the dance being wrong and in the wrong direction. We believe what we preach and are willing to defend it for the sake of those whom we believe are destroyed by the dance halls of our day. We do not believe that the dance hall is one of morality's greatest benefactors in the development of purity of character in the youth of our nation. We believe that the dance hall is sinful and contrary to the principles of the blessed Master. We believe it should be outlawed by all churches for we are convinced that its fruit is bad, as I shall endeavor to show in this lesson. We believe that the dance is not only condemned by the Bible, but that it is one of Satan's most deceptive tools of destruction. We believe the way of life that is evidenced by the modern dance constitutes one of the paths to the destruction of our cultured civilization in America.

CHURCHES LEAD THE WAY

Just think for a moment with me of the tragic result that can and may happen when churches build dance halls; have beer parties; drunken beer parties; where churches have gambling devices at which our youth of today are taught to dance, drink, and gamble. Just whom do we think we are fooling? The Lord knows where it may lead; the Devil is happy as he sees his most deceptive devices being displayed by so called Christians. The Devil is certainly not going to stop our youth from drinking, dancing, and gambling. If the church does not, if the parents do not, then who shall lead them away from such sinful activities? My friends, if churches may sponsor dance halls, gambling

parties, beer parties, where men posing as ministers of the gospel, and leaders of the church, become intoxicated, even to becoming drunk, then please tell me what is wrong? If all this is Christian then tell me, what is Christianity opposed to? Are professed ministers of the gospel, who get drunk, who are or may be confirmed alcoholics fit to direct our youthful men in the armed services of our country? Can you picture a chaplain in the army drunk, or even drinking intoxicating liquors and then officiating at a religious service for our young men? It seems to me that a sane and sensible look into this would show us why we are said to have some seventy million adults drinking intoxicating liquor today: when some five to one hundred million of these are alcoholics. In a western city it was stated over television the other day that out of seventy thousand people, there were ten thousand of these problem drinkers and this in a city that is supposed to be blessed with three religious schools. Let church people of all faiths quit drinking, stop visiting the dance floors; and cease their gambling and the underworld would have to go out of business. Until churches clean up; take a stand against such practices; and exercise discipline against all who practice such, be that person a spiritual advisor or leader, this nation I believe is doomed to destruction. I cannot but believe that a nation under the absolute control of a religion that would lead its youth to drink, gamble, and dance, controlled by ministers who become, many times alcoholics; who are noted for their gambling abilities; and who defend the modern dance; that nation will in time deteriorate. History is too replete with such nations having done just that. It is my conviction that at any time churches ignore these Bible warnings and continue to practice such that the nation of which they are a part will soon lose its freedoms. We believe therefore it is time for Christian people to rise up and cry out against such practice and to safe guard our nation from any power, religious or secular; at home or abroad; that would lead our nation to indulge in such sinful and soul destroying practices. Corrupt Christianity will corrupt the church and there is no end to the depths to which we may descend.

WHAT CONNECTION?

You may ask, what connection does this have with your subject, "Tragedies of the Dance?" Just this! I am pointing out that churches that lead our youth and our nation into such Bible condemned practices are leading our youth into cesspools of spiritual and moral decay and shall have to assume the responsibility for the downfall of the society which they have created. Churches of Christ practice no such and we are inviting you who listen to join hands with us in combatting this destructive influence that is certain to destroy the liberties we now enjoy unless stopped. We make no apology for this stand, but rather

... of coming to the defense of Christianity.

We had better be safe than sorry. Read histories, look at the nations about us where freedom as we know it is not permitted, OPEN YOUR EYES NOW!

TESTIMONIES

I now give you the testimonies of those who should know. An ex-dancing master said "out of two hundred girls who were soon to become unmarried mothers, one hundred sixty three went down by way of the dance." Another statement says, "Out of twenty five thousand women in a certain city, that three fourths of them were led to ruin through dancing." A matron of a home for fallen girls said, "Seven-tenths of the girls received, fell through the dance and its influence." In a certain city it is said that forty thousand women live the life of infamy which usually ends in death and many times suicide within six years. Three fourths of these went down by the dance. Tragedies of the dance! Churches leading our youth to practice dancing and drinking with the above testimonies showing the danger of such? Never the church to which I belong. It is said that in a certain city the vice commission asked three hundred girls, "What led you to do wrong?" 85% of them said, "My first step wrong was caused by the modern dance." The president of a southern college said, "The dance has contributed many disgraced girls to this world. Many boys have lost their honor and character in a dance hall. Girls lose virtue and purity in dance halls, but never one has been made purer." He then adds, "Those who remain moral do so in spite of the dance; not because of it." This same man says, "Every contribution that the dance has ever made has been on the wrong side of the moral ledger. Certainly we do not want to sponsor anything in our homes or anywhere else that has carried girls to homes of prostitution, that has carried boys and girls to immorality; that has been a companion of whiskey, gambling, and criminality. Investigators, who care nothing for religion have found this to be true also." My friends, read your federal reports on juvenile delinquency; read Mr. Hoover's reports of the breakdown in our control of this nation's activities and know that the statements just read have to be true. Dancing, gambling, and drinking just can't be compatible with Christianity. They just have to be opposite, the one to the other. Another dance hall operator says, "We are all men. We know the natural desires of youth. We know that sex is the strongest impulse planted in the human race. You can picture the effects on a boy or girl of eighteen to twenty when this hunger is keenest, when knowledge and experience are lacking in the foundation of judgment of one of these dances. Yet we find thousands of boys and girls dancing this way whose parents look on complacently—there is then but one reason for its popularity. That reason is sex appeal. I hasten to assure you that I do not believe that dancers always are conscious

this is the reason they enjoy this position and the steps that go with it. But this lack of consciousness is merely an added factor of danger." End of quotation.

TEENTOWN

A very dear friend of mine visited with his friend "Teentown" in a certain southern city. He said he visited this teen town and took with him a brother preacher. He asked him what he thought of it, and this was his comment. He said it was a young honky-tonk. He said the men behind teentown were unselfish men who seek to better their community, but that they were deceived. He said that in reality teentown is a training shop for dance halls and night clubs. He said "when these children get out of their teens where are they going to dance? Even before they are twenty one and they being infected with the dance craze, they desire better floors and better music. Where will they go? The night club and the road house of course. Fathers and mothers who permit their daughters and sons to go to teentown need not be surprised when they learn they have started going to night clubs and drinking." The man who made these comments was a good friend of mine. He has since passed away (but he spoke the truth).

A prominent speaker, speaking before a certain association said, "Dance halls are the modern nurseries of the divorce courts; training shops of prostitution, and graduating schools of infamy and vice." Now, I know you are ready to say, Brother Harper, this man is too radical.

I know that not all who dance go that way. He knew that. He was not saying that. He was but pointing out the fact that most of those who have gone that way started at the dance hall and had it not been for the dance hall they would never have been lead into that way of life. Therefore, it was the training shop for all such. These records I am giving today all prove that his statement is true.

TRAGIC THIS!

A certain dance hall operator who found his sister destroyed by this way of life was caused to surrender it for the way of life much better. His sister was young and beautiful. He had warned her of these dangers. She came up missing. He received a telegram from her. He went immediately. He found her dying, the victim of a dreadful disease. Standing about her were little girls ruined as she was. They were crying about her bedside as she lay dying. She had been trapped and sold into white slavery. As she lay dying she said to her brother, "It's too late for me, but you may save the other fellow's sister." He promised her he would give up the dance hall and surrender his heart to the task of saving other girls; other sisters; that he would try to undo the wrong he had committed as best he could. This was not the story of a preacher, but of a dance hall operator whose sister had been destroyed by his own way of life.

The fruit of the dance good? Nay, my friends! From its fragrant blossom of deception comes the doom of death to thousands of our young girls and boys, if allowed to mature to its full fruition.

ITS FRUITS

In our discussion of these lessons, we have found the dance floor has led to drinking; to immorality; to diseased death of our youth; and to suicide. It has led thousands of our young boys and girls to lives ruined and many of them are now, as I am speaking, behind prison doors and homes of correction. And then to think that churches will sponsor dancing, drinking, and gambling with this sinful, heartbreaking, body and soul destroying aftermath that is so destructive to the youth of our nation and finally to our nation itself.

OUR BIBLE

On I could go for hours with such examples, but now I ask you to listen to your Bible. In I John 2:5 your Bible says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." Then the Bible says, "The world passes away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth—yes, doeth—the will of God abideth forever." Your Bible says in James 4:4, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore is a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

My friends, the shame of that way of life that is characterized by drinking, dancing, and worldliness is seen in Daniel chapter 5. Here is a living example of the definition of 'lasciviousness, revelings, and such like.' At this drunken brawl appeared the hand-writing on the wall. They had been 'weighed in the balance and found wanting.' That same hand will one day write again on the walls of eternity and those who are drinking, gambling, and dancing are going to be weighed in the balances and found wanting. In Matthew 14 is the fatal tragedy of the dance. Here a young girl dances before her step-father—who is her uncle, a licentious man living with his own brother's wife. This immodest dance cost the life of one of the world's greatest preachers, John the Baptist, because he dared to condemn this adulterous marriage. This is the tragedy of the way of life I am condemning today. This dance so stirred the old king's heart until he promised this girl anything to the half of his kingdom. She asked for the head of John the Baptist. You will remember that Christ said in Matthew 7:16, "Ye shall know a tree by its fruits." The fruit of the "dancing tree" I have proven to be corrupt. Christ said a "corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit" Matthew 7:19. Yes, by their fruits ye shall know them. Paul says in Romans 12:2, "Be not conformed to this world" and in

Romans 6:23, your Bible says, "The wages of sin is death." This is eternal death, that of the soul separated from God.

Last, but not least I close with Paul's warning to the churches in Galatia. In Galatians chapter 5:16,17, the Bible says, "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other." Now in these verses is found almost word for word, the thought of my lessons on the dance; that "dancing is not compatible with Christianity" for the dance is of the flesh. That this is true listen to Paul's statement in Verse 19, "Now the works of the flesh are these" and then he mentions specifically lasciviousness which excludes everything that even tends to stir the lewd emotions of the flesh and certainly this would eliminate the constant bodily contact of men and women and boys and girls, and in this expression he destroys the dance before it ever begins. Then in the works of the flesh he again specifically mentions revelings and such like which as an all inclusive expression not only includes such things as the dance halls and road houses, but all kinds of drunken parties where revelings and dancing and gambling and lustful desires are satisfied outside the laws of God prescribed for those who wish to be saved. Your Bible plainly says in verse 21, "that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." This was written to children of God showing to them that they also may go back into this way of life and be lost; forever lost. Yes, dancing, drinking, which is specifically mentioned here, and gambling are all of the flesh and therefore contrary to the spirit. Churches of Christ stand eternally opposed to all such and beg of you to stand with us and help us bring America back to the Bible.

CONCLUSION

I believe I have established from your Bible and from the fruits of the dance, that the dance is on the wrong side of the moral ledger and is contrary to Christianity. I beg of you young people, single, and married, to quit such things now and dedicate your young lives to Christ. Come believing in Him; repenting of your sins; and be buried with Him by baptism into death, for the remission of sins as commanded in Matthew 21:18-20; Luke 24:46; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38 and Romans 6:3-4 is my prayer for you in the name of Christ our Lord.



We have been watching your television programs, and find them excellent. They are interesting as well as instructive. Keep up

WHAT KIND OF FATHER ARE YOU?

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 536

May 6, 1962

My friends, today I am discussing a most important question -- that of fathers. If you are a father, will you keep your dial on this program until I have concluded its discussion? Are you satisfied with your role as an American father? Or, are you the kind of father your children should have? Are you really? Is the training you are giving them what it should be? Is your example before them the kind of example your son should have? Will walking in your pathway make of him a fine, honorable Christian gentleman; one who loves his family? One who is good to his wife and children, considerate of them with tenderness, yet Christian firmness? Does your presence at home relax your family? Does your being at home cause happiness in the home? Or do they dread the hour for you to come home?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

In Genesis 2:23, God having made woman and having brought her to Adam, Adam said, "This is

of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they two shall be one flesh." There can be no greater relationship between human beings than the relationship of husband and wife. They become "one flesh." Of this your Bible says in Ephesians 5: 28-31, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

How many of you respect your wives as the Lord loved and respected the church? Just as the Lord and His church -- His wife -- are united as one in this relationship, just so man and his wife are united in this beautiful closeness of one

flesh bound together in the marriage vows. They are to desire each other beyond and above everyone else in this world. They are, in their relationship, as close as the Lord and His church. The husband is to love his wife to the extent that he will give his life for her as the Lord did for the church, Ephesians 5:25. He needs to love her this way that she may be emotionally strong enough to perform her duties to him as a wife and to her children as a mother. To fail to do this, man will be lost in the day of judgment. This is a command of the Lord, not of man. Many men are inconsiderate of the wishes and desires of their wives. Seemingly they think she exists only for their satisfaction and desires. They do not consider her desires and aspirations. Men go where they please; to the places of entertainment they enjoy, and expect their wives to go along and enjoy it because they do, and they are the husband. They will have their friends, visit the homes they want to visit, go to places they like, but refuse to take their wives to the places they would give their hearts to visit, or to have their friends over some evening or call upon their friends just because the husband does not like those places

or his wife's friends do not interest him. He wonders then why she is not as happy as he wants her to be. Why, she does not just turn over the furniture getting to him when he comes home. How can she be? Do you want her to love you? Then try finding out what she likes and help her to do it and you may be surprised to find that you have the most darling little wife in the world. You may say, "I work hard day and night for my family." Maybe you do. Would you exchange places with her? Would you be willing to go through the nine months she has to endure for your babies to arrive at your home? You have no argument that she does not have. You may tell me, "I take my family to Sunday school and church every Sunday; I provide for them better than most husbands and fathers," and this you may do, but if you are inconsiderate of her and selfish to have and go only as you please; if you are ill tempered in your home, fussing, abusive, upset at every little thing that does not just exactly please you, then remember you stand guilty before the Lord for He would not so abuse His bride -- the church. I hear men say, "I just can't control my temper, Brother Harper." Only men-

tally upset people cannot control their tempers. You control them when you are with men that you dread because they can overpower you. You do this to your family only because they will take it. Will not such action admit your inability to get what you want with kindness, gentleness, and with tenderness and your resort to abuse? Do you think this makes you to appear as a real he-man? Could it be an expression of an inferiority complex? I do not mean to be hard and unkind, but I have spent 36 years trying to save broken homes; trying to keep little children from being deserted by fathers and mothers. Many children are now in jail, or the pen, or maybe on the way to the death cell because fathers and mothers would not try to adjust their lives. Parents are to blame for these poor little unfortunate children, torn as they are and now at the mercy of the courts. I would be ashamed to run off and leave my children. Why will a man abuse the girl who gave herself to him in marriage? who has gone through the shadows of death to bless his home with children? Why does his love and tenderness have to change so quickly after he has satisfied his lustful passions

and fleshly desires? God did not mean for it to be this way. Are you angry at me? If so, how is your home life? Is your home really a happy home? Are your children all happy and well adjusted in life? If not, let me tell you what I believe is the trouble. Our children are usually the product of their home life. When men and women become emotionally upset later in life, nine times out of ten you can trace it back to the fathers and mothers of those children. They were reared in a confused home atmosphere. Your child is the casualty of that condition, but usually the father or the mother had rather have his or her own way, even though it destroys the child, than to sit down with each other and say, "Mom or Dad, let us get together on how to sensibly rear our children and how to create the right Christian atmosphere for our children that they may be happy and well adjusted in life." I promise you that 90% of your child's troubles in life go back to the fact you were not agreed on how to rear your children. Usually one parent dominates the home. I just know this is true!

Now for a father or husband to be the kind of husbands or father

he should be, the wife must realize her place and not try to take over the home to boss it and make everyone do what she wants done or create a scene. I shall discuss her place in my next lesson. Do not miss it. I know where the trouble is with our children. I know where it is with our homes. I think you know. We are not willing to work out our difficulties as Christians and we drift apart rather than closer together.

FATHERS

Let us now study the kind of fathers we should be. Turn with me to Proverbs 22:6 and we read "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This is your obligation as parents. If you fail in this because of your lack of interest or your desire to have your own way and by such actions fail to so train your children, you shall answer at the judgment. We need to be caused to see these things before it is too late. I may not be able to help men and women of my age. The furrows are too deep. The scars are too many. It becomes almost too great a personal surrender and admission of our failures for us to make the necessary adjustments. Too many hard things have been

said and done. To you who are young with your families still around you let me try to help you. Read with me now Deuteronomy 6, verses 1 through 9, and we can see how, in the Old Testament times men trained their children. Time will not permit the reading of all this. Here God commanded the fathers of Israel to keep the commandments, and statutes of God and to remember His judgments. He said "which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of life." He began here with the grandfather. We know how to raise hogs, cows, sheep, or horses; how to have fine registered animals. This same rule will rear children. You begin back with the granddads. You grandfathers listening to me, did you try to teach these things to your sons? Where are your sons today and why? Now hear verse 7, "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." This was the way to train up a child. Have you grandfathers, have you fathers listening to me so taught your children? How many of you

know where to find the commandments of God, the statutes of God and the judgments God has visited upon mankind? Do you believe the Bible? Do you think God does not know how to rear children? How to train them? Now why all this? Listen you grandfathers and you fathers: Verse 20 "And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?" Now listen to a part of the answer and read the rest of it, Verse 24, "The Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, *for our good always.*" God has placed the direction of the home squarely upon the shoulders of you men. You wives should respect this and help him to be the head of the house instead of trying to browbeat him and take over the home yourselves.

Now may I ask you this question: How many of you listening to me, you fathers whose children are now gone, how many of your children ever saw you in your home reading to them the Bible? How many of them ever saw you on your knees in your home praying to God for them?

How many of our boys who now sleep in Flander's Field; who fell upon the beachheads or on battlefields in World War Two, or whose bodies now sleep in the frozen battle fields of Korea ever heard a father on his knees in the home saying, "Father, I thank You for my family; for my children; for my son or sons, and I pray You to help me to be just the kind of father I should be to walk before them — to guide their little feet aright. Father, I thank You for my wife, the mother of my children. Help us to make the kind of home our Children need." I am afraid I must say that possibly 90% or more of those boys who died for our religious freedom never saw or heard a father say "Father, I thank You for my son." The sweetest thought he could have had in his dying hour would have been a scene in his home back here in America of a father and mother on their knees praying, "Father, I thank You for my son." What would you give to relive those years now and have those precious boys and girls back home and let them hear you say, "Father, I thank You for my sons and daughters." But you say, this was in the Old Bible. Listen to Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, provoke

not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Again in Colossians 3:21, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." Yes, the New Testament places the responsibility upon the fathers. This is why you are to control your tempers and pray that your direction of your children shall be that which will bring them up, nurtured in the admonition of the Lord.

DRINKING, DANCING, GAMBLING

Now I ask you, do you feel that when you drink before your children, when you teach them to drink, when you attend the gambl-

ing dens and night clubs and dances, that you are obeying the admonition of the Lord both in the Old and New Testaments? If so, please read today Galatians 5:19-26. Yes, what kind of father are you today? Will you not, right now, determine in your heart for the good of your child that you will arise, give yourself to the Lord by obeying His commands, to believe in the Lord, to repent of all your sins, and to be baptized into Christ, as your Bible plainly teaches in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, and Galatians 3:27, and Romans 6:3-4 is my prayer in the name of the Lord.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Across my desk come the tear filled letters, mostly from mothers, wanting me to help them or pray for their sons. They want to know wherein they have failed. They say, "We have tried." Let me answer all of you by reading this beautiful poem regarding a parent's prayer.

FROM A PENITENT PARENT

Somehow I lost you, son, along the way,
I do not know just how it came to be,
I only know that you were mine one day,
Then suddenly you slipped away from me.
Did I say suddenly? I do you wrong,
For not in rash decision did you go,
Setting your sail in anger, pushed along
By overwhelming force, or undertow.

No — it was gradual — your craft was new,
And I left you alone to try it out,
I walked the shoreline for awhile, and you,
Held to your course with confidence, not doubt.

MOTHERS AMERICA NEEDS

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

May 13, 1962

Radio Sermon No. 537

It has been said that when our Lord began to search for a name that would adequately and beautifully picture to us the one who brought us into this world that having searched heaven and earth there could be found no greater name than the word "mother." While this is but a legend, yet to all the civilized world there is no human name known to mankind greater than the name "mother." She it was who nurtured us all the long hard months while we were developing, ready for her to present us to our father and to the world. Nearly 65 years ago a young girl just 19 years of age gave me my being into this world. Back when bringing children into this world was such a trying ordeal, with scarcely anything to ease the pain or to save the mother should she have grave difficulty. Many are the graves where young innocent mothers sleep, many have been asleep so long that their bodies have long since returned to dust from whence they came. It may be that I am speak-

ing to many today who do not remember their precious mothers. What a joy and a blessing you have missed. How I remember my precious mother from the time I was just a little boy until we laid her lifeless form to sleep in the cemetery in Conway, Arkansas, where it lies beside our wonderful father, Judge Harper. It was mine to have my father for 45 wonderful years and a more devoted father a son never had. I was privileged to have my loving mother for over a half century. They were beautiful years with so many pleasant memories. When your children stand at your grave long years after you are gone, can they stand there with beautiful memories of the home where love reigned in the hearts of the parents for their children? Or shall they stand there silent because they cannot say, "My father was such a good man and my mother a devoted mother." It is said that "The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world" or "As is mother, so will be the daughter." This is

not always true, but there is enough truth in these statements to cause you mothers and you young girls who shall become mothers to ponder well these words. You are with the children day and night. Your influence is possibly the greatest influence ever to be felt in the life of your child. You can make your child or destroy it. You can create in your child a right spirit or a wrong spirit. You can make it to be a lovable and obedient child or a sullen and despondent child. You can create them extroverts or introverts. An extrovert is one who is happy, who enjoys life. An introvert is one we think of who is reserved and who seemingly does not enjoy life as he should. The reason? He has had to fight for what he gets. Some parents are partial to some of the children; some grandparents are partial to some of the grandchildren. The other children notice this at an early age and sorrow fills their little hearts and they feel hurt deep inside and begin to draw in and fight back and it develops a complex that may never be corrected no matter how hard you may try in later years. Parents or grandparents who will show such partiality in children that it warps

them, will have to pay for it in this life in the harm it may do the child and then at the judgment for a spirit that would hurt an innocent little child. Our children are the most precious possessions we have. We should strive every way to be the best parents possible and you mothers should leave nothing undone in giving to your children the love and warmth that they need to make them happy children in the home, for as they are in the home, so will they be in the society of this world.

MOTHERS OF THE BIBLE

The first mother known to man is the Mother Eve found in Genesis chapter 2 through 4. She I am sure was in many ways a wonderful mother and I would not attempt to unkindly reflect upon her beyond that which is right and just. But you remember she was anxious for the things of this world and when the tempter came and told her if you eat of this fruit "you shall not surely die," she believed him instead of God. When she was told her "eyes should be opened, and she should be as gods, knowing good and evil" she reached forth for this forbidden fruit. Little did she

dream that so soon her first born son, Cain, would murder his brother Abel. Her hand had rocked them both. Her sin is now breaking her heart. Maybe this had never entered your heart, but Eve brought sin into the world and now sin has destroyed her son. What a tragic beginning for the human race!

MOTHERS WHO GAVE US GREAT MEN

Let me study with you now, mothers who gave us great men, and see the kind of lives they lived. Hannah, the record of whom is found in I Samuel, chapter 1, prayed this prayer, verse 11. "And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then will I give him unto the Lord all the days of his life." Samuel was this son. He became one of Israel's greatest judges. Why? His mother wanted him, even prayed for him and had dedicated him to the service of the Lord before he ever blessed her home. Did you want your child? or were you angry when you knew your child was to be

the little children that are being brought into this world unwanted. No wonder they fill our jails and make necessary the electric chairs or gas chambers. How Christ needs to be in our homes! In Exodus, chapter 2, is the story of the birth of Moses. A decree had been issued by Pharaoh to slay all the male babies. Jochebed, the mother of Moses could not see her beautiful baby boy slain so she hid him in the river's brink. Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe, saw the child, was touched by his tears, the tears that changed the destiny of men, and saved the child's life. Mariam, the little sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" The baby's mother was called. Do we doubt the influence of this mother upon this child? She gave to the world the greatest lawgiver the world has ever known, save the Lord Jesus Christ. How different these two mothers. Eve gave to the world its first murderer; she longed for the pleasures of this world; the mother of Moses gave to the world its greatest lawgiver, save the Christ.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

In Luke, chapter 1, is the story

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of another mother who brought forth a son. His name was John, later called John the Baptist, because he baptized. Again this was a son in answer to prayer. In verse 13 the angel of the Lord said to Zacharias, "Thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth." Did you pray for your son's birth? Have many rejoiced because of his birth? Or has your son been the cause of many heartbreaks and much suffering and maybe the sadness of little orphan children left to weep at night for a daddy who never comes home. This son was the forerunner of the Christ, the Saviour of the world. Prayer for our children, preparation for their births, rather than their being brought into the world by accident and many times by resentment just to gratify our human passions, would change this old world.

TIMOTHY

In II Timothy 1, verses 3-5 is one of the most beautiful of all stories. Here is laid down in the New Testament the same princi-

ple found in Deuteronomy 6. Paul says, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." The place to begin to rear children that shall bless the world is to begin with their grandfathers and grandmothers. These two Christian women gave to the world a son who blessed the world in which he lived. He became an example to the youth of his day (I Timothy 4:12).

MARY THE MOTHER OF CHRIST

The last I shall present to you today is the mother of Jesus found in Matthew chapters 1 through 2; and in Luke chapter 2. Mary must have been a wonderful young girl to have been selected by heaven to bear the body in which Christ our Saviour should dwell. What an honor! Because of this Mary said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord — My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior." Then she says, "For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." Again a girl rejoices and thanks God for a child. This is the spirit that will give to the world great men and women. The mother of Moses, the mother of John, the

mother and grandmother of Timothy, and now the mother of Jesus, were all great and godly women dedicating their children to the Lord and not to the world. By these men the world has been blessed and by Christ the world is to be saved. How different these men from the Neros, the Hitlers, the Stalins, the Khrushchevs, and the underworld characters of all our nation!

A LOOK AT THESE

Let me ask you some questions just here. What kind of women do you think these women were? Do you imagine you would have seen them out in public with short shorts and halters on, sitting in parked cars, drinking beer, smoking cigarettes, or at night clubs, where drinking, gambling, dancing, and all kinds of questionable things were being carried on? Do you really believe the proper place for a mother is to be at such places? Or would she not be better serving her Lord, praying for her children, walking before them as a Christian mother should, teaching them the dangers of such a life? Let me ask you to listen to my lesson next week on "How Much Do You Love Your Child?"

So many things I wish to talk to you about that cannot be done in 15 minutes. No matter how much you object to, or resent my lesson today, I believe down deep in your heart we all know that to live in our homes as fathers and mothers as discussed in my lessons would break up the divorce courts, and would let thousands of little boys and girls enjoy the love of daddies and mothers who are now living with other men and women and leaving their precious little children to be reared by a stepfather or a stepmother. To you who are trying to be a father or mother to the other persons' child, if you are trying to really help their children, I say, may God bless you for this. Just here I wish to read to you from a letter I have from a wonderful young mother, "Of course, we both look forward with much pleasure to my staying home and doing those things for which I was created." She is a wonderful secretary, with a good salary but just think of this dedication to that for which she was created. This is what all mothers need to see, understand, and take pride in doing. No greater role on earth can be enjoyed than being a Christian

mother, performing the place for which God has created her.

CONCLUSION

Now what kind of mother are you? Do your children love to come home? Do they love to bring their friends home with them? Do you make them and their friends happy? Or are they afraid of you, dread you, and refuse to bring their company home with them because of the way you act and the fits of temper you display? Do they wish their mothers were like you and when they visit your children? Or do you embarrass them by your actions? Some time ago, my daughter said to me, "Dad, my yard is a neighborhood yard for all the children and my icebox is too handy to everyone." I said to her, "Myrnie, be thankful that the children in your neighborhood love to come to your place. Just remember your children are at home. Always make your home a place where the friends of your children will love to come and where your children will not be afraid to invite them. If you do not, they will find their friends elsewhere." What kind of a mother have you been? Can your

children look back over the years and remember you as a loving, kind, and understanding mother or will their memories be of a mother who was ill-tempered, to whom they dared not go with their little childhood troubles? Remember kindness always pays even with your children. In Proverbs 31:28 we have these beautiful words of praise for a mother, "Her children arise up, and call her blessed . . . but thou excellest them all." Now see why mothers never forget verse 26. "in her tongue is the law of kindness." Has your tongue been kind or has it been biting, vicious, and commanding? Remember, your child will pay and you will reap bitter tears when it is too late. Read Proverbs 25:11; 15:1; 21:9; Read them please.

You who are listening, will you not today consecrate your hearts to the Lord, believing in Him, repenting of your sins, correcting them in the home, and be baptized for the remission of sins that you may be saved as commanded in your Bible, Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38, is my prayer in the name of the blessed Lord.

"HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE YOUR CHILD?"

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 538

May 20, 1962

My good friends, my subject today is not meant to insult you, but to challenge your attention to one of the most serious of all questions. We are asked many times, do you really love your children? Our answer is always, Yes, I love my children. If I should ask you, "How much do you love them?" you would answer me "with all my heart." Now just what does "with all my heart mean"? Are we willing to really love them to this extent?

HOW SERIOUS IS THIS?

Let me ask you this, had you ever considered this fact that when you bring a tiny little baby into this world that a soul came into existence that had never been here before and that this soul will never die? That soul, your child, is here because of you. It was helpless with regards to its being thrust into this old world of hate, sin and bloodshed. It had no choice. Now what do you owe to that child? May I say to you who are of the age to still have chil-

dren, if you do not intend to prepare for that child a Christian home where it can be trained up in the way it should go, then do not sin against that child by bringing it into a home that does not intend to direct the life of that little child in the path that leads it to heaven, rather than into possible sorrow here and maybe to an eternal hell after-while. Do not run that risk with the soul of your child. It is too precious for a mistake to be made.

DRINKING

Let me put your love to a test; to a rigid test, one that will test your sincerity. In I Corinthians 13:8 your Bible says, "Love never fails." Do you believe your Bible? Let me see now if you love your child with a Bible love. First I shall test you with regard to your teaching on strong drink. Do you have children or a child? Do you drink and by such acts lead your boys and girls to drink? If it is all right for you to drink it will have to be all right for your sons

nd daughters to drink. Between 10 and 90 million adults between the ages of 16 to 90 drink intoxicating liquors. The tragedy of this is millions are church members. Suppose not a person on earth drank it? Can you visualize the difference in the condition of our world today?

QUOTES

Let me read to you now some records and then see if you love your child with Bible love when you drink before him. "Alcoholism is now our nation's number three health problem ranking immediately behind heart disease." Now do you love your child when you lead him to drink? Do you? The Rockefeller Foundation report found in the Advertising of World Mutual Health & Accident Inc. Co., of Pennsylvania 1961 says "Twenty percent of mental patients in American hospitals are alcoholics; 40% of admissions to Bellevue Hospital in New York City are alcoholics; 32% of male admissions to Massachusetts hospitals can be traced to alcohol as the chief cause." And yet you say you love your children and you lead them to drink and oppose men like me who beg for their precious little lives. A leading

doctor of an outstanding insurance company said, "Every drink costs the moderate drinker 20 minutes of his life." Yet some of you claim to love your child and you drink and maybe give it to him to drink. In the Christian Century Dr. Regner W. Kullberg is reported to have written that "chemically, alcohol is a poison in all quantities and in every quality. It will kill anything that is alive and preserve anything that is dead." Again, from this same paper we read, "It is an old truth that alcohol leads the way to the red-light district and promotes the incidence of venereal disease. Alcoholism is the best salesman of prostitution. Moreover, the incidence of syphilis can be closely correlated with the consumption of alcohol in any community. In these various ways alcohol undermines the mental and physical health of the next generation." Now do you love your boys and girls, your grandchildren when you drink, teach them to drink or when you are the manufacturer of this life killing poison? Just think, men are worth multiplied millions, much of which has been made off heartaches of innocent mothers and children and yet we honor such men. Just think, my

brethren, what a shame it would be if the church of Christ made and sold this soul destroying, this character degrading liquor to our people that we might make financial gain of them and lead them into such downward roads of corruption! How proud I am that we have too much respect for the church of Christ; that we love our children and the members of this church too much to lead them into beer parties, many times cause them to become alcoholics. I can lift my head in pride when I say to you, the church of Christ does not make nor sell liquors to our people. We do not give beer or gambling parties for our men. We will not sit and listen to a man who we know is an alcoholic. This same paper says, "It is true that some chronic alcoholics reach an advanced age, a fact they often boast of. But the more numerous victims of alcohol who are in the cemeteries are unable to boast." And yet many fathers and mothers drink before their children and even give them to drink. I have before me this statement from this same paper. It reads, "Before me now is a stack of condensed records of 221 male alcoholics from every walk of life. About half of them are one-time big business men." Listen to this and then tell me if you love your child with Christian love when you teach it to drink, or drink before your child; "The social costs of drinking go beyond the financial cost. Drinking during the repeal years has had a serious influence on social problems such as divorce, sex." A judge in Chicago, whose name I shall not reveal just now, says further, "Seventy-five per cent of all the divorce cases I have heard resulted from alcohol." And yet we will continue to drink before our children and run down and try to destroy the influence of men who are preaching as I am. I am told there are churches in whose pulpits social drinking cannot be condemned. I even met a religious leader in public debate one time who defended the right for Christians to drink socially. Just listen again, this same paper, "We have learned that alcohol, as commonly used today, causes more diseases, disabilities and death than any other cause of ill health which is in the power of the individual to prevent and avoid." Yet more than 70 million adults continue to drink it and by so doing teach their children to drink. The cost of alcohol and the prevention of

its crime costs us some twenty billion dollars each year. Enough to pay off our national debt within 15 to 20 years. America, we are decaying from within and one day our freedom will fall.

OUR BIBLE

You ask, What does the Bible say about drinking? Doesn't it advise against it? Turn to Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 23:29-32: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Yet we teach our children it is all right to drink. To the youth who may be listening, listen again to this verse, "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Believe your Bible?

DANCING

May I now talk to you about the sinfulness of the dance? In

Matthew the 7th chapter we have these words, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Listen to the "fruits" of the dance by those who know; not just preachers at whom the world pokes fun. Question to 300 women, "What led you wrong?" Answer, 85 per cent said, "My first wrong step was caused by the modern dance." A matron in a rescue home says, "Seven-tenths of the girls received here have fallen through dancing and its influence." Another matron testifies, "Fully ninety per cent of our girls testify their downfall began in some dance hall." Another outstanding authority on the dance, one who operated dance halls, says, "It is a startling fact, but a fact nevertheless that two-thirds of the girls who are ruined fall through the influence of dancing. Mark my words, I know this to be true," end of his quotation. A doctor says, "Dance halls are the modern nurseries of the divorce courts, training shops of prostitution and graduating schools of infamy and vice." A book on dancing says, "Out of 25,000 women in a certain city, three-fourths of them were led to ruin through dancing." A doctor in one of the largest cities says, in that city 40,000 women live the

life of infamy which usually ends in six years in suicide. "Three-fourths of them went down through the dance." On and on I could go with broken homes, orphaned children because of the dance floor, and yet the dance is upheld and defended and that by religious people, but those who produce this program oppose all such practices. Now do we not know this is wrong? Why should we have to keep begging for your children? They are your responsibility. Yes, the New Testament condemns it. In Galatians 5:19 your Bible says, "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these" and then he mentions "lasciviousness." What does this word mean? Webster says, "Tending to produce lewd emotions." Dancing with the opposite sex, not only tends to excite these lewd emotions, in many cases it produces them. Lasciviousness kills the dance before it starts. Then in verse 21 the Bible says "reveling and such like." These revelings were festivals where they had all kinds of unholy acts, among them of course was the dance. Then the next word says "and such like" which gets everything akin to such actions. Yes, the fruit of the

dance is described by these dance hall operators and doctors. Do we really love our children as we should, now that we know these things, and still teach them dancing is compatible with Christianity?

SMOKING

The last I wish to mention here is that of smoking. Please do not turn off your radio. Listen to these reports and then quit today. "This year 30,000 men and 5,000 women will die of lung cancer." In a certain state two health departments report that of "500 lung cancer patients only eight were non-smokers. The British Medical Association reported, "Cigarettes were the principal causes of lung cancer." In 1930, there were 2,500 deaths from lung cancer." "Last year, 36,000 deaths and in 1962 it is estimated that there will be 45,000 cases, with 39,000 deaths." "Ten times as many as nonsmokers die of lung cancer." "The death rate of non-smokers is nearly 13 per 100,000. Those who smoke less than a half pack per day, 95 per 100,000, or

8 times as many. 264 per thousand for those who smoke two or more packs per day."

SCHOOL CHILDREN

The American Public Health Association reported "If present trends continue, more than one million present school children in this country will die before the age of 70. "A specialist says lung cancer will catch up with the twenty year pack-a-day cigarette smoker if a coronary doesn't hit first." Now do we really love our children with a Christian love? These are not reports from preachers who are hobbyists and trying to rob the people of all the fun they can have. These are specialists.

CONCLUSION

Now how much do you really love your children? Remember your Bible reads, "Love never fails." Are you too selfish to stop drinking if you drink? Or to quit going to dances if you go? Or to stop smoking, now that we know that many of the best authorities and doctors condemn it as a killer of our children?

You who are preachers, elders, deacons, or Bible school teachers, will you not this day, for your sake and that of your children and other young people, join with me in trying to set an example before our youth that will cause them to stop smoking that their lives may not be destroyed? You already know it is wrong to drink, visit dance halls and road houses. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). I do not pronounce upon you sin but I do ask you to think of the statement of James now that we know cigarette smoking is being condemned by many outstanding authorities and they are begging our youth not to begin it. You think it over, not in anger, but in prayer.

Will you not come today surrendering your heart to the Lord by believing in Him and His word; by repenting of all your mistakes and being baptized as your blessed Lord has commanded and then arise from this watery grave to walk as I have been begging with you to do today, is my prayer in His blessed name.

WERE THESE REGENERATED, SAVED, BORN AGAIN?

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

May 27, 1962

Radio Sermon No. 539

Many are the letters I receive asking me concerning the things we believe and teach with reference to how and when man is regenerated, saved and born again. So I thought it good to discuss this with you today. I know no better way to get this before you than to discuss the first conversions ever recorded after Christ became the Saviour of mankind. Whatever they did to be saved had to be the right way. If we can find men who are said by the Bible to be saved, then we can accept that as final proof as to how regeneration, salvation, and the new birth are all brought about. Men today give different and various answers to these questions, none of them agreeing. If my regeneration, if my salvation, if my new birth do not harmonize with the Bible, then no matter how honest and positive I am that I have enjoyed all three, I am just wrong. Ours must harmonize with the examples given in the Bible.

But, says one, "I cannot be mistaken; I know I am saved. I know

when it took place." Well, let us read something just here and see if you could be wrong. In Jeremiah 10:23 we read "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Again in Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25 your Bible says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Let us read from II Corinthians 11:12-14, "But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

Listen again to this same apostle and then know we can and may be deceived. In Galatians 1:6-8 your Bible says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that

trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." From these, it is clearly seen that man cannot guide his own steps; that man can be deceived into following the way that seems to him to be right but the end thereof is death, and that it is possible to receive a perverted gospel and be as honest in believing it is the true gospel as one would in believing the gospel of Christ. If you will just say, "Lord, I want to know the truth, I want above everything else to know I am regenerated, saved, and born again as the Bible teaches," then I assure you I can show you how it is done and there can be no doubt. If man cannot know by some intelligent way then the Lord is to blame and not man and man stands ready to defend himself against an incompetent Christ who was not able to or did not give us a way so plain that "wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" as promised by the prophet in Isaiah 35:8. I say to you, if you will take His word and accept it with faith that Christ knew what man must do to be saved, then it is just as clear

as the prophet said in Jeremiah 35:8. Now "to the law and to the testimony" (Isaiah 8:20)!

CHRIST IS BORN

In Matthew 1:21 we read "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Again in Luke 2, verse 11 your Bible reads, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Now in the verse above it tells us to whom He is this Saviour, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Not just to a few select individuals or races, but "to all the people." In I Timothy 4:10 we read "Because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." In Hebrews 2, verse 17 we are told that He is "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Hence Christ is man's Saviour; He is the one who makes reconciliation for us unto God. All this proves positively that man cannot save himself apart from Christ. This being true then certainly Christ knows what we must do. He must know

he way. The question is, Did He tell us and show us that way or has He left man so in doubt that there is not a way for man to know positively when he has been regenerated, saved, and born again?

MEANING OF WORDS

It seems man has a confused understanding of these words. These words mean exactly the same thing. A man regenerated, is a born again man, he is a saved man. There is no such thing as being regenerated and not born again; not saved. Notice the definition of the word regenerate. Webster says it means "To generate anew; to bring into a better state — born anew." The word from which we get the word regenerate is the same word from which we get the expression 'born again.' They mean one and the same thing. So, however one is saved, that is the way he is regenerated and born again. We have the idea that regeneration or being born again is something mysterious that cannot be understood nor explained to us by man. But when you know it means the same as being saved it simplifies it. If they be not the same, then tell me, is man regenerated — born again — and yet not alive? You see in the Bible

the word regeneration and born again and saved all mean the same thing. Now do not just shut up your heart to this vital truth. It is your soul that is to be saved and that of your children. Please study this to see if I have told the truth about it and if I have, accept it. From this we see that to be regenerated and to be born again simply means one becomes a child of God. If a child of God he is saved. Therefore, the terms are the same.

SAVED FROM WHAT?

This brings up the question, From what is man saved when he is born again or regenerated, made alive in Christ? Is he saved from future sins and therefore can never be lost? Or, is he just saved from past sins? For instance when the Saviour said in Mark 16:16 "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" did He mean from all future sins or from past sins? In Acts 2:38 when Peter said "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" did he mean all future sins man may ever commit? Or did he have in mind only the sins they had already committed? If he had in mind only what we call past sins, then

this destroys the idea of man's being "once saved always saved." Turn with me now to Romans 3:24-25, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." This needs no interpretation. It just says that the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, through faith in His blood is for the remission of sins that are past. This eliminates the teaching that when man becomes reconciled unto God by Jesus Christ, through His blood, that he is saved for all future time. It is for the remission of sins that are past says your Bible. Your Bible is right. So when Christ said "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," He simply meant saved from sins that are past.

CHRIST FOR ALL TIME

Let us listen to Christ after His resurrection. In Matthew 28:19-20 Christ said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded

you: and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." I shall not argue with you. Christ commanded this. You either do it or you do not. He has promised to be with those only who so teach. You may take your choice. It is up to you to obey the Lord or not. I have and I am glad. Again in Mark 16:16, which we have already quoted, He commands us to believe and be baptized with the promise we shall be saved. In Luke 24:46 He said, repentance and remission of sins shall be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. He is the Saviour. He should know what men should do to be saved. You know what He has said. It is up to you. I have obeyed Him. Have you?

THE GREAT COMMISSION EXECUTED

Let us now find this great commission in action. You will recall this was to every creature, in every nation, in all the world. It must be of very grave and vital importance to the salvation of man; to his regeneration; to his being born again, since it is to be preached to every creature in all the world. You will recall He said this should begin in Jerusalem. Not in Wash-

ington; not in London; not in Paris; not in Rome; not in India, but salvation and remission of sins in Christ's name was to begin in Jerusalem. You will recall He said it should begin after His death and after His resurrection. I shall not argue this. Our Bible is either true or false. Our Lord knew or He did not know. The Bible records Him as saying it should begin after His death and after His resurrection and in Jerusalem. I will accept this.

IN JERUSALEM

I now take you to Jerusalem. The apostle had been commanded in Luke 24:49 to tarry in Jerusalem until they were given power to begin. It is now Pentecost after His resurrection. The apostles have obeyed His orders. They are in Jerusalem. He had promised to send them the Spirit to guide them into all truth, John 16:13. It is 9 o'clock on, what we call Sunday morning, or the third hour of the day, Acts 2:15. They began to speak "as the Spirit gave them utterance," verse 4. In verse 33, Peter tells them plainly they had received the promise of the Holy Spirit and were therefore seeing and hearing this sermon. There can be no doubt but that this is the time for the great commission

given to them by Christ to begin. He tells them this is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in Joel 2:28. He announces the death and resurrection of Christ, verses 23-24; he tells them that Christ has been exalted at the right hand of God upon David's throne to reign until His enemies have been made His footstool, verses 30-35. He commands them to "know assuredly" that this same Jesus whom they crucified had been made both Lord and Christ, verse 36. They were pricked in their hearts (that is convinced of their sins), they believed this and asked "Men and brethren what shall we do?" The Spirit guided Peter to answer in these words: "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." What had convicted them? It was the sermon delivered; not some miraculous operation of the Spirit that brought them into convulsions almost. The Spirit operated but He did it through the preaching of the gospel just as He does now. The answer given here, it seems to me, is too plain for a child to misunderstand. Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ."

Now for what purpose? "For the remission of sins." Did they understand it? Yes, for in verse 41 your Bible says "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day they were added unto them about three thousand souls." Verse 47 says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." To what church?

Here we have three thousand, plus daily additions who heard the preaching of the gospel. They were pricked in their hearts — that is convicted of their sins by this preaching. They repented of their sins and were baptized for the remission of their sins. They were called the saved and added to the church. Now I ask you, What did they receive that they should have received? There was not all the carrying on that we see many times today begging and trying by every means known to get the Spirit to come down and regenerate the heart that they may be born again and saved. These were saved, had remission of sins, were called believers, and the Lord added them to His church. What more can you want or have?

CONCLUSION

In conclusion may I ask you, were these saved? Born again, for-

given, redeemed, washed in His blood, saved by grace? Were they saved by faith? Did they depend on their works, on water, on baptism alone? Was this baptism of regeneration? Did they trust Christ for salvation? Or, did they trust their works and the water? Were these *regenerated and born again from above*? Now, were they? Well, just what did they do? Do we not know that if we will do exactly what they did, with the same kind of faith and trust in Christ to save us as He promised in Mark 16:16 that we will be saved just as they were, regenerated or born again just as they were, and made members of the Lord's church just as they were? We of the church of Christ believe, teach, and have done exactly what they have. Now why are we not saved as they were, born again, regenerated, and washed in His blood and members of His church and not some branch? What do we need more than this? This saved three thousand! It will save you. Every other conversion of the Acts of the Apostles that is described begins with the preaching of the gospel, and ends by those hearing this gospel, believing and being baptized and each time a church was there for that made

them the church. Will you now do is wrong with doing what these the same today is my prayer in three thousand did? Does this not His blessed name? Friends, what have to be right?

2

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

A good lady from Monterey Park, California writes that Christ said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15); that the Bible suggests "My commandments are not grievous." Then she suggests that the seventh day was sanctified by the Lord Himself and wants to know why I do not keep it also? This is easily answered. At the time a command is given, it is binding as long as the covenant under which it was given is in existence. The offering of animal sacrifice was a command of God but it ceased when the covenant that commanded it ended. Just so with the 4th commandment "remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." As long as that covenant was in force that commandment was to be obeyed, but when it ended a new covenant took its place. We read in Hebrews 8:13 "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Then in Hebrews 9:15 Christ is said to be "the mediator of a new testament." In verses 16-17 it states plainly that a "testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." Now in Hebrews 10:9 your Bible reads: "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." Today we are under this new covenant; this new testament. Now under this covenant, this testament, there is not one single command to "remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." Therefore, when we do not obey the fourth commandment of the decalogue we are not disobeying this new covenant; this new testament. Certainly we have to keep the commandments of the covenant under which we live, but our covenant (this new covenant) does not in one single place give this command. An example that we can all see is our state of Texas. We have had six different constitutions, if we begin with the Mexican ownership. Now in our present constitution we abide by what it says. We are not bound by one single law because it was a part of either of the others. If it is not in our present constitution it is not binding. Just so with the sabbath. It is not commanded in this new covenant, therefore not binding.

FROM THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

"Thank you for your continued radio program in the Philippines. We have some response from week to week almost. We believe many are listening but just do not write us. In His service, R. F. B."

it; turn from it, and pass away." Let us ask with Joseph, who when he was tempted by his mistress, said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

Dread is the curse of a heart no longer pure. Its peace is gone, its honor, its native dignity. It is left naked to guilty shame. It becomes as a troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Just as one touch brushes the dew from off the rose, and one hot breath of wind withers the vernal flowers, so one evil hour can wipe off innocence from the heart. Ah! how many a home has been smitten, how many a youth blighted, how many a fair dawn over-clouded by this sin! How many pale spectres of the lost start from their graves to warn men from this sin with the waving of their wasted hands! And behind them all stands God's judgment; behind the clouds, the night. By an eternal necessity the Lord excludes the "abominable . . . and fornicators" from the new heaven and the new earth. By an eternal decree, He says, "For without are . . . whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters" (Revelation 22:15). How dreary, how shudderingly cold is that "without." **Without** the city of God the impure must dwell forever.

This deed of darkness may be hidden from man, but it cannot be hidden from God. His law will search it out, and lessen no part of the penalty. If it is concealed on earth, it cannot be concealed forever; and, before the Judgment Seat of God, you must answer for your sin.

But is there hope for him who has fallen, whose life is stained? Is there hope for the woman who has fallen and bears the mark of the outcast? Ah, yes. For this sin, too, there is a fountain of cleansing. There is no sin so black that it cannot be taken from a penitent heart.

Have you been tempted, have you fallen? If so, there is help for the transgressor however hard his way may be. David sinned, but he confessed it and was forgiven. With God there is mercy and cleansing. At the well Jesus talked with a fallen woman; she confessed her sin and Christ lifted her up into a new life, and she became a missionary in her own city.

Jesus came early one morning into the temple. Scribes and Pharisees were there, and they brought a fallen woman to Him. The law of Moses was that she should be stoned. This they mentioned, and then asked, What sayest thou of her? They were tempting the Lord. "But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground. But when they continued asking him, He lifted up himself and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground. And they, when they heard it, went out one by one, beginning from the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst. And Jesus lifted up himself, and said unto her, Woman, where are they? Did no man condemn thee?

And she said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; from henceforth sin no more." Let us observe that Christ did not tell the woman taken in adultery that she was hopelessly lost, but He said, "Go and sin no more."

If there are any of you who are guilty of this sin, and if you loathe your sin and hate your shame, will you take the pardon offered to you by the crucified Christ? It is yours if you will believe in Him, forsake your sins, confess His name among men, and be united with Him through baptism in the benefits of His death. While we sing, may the Lord give you assistance in casting your ballot for righteousness and truth.

WHY CHRIST SO LOVED THE CHURCH

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 260

January 20, 1957

Today we have gathered here in this beautiful auditorium as a people dedicated to him who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords (I Tim. 6:15); to Christ who is now seated upon the throne of his father David to rule and reign until he comes again to deliver his kingdom up to God, the Father (I Cor. 15:24-28; Acts 2:29-36).

It was five years ago next month that we gathered here in Abilene at the City Auditorium to hear Brother Nichols in the recording of our first sermon over this ABC broadcast. Since then millions have heard the gospel of Christ; thousands have surrendered themselves unto Christ by obeying the gospel, not by the signing of a card, but by surrendering their will unto his will as they came believing in Christ (John 3:16), repenting of their sins (Acts 17:30); confessing their faith in Christ as God's son (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:8-10), and being "buried with Christ" in the beautiful waters of baptism for the "remission of sins" (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 2:38), arising to "walk in newness of life with him," as commanded by Christ and his apostles.

Many congregations have begun as a result of this program and the Highland congregation is eternally grateful to you who have had fellowship with us in helping us to make such a program possible. Thousands in this generation shall rejoice in the day of judgment because by this program they have learned the truth and having obeyed it, shall go marching through the gates into the eternal city of God.

The Lord has been gracious to us, we have seen His providence open up wonderful opportunities round about us and we

believe the church of our Lord, which had its beginning in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the glorious resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:1-47), is now standing upon the greatest threshold for reaching the world with the message of salvation of any generation since the apostles of our Lord, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, shook the foundations of the world. What was done during the first century with nothing but the church, can be done again if we shall continue to love each other and "be labourers together" (I Cor. 3:9) in the work of our Master having "fellowship one with the other" (I Jno. 1:7) until "every creature," in every nation, in all the world (Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16:15), has had the glorious privilege you and I have had to hear the gospel at least once before his eyes are kissed to sleep in death and he has to stand before the Lord in the day of judgment, lost because the gospel did not reach him (II Thess. 1:8-9; Rom. 1:16). This can be done; it must be done; it will be done.

My friends, I am discussing with you present and the millions who may hear our program today this most vital subject, "What Does the Church Mean to Christ?" The religious leaders of the world are quite concerned today over the attitude the world is taking toward the church of the Lord. Over fifty million people in America with no church affiliation; half those who belong to some church are not regular in their attendance. The usual answer we get to the question, **Why** are you not a member of the church or **Why** do you not attend services regularly, is **this**: The church is non-essential and the church therefore is looked upon by them as nothing more than a human society to which a man may join himself as he sees fit.

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

That you may see the beauty of the church and what it means to Christ, I am asking you this question, What is there to an institution that would make the Lord take four thousand (4,000) years in its preparation? In Gen. 3:13-15 begins the ground-breaking for this glorious event of which we are speaking when Jehovah said to the serpent concerning the "seed of the woman," "It shall bruise thy head." Here the Bible introduces the "Victory of Christ" over Satan, which victory is climaxed in the Revelation of John to the seven churches in Asia Minor.

Time goes by and this beautiful picture unfolds before our very eyes as we hear Nathan say to David in II Sam. 7:12-13 concerning the seed of David, "He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever." That this house of God is the church is beyond question for Christ, this seed of David, never built but **one** "house" for Jehovah, and **that** was the church (I Tim. 3:15; Matt. 16:18). Again I press the question,

What is there to an institution that would make the Lord promise centuries before hand, that it **should** be built?

GOD THROUGH ISAIAH SPEAKS

Isaiah the prophet says in the second chapter and verses 2-4, "It **SHALL** come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be **EXALTED** above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord; to the **HOUSE** of the God of Jacob; and **there** he will teach us of his ways, and we will **walk** in his paths." Here the Lord is laying the foundation for a "house" that shall be exalted above the mountains and the hills, that is above **all** earthly governments. Why would the Lord be so interested in a "non-essential house" as to have Isaiah to say centuries before it was built that his house, the house of the Lord, the church, should be an "exalted house," and "exalted kingdom" into which "all nations and peoples" would come? Why has he gone to such trouble to see that this "kingdom," this "house" of II Sam. 7:12-14, be "built" for him by the seed of David, which seed Paul in Gal. 3:16 says is the Christ. IF that house be non-essential? There must be a reason, a vital reason, for his planning such a "house"; such a "church"; such a "kingdom"! **That reason understood** and we shall have **no** trouble getting people to become members of this "house" of which these "prophets speak—the church of the Lord."

DANIEL SEES THIS KINGDOM

In Daniel 2:44 Daniel says, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall **NEVER** be destroyed—it shall stand **forever**." Had it occurred to you to ask, Why was Jehovah so determined that this kingdom "should never be destroyed"—that it should "stand forever"? Does it sound to you like a "non-essential" institution that man may trample under his feet and refuse to become a part of? This kingdom is also referred to by Daniel in chapter 2, verse 45 as a "mountain." This is that same "mountain" spoken of by Isaiah. But Isaiah also called this mountain the "house of God" and Paul in I Tim 3:15 says the "house of God" is the "church of the Living God." The "house," which is the "church" refers to the people called out of the world to serve God; the "mountain or Kingdom" is the "government" that reigns over them. Hence they are the same people at the same time. Again I press the question, **What** is there about such an institution that would make the Lord **so determined** that it "shall never be destroyed" and that it "shall stand forever"? Think you it is a "non-essential church"?

MATTHEW 16:18-19 CHRIST DEFIES!

In Matthew 16:18 Christ says "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH and the GATES OF HELL shall

NOT prevail against it." My friends, **what** is there about such a church that would cause the Son of God to **DEFY** the very **GATES** of **HELL** to bring it into existence? Think you the Lord of glory would be **so determined** to establish a "non-essential church," one that man could trample under his feet, despise and have no part in, until he would go to such depths as to "defy the very gates of hell"? The **entire unseen** world! He says to Peter "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt **bind** on earth **SHALL BE BOUND** in heaven, etc." Here you again have both the "church" and the "kingdom," showing they are the same people; one, the church, meaning the people, the other the "kingdom," referring to the government over them. **Why** such "binding and loosing" in heaven **IF** it has no value to the soul of man and his salvation? Again I press the question, **Why** would the Lord **DEFY** the gates of hell that the church be built? **What is** there about such an institution that Christ was willing to fight such a battle with the forces of the "hadean world" that his church might live? Before you declare **His** church non-essential, before you preach and teach that man can be saved outside **THIS** institution, maybe you should sit down with your Bible and try to answer my question, **What is** there about such a church that would cause the Lord to "defy the gates of hell," to bring it into the world?

CHRIST DIES FOR THE CHURCH

In Eph. 5:25 Paul says "husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and **GAVE HIMSELF** for it." **How** did he "**give** himself for it"? In Rom. 8:34 the apostle says "Who is he that condemneth, It is Christ that **died**, yea rather, that is risen again." Christ "**died**" that the church might be given to the world. Think you that a church so dear to the heart of our Lord that he would actually "**die**" to bring it into existence is a "non-essential church" and man may disregard it, refuse to respect it by not becoming a part of it and at the same time gain the love and respect of the Lord who loved it so that he "**gave** himself for it—that he died that it might live"?

CHRIST BUYS IT WITH HIS BLOOD

When a person loves anything to such an extent that he is willing to give his "life's blood" that he might possess it, or that others might enjoy its benefits, I think we are justified in saying that, that for which he has given his own blood, is the dearest possession in his life. That is why **wars** are fought. That is why countries are "baptized in blood." Men **dying** for that which they cherish **more** than **life** itself. Paul says in Acts 20:28 to the elders at Ephesus "Feed the church of God which he **PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD**." Yes Christ loved the church to such a great degree that he actually "**gave** his life's blood for it." The church therefore is the "**blood** bought possession of our Lord." To be bought with the blood of Christ **is** therefore to be **in** the **church** for which he gave his blood. To say the church is non-essential; that man can be saved apart from the church, is the same as branding the "blood" as non-essential and that man can be saved **without**

the "precious blood of the Lord." The church is the most costly institution this earth has ever known. It was purchased by the suffering, by the death, yea by the very blood of our blessed Savior. Think you, Christ would give **so** much for a "non-essential church"? Ah, my friends it is time the world should learn **WHAT** the **CHURCH IS** and **WHY** the Lord built it! He means for man to respect it by becoming a member of it for the church **IS** the **FAMILY**—the **HOUSE** of God, I Tim. 3:15; I Peter 4:17-18. Again I press the question, What **is** there about **such a church**, that would cause the Lord to purchase it at the price of his own blood? If it means **that** much to our Lord, the **least** you could do is to show your love and respect for his sacrifice to bring the church into the world is to obey the gospel and let the Lord add you to it as he did those in Acts 2:47.

HONORS IT AS HIS BRIDE—HIS WIFE

Christ's love for the church is further demonstrated in the beautiful picture of a man and his wife. Paul says to the church at Corinth, in II Cor. 11:2, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; **FOR** I have **ESPOUSED** you unto **ONE HUSBAND**, that I might present you as a chaste **VIRGIN** to **CHRIST**." John, on the isle of Patmos, was told by the Spirit of God in Rev. 21:9 "to come up higher, I will show thee the **BRIDE**, the Lamb's **WIFE**." My good people I ask of you seriously, **What could** there be to this church that would make the Lord own her as his **BRIDE**, yea as his very own, his beloved **WIFE**? Think you the Lord considers a church that is as dear to him as a wife, a "non-essential institution"? Do you think you can disrespect such a church by saying to the Lord, I do not care for your church; I do not desire membership in such an institution? Again I press the question, **What could** there be concerning the church that the Lord would love it as dearly as a wife? To disrespect the church, the Lamb's wife, by calling her "non-essential" is to incur the wrath of God upon us.

WHAT CHRIST HAS FOR HIS CHURCH

As we come to the close of our lesson we shall be able to understand why the Lord so loved this church by seeing what he has prepared for her as he comes again. Eph. 5:22-23 is that chapter that shows the beautiful relationship that exists between the Lord and his church. I would that you read it today for I do not have time to discuss it in detail in these closing moments. It is here that Paul says of the church that Christ is her head; that he is the **SAVIOR** of the body—the church; that the church is "subject" to Christ; that he "so loved the church" that he "gave himself for it"; that he "sanctified it and cleansed it by the washing of water by the word." Now our question is, **WHY** did he do all this for the church? **WHAT** does he have prepared for the church which he owns as his **OWN WIFE**? When Christ comes is he going to cast her aside for someone else or for something else?

My friends will you listen closely as I read what Paul says Christ is going to do with this church he loved so much? In

Eph. 5:27 Paul says of Christ, "That he might present her **unto himself** a GLORIOUS CHURCH, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be HOLY and WITHOUT BLEMISH." Yes it is the CHURCH that shall be presented to Christ at his coming. He shall remove from it all blemishes and to himself he shall take her to be with her throughout all eternity.

CHURCH LOST?

This question now I press as we close, Do you think Christ established such a glorious church and that he invited us to become members of it and then so veiled it that man can't know which one is his church and is now forced to build what is called "branches" of the church, all divided and warring the one against the other? Has Christ done this to us? **No**, Christ left the church here and gave us the plan by which men may **know** beyond doubt they are in the Lord's church **if** we will lay aside all prejudices and preconceived opinions and open our hearts to what they did from Pentecost to the close of the book of Revelation. It is because we are so divided that men are confused.

HOW ENTER HIS CHURCH

Many people are confused as to how we may know when we are in the church the Lord built. This is the easiest truth found in all your Bible **IF** we will just be willing to accept what the Bible teaches on this subject. Man has so confused this vital truth until men's eyes are so closed that the truth of God seemingly cannot penetrate their minds. It is not complicated. It is easily understood. The Lord said in John 8:32, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." To have accepted error will keep you bound. Only truth can make you free. I must not be mistaken since the Lord said in Matthew 15:13 "every plant my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up," and he was talking about the "doctrines of men." He had just said in verse 13 "But in vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the **COMMANDMENTS OF MEN**." I must not be in an institution, a plant, not built by my Lord for all such says Christ shall be "rooted up." I do not want to be "rooted up" at the day of judgment.

TERMS OF ADMISSION

Now the church the Lord built cannot be "joined by man." The Lord alone adds to this church (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 12:20). For the "Lord to add you" to his church, you must comply with his requirements. No candidate during the apostles days was ever "voted on"

for baptism. No "baptized person" was ever "voted on" for church membership. You see **man** can't do the adding; **that** is the Lord's work.

ACTS 2:1-47

In the second chapter of Acts we have the "birthday of the church." In this sermon they were caused to "believe" in the Christ who was crucified, risen, and seated at the time upon the "throne of David," Verses 17-37; this sermon having cut them to the heart caused them to ask "what must we do?" To this question Peter gave them a very plain answer. He said "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." This was **not** misunderstood **then**. It **cannot** be **now**. 3,000 of them "gladly received the word and were baptized" (vs. 41) and the last verse says "and the **Lord added** to the church daily such as should be saved" (vs. 47). All know these "believed in Christ"; "repented of their sins"; and all of them were baptized." "For the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38; Acts 2:41). All know they received the "remission of sins" and were "saved" and "added to his church," for the Bible expressly says such.

THE LORD ADDED

Now that the "Lord added them to the church" I press this vital question. To **which** church did he add them? How many denominations were there present in Jerusalem on that day? Not one! There was only the church the Lord built and to that one he added these 3,000. This can't be refuted. But these all had been "baptized for the remission of sins." The world today denies that we have to be "baptized for the remission of our sins" and **here** is where our trouble comes. Churches of Christ believe this sermon preached by Peter and so teach and preach. Now if you today will do what these did, Christ being no respecter of persons, he will add you to this same church. This has to be unanswerable. It is this church he shall present unto himself (Eph. 5:25). Think you now **honestly** that such a church is "non-essential" and that you and yours can expect to have the favor of our Lord upon you when you **reject** this church that meant so much to the heart of our blessed Lord? Will you not obey the gospel today and let the Lord add you to his church? Write us and we shall be only too happy to help you. May the Lord bless you and keep you is our prayer in Christ's holy name.

COMMUNISM MUST BE STOPPED

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 540

June 3, 1962

Today and without apology I am discussing one of the most important issues confronting the freedoms of America — Communism. Communism is a godless religion, in the hands of godless men determined to destroy the free world. They regard not the rights of their fellow men; they have no concern for other nations but to enslave them, shackled with the chains of ruthless Communism. The dignity of man is an insult to them, for man to Communism is no more than a pig or a dog to be sacrificed at their will for the good of the party. Certainly they have some feeling for their own, an animal has this, but for society at large they have no feelings save as society may serve their ultimate purpose — the enslavement of the race of mankind. They must be stopped now or life to those of us who have known the beauty and the dignity of free men shall vanish from before our eyes as the proverbial snowball before an August sun. Americans are sitting idly by sleeping away our rights to act as men of freedom

and by our acts of complacency our nation could be overthrown by Khrushchev, to me an outlaw, a fiendish murderer even of his own Russian patriots who chance to get in his way, much less those whom he knows not. One step further down the road socialism and Communism lurk behind the bushes, ready to rob us of our rights as free men.

—MARX—

Karl Marx, the usually admitted father of Communism, had but one dream: Force the world into what he called a perfect society, a society that would do his every command without question; a world where the Communistic State was the sovereign dictator. To do this he was determined to destroy every opposition and having so done to make a new kind of human being, a human being that would resign his freedom of will to the Master, the Communistic State, ruled and directed by a few men, men dedicated to the overthrow of all forms of government that respect the rights and

dignity of man. This, it seems to us, should be enough to cause men to see the devastation that lies in the wake of infidelity, atheism.

Hitler, Stalin, Khrushchev, and Castro are living examples of what godless men, as dictators of nations, will do to those over whom they rule. And yet in our schools we dare not teach our children of God, of Christ, or of the sacred book — the Bible — God's revelation to man because we are so divided. This I shall discuss fully in my lesson of "Can Protestantism Live?" Do not miss it.

DEFINITION OF COMMUNISM

Mr. James D. Bales in his book on "*Communism, its Faith and Practices*" gives this definition of Communism (Page 20) and I give it to you for I can think of nothing more fitting to describe it. You must know what you are opposing else men may sidetrack you. His definition: "Communism today is a Marx-inspired, Moscow directed, international criminal conspiracy against civilization, based on a God-denying philosophy of life sustained by faith in the dialectic, backed by the devotion of its fanatical believers and to an uncertain extent by the armed might of The Red Army." It truly is a criminal conspiracy against world

society in which free men are constantly made mindful of the threat that hangs over them daily as a dark black cloud of doom, ready to pounce upon them for the least infraction of the Communistic ideologies. In this same book (Page 19) Mr. Bales says that according to a House Report, "Communism is a world political organization advocating, (1) the abolition of all forms of religion; (2) the destruction of private property and the abolition of inheritance; (3) absolute social and racial equality; (4) revolution under the leadership of the Communist international; (5) engaging in activities in foreign countries in order to cause strikes, riots, sabotage, bloodshed, and civil war; (6) destruction of all forms of representative or democratic government, including civil liberties such as freedom of speech, of press, and of assemblage; (7) the ultimate objective of world revolution to establish the dictatorship of the so-called proletariat into a universal unit of soviet socialist republics with its capital in Moscow; (8) achievement of these ends through extreme appeal to hatred." End of quotation (Page 19).

GEORGE S. BENSON

President George S. Benson of

Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas in an address before a capacity crowd at Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee in February of this year, lecturing on Communism said in part, "The purpose of the international Communist movement has been made very clear in official Communist publications — — The Communist Party from 81 different countries was represented at that tremendous Congress. — — From these official pronouncements it is made clear that the international movement is aiming at complete world domination and that it is going to prosecute more actively the campaign against all *free* nations of which America is the chiefest. The 81 parties all signed the report at the end of their convention declaring that all capitalist nations are to be wiped out and that Communism is to be made complete in its world domination. This means that the fifth column in America is very busy trying to achieve these goals." End of quotation. We were treated to the bombastic insults of Mr. Khrushchev over TV right in our country when he defied us by declaring to the top of his Communistic voice that he would "bury us."

SEMINAR SET UP

After having heard President Benson's address on this great subject, I went home and wrote him a letter suggesting that the greatest bulwark of strength in this country against Communism is the pulpit where properly directed ministers could reach the millions of America. I suggested that Harding College, under his direction, for he is a nationally known personality combating this evil, set up a seminar for the specific purpose of teaching and training the preachers and others who would attend such a seminar. Teach them to know exactly what Communism is; its aims; its methods of accomplishing these aims; and last to those of us who wish to do something about it, train us to such an extent that we will know how to meet this dreaded evil and at the same time not to go off on a deep end somewhere that our influence may be destroyed by compromisers who would stop at nothing to brand us as radicals, bereft of reason, with one aim only that is to destroy some man or men who may be in high places. In reply to my letter here is in part what he said, "I received your letter of March 23 suggesting the advisability of a seminar on the Harding

Campus for ministers for instruction on what Communism is, what its tactics are and what its goals are." Then further in the letter he says, "So probably in a few months we will be announcing a special Freedom Forum or perhaps we will call it a Ministers' Seminar where we will spend a week studying Communism." I suggested that the school could bring in trained speakers on the subject and in the letter he suggests that he thinks this could be done. Here is an interesting part of this good letter, he suggests that "we can do quite a job supplying ministers with good, sound materials on Communism and equip them to the point they will be ready to discuss this publicly anywhere and some of them probably would soon be ready for debates if we persuade the Commies into debate." End of quotation.

My good friends, the pulpits of America (if the preachers would equip themselves to know what Communism is and how to meet it, and then become dedicated to the cause of exposing its diabolical intrigues) could save America for they can arouse an otherwise sleeping continent to the dangers of an enemy lurking at our back door — South America and Cuba.

Schools all over this nation could do as Harding is thinking of doing and I truly hope will do, call in your preachers from all over this nation and have men dedicated to our principles of American liberties, a heritage bought at the price of innocent blood — the precious blood of our forefathers, have them instruct your ministers in the "know-how" of combating godless Communism before we are slaves to her cruel, inhumane dictatorship. You may say, "Brother Harper, we have armies, guns, tanks, atomic bombs to keep back Russia." Yes, I know this, but so does Russia have these. Only a dedicated Christianity, not just religion, but a consecrated church in this twentieth century can save our world from this atheistic tyranny.

COEXISTENCE

There is a philosophy that says, Let us have coexistence with Communism. It has been good for Russia; let it alone. The Communist Party would have us think it is the friend of the working man; that if we had it we would live in the working man's paradise but every time a nation has tried to coexist with Communism, man becomes no more than a slave to Russia. Coexistence brings on what

we call the "cold war." This is but a period in which Russian Communism tries to lull us to sleep while she perfects her diabolical schemes, lays well her plans to conquer nations without a shooting war, take them by infiltration and deception. This period is the period where she bids for time; time to foster hate, arraying class against class; country against country with internal revolutions while she tries to emerge as the protector of the working man, arraying capital against labor as though they were enemies, never recognizing the fact that they do not have to be enemies but that each may give strength to the other, each appreciating the other as friends so closely knit together that Communism should never be allowed to sever the bonds that bind them together if each will share in the rights of the other. Capitalism is what they call the "thesis"; labor is what they call the "antithesis," while the war that is supposed to rage between the two results in what they call the synthesis, or complete overthrow of capitalism and the enthroning in its stead of the tragic Communistic State Dictatorship which becomes the fiendish owner or possessor, not only of all our property, but of mankind himself. We exchange our personal

rights of ownership of property to have and to control for this Socialistic Monster that takes the place of our private enterprise and ownership of business.

Should you believe me not, then look at Poland, part of Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Bulgaria, North Korea, North Vietnam, Tibet, Cuba, at our very door, East Germany and 600,000,000 Chinamen handed over to the Communists without a struggle.

EAST GERMAN WALL

The wall protecting East Germany from the West is a living demonstration of how Communism is hated and despised by those behind her concrete slabs. Russia had to build a wall, guard it with men and guns and even then they dare to flee the "Utopian dream world" where they claim men will be freed from the shackles of capitalism, where no wars shall ever come, where all men shall be equal, each sharing alike, every man with plenty and a state of perfect peace will forever reign. These nations I have mentioned; this wall they were forced to build to keep back the hordes fleeing her Communist Utopia is but evidence that her philosophy of life is truly a deception that dulls the mind of some

and then plunges them into despair. Give these nations free and open opportunity to decide their kind of government and watch even Russia herself, overthrow Communism, dethrone Khrushchev, yea, I believe hang him by his heels, head downward. Give Cuba free elections and the bombastic bellowing of the mad man of Havana would no longer be heard. China would rise up in masses by the millions. Communism does not let them vote.

MORAL CONCEPTS

The moral concepts of Communists are not those of our nation. They teach their people to rob and plunder the capitalists; they sacrifice the honor of their women for the party intrigues. As did Hitler, so does Communism, teach the children to spy on their parents. Communists teach hate instead of love; they are not admonished by the teachings of both the Old and New Testament that it is wrong to murder. They have murdered more than 30,000,000 people and many of them their very own Russians. Wives, husbands, and children are no longer the property of each other, that is they no longer belong to a family; they belong to the Communistic State. Homes, lands, pro-

perty of all kinds have been taken away and they now become the chattel property of the state, free to be moved at will.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

We can no longer make such foolish bargains as to "wait for Stalin to march into Berlin" to divide Berlin, leaving our half in the very heart of the Russian stronghold of Germany; divide Korea, which division cost us our beloved sons. We can cease to give Russia without scarcely a protest other countries as we let Stalin take over the countries, many of them just called over. We had the power then to stop her but we sat idly by and watched these countries raped by a ruthless, godless, fiendish dictator whose every aim was to prostrate us on the altar of surrender to him and his satanic tyranny. We folded our arms, dug our heads into the ground and allowed our leaders to plead for the Communistic reformers of China as though they were just farmers trying to make their country a better place in which to live, telling us it was not Russian Communism. But today we have six hundred million now ready to destroy us. Yes, we can quit playing into the hands of Russia by our mistakes, and we shall be charitable

enough to call them mistakes. Our goods should stop going to Castro and Russia by way of neutral countries and bring these nations to their knees. Instead, so long as we see they have what they need Communism will take the honor, continue to build for our destruction. Let nations that receive our goods declare themselves free from Russia and her satellites and prove it by letting Russia come to her knees and beg for help in a way that the peoples of Russia and China may know their form of government has failed and has been forced to bow to what they hate as capitalistic nations. I do not mean to be hard. The Bible says, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." The same is true with Communism; you be easy with her and she destroys you.

THE BIBLE

They try to make the Bible a Communistic Book. Not so. There is one illustration that forever puts to flight that accusation. In Acts chapters 2 through 5 we have the hunger that was in Jerusalem during the beginning of the church the Lord built. These early Christians out of a heart of love freely gave. It was not a forced sacrifice as they stood looking down a Communistic gun barrel. In chap-

ter 5 is the story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. They owned property, sold it, and were supposed to have brought it all for the poor, but lied and kept back a part. Peter's question and answer is the death knell to the argument that Christianity (the church the Lord built, for you can't separate the two) is a form of Communism. Peter asked, "While it remained, was it not thine own?" Communism says "No. You have no right to the ownership of property. It belongs to the party, the perfect society." Hear the answer, "And after it was sold was it not in thine own power?" You, who may be listening to me today who have tried to make the Bible the basis for your damnable doctrine by citing Acts 2:41-46 as the foundation for your great new-found Socialistic Utopia, you have misapplied this benevolent act of Christianity. These in Acts chapter 2, who were so generous that they sold their possessions and gave to the poor, were not Communists, they were capitalists who sold their possessions to feed the poor. Under your diabolical theory they would have possessed nothing to give. The state would have owned it all even including the people themselves. They had the right to private ownership; to buy,

to sell, to keep back a part after selling, to give as they felt the need. Not so with you. You have robbed the people of that right, if and when your dream of a Communist world comes literally true.

OUR HOPE

My friends, our hope is not in material warfare. It persuades, holds back, but unless we take the world for the Prince of Peace our world shall be destroyed by our hands, for these bombs will get out of control. They all but did a few days ago as announced by our radio and television stations. Let us come back to the Bible. Quit fighting the revelation of heaven. Cease to brand God's commands as nonessential. Come believe in the Christ as your personal Savior as in John 3:16; repent of sins committed against God and man; as your Bible so beautifully pictures . . . be buried with Him in baptism just as your Bible teaches

in Romans 6:4; arise to walk with Him in the pathway of peace; give up all this denominational paraphernalia not found worn by the church the Lord built and let us unite in one common cause and with Christ, our Captain, marching in His army, we shall march on to victory over Communism or any other power, religious or political, that seeks to destroy our American way of life, close our public schools, close our churches, and force us to surrender our freedom to worship God as we believe in our hearts we should. Be not deceived; be not blinded; Communism is not the only tyrannical power seeking the destruction of our freedoms. Come join hands with the churches of Christ to return to the Bible, be guided by it alone in matters of religion. What is found in it do. That which is not found surrender and Christ can save us from destruction. Do this now is my prayer in the name of Christ our Lord.



QUESTION OF THE WEEK

JUNE 3, 1962

Several have written me concerning Deuteronomy 31:26 which says, "Take this book of the law, and put it in the side (Revised Version says "by the side") of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." For this statement together with the statements found in Hebrews 9:4; Exodus 25:16 and 21 where the Lord com-

manded Moses to put inside the ark the "tables of the covenant," referred to in Exodus 31:18; Deuteronomy 5:22 as "tables of testimony" — "tables of stone," they conclude that this refers to two separate and distinct laws: one the law of God written by Him, the other the "law of Moses," written by Moses, which law excluded the Ten Commandments. This is a false conception of its meaning. In the monthly book of sermons we mailed to you, the reference to Deuteronomy 31:26, pages 9 and 10, should have read "Also in the side of the ark of the covenant was placed a copy of the book of the covenant. This book also contained the Ten Commandments . . ." The point was simply this, that while the tables of stone upon which was written the "Ten Commandment Law" (as it is so often referred to) were inside the ark itself, that by the side of it was also placed the "book of the law," which book also contained as these lessons have proved the command to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." While they were to leave the tables of stone inside the ark, yet the book of the law placed on the outside contained the writings of Moses which writings bound on them the sabbath. That you may know this is true read Deuteronomy 5:1 where Moses says, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep them, and do them." Now in this same chapter he restates the "Ten Commandments," mentioning particularly the sabbath day. So the placing of the tablets of stone in the ark on which were written the Ten Commandments does not mean that they were not also included in the "law placed by the side of the ark." Only the Ten Commandments part of the law was placed inside the ark but on the outside was placed the entirety of what Moses had in mind in Deuteronomy 31:26, which included the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:14-15).

From Seymour, Texas
Highland Church of Christ,
Abilene, Texas

Brethren: We are regular listeners to the HERALD OF TRUTH, KSWA, Graham, Texas. We are so thankful we have this good program over this station and hope and pray it will continue to be spread over more and more stations the world over. We would be glad for you to send this series of lessons which Brother Harper has been giving the last two Sundays, beginning with lesson 531. Also, may we ask you to please send us the record of songs with the short lesson by Brother Baxter. We thank you and those who are making this possible to be sent out. May the Lord richly bless all who are doing so much to make this good work possible.

In His wonderful name, R. B. F.

CAN PROTESTANTISM SURVIVE?

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 541

June 10, 1962

Today's lesson is a discussion of a vital subject because it affects the hearts of millions. I enter it with caution and yet with conviction. I enter it with kindness, yet with firmness. It is my firm conviction that those who make up the Protestant Religious World are sitting unthoughtedly by and watching their freedoms slowly though surely being taken away. Time for your prayerful and serious meditation concerning all this division is over-due. We have been reared in a land of freedom and it has never dawned upon us yet just what it means to lose these freedoms, these religious rights, and find ourselves as our brethren have recently experienced in Poland where the government has denied the church of Christ the freedom of public or private meetings for the purpose of worshiping or teaching as we believe. Unless the prayer of Christ in John 17:20-21 is regarded seriously by professed Christians, it is possible for Protestantism to be destroyed, at least to such proportions that it can no longer enjoy the freedom

to propagate that which it believes to be true. Why? Its division is its weakness. Remember him who said, "United we stand; divided we fall." While Lincoln was but a man there was one greater than he who said the same thing but in different words. In Matthew 12:22-26 Christ speaking has this to say to those accusing Him of casting out devils by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons, "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out devils, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?"

My friends here is a statement made by the Lord worthy of our consideration. He just plainly declares that a house divided against itself shall not stand. Today we have 250 or more religious denominations in America, all teaching, preaching, and practicing different doctrines, yet all claiming to make up the true church, "the house of

God" (I Timothy 3:15). Why would the Lord so divide and confuse His house when He said Himself "Every city or house divided against itself shall not stand"? If Protestantism be true, then why the Saviour's prayer in John 17 that they all might be one? Had Protestantism rather enjoy the seeds of division than take the Bible, discarding all human creeds uniting her forces with the Bible as her final and absolute authority for all it does before Protestantism destroys itself? Did the Lord speak the truth when He condemned a divided house?

IRON MIXED WITH CLAY

In Daniel chapter 2 and verse 40 we have a perfect likeness of the present day Protestant situation as it seems to me. Here Daniel is interpreting the king's dream. In this dream there were four kingdoms to arise. The fourth he is now describing. Listen to his description, "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of the potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it

of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with clay." Now you ask, why the mixture of clay? Let the Bible answer. "And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken." If you are a Bible student you know what happened to this kingdom. In Daniel chapter 8 and verse 25, your Bible says it "shall be broken without hand." That kingdom, which was Rome, fell. It was broken because divided. Now just as the clay was the weakness of this kingdom, representing the divided condition of this kingdom, just so the divisions found in Protestantism become the clay in its house and that clay, that divided condition, shall be its ruin just as the clay, the divided condition of Rome, was the cause of her downfall. My friends, it cannot fail else your Bible cannot be true. Hear our Lord again as He says in Matthew chapter 15 and verse 13, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." The psalmist said in Psalms 127, verse 1, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." With all these warnings how can man declare it makes no difference what a man believes or that it makes no

difference to what church or house a man belongs. The question is: Are you certain the Lord built the house, the church you are in?

A BABYLON OF RELIGIONS

Protestantism is but a Babylon of religions; a confusion of religions. Is the Lord the builder of them all? Now honestly is He? If all the churches are the Lord's then why can't I be a member of all of them at one time? Who gave you the right to keep me out? Does the Lord forbid me to belong to anything that He has built? If so, why? Do I have to surrender one truth and leave one of His churches that I may accept another truth and join another of His churches? If He has given to all Protestant denominations the doctrines they preach and teach, the different organizations that govern them, then why is it necessary for me to surrender my present convictions and actions in order to become a member of another group of His? Friends, can't we see that all this has to be wrong? Can't we see that here is the clay in this Protestant house that bids fair to undermine it as did the clay in Daniel's prophecy? I do not mean to offend the most sensitive soul listening to me today. I am truly disturbed over this division and

what it will eventually mean to our way of life here in America. I am fearfully and frightfully worried over it for I know it is condemned by the Lord who died for His church to be in this world; who bought it with His own blood. He, it was, who said "A house divided against itself shall not stand." Protestantism is a divided house and we all know this.

ITS HARM

As we study the harm in this division that first of all weakens those espousing the division, may I suggest that it does more than that. It divides homes and communities, arraying father against mother and sets the children one against the other oftentimes and friend against friend. The children are divided Sunday morning. One goes with daddy, if daddy goes; the other with mom. There is disunity in the home and community; the Bible can't be studied because of the division. This division is a curse to thousands of homes. Their children grow up frustrated children. I know for I am called many times to help them find their way back. If all these conflicting denominations are from the Lord; if one is as good as another, then why does mother go her way to church and the daddy go his way? But

few people by their actions believe this doctrine. If I honestly believed that the church where my wife attends is just as good as the one where I go, I certainly would not want to go to "my church," and sit alone when I could be with her and my precious little children whom I love. Such divided actions upon the part of the religious world is truly sectarianism. You who are listening to me right now, whose home is religiously divided, what excuse could you give the Lord for this divided condition, not able to discuss the greatest book on earth—the Bible, claiming as you may that one church is as good as another? If this be true, then what makes the differences that exist among these Protestant denominations? Is it God's truth that has actually divided them? Or is it sectarian, denominational creeds and pride? If one is as good as another, then why not unite? Could there be any essential Bible differences great enough to force such division as we have if all of them are going to be saved anyway? If none of them teach anything so contrary to the Bible as to cause them to be lost, then why not come together for your own existence and give up all things not necessary? Why be so wedded to some peculiar doctrine or practice

or denomination admitted by Protestantism to be nonessential that unity of those desiring to be just Christians cannot be enjoyed? The denomination to which you belong — does it have an essential doctrine, one necessary to salvation to which man must submit that the others do not have? If so, then those not of your denomination can't be saved. But, on the other hand, if your denomination does not hold anything essential to man's salvation that can't be found in the other denominations, then what scriptural right does it have to exist? Why not unite with others? There is but one answer to this.

THE BIBLE REFUSED

Another thing destructive in all this Protestant division is the fact it has forced the Bible out of many of our public schools. Now let me ask you something right from our hearts. If one doctrine is as good as another, if one church is as good as another, if they all get their doctrines from the Bible, then why does Protestantism object to these different doctrines being taught in the classes, and especially if they all come from the same Bible? What difference would it make what your child is taught if this be true? Do you believe a nation

can long survive with the freedoms we now have when that nation rules the Bible out of its public schools and in its stead seeds of modernism are taught especially when the Protestant world largely claims the Bible as the written word of God? Why will Protestantism cause, by its division, the Bible to be forced out of the schools? Isn't this one accusation against the divided condition in Protestantism enough to condemn its existence? Isn't anything that drives out the Bible wrong fundamentally according to the Christian concept? Did not Christ demand that it be taught to every creature? Can a nation long live with such a history as this?

WHEREIN LIES THE TROUBLE?

It seems to me that the basis for this trouble arises out of this situation. What must be our final standard of authority? Shall it be in a pope with his cardinals or a conference with its bishops? or a convention with its delegates? Or shall it be in none of these, but in the Bible alone as the complete rule of faith and practice in the field of religion? Bernard Ramm, in his book on *"The Pattern of Religious Authority"* says, "If the truth is merely that which appeals to the individual (no matter how care-

fully this be disguised to appear as something else) then it is impossible to differentiate the true from the false, delusion from reality." He then asks these questions: "Does He (that is, God) express it through the Roman Catholic Church: or through the ecumenical councils of the Eastern Church? or through religious intuition? or through man's best thoughts about God?" He then suggests, "There are not as many authorities as there are individuals, and there are not as many religious truths as there are religious thinkers. There is only one authority—God; and only one truth—divine revelation." William Horder in his book on *Protestant Theology* has this to say, "I do not wish to be misunderstood here — he had just been defending the division in Protestantism — I am not advocating that sloppy idea of tolerance that is so popular today. You know, this kind that says, One man's religion is as good as another. Carried to its logical conclusion, this means that Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Communism, and Father Divineism are all equally true. There is nothing to choose between them. If all religious opinions are of equal value, it can only mean that none of them is of any value. It

means that we can know nothing about religion." How true this is; yet how sad then is Protestantism! If all are right, then nothing is fundamentally right, nothing fundamentally wrong. Every man is to go his own way, make his own rules, and this destroys the Bible as the absolute and final guide for man as the revelation from God to man. If man has no absolute revelation from God to himself then man is lost in a fog of despair and shall die in desperation for he has no final guide and that spells chaos. Again I ask, can Protestantism survive all this divided condition? Remember our Lord said, "A house divided against itself shall not stand." Protestantism is a "divided house." Does one have to be confused by such terms created by this division as Orthodox Christian; Fundamentalist Christian; Conservative Christian; Liberal Christian; Neo-Orthodox Christian? Can't I be just a Christian and forget about Protestant Christian, Roman Catholic Christian, Neo-Orthodox Christian?

PROTESTANTISM THINK

May I appeal to Protestantism, trying as it is to reach the world. Surrender all this division and confusion over what you call "non-essentials" and be satisfied with

being just a humble Christian, members of the one church the Lord built, Matthew 16:18. This would be so easy. Watch how easy. In Acts chapter 2, the man of God — Peter — who incidentally was a married man, answered the question of salvation when he told those who asked him what to do, "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." Our trouble today is the Protestant world does not believe this is necessary and has therefore left this fundamental truth and as a result all this division has come about. Three thousand obeyed what he commanded (verse 41). The Lord added them to His church (verse 47). There was not a denomination known today present then; nothing but His church — one church. Can't we see this? This church had nothing higher than elders to oversee it (Acts 14:23; I Timothy, chapter 3). In Acts 20 they were called elders, verse 17; they were called overseers or bishops in verse 28, and were commanded to "feed the flock" which is that done by shepherds or pastors. Hence the elders were the bishops and the pastors over local congregations. Now we

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have done the same as did these; we have the same church government as did they; what we are and have done is what they were and did. We therefore are neither Protestants, nor Roman Catholics but just the church the Lord built. If not, why not? Listen to my pleadings today, Protestantism. Surrounded as we all are by Communism is it not time the rest of the

world were getting together if it is to survive. Will you not do as these in Acts 2 did and unite as did they, is my prayer in His name who prayed that "we all be one" in Jesus Christ our Lord. Again, I ask, "Can Protestantism Survive" divided as it is? Christ says "no," what do you say? What a battle we are in today for the minds and hearts of men!



QUESTION OF THE WEEK

JUNE 10, 1962

I have a question from a man in San Leandro, California. He asks this, "Why is the true Christian doctrine of justification by faith alone because of God's grace alone, in Christ's vicarious satisfaction alone so repulsive to you?" From this we are to understand that he feels we deny that salvation is by faith; that it is by the grace of God; and that it took the vicarious satisfaction of Christ to save man. Now we believe we are justified by faith but not by faith only for the simple reason James in James 2:24 says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and NOT BY FAITH ONLY." Yes, we are justified by faith but "not by faith only (or alone)." We believe that man is saved by the grace of God but not by the grace of God alone. Paul positively said in Ephesians 2:8-9 "for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Here Paul declares this grace saves through faith, hence we do not believe it is by grace alone. Now we believe Christ had to die to provide this perfect satisfaction for sin but if this offering alone is enough then all men would be saved for in Hebrews, chapter 10 and verse 9 the writer states that He (that is Christ) by the grace of God should taste death for every man." If this vicarious satisfaction alone was enough to save all men then all men would be saved for He died for all men.

Now may I ask this good man some questions? Can man be saved without repenting of his sins? Can man be saved without confessing Christ? Can man be saved without loving God and Christ? If he can't, then man can't be saved by faith alone though the grace of God has provided the vicarious suffering of Christ for the sins of man. Man is saved by faith in this vicarious satisfaction of Christ for our sins but it is not by faith alone; it is by a

WHAT FAITH IN CHRIST IMPLIES

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

June 17, 1962

Radio Sermon No. 542

In the discussion of this lesson — “Faith in Christ — What It Implies” or what it demands — which is another way of expressing it, I hope to deal with some very vital and fundamental facts with reference to salvation in Christ by faith. I hope to convince you in these fifteen minutes that faith in Christ implies a complete surrender to Him. This done, then I shall hope to show you that this faith also accepts His revelation as complete and sufficient to guide man to heaven when he dies. This faith, reliance, trust, and confidence is in a person, a very real life existing, life giving, life sustaining, and life blessing person. The power, the strength, and the force inherent in this person is demonstrated by the existence of a perfectly ordered and functioning universe. The laws that cause this world to function have just been discovered by man centuries after the Creator of this universe set them in motion and yet some have the arrogance, the effrontery, the boldness to affirm that there exists no such person as the person in whom we

place our trusts, our hopes, and our dreams. It is He who was there in the creation of the universe without whose power nothing could exist, whom we ask men to believe and to trust. It is to this person we ask men to completely surrender their souls with the assurance that He will fulfill every promise made to man.

GROUND'S FOR OUR FAITH

In Isaiah 40:12 we read “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance.” The person of our lesson today is that person who possessed the power to create a world and in that creation to make a perfect balance in everything. If the earth weighed more than it does we are told that it would be too near the sun for life to exist. If it weighed less than it does it would go flying into endless space and man would freeze to death. Another thing that I feel is most

significant that most of us maybe never thought of is, had the earth been larger than it is there would be a lack of oxygen and had it been smaller we could not endure the richness of the oxygen and life could not exist upon the earth. These great principles have been discovered by man, but the person in whom we place our complete confidence and into whose power and life we submit our lives made and controls these laws as though they were but toys in His hand. Yet some men today laugh us to scorn as though we are but morons, placing our hopes in a mere man who died nearly two thousand years ago on a Roman cross, unable to protect Himself from a small band of angry men, having to submit to their cruel and vicious atrocities, dying by their barbarous acts on a wooden cross. Not so, for in the Garden of Gethsemane, the garden of tears, said He, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels." Not so, because when they had buried Him in a new tomb, had rolled the stone to the grave and sealed it with the Roman seal, His Father was greater than this stone, greater than the Roman

Caesars, and with this power He broke the seal, rolled away the stone, and brought forth His Son from the tomb. O, yes, you may laugh this to scorn. But to answer the power of this man who some say is but a dead man; to answer the reaction of that great number of Jews on Pentecost and during the first century; to answer the life of Saul of Tarsus, when they lived during the very days of all these events, is something that mortal man has never been able to do to the satisfaction of any generation. The writings of these men; the teachings and works of the Christ, are not the teachings and writings of mad men. Hear me now, please: Should the teachings of this Christ in whom we place our complete faith and trust; should the teachings of these men chosen of Him, which teachings constitute the New Testament, be followed at the U. N. Assemblies, peace would follow in one hour and our world would be free.

BIBLE EVIDENCE

Fifteen minutes does not allow time for much detailed discussion of these wonderful and beautiful evidences that the scientific world has discovered which truths were revealed in the Bible long before these men ever lived. Just here I

call attention to a discovery by Herbert Spencer in which he affirmed that there exists but five known categories, namely: time, force, space, action, and matter. This was known millenniums before Mr. Spencer ever existed for Genesis chapter 1, and verse 1 contains each of these categories in Moses' account of creation. We have here; "in the beginning" — time. God, power; created, action; the heavens, space; and the earth, matter. Again the person in whom we ask you to believe was a vital part of this great truth found in your Bible centuries before man ever discovered that they even existed. In Hebrews 1, verses 2-3, your Bible says of Christ, "by whom he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Yes, this person in whom we ask you to believe is this power that was there when the world was formed and by whose power the world is upheld today. He it is who sits at God's right hand today making reconciliation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:17). In Genesis 1:26 your Bible reads, "Let us make

man in our own image, after our likeness." This "us" includes this person in whom my trust, my confidence, yea my childlike faith have all been completely placed, or entrusted. He it was who was there when man was formed and He it is who knows my every need. Mr. Spencer made a great discovery. To him I give great honor, but as the builder is greater than the building; as the painter is greater than his masterpiece, so is the Christ in whom I place my trust greater than the man or men who have discovered His laws and how they function because it was He who made those laws and created the man or men who discovered them.

BABYLON GONE

The book, called the Bible, is so meticulously accurate in its predictions that I find myself completely o'erwhelmed in its ability to pull back the curtain and look with such profound certainty regarding future events that shall take place. It is so perfect in its predictions that the very thoughts of infidelity cause my soul within me to rise up in indignation. Will you give it a chance in your heart?

In Isaiah 13:19-22 Isaiah foretells of the destruction of Babylon when he said it "shall be as when

God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited." Its overthrow is recorded in Jeremiah 50:2, "Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Mero-dach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces." Until this good day Babylon has not been inhabited. A literal fulfillment of God's word.

BRICKS OF STUBBLE

In Exodus, chapter 5 is the story of Pharaoh's commanding his taskmasters to force the children of Israel to make brick out of stubble instead of straw because of his anger. In verse 12 we read, "So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw." For centuries men wondered about this, but no longer must we wonder. In Exodus 1, verse 11 we find two cities built for Pharaoh at this time by the children of Israel, verse 11 — Pithom and Raamses. When the city of Raamses was excavated they found its walls to be built just as the record stated, part of clay and straw, and part of clay without straw but with a very low grade of stubble. Literally fulfilled.

JERICHO WALLS

In Joshua, chapter 6, is recorded

the capture of Jericho by the children of Israel. Men have ridiculed this story but in recent years this city has been found. The amazing thing about its finding was this, its walls had fallen outward instead of inward. Had it been overthrown by man they would have attacked it from without and its walls would have fallen inwardly. Not so, they fell outwardly. Again the book, the Bible, the revelation of God proves itself to be worthy of our confidence and it is in this book we read of the promise of this child who was to come, born of the seed of woman, Genesis 3:15, of the seed of Abraham, Genesis 22:18, and of the seed of David, II Samuel 7:12-14 and literally fulfilled in Galatians 3:16 when Paul writes, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." It is to this seed that we look for redemption, the salvation of our souls by faith in His precious promises.

HE IS THE ONE

Many are the prophecies referring to this Christ, the seed of David and their absolute fulfillment, but the following shall suffice for today with regards to the

internal evidences that assure us that this Christ is the true Savior of men. His birth was foretold in Isaiah 9:6-7 where it reads, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Then verse 7 declares He shall have the throne of His father David "to order it and to establish it." His mother was foretold in Isaiah 7:14 where the prophet declares "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." The place of his birth was foretold in Micah 5:2, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, . . . out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to rule my people Israel." In Matthew chapters 1 and 2; in Luke chapters 1 and 2, are fulfilled every prophecy made by these men. Christ was born in Bethlehem of a virgin, and to Him was actually given the throne of His father David, Luke 1:32 and Acts 2:29-35, and upon this throne of David He is to reign until the end when He shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, I Corinthians 15:24. It is in this Christ, this resurrected Christ, now at the right hand of the Father, that we place

our trust and ask you to believe with all of your heart. We believe that one who can make the worlds, one who can control them in such perfect precision, can give to us a book capable of directing our steps from earth to glory. If not, why not? Some claim the Bible is not sufficient to guide us, but no man has ever added anything to it but to make it harder and more burdensome for us to carry out. Your Bible claims for itself in II Timothy 3:16-17 that it is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect (the meaning of which is complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works." What more can continuous revelation add than this? What more could church tradition give us? What more do we want than to be complete in every good work toward the Lord?

WHAT FAITH IN HIM MEANS

We come to the close of our lesson by asking and answering the question, what does faith in Christ imply or demand? This can be answered in the words of Philip in Acts 8:37. The eunuch had asked, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" and Philip answered "If thou believest with all thine heart,

thou mayest." Faith in Christ implies, yes demands "all of our heart." In Deuteronomy 6:5 Moses said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." In Luke 10, verse 27, we read again, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." Faith—acceptable faith—saving faith, is a faith that believes and loves God with all of one's heart, mind and soul. Christ said in Matthew 16:24-26 that to follow Him one must deny himself, and take up his cross. He declared if a man will save his life he must lose it for Christ. Likewise acceptable faith demands obedience. Your Bible reads in Romans 1, verse 5, "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations." In chapter 16 and verse 26, your Bible shows that the mystery through Christ was "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." This is why James declares in James 2:24 that our justification is "not by faith only." Yes, faith in Christ implies, yes, demands obedience to His every command. Christ upon one occasion asked this question, "Why call ye me Lord,

Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Saving faith must accept all these prophecies given as true. It accepts Christ as the absolute fulfillment of all the hopes and dreams of the Old Testament prophets. It accepts the Bible as God's absolute and final guide and authority in all matters pertaining to the salvation of man. Galatians 1:6-9; Jude, verse 3 where he declared this faith the gospel "was once for all delivered to the saints."

THE GENERATIONS GONE

To imply that the generation of preachers that are now dead and gone and that those of this generation who are rapidly passing have never taught the people in whom they should believe, but just believe; that they have never taught them of what they are to repent, just repent; that all they have done is just teach them they are to be baptized into water, would be an unkind accusation, for no generation ever proclaimed faith in the personal Christ as our Savior, repentance of sins against God and man, and baptism into Christ where remission of sins is enjoyed than did this generation that is gone and is now passing. It was they who laid the foundation upon which the younger generation is

now so ably building. We were accused by the religious world then as now of not believing in a personal Christ but in our own works; we were accused then of denying the blood and just baptizing a dry sinner in water. It was those great giants of a generation gone who knew what Bible faith really meant; what Bible repentance actually was; and the beautiful relation baptism sustained to the Lord and to the forgiveness of our sins. This generation needs to get back to the faith our fathers had in the God of the Bible; in the Christ of Calvary; in the atoning blood shed for our redemption; and the true meaning of baptism into Christ for the remission of sins.

Faith in Christ, acceptable faith, caused me to repent of sins committed against my Lord. True faith is what brought me to the waters of baptism to be buried with my Lord in baptism (Romans 6:4) that I might be raised to walk with Him in a new life. This faith

taught me by the men of generations now gone is the power that causes me today to preach the gospel of Christ. It is my personal faith in a real person, a living, moving, loving, kind and compassionate Savior that causes me to dedicate my life to this work of trying to bring each of you to have a childlike faith and trust in Christ that will move you to obey Him; to walk with Him. It was He who said "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). I believed Him. I trusted Him, therefore I have surrendered to His commands without a question. This is what true saving faith in Christ implies — yea demands. It is my faith in Him as a person that has inspired me to continue working for Him, carrying out His work on earth in helping those who need help, and preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth. Will you not come today and surrender to His every command is my prayer in His blessed name.



QUESTION OF THE WEEK

JUNE 17, 1962

I have a letter from a man in which he says, "I perceive that you are just plain confused. You do not know the root meaning of the word church." Then he asks this question, "What do you know?" Then he adds in this letter

THE SHEPHERD OF THE 23rd PSALM

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

June 24, 1962

Radio Sermon No. 543

When my father lay dying, when his tongue could no longer speak, his Bible lay open at this, the world's most loved psalm, the 23rd. This together with Christ's promise to return in John 14, Paul's great lesson on love, I Corinthians 13, and the beloved John's 21st chapter of Revelation, describing the glorified state of the church in heaven itself, were the chapters that gave strength to his soul while his body was slowly but surely returning to the dust from whence it came. This psalm is the best known, possibly, of all the writings of David for it pictures to us the loving devotion of our Savior, who is today our Shepherd.

THE PSALM

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want,

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters,

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before

me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

DISCUSSION

This psalm is the very embodiment of love, a rope thrown out to us to which we may lay hold and be drawn close to our Master's side. With this cord of love our Shepherd draws us into pastures green beside the waters still and there amidst this calm and peaceful rest we give thanks to Him who is the true Shepherd of our soul. One day He shall draw the curtains about us as though we were walking between mountains high. Dark shall be the valley through which we shall pass but between these mountains, in the valley of shadows our loving chief Shepherd shall meet us with outstretched arms to bid us come home. This psalm with its language beautiful, enriched with its lofty sentiments, and thoughts sublime, endeared to us with imagery unsurpassed by mortal man, was written during the

Golden Age of English literature and shall never die so long as the English tongue continues to be spoken by men upon this earth.

The setting for this psalm is that which gives beauty to its meaning. We are told that David, the sweet singer of Israel, wrote this song, amidst the scenic hills of Palestine, not far from the city of the Great King. Here it was he had seen the sheep following him as but a shepherd lad. He knew their nature; he knew the love, devotion, and tender care the true shepherd had for his sheep. He began to think of man, made in the image of God. Surely that man created in God's own image must be greater than the sheep of the field; that man must have a Shepherd to watch over him as he makes his way from the cradle to the grave. Man must be of greater value than a sheep and therefore must have a Shepherd greater than man himself. To understand this psalm one must know something of the shepherd's life in the Palestinian hills and valleys. He must be able to see the shepherd as by morning he leads his sheep into pastures green by the side of untroubled waters and how by night he leads them back safely into the sheepfold. He must be able to see how tenderly the shepherd

protects them from the cold, from hunger, from thieves and the ravenous beasts as he stands to defend them even with his life.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A GOOD SHEPHERD

The qualifications of a good shepherd are given in John, chapter 10. Christ is here the good shepherd. It says of Him, I know My sheep, they follow Me. He led His sheep, He did not whip and beat them. He walked before them that He might dispel their fears. He fed His sheep for, said He, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." The Good Shepherd of John 10, tended His flock. That is, He nurtured them, cared for them, and it is said of Him, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Last of all a good shepherd will give his life for his sheep. It reads in John 10:15 "I lay down my life for the sheep." All this David saw in Him who is the Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm. You who are elders, which in the Bible are the same men as bishops, overseers, pastors, yea shepherds; Do you qualify by this standard as a "good shepherd"? If not, take

heed lest you be a hireling, not realizing it.

LOFTY THEMES

There are many beautiful hopes contained in this short psalm. Hopes that reach from the little babe in the cradle into life eternal beyond this vale of tears. Follow me now through these dreams in the faith of David and then pray with me for such faith in our Shepherd today.

David begins by singing the song of faith as we hear him say, "The Lord is my shepherd." May I ask you today, who is your shepherd? Is it pleasure? Is it money? Is it liquor? Or can you with the psalmist say, "The Lord is my shepherd." For Him to be truly your Shepherd you must follow Him all the way. Is your faith in Him strong enough to believe His promises, trust His saving grace, and to obey His every command? Remember, it was your Shepherd who said in John 14, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." For "in my Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you." Then He says, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." O, for a childlike faith in Christ; a faith as this of David that would accept Christ as our Shepherd, to rest in His assurances and

follow Him. In the next part of this verse David says, "I shall not want." We talk about our assurance that we are His, but is your trust in Christ a trust that you honestly feel deep in your heart this promise "I shall not want"? In Hebrews 10:22-23 the writer says "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith . . . let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful who promised." Do we believe this? My friends our assurance is not in guns; it is not in tanks; it is not in carnal weapons with atomic bombs great enough to destroy our civilization; our faith and our assurance is in the Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm. May I ask you, do you know this Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm? It is not enough just to know the psalm; we must know the Shepherd of this Psalm! "I shall not want!" O, what a thought sublime! and yet the world about is starving; hungry for love, for tenderness, for a small wee touch of human sympathy and care. So near is this Shepherd, and yet so far!

The next verse sings of contentment and peace. Listen to his words, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters." Have you ever seen the cattle in the pastures

green lying down in perfect contentment?

Have you ever been on board a ship when the waves leaped above its bow to watch the mighty vessel as it sank beneath the waters deep as the maddening waves like mountains all but tore the ship apart? Did you wonder if she would ever rise again to see the light of day with you alive? When the angry waves abated and the sea became calm and still and the old ship once again began plowing smoothly on its voyage, it was then you could know what David was saying when he pictured the sheep as they drank of the waters still. O for a world of peace and contentment instead of fear and hate as we find in the hearts of men today! If they would but meet our Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm!

The next is one that gives strength and courage to our very souls for he sings this time the song of life. Hear him: "He restoreth my soul." The shepherds watched for the very life of the sheep. Just so our Shepherd and our Shepherd alone can restore the soul. Man cannot save himself and we do not now, nor have we ever taught any such doctrine. Man is lost in sin and must come to know this Shepherd of the 23rd

Psalm as his personal Savior. In Luke 2:11, that memorable night in the city of Bethlehem, when the Savior of man was being born, the angelic chorus sang low in the sky this song, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." He it is who stands with pleading arms saying, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). But you will have to come, sinner friend. Neither Christ, nor the Holy Spirit will force you to come by some mysterious power. You must do the coming if you are to find this rest. Revelation 3:20 reads, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me." You must come to this Shepherd to be restored.

One of the most profound of all the stanzas sung by the sweet singer of Israel is penned by him in these beautiful words, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's saks." Where this Shepherd leads are paths of righteous living. He does not lead you into drunken dives; into road-houses, night-clubs, where drinking and dancing and gambling are the order of the day and night. He

does not lead His people to make, sell, and drink intoxicating liquors before His people and teach them to drink, dance, and gamble. He says, "Take up your cross and follow me," not Satan! Here is the song of leadership and it means that whatever He commands us to do that we must obey. It may be to believe in Him, or to repent of our sins or to be baptized in His holy name for the remission of sins, but whatever it is, it has to be done or we reject the leadership of the Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm and to reject His leadership, my good friends, is to be lost.

Ah, my friends, what confidence, what courage, what longing for true companionship and comfort this world is hungering for and yet it is all to be found in the Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm. Listen to the confidence of David as he says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil." This is the faith that lived in the heart of Paul and moved him to accomplish the great work for his Master for in II Corinthians 5:1 your Bible reads, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (our bodies) were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the

heavens." Oh, for a faith in God that would create in our hearts the confidence that dwelt in the soul of David as he wrote this song, guided by the Spirit of the living God as he dreamed of the valley and shadow of death. Could I but have the courage of this great man as he, thinking of this solemn hour, sang this verse, "I will fear no evil." That is, I shall not be afraid. Now why? Let this great man of God answer in the words of the Spirit that guided him, "For thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Here is the song of companionship as he walked through the shadows into death itself, Christ his Shepherd was there, He had gone before; He had walked the path of Calvary alone. He knew the way and David said "I shall have you, Lord, as my constant Companion and beneath Thy rod and Thy staff I shall find comfort for I know You will safely guide me across the shadows of death into that city fairer than day."

I know what this means, for we have seen those shadows slowly but surely closing in upon one of our very own. We went through those valleys. We heard her say, "I had much rather be in my place than in yours if I should not sur-

vive the operation because of the sorrow it will bring to you." But we also saw a living demonstration of this song that came from the pen of David millenniums gone by for when asked if she were not afraid to die, her only answer was, "I am a Christian, I am not afraid of death." Her Shepherd was with her to comfort her and to be her constant companion as she made the journey from this earth to the eternity beyond. This psalm, the Shepherd of this psalm is my hope and my strength as I make my way to the grave of our little Teenie girl. She feared no evil in the crossing.

Then, in this is the song of the providence of God, of His loving favor and the joys and blessings that shall follow. Do you know what they are? Then listen. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." America, we are in the midst of the providence of God's blessings. Yes, we can say with David, "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over," and yet America is turning her heart from one so kind and merciful and giving her strength, her energy, her time to serving the devil at his drunken parties, his gambling dens, and his houses of debauchery. No nation blessed as are we, but how many

of you listening to me now ever bow your heads with your family and thank the Lord for His loving kindness, His providential care, that causes our joy to be full and our cup to run over? America, this will not last unless we return to this Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm to let Him lead us in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. You who are listening, you know what all this means. Let me invite you to the services of the churches of Christ where you are and study with us these great and wonderful truths.

But listen to the greatest of all blessings yet to come from this Shepherd of the psalm. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." The person or the nation that follows this Shepherd is promised the goodness and mercy of the Lord. You are never cursed by letting Him lead you. Your sorrow comes when you turn from Him and follow your own evil ways. But last, and how I would stamp this indelibly upon your heart, "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Here is heaven itself as the final reward for this childlike faith that began in verse one in the heart of David and now ends with the Lord in the

eternal paradise of God, the home of the soul. It begins with childlike faith and ends with the immortality of the soul, that for which our hearts are seeking, (Romans 2:7).

CONCLUSION

I close with this story. It is the story of the young man who was such a great entertainer. He had entertained the passengers on board the ship. They requested that he read to them the 23rd Psalm. He agreed upon one condition that they would, after his performance, let an old unwanted and neglected preacher who was present, read it following him. They of course agreed. The young man with his great powers of oratory read the psalm. They cheered, and clapped their hands until it went up with a thunderous roar. The grand old man, all but afraid to come before them now, began reading. When he was finished, not a hand clapped; it was as still as death. With tears of humiliating defeat he turned to walk away believing he had made a complete failure when he chanced to look up at his audience. It was then he knew why there was not a sound. His aud-

ience wept with tears. The young man arose and said, "Ladies and gentlemen: the reason I asked for this grand old man to read was because I only know the psalm; he knows the Shepherd of the psalm." Do you know Him? Do you walk with Him? Does He lead you? Will you not come to-day and surrender your heart to His leadership, when He asks you to be baptized as penitent believers in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit with the promise that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Will you not obey Him? Then, being "buried with him by baptism into death" as the Bible plainly teaches in Romans 6:4, will you not rise to walk with Him in this newness of life, knowing it was the Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm who asked this of you? Will you not let Him "lead you in paths of righteousness for his name's sake" knowing that He knows the way, is my prayer in His blessed and holy name. My friends, what could be wrong in doing what the Shepherd and bishop of our soul commands us to do?



QUESTION OF THE WEEK

JUNE 24, 1962

A letter from Missouri asks this question, "If the fourth commandment of God was abolished and we are not obligated to keep that part of God's

THE SABBATH OF EXODUS 20

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 531

April 1, 1962

My good friends: Words fail me in expressing my thanks that in the providence of God I have been permitted to visit with you again, not only here in our nation, but yonder in Bermuda; Liberia, Nigeria, the Philippines, and in our sister nation Canada. If you are listening in any of these far-away places we would love to hear from you. I wish to thank you for the letters you have written and we will try to answer each of them.

UNABLE TO ANSWER

It became impossible for me to answer personally all your questions regarding my lessons on the sabbath. Many of you received answers to your letters, but since I could not give lengthy answers to all, I asked permission to prepare this series of lessons answering them. The failure to understand the two covenants, the misunderstanding of them has confused thousands of you who are listening and from people of many denominations come letters confirming this very thing. I wish

you would write us for these lessons. They will all be in the April booklet. We shall be happy to send one to each person who writes us. Should you wish more, or should churches wish them, write us and we shall be happy to tell you how you may secure them. Now I shall answer these questions as plainly, yet as kindly as I know how, for I want you to study what we have to say.

WERE THERE TWO LAWS TO ISRAEL?

That we may understand this discussion plainly I am asking: were there two laws or covenants given to Israel at Mt. Sinai, one called the "Law of God" which is called the "moral law," the "ten commandments"? And another law called the "Law of Moses" or the "Ceremonial Law"? Was the first of these to last forever, the "Law of God" called the "Moral Law," the "Ten Commandments," while the other law called the "Law of Moses" or the ceremonial law was to end at the cross? Or were these parts of the same

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law—the “Law of God” which law is also called the “Law of Moses”? If they be not different laws, but parts of the same law, then there is trouble ahead for those who bind the sabbath day upon us in this New Covenant, the covenant or testament of Christ. You will remember that the Bible says in Colossians 2:14, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” Then in Ephesians 2:15 your Bible reads, “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain (that is Jew and Gentile)—one new man, having slain the enmity thereby.” Here was something taken out of the way, nailed to the cross, and abolished. What was it? Again the Bible reads in Romans 7, verses 4 and 6 and 7, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ . . . 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.” Here they were dead to the law; were delivered from the law by the body

of Christ which must refer to the same event of Colossians 2:12 and Ephesians 2:13-16, the cross of Christ.

Now what law was Paul referring to in Romans chapter 7? Verse 7 identifies it beyond question. “What shall I say then? Is the law sin? . . . Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law.” Now what law? “For I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” My friends, the law to which they had become dead by the cross; from which they had been delivered here in Romans 7, was the law that said, “Thou shalt not covet.” This was the “Ten Commandments.” This was also the law that said, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” If one of these so-called laws had to cease, then since they had become dead to and delivered from the part that contained the Ten Commandments, that would force the part called the ceremonial law to still be binding. This one chapter proves there was but one law which contained the Ten Commandments as well as the ceremonies and to it they were dead and from it they were delivered. There is no answer to this.

Since the binding of the sab-

bath upon us in the Christian dispensation is wholly dependent upon the establishment of the theory that God gave to Israel two laws, one called the "Law of God," the other called the "Law of Moses," one to never end, the other to be taken away, I shall now begin the scriptural study of this theory. Friends, there is but one law. It is called the "Law of God," "The Law," or the "Law of Moses," and it contains both the "Ten Commandments" and the ceremonies of that law.

JOHN 1:17

I begin this study by reading John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Again in Hebrews 10:9 we read, "He taketh away the first, that he might establish the second." Of what did the "Law of Moses," this first testament consist? Two laws? Or one law including both the Ten Commandments and the ceremonies used in carrying out this one law? Let our Bible answer.

EXODUS CHAPTER 20

Beginning with Exodus 20, verse 1, we read: "And God spake all these words saying . . ." Now what were "these words"? Beginning with verse 2, concluding

with chapter 23, verse 33, are recorded these words spoken by the Lord to Moses. Do you know that in these four chapters there is no such division as the "Law of God," the "Law of Moses," and the "Law"? These expressions of identification of these words were given by the Lord after this law was given. In chapter 24, verse 3, we read, "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments." In verse 4, it says, "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord . . ." Verse 7 of this same chapter reads, "And he took the book of the covenant (not covenants), and read in the audience of the people." In verse 8 we read, "Behold the blood of the covenant (not covenants), which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." In these words written by Moses, called the book of the covenant—one book—we have both the Ten Commandments and the ceremonies of the law. This book contained also the feasts of unleavened bread; of the harvests and of the ingathering. All these are a part of what is called the ceremonial law, but they helped to make up this book of the covenant dedicated by blood which book also con-

tained the Ten Commandments. In this book they were also forbidden to have other gods. They were commanded to rest on the seventh day, as well as keep the ceremonies. One law, one book, one covenant to one people!

TRUTHS ESTABLISHED

I have read these various passages from Exodus, chapter 20 through chapter 24, that I may establish these truths:

1. "All these words" from Exodus 20 through Exodus 23:33 were included in "These words spoken by the Lord" in Exodus 20:1. They did not originate with Moses.

2. Not one time did the God of this covenant, given on Mt. Sinai divide "these words" into two separate and distinct laws, one called the "Law of God," the other the "Law of Moses," each distinct from the other. It was one law; one book; one covenant to one people only—Israel. In this book of the covenant we found what is called the "Law of God" or the moral law, and the ceremonial law all making up this one law, the book of the covenant. They were parts of the same law.

3. The truth I wish you to now see is this: Moses wrote down this law and your Bible calls that

law the book of the covenant, not covenants. One book, one law, one covenant. My question now is, Did this one book of the covenant written by Moses include or exclude the Ten Commandments? Did this book also include or exclude what is referred to as the "ceremonial law"? I do not believe any man will deny that this "book of the covenant" dedicated by blood excluded the Ten Commandments. Now we know it included also the ceremonies for they also are mentioned. This true then it is evident that what they refer to as the moral law and ceremonial law did not constitute two laws, for this was one book, one covenant containing what some wish to call the two laws of Israel. Remember that all these words from Exodus 20, verse 1, through Exodus 23, make one covenant, not two; constituted one book, not two, and it was given only to Israel. This alone refutes the theory. But there are chapters even more explicit.

II KINGS CHAPTERS 22 AND 23

I now invite you to turn with me in your Bible to II Kings, chapters 22 and 23. Remember now that Moses wrote down these words of Exodus 20, verse 1. Exodus 24:4, called these words writ-

ten by Moses, the "book of the covenant." Centuries pass. We come now to about 600 B.C. maybe 620 B. C. and in II Kings 22 verse 8 we find this reading. "And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law, in the house of the Lord." Just think! This book was lost in the house of the Lord. What book is this? I shall show you that this is the book of the covenant written by Moses. This book was given by Shaphan to Josiah the king to read. It says, "When the king heard the words of the book of the law (not books — not laws), that he rent his clothes." He sent the book to the prophetess Huldah. She confirmed it as being the book of the law. Now listen to verse 13, "Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book (not books) that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us." Just Israel. Remember this book contained more than just the Ten Commandments. It contained all that which was written to us.

But I hear some say, you have not read to us where this book found by Hilkiah the high priest is this book of the covenant. This I shall now do. In II Kings, chapter 23, verse 2 we read, "And the king went up into the house of the Lord and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words — now listen — all the words of the book of the covenant (not books — not covenants, but the *book* of the *covenant*) which was found in the house of the Lord."

Yes, it was the book written by Moses, recorded in Exodus chapters 20 through 23, called in Exodus 24, verse 7, the "book of the covenant." Thus we see that this "book of the covenant" and the "book of the law" are one and the same book.

In Hebrews 9, verse 4 we read: In the ark of the covenant were the tables of the covenant. They were here lest they be lost. Hence it became necessary that they be written by Moses and placed in this book of the covenant. Also in this Ark of the Covenant was placed a copy of the "book of the

law" (Deuteronomy 31:26). This book also contained the Ten Commandments as well as the ceremonies of the law and it all was called the book of the covenant or the book of the law. *One* book — *one* law. This is the law to which Paul referred in Romans 7, verses 4, 6, and 7; also Colossians 2:12-14, and Ephesians 2:15 to which they had become dead; from which, said he, they had been delivered; and that had been nailed to the cross; taken out of the way. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second (Hebrews 10:9). This was done by the body of Christ upon the cross.

CONCLUSION

I have now proven distinctly by the Bible, Exodus chapters 20 through 24 and II Kings chapters 22 and 23, that all these words God spoke by Moses to Israel from Mt. Sinai constituted this book of the covenant — this book of the law, and contained what is called the moral law and the ceremonial law, *one* covenant, *one* book, *one* law. They are not therefore two separate laws, one to last, the *other* to be nailed to the cross. They constituted one law and what happened to part of that law happened to all of the law. It was

all taken away. Asks one, Can you steal? Can you covet? Can you kill? Can you have other gods? No, for this second law — the Law of Christ — grace and truth, condemns all such. Ephesians 4, verse 28 says, "Let him that stole steal no more" In Ephesians 5, verse 3 the Bible says "But fornication, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once mentioned among you, as becometh saints." This same book, chapter 4, verses 5 to 6 says, "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all — " and in Revelation 21:8 it plainly says "and *idolaters* . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." In Ephesians 4, verse 25 we read "Wherefore put away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor." In Ephesians 6:1 children are commanded to obey their parents. All these are parts of the Ten Commandments, but we obey them because they are a part of this new covenant; this second covenant, the Law of Christ, this grace and truth, and not because they are found in Exodus chapter 20; a covenant dedicated by the blood of bulls and goats, but because they are a part of this new covenant dedi-

cated by the blood of Christ, Matthew 26:28; I John 1:1-9. This forever answers the charge that if the Ten Commandments are done away that we can commit all these sins. Nay verily, for they are forbidden by the law of Christ as well as by the law given by Moses.

Be listening next time to my discussion of Nehemiah chapters 8, 9 and 10. Do not miss it. Read them between now and then.

THIS NEW TESTAMENT OF CHRIST

Remember that in this New Testament, the testament of Christ, we are commanded to "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 Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Peter knew what he was talking about for the Spirit was guiding him. Three thousand obeyed this command and were added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:47, Acts 8:1). If you will do exactly what they did, it will make you exactly what it made them. This we teach. May no one be able to cause you to disbelieve this command found in your Bible given as a part of this New Testament of Christ dedicated by His precious blood, is my prayer in His holy name.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

APRIL 1, 1962

BROTHER REESE

Many of you have asked me about the passing of our Brother John F. Reese. He was known to so many of you personally, and others by letters and by telephone. He was known to the brotherhood of the church of Christ because of his long and faithful service with the church, especially as he gave his full time working with the Highland Church of Christ in helping to direct this radio and television program. Brother Reese was a small man of physical stature, but he approached the stature of a mental genius. He possessed the keenest mind of perception. He, in his wisdom, usually knew the solution by the time the problem was presented. Only a high school graduate, yet he could converse with the most learned in the field of science, education, or religion. Had Brother Reese been privileged to perfect his education, I firmly believe he could have taken his place alongside the greatest of scientists, educators, or religious leaders of this or any age in which he might have chanced to have lived. I knew him as but few men knew Brother Reese. As a preacher, I have worked with him for sixteen years, part of the time as a deacon, part of the time as an elder, and he was always active and alert. He was like the apostle Peter, at times fiery and explosive in his defense of that which he felt to be right but always humble enough to consider your side of the issue. He was truly one of the Lord's great soldiers

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE SABBATH ANSWERED

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

April 8, 1962

Radio Sermon No. 532

My friends:

In my last discussion I began with Exodus chapters 20 through 23 where the words of the Lord were given to Moses. In chapter 24 Moses wrote down these words. They were called in this same chapter "the book of the covenant." I showed that God did not make any distinction in these chapters, calling part of them the "Law of God" and another part the "Law of Moses." It was all one book — one covenant — therefore, one law. I pointed out to you that this book of the covenant was lost for generations and was found about 600 B.C. in the house of the Lord by Hilkiah, the high priest. It was given to King Josiah and in II Kings 22:11 it was called "the words of the book of the law" and in II Kings chapter 23:2 it was referred to as the "book of the covenant." No reference to having found two laws, one the law of God and the other the law of Moses. No reference to having found two books of covenants, one the book of the covenant of God, and the other the

book of the covenant of Moses. It was one book of one covenant containing both the Ten Commandments and what they call the ceremonial law.

I promised you that I would study with you today the book of Nehemiah with respect to this question. You will remember that those who keep the sabbath endeavor to divide the Old Testament into two laws — one what they call "The Law of God — The Moral Law," containing the Ten Commandments, and the other what they call the "Law of Moses," containing all the ceremonies of the Jews which they call the "ceremonial law." Now I am happy again today to show you that God made no such distinction. This truth established and the entire theory falls. As promised, I am now discussing with you chapters 8, 9, and 10 of Nehemiah. In this study I shall be able to establish the truth that there is no such thing as a division of the law to the Jews called the "Law of God" — the Moral Law containing the Ten Command-

ments, and another law called the "Law of Moses" which has to do only with the ceremonial laws. There is no such distinction made in the Old Testament. Find in it where it refers to a moral law and a ceremonial law, the one given by God, the other by Moses. This is a distinction made by man for the purpose of trying to answer Colossians 2:14, Ephesians 2:15 and Romans 7:4-6. If I am able to overthrow such a division, then there remains not an argument that will sustain the keeping of the sabbath day as commanded in Exodus chapter 20 and verse 8, which law was given to the Jews only. Remember there is not one command to be found from Genesis, chapter 2 through Exodus chapter 16 where God ever commanded Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or the twelve patriarchs to "remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." Nor is there one chapter explaining to them how they may keep it holy. Oh, I know God "blessed the seventh day and sanctified it," but even then it was not called the sabbath, nor did He command any man to remember the sabbath to keep it holy. Not one command prior to the crossing of the Red Sea. Do you know why this is? Let our

Bible answer. In Deuteronomy 5:15 it reads, "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God, brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: Therefore, (or: for this reason) the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day." The Gentiles were not in this deliverance from Egypt and this command was never given until this deliverance from Egypt and had been perfected. No command prior to this can be found to remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. *Not one!* No command can be found to "remember the sabbath day to keep it holy" after the testament of Christ became effective, *not one.* His testament became effective after His death and was to begin in Jerusalem *after* His resurrection (Hebrews 9:15-17, Luke 24:46-49) and after they were endowed with power. Now to the study of Nehemiah to establish forever that there is no such thing in the Old Testament as two distinct laws — one the "Law of God," and the other the "Law of Moses" — one to last forever, and the other to be nailed to the cross — taken out of the way.

CHAPTER 8

In Nehemiah chapter 8, verses 1 and 2 we read "And they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel." Here we have the book of the law of Moses. Now what is this book? Verse 2 reads, "And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both men and women — " From this we see plainly that the "Law of Moses" and the law are not two laws; not two covenants as the exponents of the sabbath try to sustain, but one. Here in Nehemiah 8:1-2 is the absolute refutation of any such distinction. The "Law of Moses" and "the law" are here the same law. But that you may forever be assured that I am correct in this, will you please turn with me now in your Bible to Nehemiah 8, verses 5, 7, 8 and 13 to 14. They read, "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people." What book? The book of the law of Moses, verse 1, just quoted. Then in verse 7 he names thirteen teachers and the Levites saying they "caused the people to understand the law." Now to forever destroy every argument that can ever be made in an effort to force two laws —

one the Law of God, and the other the "Law of Moses" each being a different law, now read verse 8, "So they read in the book in the *Law of God* distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." in verses 13 and 14 Israel gathered before Ezra to understand the words of the law. And "they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month."

SUMMATION

From this reading in this one chapter we have found that the "Law of Moses," the "law," and the "Law of God" are all *one* and the *same* law. Nehemiah, word for word called this "book of the law of Moses" also the "book of the law of God" and refers to both of them as "*the law*." This caused the people to "understand the law," verse 7. There is no answer to this. The "Law of Moses"; "the law"; and the "Law of God" are all here in this *same* chapter referred to as *one* and the *same* law; *one* and the *same* book. Ah, my friends, lest you think these laws are different; that this "law of Moses" called here the "Law of God" does not include the sab-

bath, I read to you now from Nehemiah 9, verse 3, "And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day." Now in verses 13 and 14 of this same chapter, we shall forever settle this question of there being two separate laws, one the "moral law," and the other the "ceremonial law"; one the "Law of God"; the other the "Law of Moses." It reads. "Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai; and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant." This just plainly identifies this book of the law of Moses; this book of the law of God; this that Nehemiah calls the law, for here it included both the sabbath and all the commands, right judgments, true laws, and good statutes and precepts given to them by Moses. This completely destroys the very foundation upon which rests the whole of this sabbath contention for it rests upon the theory that there are two separate and distinct laws, one the "Law of God"

the "Ten Commandments," which they call the "moral law," and the other the "Law of Moses" which they call the "ceremonial law." Now it is argued that the "Law of Moses," the "ceremonial law" was nailed to the cross, taken out of the way. If this be true, then since the ceremonial part of the law was positively identified here by Nehemiah as the "Law of God," then they must admit that the "Law of God" was also nailed to the cross or find another way out.

NEHEMIAH 10

Again in this same book Nehemiah chapter 10, beginning with verse 29 has this to say that they "entered into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord, and his judgments and his statutes." Verse 31 reads, "And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt. Also, we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our

God; for the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of God." But you may say this is only the ceremonial law. Oh, no for it specifically mentions the observing of the sabbath and how it was to be observed, even with burnt offerings. But to show you that this is not just the ceremonial law, I read verse 34, "And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the law." What law? Verse 29 spelled it out — God's law. Again in verse 36 it reads that they brought "the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law." What law? Verse 29 said "God's Law."

Here again God's law contained the sabbath, and all the ceremonial functions included in keeping God's law, the law of Moses, or just "the law" as Nehemiah calls

it. Could this chapter be introducing a different law of God from that found in Nehemiah, chapters 8 and 9? No my friends, they are the same law; not two laws; not three laws. One law included it all and that law was taken away, says Paul.

I want you to remember that I have actually proven by the Old Testament writers themselves that the "Law of Moses"; the "Law of God," and the "the law" are all one and the same law; not divided into two laws, one to be done away and the other to last forever. They make up this "book of the covenant," dedicated by the blood of animals and what happens to part of it happens to all of it. I shall discuss with you why we can't steal, why we can't kill in this new dispensation. It is all so easily answered. I am offering my booklet "The Lord's church" to the first person who sends me the verse from Genesis chapter 2 to Exodus chapter 16 where God commanded Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or the twelve patriarchs to "remember the sabbath day to keep it holy" or where He ever-gave to them instructions as to "how to keep it holy." Now I do not have this booklet for sale. They are gone.

But this one I will give to you. If you can't find it, then surrender that contention. Also, I will give it to you if you can find the command given in the New Testament after Pentecost, Acts 2, at which time the New Testament — Christ's Testament — had its beginning. Why given so many times from Exodus 16 on throughout the Old Testament, but not one time found from Genesis 2 to Exodus 16? Why is it not commanded *one* time from Acts chapter 2, the beginning of the New Testament, to the close of the Bible if it were binding from the creation of the world, before man was created, and was to last throughout all ages of God's dealings with man? Strange and pathetic are the attempts to prove that we Gentiles are bound by it today, under the "Law of Christ," when not

one time does His law ever command us so to observe it. Write us for these sermons.

CONCLUSION

And now in closing, may I plead with you to obey the "Law of Christ" which law says in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Obey His law when it says "*buried* with him in baptism, wherein also ye are *risen* with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." This done and faithfully abiding in His teachings until death and heaven will be your home. May you not sin away your days of grace and die having refused to obey the "law of Christ" is my prayer in the name of Christ our Lord.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

APRIL 8, 1962

I have been asked to explain Isaiah 66:23 which reads: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me saith the Lord." It is thought that this passage binds upon us the observance of the sabbath day. If this be true, then it would bind upon us the observance of the "new moon" ceremonies.

Let us read from Ezekiel, chapter 45, verse 17, and never forget this verse: "And it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel." Here again we have both the sabbath and the new moon celebrations. Here, as in Numbers 28:9-10, they

THE BIBLE MEANING OF EVERLASTING, PERPETUAL, AND FOREVER

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

April 15, 1962

Radio Sermon No. 533

My friends, I have discussed these words before, but not in the same connection, nor to the same extent that I shall discuss them today. When people read these words just mentioned they at once conclude that the things under discussion can never end, but this is not always their meaning. The meaning of these expressions have to be understood in the context where they are found. Now you may just throw up your hands, as I have had people do, and say, "Well, it says everlasting — forever — perpetual, and I just believe that it means what it says." Well so do I. Now what *does* it say? It is here we should be most anxious to really know what the Bible teaches concerning these things. Now will you let our Bible answer these questions?

EVERLASTING

Our first word shall be everlasting. In Psalms 41, verse 13 we have this reading, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting." In I Timothy 1:17

we read "Now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." In these passages we have the words *everlasting*, and *eternal* applied to God. Now I ask you this question, Are the words everlasting and eternal in these passages used in the same sense that God used them with reference to the covenants made with man in the Old and New Testaments? Friends, everlasting in these passages point *backward* into eternity as well as *forward*. Here is a perfect, complete sense, an all inclusive sense, in which these words are used that does not apply when used with reference to The Bible Meaning of Everlasting the everlasting covenants made by the Lord with man.

To show you now that the word everlasting does not always mean what it did in the verses relative to God, "without beginning or ending," and to show you that it may be limited to a certain

time span, I now invite your attention to Genesis 17, verses 9-10 where your Bible reads, "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised." Now listen to verse 13, "And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." Question: Do you circumcise every male child born to you? If everlasting always means that it cannot end, cannot under any circumstance cease to be, as I am told, then you must circumcise, for Christians claim today to be the seed of Abraham. Your Bible says in Galatians 3:29 "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Are you Abraham's seed? Then why do you not circumcise your male children? There is an answer. Do you know the answer? In Galatians 5:2, your Bible declares "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing," and in verse 4 Paul tells them they have "fallen from grace" if they bind circumcision. In Genesis 17:13 circumcision was to

be an everlasting covenant. Yet in Galatians 5:2 to those who bound circumcision Christ profited them nothing. Ask your minister to explain the meaning of this everlasting — ask him if the meaning of the word everlasting, used here with circumcision, is used in the same sense as when used referring to the everlasting God? No, the circumcision covenant came to an end. I will explain it to you. In Genesis 17:9 it says the circumcision covenant shall last "throughout your generations." In verse 12 it reads "every man child in your generations." Now when the promise to Abraham that "in thee and thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed," was fulfilled (Genesis 22:18) — it was then Abraham's fleshly generations ended and a spiritual seed or generation took their place and with the ending of the fleshly seed and the beginning of the spiritual seed came to an end "their generations." With the passing of their generations, came to an end this everlasting covenant of circumcision which was of the flesh and now it is the spiritual circumcision of the heart (Romans 2:28-29). Here in Genesis 17 the word *everlasting* has a special use and its duration was for a particular

(Continued on page 27)

period of time and that time was stipulated "throughout their generations." Their generations now having come to an end, this everlasting covenant came to an end. Yes, it was everlasting, but only for that particular period. I ask again, why do we not circumcise since we claim to be Abraham's spiritual seed? This answered and we have the answer to the sabbath question: Christ was this promised seed of Abraham. In Him were fulfilled all the promises of the Old Testament. When His testament became effective all things else ended. It is now spiritual, not fleshly, Romans 2:28-29.

THE LAND PROMISE

In Genesis 17:8 is the foundation stone from which the premillennialists begin their argument that Christ is yet to restore to Israel all the land once reigned over by David, for say they it was promised to Abraham and his seed for an everlasting possession. Since that territory is now in the possession of the seed of Abraham and since it was to be an everlasting possession, they claim that God is honor bound to restore it to them. If it were to be an everlasting possession in that sense then they could never have lost it. The fact they have not

possessed it now for some two thousand years and that it shall have to be given back to them is proof positive that they have not retained it as an everlasting possession for it had been lost to them now for two thousand years. Oh, one says, Mr. Harper, they *do* have it again. Nay, verily; for there is not a Jew within the old walls of the city of Jerusalem, the very capital of this great country. No, it is far from having been restored to them. Now, what is the answer? Here it is: This promise was made to Abraham and his seed, his fleshly seed only "throughout their generations," verse 7.

Let us turn now to Matthew 3, verse 9. Here Christ said to the Jews, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father." Now why this admonition? There was coming a time when the fact that they were the fleshly seed of Abraham would not secure for them the blessings of God. This the world needs to learn now! I now invite your attention to Romans 9, verses 6 through 8, Do you have your Bibles? "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but,

in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Now hear the next verse and never forget it. "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." What more do we demand than this to prove to us today that the fleshly seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, yea of David, who is of Abraham's seed, are no longer counted for the seed to enjoy these physical promises made in Genesis 17:7-8? The spiritual seed of Abraham are promised a better home, even heaven itself. Hear the writer of the Hebrew letter as he speaks concerning the hopes and dreams of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in chapter 11, verse 10 and then forever surrender all these physical fleshly hopes of earthly Canaan. The writer says, "For he (this is Abraham) looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Not earthly Canaan. Can't we see this?

PERPETUAL—FOREVER

Let us now study the meaning of the expression "for ever." The same argument is made regarding the expression "for ever" that has been made with reference to the word "everlasting." In Exodus 31, verses 16 and 17, your Bible reads,

"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel (not the Gentiles) for ever." From this passage it is argued that the sabbath day is just as binding on this generation, during the Christian dispensation, as it was back during the time of this command in Exodus 31. It is suggested that "for ever" means "without end"; that it shall never cease. Now to show you that this argument will not hold, I have but to read this time from Exodus 12:8 where the Lord is giving instructions regarding the lamb to be slain the night He was to pass over Egypt to slay the first born in every home where He did not see the blood. It reads as follows: "And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it." In verse 11 it tells them why, "It is the Lord's passover." Now concerning the observance of this "passover" hear the Lord's instructions in verse 14, "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye

shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." Do you keep this "passover feast"? Why not? It was to last for ever. If the sabbath is binding because we find it was to be observed for ever, then why not the observance of the passover in the same way? There is no answer for this by those who keep the sabbath because the passover was to be for ever also. Turn with me now to I Corinthians 5, verse 7. It reads: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." No longer do we have the old passover feast. Today Christ is our passover. So again when Christ and His New Testament became effective it was the end of the Jewish generation, according the teachings of the New Testament. Here we have proven again by the Old and New Testaments that the expression for ever does not mean it never ends, but that it is for ever during that special dispensation under consideration. But the key to all this is that the circumcision covenant; the passover covenant, and the sabbath covenant were all to last only "throughout their generations." Since we have established positively that neither

the circumcision nor the passover covenants are being observed by those who try binding upon us the sabbath covenant, yet they were everlasting and for ever, we have completely answered this argument that the sabbath is binding today because it says it was for ever. You see when Christ became *our* passover; when Christ became lawgiver then *His* Testament became effective. It was then that these "generations" throughout which all these covenants were everlasting and should not cease, *ended* and these covenants no longer are binding according to the New Testament. Christ freed the Jews from all these fleshly bonds and ties and covenants. The fleshly generations or seed of Abraham ended with the coming of his spiritual seed, those in Christ; the generations of Israel ended when Christ fulfilled *all* the Old Law and when men became no longer Jews of the flesh, but of the Spirit. All this was nailed to the cross and now we have Christ our passover, circumcision is of the heart, not of the flesh; the fleshly generations of Abraham and Israel have ended with the spiritual seed of Abraham. *Today* we have the *New* Testament and in it there is not

one command to "remember the sabbath day to keep it holy," *not one.*

PERPETUAL

But some say to me, Mr. Harper, the sabbath was to be a *perpetual* observance and if perpetual, it can't end. Let us read again, this time from Exodus 30, verse 8: "And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations." You will never forget the *time duration* of all these. Each time it was "*throughout your generations.*"

CONCLUSION

Now let us read again the command regarding the sabbath in Exodus 31:16-17, "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever." This sabbath covenant was between God and Israel; not between God and the Gentile world and this sabbath covenant was exactly like the others. It was perpetual, forever, throughout their generations. Since therefore you do not observe to keep the circumcision covenant; since you

do not observe the passover covenant; all of which were everlasting, perpetual, for ever,, throughout their generations, then you must admit that this sabbath covenant that was perpetual and forever was also to last only "throughout their generations." Since all these others are admitted to have ended with Christ and His Testament at the cross, Colossians 2:12, then it must be admitted also that the sabbath covenant which was given to the same people, Israel only throughout their generation, ended with Christ and His testament. This was the end of the Jewish generation (according to the New Testament), and today we are neither Jew nor Gentiles; we are "one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). These lessons correctly understood and destroyed is every possible argument to bind upon us the sabbath given to none other than those who crossed the Red Sea.

Remember that Christ our pass-over, who died for our sins, said in Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believeth not shall be damned." Remember Peter, directed by the Spirit said in Acts 2:38, "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." This is the New Testament. My

prayer in His name is that you obey Him, trusting Him for His promises, assured that when you obey your Lord He will save you.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

APRIL 15, 1962

As the result of my sermon in December, "The Pleading Eyes of a Child," I received one of the most cherished letters during my six years with this program. A young orphan girl from the Philippine Islands wrote me, wondering why she and her little sister and two brothers had to be left as they were with their father and mother not wanting them. She said she was so glad someone cared about children in this condition. She is in college and wanting help, not so much financial help, possibly, but help to let them know they are loved and wanted, and cared for in the hearts of Christian people. How I would love to just go visit this little girl and her brothers and sister and let them feel the warmth of a heart who truly loves these children, but I can't of course; they are too far away. We sent her letter, or a copy of it, to our Brother Brashears who is working with the churches of Christ there. It is my prayer that the heart of this precious young girl may find the love and warmth that she and her brothers and little sister need to bring back into their little hearts the sunshine of life and the joy of being loved and wanted. Churches of Christ are interested in children whose fathers and mothers no longer care for them nor want them, or whose parents, maybe for reasons they cannot help, can't provide for them what they need. Should this little girl in that faraway island be listening I want her to know that we do love her and want to hear from her again.



FROM THE GREAT STATE OF IDAHO

Dear Brethren:

I am enclosing \$5.00 for the wonderful TV broadcast and what a godsend it is in homes where they never have a chance to hear this better way of life. I hope it will continue to go into all parts of the world. Hoping our little mite will lead some dear soul to Christ that otherwise might not ever hear the gospel.

May God bless all in this great work.

G. R., Napa, Idaho

DID CONSTANTINE GIVE US SUNDAY?

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

April 22, 1962

Radio Sermon No. 534

too many for me to have time to answer each of them in a lengthy explanation. Many of these letters suggest to me that Constantine of Rome changed the law, and also that the Roman Catholic Church claimed to have changed the sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday.

This discussion is in no way to be construed as an insult to those who hold to the sabbath, but simply to point out the truth as we believe it to be. The charge is, as I would call it, threefold; first that Constantine by law changed the worship day from Saturday to Sunday; second, that the Roman Catholic Church claims to have changed it because they claim the divine right to make such changes; third, that it was a heathen custom brought over into the church by Constantine to unite, if possible, the heathens with the Christians. These three accusations I shall undertake to document in this sermon today.

1. To show you that these accusations are made, I quote from

the book "The Protestant Dilemma" by Richard Lewis. In this I shall be fair, for you must always know that what we present on this program is an honest setting forth of what the people from whom we quote have said. On page 71, the writer says, "The Council of Nicaea was held in A. D. 325. Constantine presided over this council, though he was not a Christian. In fact, he had, four years earlier, decreed that all townspeople should rest on the 'venerable day of the sun' thus attempting to achieve a unity between the pagan and Christian elements in the empire." On page 78 he says, "Finally, a pseudo-Christian emperor with purely political motives brought Sunday into favor by legislative action." But again on page 28 we read "Not until after the change in the practice of rest and worship from Saturday to Sunday had been well established did the politically minded church step forward to claim the credit." Thus is documented beyond question the first

of these statements that Constantine changed the meeting from Saturday to Sunday. Keep this in mind!

CATHOLIC CHURCH

The next claim mentioned by them is that the Roman Catholic Church claims to have made this change. This time I read from this same book, page 77, "The Reformers were aware of the claims of the Roman Church. Speaking of the Catholics the Augsburg Confession states, 'They allege the change of the Sabbath into the Lord's day, contrary, as it seemeth, to the Decalogue; and they have no example more in their mouths than the change of the Sabbath.'" One more quotation, this time from page 79. He is quoting from the catechism by Professor Peter Geiermann, which this writer says appeared in 1910 having received the blessing of Pius X. It is as follows: "Question, Which is the Sabbath day? Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day. Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday? Answer: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea — transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." Again I have documented the

statement made by me that they undertake to show that the Roman Catholic Church claims to have made this change from Saturday to Sunday, and not the Holy Spirit.

HEATHEN PRACTICE—SUN GOD

Now to establish the claim that it was a heathen custom palmed off on the church as an act of "sun-god" worship and not a Scriptural act of commemorating the "Lord's death till he come." On page 71, I have just read to you where Constantine "decreed that all townspeople should rest on the 'venerable day of the sun'." Now on page 72 the writer has this to say, "These actions make clear the objectives of Constantine which are stated by church historians to have been the unifying of the pagan and Christian elements: a day which both could keep; the day named for the sun and the day of the Lord's resurrection; the pagan worship of the sun and the Christian worship of the Creator." I believe I am now justified in saying that the claim is this: That Constantine and the Roman Catholic Church changed the Sabbath day worship from Saturday to Sunday instituting in the place of God's ordained day, the sabbath,

Saturday, the "sun-god's" day, Sunday, with its heathen practices that the heathen might worship his heathen God. Our question now is: Are these accusations valid? or can I prove that Christians worshiped on the "first day of the week" under apostolic indorsement long centuries before Constantine or the Roman Catholic Church existed? Can I prove that during the centuries before Constantine, Christians were meeting on Sunday? If I am able to do this then again we have proven these claims to be wrong.

CHRISTIANS ON SUNDAY

I read now from the Bible, Acts 20:7, "And upon the first day of the week (which is Sunday), when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Now verse 11 reads, "When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed." From this it is argued that this was not the Lord's supper, but a regular meal, based upon verse 11. First may I ask, Why did they come together to break this bread if it were a common meal? This was a breaking of bread for

which they came together on the first day of the week to observe. Another thing, there is no need or at least there should be none, to prove that this was not at the close of Sunday, therefore on Monday morning, as is presented by some as a possible explanation of this passage. It just plainly says, "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." That should settle it. But asks one, What are you going to do about this new translation that reads "Saturday night"? First, I would like to say I believe this is very unfortunate but still "Saturday night" is after the sabbath which ended at sundown and is still the "first day of the week." When men strive so hard to show this is not to observe the Lord's supper, when they strive to show this could have been on some other day, it is conclusive proof to me that they are in tragic trouble with the sabbath theory for this shows the practice of the early Christians observing the Lord's supper, not on the sabbath, but on the first day of the week — Sunday. But asks one, What is the meaning of verse 11 where it says, "when they had broken bread and eaten"? Does this not show this was just a common meal? Certainly not. You do

not just "break the bread," you also eat it. In I Corinthians 11:28 we read, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." That was the purpose of their coming together and here they are partaking of the supper. Have you ever watched people observe this beautiful memorial of the death of the Lord? We do not just grab up the piece of bread and begin biting on it; we very humbly and very manfully break the bread and then eat of it. This is what they were doing.

But says another, in Acts 2:42 it says "They continued steadfastly in . . . breaking of bread" and that this was a common meal, was it not? No, the "breaking of bread" in verse 42 is the Lord's Supper. Now in verse 46 it reads "And breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Verse 46 plainly states that the breaking of bread here was a common meal at home. They ate meat. This was not the same breaking of bread therefore as in verse 42.

Now turn with me if you have your Bible to I Corinthians 10:15-16. It reads, "I speak as to wise

men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Now it shall be my pleasure to show you that the "breaking of bread" which is the Lord's Supper is to be "when they come together into one place." If this I can do, then we can understand why the disciples were coming together on "the first day of the week" to break bread in Acts 20:7.

I now read from I Corinthians 11:17 "ye come together not for the better, but for the worse." Then in verse 18 we read "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear there be divisions among you." Now listen to verse 20, "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper." Now why? They had brought their own supper and were putting to shame those who had not — the poor. So this one thing I have set forth — this breaking of bread -- Lord's supper — was at a meeting in which they were to assemble into one place, as the verse above says, "together in the church — the assembly." They did not break this bread from house

to house. They were not to eat this bread at their various homes separate and apart from the congregation, but in the assembly when they came together into one place.

WHY WAS THIS?

It is now necessary to find the day on which they met. If you will read I Corinthians 16:2 you will find the Spirit guiding Paul to write these words, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Again we find that the people in Corinth and Galatia had been given this command to be obeyed on the first day of the week. Is there any reasonable answer as to why Paul would have them do this on the first day of the week? Yes, he had just been talking to them of the day on which they "came together into one place." Since they were accustomed to assemble into one place for the Lord's supper, why not take this time to "lay by in store" for the poor saints in Jerusalem? Again, we know they came together at Troas in Acts 20: 7 to "break bread" on the "first day of the week," which is Sunday.

A MATTER SETTLED

From these Scriptures it is positively proven that Constantine did not originate the idea of Christians meeting on Sunday. Here in Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 16:2, from A. D. 55 to A. D. 57 as nearly as we can calculate the time, we actually have the early church meeting and observing the Lord's supper on Sunday, which is the first day of the week. This is some 265 years before the council in which it is asserted that Constantine changed the worship from Saturday to Sunday. He could not have been the one to introduce the Sunday meetings for under the leadership of the apostles this was practiced. Had it not been of divine sanction, are we ready to accuse the apostles of winking at that which, as I shall read to you is called today the "mark of the beast"? In the book "The Beast and His Mark," is the charge that Sunday is the Mark of the Beast. On page 39 we read, "The mark of the beast is a rival, or counterfeit, of God's seal, the Sabbath." Again, "Therefore the mark of the beast must be a rival sabbath to God's true Sabbath." Having said this he quotes from the "Catholic," a publication of Feb. 9, 1893, Kansas City, "The Catholic Church of its own infallible authority created

Sunday a holy day to take the place of the sabbath of the old law." Now I ask you this question. How could the Roman Catholic Church have changed this? How could Constantine have changed this? when we find Christians meeting on Sunday, the first day of the week 265 years before the counsel of Nicaea over which Constantine the Great presided? How could the Roman Catholic Church have changed Saturday to Sunday when the Christians were meeting on Sunday some five to six centuries before there ever appeared in secular history the name Roman Catholic Church? During the time of Acts 20:7 the Roman Catholic Church was unknown. This being true then neither Constantine nor the Roman Catholic Church could have been the power that instigated the meeting of Christians on Sunday, for this had been in practice 265 years before the council over which Constantine presided and five to six centuries before the world ever read of the Roman Catholic Church. This being true I have proven by the Bible that our authority for meeting on Sunday is of divine origin, practiced by the church under the direction of the apostles, guided as they were by the Spirit and par-

ticipated in by Paul and the early church. If it were wrong; if it were contrary to divine revelation; if it were the "Mark of the Beast;" if this breaking of bread should have been done on Saturday, the sabbath, then why did not Paul correct them? Why is there absolutely no record of the early church's having come together on Saturday, their sabbath, to break bread; to observe the Lord's supper? This is vital and needs to be explained before we accuse the practice of meeting on Sunday an act of sun-god worship and therefore an act of heathen worship. Would Paul, the Christians at Troas, or Corinth, have offered worship to the sun-god? or worship the beast? All that Constantine did was to legalize Sunday, because it was the day the Christians met to observe the Lord's supper. He changed nothing. He respected their day of worship. The Roman Catholic Church changed nothing. Christians had been meeting on Sunday since the early church.

CONCLUSION

In my next lesson I shall discuss Paul's purpose for meeting with the Jews on the sabbath.

OBEY THE LORD

Friends, I beg of you today to

come obeying your Lord believing in Him as your only Saviour, repenting of your every sin, and be baptized into Christ as says your Bible, Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27. Do this by being buried with Him in baptism, Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12. These men guided by the Spirit knew what the Lord wanted men to do, else these Scriptures would not be in the Bible. Will you not obey your

Bible today, is my prayer in the name of Christ our Lord.

Remember, we are not commanded to keep a day in the law of Christ, but we are commanded to remember an act — the death of Christ (I Corinthians 11:24-26). They commemorate a day; we remember the death of our Lord. This is the difference!

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

APRIL 22, 1962

While this is not what we might term a question, yet it was suggested to me some months ago by Brother Reese Bryant, who was in Nigeria as a missionary for some two or three years. He said, "Brother Harper, radios are not as plentiful there as in the states." He suggested that every Sunday many groups of interested people would gather around one radio, possibly 25 to 200, sometimes sitting on the ground or maybe other places listening to my sermons. We thought it would be wonderful to have some personal fellowship with them today in this period of our study. So to all you in Nigeria who may be listening to my voice today, may I say to you, "Hello and God bless you for listening to me; for letting me be your guest at this hour."

Let us say God bless all of you in Nigeria, Liberia, Bermuda, Canada, Philippines, Canal Zone, Hawaii and wherever you may be listening to us by radio or TV. Write us and let us become a part of you.



From Marion, Illinois, we have the following:

"Dear Brother Baxter: We watch your T.V. program nearly every Sunday morning. We enjoy it very much. My husband really likes the way you teach although he is not a member of the church. I pray he will be soon."

BRETHREN: our responsibility is to teach God's word and to do it through a scriptural organization — the local congregation. We are happy that so many of you are helping to teach men and women God's truth.

WHY PAUL WENT TO THE SYNAGOGUE

ABC and MBS Networks

By E. R. HARPER

April 29, 1962

Radio Sermon No. 535

As I close these discussions on the sabbath question I come now to answer the question asked me, Why did Paul meet with the Jewish people on the sabbath in their synagogues? The thought set forth in these suggestions is that Paul was keeping the sabbath with the Jewish nation as he met with them in their synagogue worship.

ACTS 13

Acts the 13th chapter is one of the most referred to chapters where Paul met with the Jews on the sabbath. Beginning with verse 14 it reads, "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down." May I ask, why they came to the synagogue on the sabbath? (It should not have to be answered.) If they desired to speak to the Jews it would have been foolish to meet on the first day of the week — Sunday — for they did not meet on that day. How easily explained! Now after they read the law and the pro-

phets, they invited Paul to speak. Paul now stands up, beckons with his hand and begins this great sermon contrasting the law and its benefits with the blessings to be found in Christ. He rehearses with them God's providence over them from their stay in Egypt; their deliverance from Egypt; their wilderness sufferings; God's rule over them with judges; and kings and finally introduces to them the seed of David, verse 23 who was to be a Savior to Israel, calling His name Jesus. He brought to their attention the ministry of John the Baptist, preaching the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. He brought to their attention the fact that John said he was not the Savior but that there was coming after him one whose shoes he was not worthy to loose. Now listen to Paul's pointed, yet pleading and moving plea to them, "Men and brethren — they were Jews — children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For

they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause for death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had (now listen to this) when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead." Then in verse 33 Paul declared to them "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Then in verse 34 he declared "I will give you — Christ — the sure mercies of David." Here sat this company of Jewish people hearing that which had never been preached to them; that which they did not understand. Listen now to verses 38-41, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things — now hear this my friends — from which ye could not be justi-

fied by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Now I ask you, Was Paul here worshiping with the Jews, keeping the sabbath? Or, was he here teaching them to give up the law of Moses which we have proven included the sabbath and which could not make them perfect nor bring to them the forgiveness of sins? If he were worshiping with them as a part of the New Testament order, then why did he call them "despisers," "wonderers" who should perish? Was Paul worshiping after a custom that would cause men not to receive the remission of sins and that would cause him finally to perish? Certainly the Gentiles wanted to hear him again the next sabbath for this was the time the Jews met in their synagogues. There was no church of the Lord with this group of Gentiles and Paul desired again to speak to them and to the Jews but you watch the reaction of the Jews the next sabbath.

Beginning with verse 44 we read, "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." Was this Word of God the law of Moses that Paul had declared to them in verses 38 and 39 could not bring them forgiveness of sins and by which he said they could not be justified? Nay verily! This was the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ, whom they rejected. But listen to verse 45: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming." Question: If Paul were here teaching them to observe the sabbath day, if he were here worshiping with them, then why did they contradict his teachings and blaspheme? Would you do that were I to come into your assembly to observe with you the sabbath? Was that the way Paul observed the sabbath? Hear Paul and Barnabas as they "waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you." Just here I ask this question. If Paul were meeting with them to keep the sabbath, then why this statement: "The word of God should first have been spoken to you"? Here was

something the Jews had never heard before the coming of the New Testament. It had to be different. But listen further, "seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Now, had Paul met there to observe the sabbath or to show them they were wrong?

REACTION OF THE JEWS

Notice the reaction of the Jews in verse 50, "But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them out of the coasts." Now for what did they persecute them? For what did they drive them out of their coasts? Was it for meeting with them to worship as was the custom of the Jews to "remember the sabbath day to keep it holy"? If so, why such treatment? Nay, my friends the sermon preached, the reaction of the Jews to that sermon is proof positive that Paul was not there to worship with them after their custom of keeping the sabbath. Thus Acts 13, instead of sustaining the doctrine of those observing the sabbath day, defeats it completely.

ACTS 17

Again he met with them in the

synagogue in Acts 17:1, but notice the reception he received — “But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar.” Does this look like Paul was there just to “keep the sabbath day holy”?

ACTS 24

One more and then from this I shall pass. In Acts 24:14 it is suggested to me in these letters that Paul was defending the practice of the Jewish law, the sabbath day. It reads, “But this I confess unto thee, that after the way they — the Jews — call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers.” Notice now, “believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.” Of course he believed those things. He was teaching them that Christ was the fulfillment of all that was written in the law and prophets and for that reason they should surrender Moses and the law and the prophets. The Jews called what Paul was preaching heresy. Would you call my preaching heresy were I to preach that all men should keep the sabbath day? But notice that here in this chapter Paul is actually on trial for his life. Tertullus, the orator is accusing Paul

of being a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition whom they had taken to try, but he was rescued by Lysias, the chief captain. Does this sound like Paul and the Jews were observing the sabbath day to keep it holy? Nay my friends! Paul was trying to get them to give up Moses and the Old Testament and accept Christ and forgiveness of sins by the New Testament. This defeats the theory. It does not establish it.

One thing I wish to make clear. I am not anti-Semitic. This is not meant to attack the Jewish people as a people. Many of them are my friends. I am only discussing this from the standpoint of a Gentile upon whom is trying to be fastened the Sabbath Day given to the Jews in Exodus 20. That is all.

THINGS FOUND

Thus far I have established that the words spoken by the Lord from Exodus 20 through 23 are not divided into two distinct laws, one to last, the other to be done away. I have established beyond contradiction, I believe, that these instructions given Moses were called the “book of the covenant,” not books of the covenant; the law — not laws. The Law of Moses and the Law of God; and that this book

of the covenant: the law; the Law of Moses; and the Law of God all contained one and the same thing. They were identical! I have established that there is no such division in the Bible as Moral Law and Ceremonial Law, one the Law of God, the other the Law of Moses. They were one law. I have proven that the words everlasting, eternal, for ever, and perpetual are not used when applied to men and covenants as they are when used to describe God. That they are everlasting, eternal, for ever, and perpetual *only* throughout the *designated time of their existence*. We have proven that this time was "throughout their generations" and that their generations ended when the "spiritual seed" or "generation" of Abraham began, which was with the testament of Christ, after His death on the cross and that by this death they became "dead to" and "delivered from" the law that said 'thou shalt not covet' which was the Ten Commandments, having been nailed to the cross and taken out of the way (Colossians 2:12; Romans 7:4-6). I have established by the Bible the fact that neither Constantine, nor the Roman Catholic Church originated the meetings on Sunday, but that it began in the

first century with the sanction of the apostles as they were guided by the Spirit, some 265 years before Constantine presided over the Nicean Council. May I read to you just here from the writings of Justin Martyr, who was supposed to have been privileged to meet John, for he lived in 140 A. D. He wrote, "And upon the day called Sunday all that live in city or country meet together at the same place, where the writings of the apostles and prophets are read as much as time will give leave." Then he says, "The consecrated elements are distributed — by the hands of the deacons." (*History of the Sabbath*, page 269.) In A. D. 180 from the Syrian Documents we read "On the first day of the week (Sunday) let there be services and the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the oblation." (*Adventism and the Bible*, page 194). I quote once more. A. D. 200, this is the beginning of the third century, "Tertullian describes Sunday observances as follows, 'We devote Sunday to rejoicing'." I could give others but here we have Paul and the church in Troas meeting on the first day of the week, Sunday, from Acts 20:7, and the churches in Corinth and Galatia, I Corinthians 16:2; during the first cen-

bound upon the world? Remember Paul said in Galatians 4:10, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

I close begging you to obey the commands of the New Testament; follow its instructions, trusting in

the Lord of Calvary for your salvation by believing in Him, repenting of your sins, being baptized into Christ as commanded of us by the Lord of the New Testament, Galatians 3:27, that which is called in John 1:17, "grace and truth." May you do this today before it is too late is my prayer in the name of Christ our Lord.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

APRIL 29, 1962

A question from a good lady in Washington state. "Do we have the Holy Spirit like they did on the day of Pentecost?"

This bothers many people. No man has the baptism of the Holy Spirit today as did the apostles on Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. The baptism of the Spirit here enabled them to speak in tongues; not just a jabbering that no one could understand but languages understood by those present. There lives not a man today who can go to any foreign country and just begin speaking in that language without ever having studied it. If they had it, like as the apostles received it on Pentecost, they could speak in languages they knew nothing about. If men possessed the Holy Spirit today in the same degree as did the apostles, they would not have to study the Bible in order to deliver it, they could give it without memorizing it. Read Luke 12:11-12. You see the apostles gave us the Bible by the revelation of the Spirit. Men today can hardly memorize the entire Bible, much less present it never having seen nor read it.

No man possesses today the power possessed by the apostles. They could raise the dead. No man can do that. Have you ever seen a glass eye removed and the eye restored? Have you ever seen a withered arm restored? Let the doctor bring them there incurable and see if they walk off completely healed.