

The Gospel Standard



“Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people,” Isa. 62:10

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Editorial

The Mission of the Eternal Word of the Living God. This is the topic of this issue. As we grow toward the sunset days of life we do not plan to meet the Lord in judgment leaning on an easy faith and the doctrine of a cheap grace. We know that if we have done the best we can in submitting to Him who died for us in every way we know how, that eternal blessedness awaits. It is that awareness which spurs us to deal with basics which mean something, rather than trivial matters which only curry the favor of carnal minds and ignorant pagans, who have made the God of the heavens and earth into an idol of their own image of thought. The mission of the word is to produce a spiritual person made in the image of the Father who sent His Son into the world to provide us an example of His likeness and to leave a gospel to direct us in the specifics of attaining that likeness.

It is for this reason that the word of God must not be handled deceitfully, thus creating a false image of both the Son and the Father. A specific objective of the word is to transform us into that image, Romans 12:1-3. In that transformation which proves, the word must deal with both the negatives and the positives of revelation. God hates, and God loves, both the negative and the positive. Those who want only the positive have no idea of what the word is designed by God to do, nor how it is to accomplish that process. We lay no claim to be able to do the whole job in one, no, not in two issues, neither two dozen issues. It took God two entire covenants and much preaching by the prophets of the Old Covenant, and Jesus and the Apostles of the New Covenant to supply the needed information and incentives. We are not so proud as to think we can do the same thing with a few issues of a paper when we are only frail mortals. But we shall make a start and we would hope that the start will be sufficient to enable others to regroup their thinking, and renew that determination and love for the Lord they had at their conversion and begin anew on that process of growing into

the likeness of a Saviour who died the cruel death of the cross to provide humanity with that privilege.

So, two old warriors who yet have not laid aside their armor nor retired the sword of the Spirit from their lives shall begin in this issue to get your attention. That is about the best we can hope for in one issue in an age when materialism has stultified spiritual thoughts in so many. In a day when pagan claimants to spiritual life carry their own little gods in their minds, and often their pockets in a thing called a wallet, we need to exercise some swift and deep incisions lest we become contaminated in the same way as those in the world around us. In a day when most saints wish to identify with the pagans and be accepted by them, we are in danger of completely eclipsing Christianity with the darkness of moral evils and spiritual ignorance. In a day when the majority of all preachers do not seem to even know enough about the kingdom of heaven to make an intelligent short post about it on Facebook, we still have the temerity to claim enough spiritual knowledge to go to heaven. Shame on us! If the kingdom of God is specifically central to our salvation from sins and our dwelling in heaven eternally, then why do not a great many more people know what it is and how it affects life?

I ask these things hoping someone will wake up enough to answer some of them rather than to bury the head in the sand and cry, Peace, Peace, when there is no peace. How can there ever be peace when darkness is put in the place of light and where evil replaces righteousness in the approval of so many who call themselves the children of God. The Denominational world of religion gave up God and Christ decades back when they approved religious modernism. That is where the origination of the present “Political Correctness” took place, not in our national government. But many of those who call themselves members of “The Church of Christ,” have gone as far astray from truth as the most rank Sectarian. When ungodly secularism is deliberately bowed to and even defended by saints of God, it is time to go

to the closet and spend hours in godly sorrow, repentance and earnest prayer. When those who adopt subjectivism in religion and reject the plain teaching of the word of God, and that is defended by “the keepers of orthodoxy,” it is time to flee to the hills to escape the certain judgment to come. When those who have faithfully proclaimed the truth of God for threescore years or more are ridiculed, lied about, and ostracized in efforts to destroy their credibility with the faithful remnant, it is time to prepare to meet God for the judgment of God is sure and swift upon them.

When whole schools are devoted to the destruction of the faith and are become actual change agents, all the while proclaiming their faithfulness and claiming to have not moved away from truth, it is time to fortify your faith, take a deep breath and dig your heels in for a stand against error. When a school allows, with no effort of correction, a one of their touted teachers to make a statement that was heard on the Internet around the world to the effect that because both men and women are under the great commission, they both have the responsibility to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Claiming to be against “Change Agents,” they have become one of the biggest change agents among us. And if they wish to continue their attacks against all who disagree with them, I would be willing to tie half my brain behind my back, and debate everyone of them at the same time on the subject. That is how weak they are in the faith.

Brethren, do you see the precarious position the Lord’s people have willingly placed ourselves in because we trusted too much the traitors to truth among us who are deliberately devoted to error and not to the truth of the gospel. We have tolerated their hypocritical claims of faithfulness while they have openly acted in opposite ways to righteousness.

It is past time to return to the word of God, seek His will in all things, submit with a heart yielded to righteousness and the God of righteousness, while in faith walking in the steps

of our Savior who died for our sins, thus qualifying himself to serve as our prophet, priest, king, apostle, and our altar upon which is laid all of our sacrifices to God. **This is what will mold us into the image of him who is the captain of our salvation.**

Now, if we have your attention, please read the following article by brother Elliott.



UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

Melvin Elliott

Two of the basic teachings of the Bible are; 1) to show how destructive sin is and 2) how we may avoid the consequences and penalty of it. The basic idea of sin is to miss the mark, the failure to seek for and practice truth. The consequences of sin are the corruption of our character that often involves man in many hurtful practices in this life. The penalty of sin will be that of eternal separation from God and eternal punishment. It is only the truth revealed through the revelation of God that can redeem man from his sinful condition. We read in Jeremiah 10:23: “O Lord, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” If man cannot direct his own steps, it is certain that he cannot direct the steps of others. Therefore, without help that is beyond him, man is in a hopeless condition. What can he do? The only remedy is found in Proverbs 3:6: “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” We also call your attention to John 8:32: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Free from what? That of following error! It is truth and only truth that makes on free from error and to err is sin.

Sin and truth are often discussed together so we will look at those passages that show the contrast between the two. We read

in Isaiah 59:1-4: “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.” I call your special attention to these above statements: “None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies...” Trusting in vanity and lies characterizes our society and who is pleading for truth? I have read where the average person tells over a thousand lies a year. In understanding we have also traded objective truth sustained by evidence for subjective feelings with no more support than the opinions of the biblically ignorant.

This is very true of our society, both secular and religiously. You need to read all of Isaiah 59 to get the complete picture. For example, in verses 13-14: “In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.” How true this is even in religious circles that truth is fallen in the street and words of falsehood are substituted for it. Things are so corrupt today that many, if not most, are following the philosophy pluralism. What is pluralism? Let me illustrate: one person says $2 + 2 = 3$ and another says it equals 5. The pluralist will say that both are right. Is there anyone who hasn’t heard the statement, “It doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you are honest and sincere?” How true that, “...[J]udgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.”

These and other passages will show how far man has gone away from the nature of God into the depths of error and sin. As we noted in the beginning, one of the purposes of the Bible is to

define sin, show how hurtful it is and the final penalty of it. Man sins, misses the mark, when he transgresses God's law. I John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Transgression occurs in different ways: it may include breaking a law God has made. We are told in Colossians 3:9: "Lie not one to another..." When we lie to another, we break this law of God to speak the truth and therefore, we sin. A lie is the intent to mislead and deceive: such is widely practiced today. We may fail to measure up to the requirements of the law and so transgress in that we fail to do what we are supposed to do. In James 2:22: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Do you practice the truth or do you fail to meet this requirement? Man also sins by going beyond the requirements of God. In I Timothy 4:3: "Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." If you will read verses one and two, you will find to forbid such is speaking lies because God has not commanded it so it is the doctrine of devils. All of this is sin and it separates one from God.

Mankind is so steeped in rejecting the truth of God in this day that it is rare to find a person that is sincerely interested in finding the truth and even less in following it. In fact, I challenge you to find a religious group of much size that is not also guilty of one or more of the above ways God's laws are transgressed. It is easy to show that they break some of God's commands. They have also compromised so many teachings of God that his laws are meaningless as they fail to measure up to God's standard. Many are also guilty of practicing and/or requiring things God has not commanded. By definition a disciple of Jesus is one who learns from Jesus and puts into practice what he learns. Since organized religion fails to teach and practice many of the teachings of Jesus, how can you be his disciple while following such teaching? I hear it said that approximately 85 % of Americans believe in God. However, their faith is not Bible faith because it is not in harmony with the Scripture. Further, it has little if any real effect on their life so how are they a follower of Jesus?

The Scripture makes this clear. In Matthew 28:19-20: “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.” The original word for teach, is literally to disciple all nations. How were they to make disciples? We are specifically told that it is by, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” You must search for and follow the truth of Jesus to be his disciple. Note Jesus words, John 8:31: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;” This is an “If, then” argument. If the first part is true, the second part follows. If states a condition that is necessary for the benefit to result. The condition is, “If ye continue in my word...” What is the benefit promised? “[T]hen are my disciples indeed;” Now look at verse 32, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” It is the word; the truth taught by Jesus that makes a disciple and only when it is followed is one freed from sin. Thus, Jesus clearly states, no one is a disciple of his and freed from sin unless and until he learns the truth, the words of Jesus, believes them and puts them into practice.

In II Peter 2 the apostle discussed how the word of God came to us and that it is as a light that shined in a dark place: but will men receive it? Very, very few have or will. Look also at how he begins chapter 3: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” As we have stated, few will hear the truth but substitute their thoughts and feelings about the matter. The religious world desires to hear what sounds good to them and there are many false teachers who will satisfy them. As the average person has not searched

the Scripture for truth, they are gullible and so accept anything that is placed before them, especially, if it pleases them . Peter warned about this very thing saying the false teacher would use feigned words and make merchandise of the people. Many, without regard for the scriptures, will follow these Pied Pipers based on outward appearances and feelings although they are void of the truth of Jesus.

The number one mission or the word of God is to reveal truth to man and support it with sufficient evidence that we might accept it. Real knowledge of the Bible is severely lacking in our society and it is not likely to improve in the near future. Many years ago the moral stories based on biblical principles were discarded and our elementary school children were deprived of these character-building stories. Then prayer was banned and now a child cannot have a Bible in their desk. A few days before I began to write this, an elementary school student simply referred to the Bible as a historical reference and was immediately stopped and not allowed to finish her report. Even as I write this, a good friend from Wyoming called and reported this occurrence. He had gone out to eat and asked the waiter his name. He replied that it was Joseph and that he had heard that it was a Bible name. This is rather typical of people today: in reality, they have no knowledge of the Scripture, much less a significant knowledge of it.

It is far past time that we heed the command of Paul. II Timothy 2:15-16:“ Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.” Man today is the opposite; he simply refuses to study the Bible to learn the truth but he embraces profane *and* vain babblings and that is why he is so ungodly and blinded toward the truth. Again, A disciple of Jesus is one who learns from Jesus and puts into practice what he learns. The feigned words of false teachers do not make one a disciple of the Savior. What a tragedy the lack of knowledge of the Bible has unleashed upon us. Man may be educated in secular matters but he can never be enlightened as how to live without knowledge of the Bible. Few even know the purpose of the Bible. Without the Scripture, man never comes to an

understanding of the source of his difficulties and so there is no hope for improvement. Hosea 4:6: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God,”

What is the remedy for the situation? Both the apostles Paul and Peter in the following two readings give the only acceptable answer. Ephesians 1:16-20: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,” II Peter 1:3-4: “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: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

When we put these scriptures together, what do we have? They show that in, by and through knowledge of them that we gain the spirit of wisdom and our understanding is enlightened. First, it is through the enlightenment of the word that we have the privilege and right to all the benefits promised therein. The benefits promised through the knowledge of the scriptures are that we have all things needed for life and godliness. It is when we embrace and follow the things of this enlightening teaching that escape the corruption that comes when we follow fleshly lust and or erroneous teaching. Secondly we can have the privilege and right, as the result of his power given to us through knowledge of his word, we can grow into fellowship with Deity and to be an heir of the glory of Jesus. It is when we conduct ourselves in harmony with the enlightenment of the

knowledge of the word of God that we have these promises. Note, these passages, Philippians 3:20-21: “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

The question you must ask of yourself is, will I follow the words of Jesus, the Scripture, or will I trade these precious promises of the Christ who has the power to bring them about, for the uncertain words of powerless men who are unable to direct his steps?

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What is the Mission of the Word of God? # 1

Charles A. Pledge

The concept of the word mission is to go or be sent to some place to accomplish some objective, or goal. Right away we understand then that there is a specific goal for the word to effect, or accomplish. It is our need to identify that goal and to determine that we shall always do our part, if indeed we have a part. There are specific objectives necessary to be attained by the word in order for it to attain the goal.

To hear some people, the word is but a dead word; mere words written on paper; just words which have no purpose in life, in fact irrelevant to life. Some tell us that the New Testament is not a tool. Keep in mind that in figurative language, a tool in reality is something which effects

something. To effect something is to bring something about, to accomplish something. So what those who say that the New Testament is not a tool is in effect saying that the New Testament can do nothing; that it is a powerless, dead, inanimate object, with no valid moral right to even exist because it is a worthless, good for nothing book with words written on paper.

If it is powerless and worthless, then why does Paul call the gospel the power of God to save those who believe it, Romans 1:16? Why does he say that therein is contained the righteousness of God from faith unto faith? Why does Jesus say that it is the word (the words which he received directly from God) which he gave unto the apostles, then commanded them to preach it to every creature, John 17:5-8; Mark 16:15-16? Why did Jesus say that whosoever submits in faithful obedience to it shall be saved, Mark 16:15-16? Except they be true, then there is no value to them whatsoever. If they be but the words of mere man, then they are worse than worthless, they are poison to the soul. Except they be the words of our salvation, then they are words which, when believed, shall damn our souls to an eternal hell. But they are true and can not be false, therefore they are the living words of the living God. Because they are the living words of the living God, then these are the words which shall judge us at the last great day, John 12:48-50.

Because they are the words of the living God they shall accomplish all that which they declare of themselves as set forth to accomplish. We want to observe a few specifics in identifying some objectives that are met by the word and then look at the overall goal of that word. Hopefully, our appreciation of the word shall be elevated and our loyalty and fidelity to it shall be deepened as we observe these things.

I. Forgiveness of Sins Is Effected/brought About, by the New Testament; the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul declared the gospel to be the power of God, Romans 1:16. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.” It is by the gospel that faith is generated, Romans 10:17. It is by the gospel that all men every where are made to know that repentance is necessary to please God in order to be forgiven. It is by the gospel that confession of Jesus before others is made known as in order to receive forgiveness of sins, Acts 8:37, Romans 10:8-9. It is by the gospel that baptism into the death of Jesus and raised to walk in a new life apart from the penalty of sin is made known, Romans 6:1-8; Galatians 3:26-27. Remember a tool is something used to effect something, or to bring something about.

II. The Gospel is that medium through which the grace of God is able to flow into the lives of men and women. We read in Ephesians 2:8: “For by grace are ye saved, and that not of yourselves, lest any man should boast.; it is the gift of God.” someone is ready to argue that it is the personal faith through which grace flows. Not so. We do not say that personal faith never has any part in receiving the gifts of God’s grace, but we do say that this passage does not say that. This passage argues that it is the gospel system of faith through which grace flows. Let us look at a brief analysis of verse 8.

1. By grace are we saved.
2. That salvation (saved is the verb that is modified here) is not of yourselves.
3. God places the giving of salvation altogether in the realm of grace in order that man could have no way to boast about being saved.
4. It is altogether a gift of God.

To say that our obedience and faith have absolutely nothing to do with receiving salvation is different from the above and is absolutely false. Obedience has absolutely nothing to do with earning salvation, or meriting salvation, that is correct. But to say it has nothing to do with salvation is false. Before concluding this thought, read Luke 17:7-10. A brief analysis is: 1. A bond-slave is working in the field. 2. Meal time arrives and he comes in to eat. 3. The owner does not invite the slave to eat with him, although he has been working hard for the master. 3. The master tells him to clothe himself and serve him a meal. 4. Afterwards he does not thank the servant for his service. 5. The reason was his service did not merit a blessing because he was a slave and indebted to serve his owner. 6. The application to the apostles, and if a general statement to them only as disciples, then to all men: when ye have done all that God commands, confess that we are still unworthy to be blessed because he, as master and owner by creation of all creatures including man, deserves to be served by us. Man, owing all to the creator, owes him everything he has because it all is a gift from God and all the service we can render him can not pay him what is owed. Paul declared that it is in him that we live and move and have our being, Acts 17:28. Thus, even the air we breathe and the water we drink are gifts of the grace of God. We are always in his debt, therefore anything he gives us is actually a gift, therefore by his grace. But a gift does not mitigate against work, or obedience to the giver. In fact, if man refuses to do what God says, God withholds the enjoyment of the gift from the ungrateful person. But how does Ephesians 2:8 teach all of this? Very simple. Let us look more closely at verse 8.

Look carefully at the first part of the verse: “By grace are ye saved through faith...” By means of the grace of God are we saved. How? Through the faith, or by

the faith system of the gospel of Christ. We have no cause for concern over God's part. He is faithful to do all he declares he will do. Our concern should be over what man must do in his part of the matter. After all man does have a part in salvation, although some say that he does not.

The Bible very definitely declares that some shall be lost at judgment, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Matthew 25:46. If some are lost, but no man has any responsibility to act in view of his own salvation, then God is a respecter of person who arbitrarily saves some and arbitrarily damns some. But God is no respecter of persons, Acts 10:34-35. Therefore we must conclude that man has some responsibility to act on his own behalf in response to the commands God gives to all men. Let us look at it in a simple clear way.

God is a God who offers salvation on the basis of the same terms and conditions to all people.

The Bible teaches that some people shall not be saved eternally.

Therefore there are some people who will not accept God's terms and conditions of salvation.

Ephesians 2:8 teaches that it is the faith of Jesus, the gospel system of faith by which means salvation is brought to us and applied. But why do we insist that it is the gospel system of faith, and not the personal faith of the individual? Very simple. The faith is to be understood and not merely faith. How do we know? A simple rule of elementary Greek Grammar tells us that when a prepositional phrase; a preposition joined with a noun and preceding it appears that, unless the context forbids it, we must view it as having the definite article THE, even

though it is not normally written in such a case. That describes this case.

Some have been hasty to reply that this is not, and can not be the case because the word through is an adverb. That may normally be the case but that is not true in this context. Why? There is a little known rule that when the word through modifies a passive verb that it must be considered a preposition which deals with direction and not action. That is the way through is used in this context. Saved is a passive verb, therefore determining how through is to be used as a preposition. This makes the preposition govern the noun, the faith, showing that it is straight through with no detour, modification, nor stopping but by the gospel system of faith, with all of its terms and conditions which is used to channel the grace of God which brings salvation to the individual by that means. Take the terms and conditions out of the gospel and you do not have the gospel of Christ which saves, but another gospel. Therefore, there could be no salvation apart from the submissive obedience to the terms and conditions of the gospel.

If salvation is by grace alone, then the gospel is superfluous; there is no need for it. By grace alone means by grace plus nothing and grace minus nothing; just grace by itself acting alone. Most of those who claim salvation is by grace alone add personal faith via this passage. They negate their own claim. Grace is able to save only through the gospel as the terms and conditions are addressed, accepted, and applied to the life of the one saved by grace.

This view of salvation agrees with every passage dealing with salvation in the New Testament. Read carefully each verse of Romans 6:1-23. Read also Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9;, and every other passage dealing with

salvation. We hope this study has been helpful. We have not tried to answer every question, but only those which we have heard dealing with Ephesians 2:8.

What is The Mission of the Word of God? # 2

Charles A. Pledge

Precisely what specific thing can sum up the mission, or purpose of the word of God? Question: whose mind-set must God's children have in them? Answer: the mind of Christ, Philippians 2:5-8. To have the mind-set of Jesus in us shall determine that we live in the same manner of conduct as Jesus lived. Or, as Peter taught, we "walk in the steps of Jesus," 1 Peter 2:21. The purpose stated then, this article shall be short and to the point.

1. The all important thing is not what we believe or teach, but that we live the proper doctrine. We actually live what we truly believe. This is the difference between the children of God and all other religious people. The people of God imitate God the Father in their life. They live in the same manner which God in the flesh lived while on earth. We are imitators of Christ, and thereby imitators of God because Christ lived in the very image of the Father. Jesus could therefore say to Philip, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, John 14:9.

The one spirit of Ephesians 4:4 which unifies the people of God is the spirit/disposition/mind-set of Christ. It is not the person of the Holy Spirit; it is the mind-set of Christ which must be in every child of God. This is that one mind we all are to be in. This is that spirit which characterizes each one. This is the disposition which must be present; the bent of the mind if you please which characterizes each sin of the living God. Please read Romans chapter eight which deals with this spirit or mind-set, or disposition all the way through. The person of the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in that chapter. If we would be a child of God, then that mind must be ours, Romans 8:11.

2.This is that which sets us apart from every other religious person in the world. He who has this mind-set is determined to do the will of God regardless of the cost. There is no squirming, nor wriggling when the will of God is read and declared. There is simply the faithful doing of it. As Jesus declared, For I came to do the will of my Father..., John 6:38. In Matthew chapter sixteen Jesus explained to the disciple show it was the will of God for him to go into Jerusalem, to suffer and die at the hands of the elders and priests. In short, I came to do my Father's will and I am going to do it even though I know I must die in order to accomplish His will. Then he taught the disciples that is any man would come after him he must: 1. Deny self (set the old will of the flesh aside and accept the will of God as his own), 2. Take up his cross (the cross in that context involved death, so in order to follow Jesus, or to be like him one must be willing to die in order to obey God if that is what is necessary), and 3. Follow me. Walk in the steps left by Jesus. Take him as our example and set our gaze upon him alone. Hebrews 12:2.

Nearly the whole religious world says "Just believe and the work is done." Just invite Jesus into the heart and salvation is finished forever." But God says that Jesus must be submitted to as Lord and Christ in order for him to sit on the throne of the heart. The world says, Jesus has done it all but God says, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Someone accuses the last statement of saying that we work and earn our salvation. That is not what the statement means at all. To work something out means that one has determined the way or the meaning of something. It merely means that each one is accountable for understanding the will of God and doing that will for his own salvation. It is the doing of that will which the religious world hates and despises with all the heart. If it was merely believing that will and leave off the doing of it, the religious world would all say amen to it.

Sometimes we hear it said by both God's children and others that there is such little difference between us. I beg to differ. There is a whole world between believing and believing and the doing of that belief. Jesus said the devil had nothing in common with him. Yet, the devil quotes Scripture and Jesus quoted

Scripture. But there was nothing in common with their reason to do so. Jesus did it to convince people of the integrity, goodness and sovereignty of God. The devil does it to deceive and mislead people. Between the children of God and all other people there is the wide chasm between only believing and the believing and doing of the will of God. The devils believe and tremble, but the devils do not obey the will of God, James 2:19.

One must be in harmony with God and it is the word of God which effects that harmony by producing faith in the heart of the one who believes it. This faith works to bring one into unity with God; therefore oneness with God. This is epitomized when we are baptized into the death of Christ, therefore planted, or united with him, and thereby united with the Father and the Spirit at the same time. God asked the prophet Amos, “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” Amos 3:3. To be agreed is to be one in disposition, or spirit. This agreement is necessary to walk together. We must never believe that God is going to give up his will to accept our will. That is ludicrous. It is man who must yield; give up his will and become the willing slave of the Father.

It is not enough to believe. We must also willingly yield our heart and life to him who sits on the throne in heaven ruling with the word of his mouth, preached and written to all mankind by those commissioned to go into all the world and preach the gospel. The apostles received the commandment, and the apostles fulfilled the commission in their life time.

Today as in the dim yesterday, the keeping of the commandments of God is reflected in the doing of His will on earth as it is done in heaven. This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous, said the apostle John in 1 John 5:3.



THE PARTING WORD

Charles A. Pledge

We live in a world of greed and violence; of pain and grief; of happiness and joys; a world in which we choose which way to go and whether to heed God or not. The choice is ours and we shall live with our choice eternally. That is why the wise choice must be made and kept.

The choice is simple; a choice between righteousness and sinfulness; a choice between light and darkness; a choice between the devil and God. We will be slave to either one or the other. No one can serve two masters said our Lord in Matthew 6:24. Jesus said that his yoke is easy and pleasant, Matthew 11:30. The wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life, Romans 6:23. We shall obey one or the other, but not both at the same time. The choice must be made. There is no neutral ground, Matthew 12:30.

What is your choice?

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