

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

INDEPENDENT • MISSIONARY • ESTABLISHED 1786

"Preaching the same truth since before Kentucky was a state"

VOLUME 31, NO. 2

NOVEMBER, 1999

HOW MAY I KNOW I AM SAVED?

BY: C. D. COLE

"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,"
John 20:31. *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God,"*
1 John 5:13.

INTRODUCTION: The first text tells me how to be saved; how to get eternal life; the other tells me how I may know that I have eternal life. I get eternal life by believing on Christ and I know I have eternal life by believing the word. It is by faith in each instance. I live by faith and I know I am alive by faith. I could not demonstrate to anybody that I have eternal life. But I have it and I know I have it; in both instances it is faith knowledge. Knowledge based upon what God says.

MEN ARE SAVED BY FAITH IN CHRIST

"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," John 3:16.
"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up," John 3:14. *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him,"* John 3:36. *"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses,"* Acts 13:39. *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,"* Romans 1:16. *"And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which*

was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead," Acts 10:42.

1. Faith has no value in itself; its value depends upon the value of that which it rests upon. Faith may be a dangerous thing. To put your faith in a church or church membership is dangerous. Faith in your baptism as an act of obedience is dangerous. Faith in your prayer life is dangerous. Faith in a creed is also dangerous. They are dangerous because they cannot save or help to save. They are valuable in their proper place but these things cannot save or help to save a person from their sin.

2. Saving faith must rest upon a real Savior. The real Savior is the person who has dealt with the sin question. The real Savior is the person who has redeemed sinners from the curse of God's law. *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,"* Galatians 3:13. The one who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. *"For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself....So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation,"* Hebrews 9:26, 28. The one who exchanged places with the sinner, taking his guilt upon Himself and being punished for it by God.

3. This makes Jesus Christ the only object of faith. He is the only person who has ever claimed to do these things. We hear much about comparative religion but there is no comparison to make between Christ and founders of other religions. They do not even pretend to compete with Him. There are many religions but only one who has ever claimed to be the Redeemer. Buddha founded a

religion but he never claimed to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. His followers do not preach that God was in him reconciling the world to himself. There are many Christian systems of religion that make no claim as being the object of faith. Nor do they point the sinner to what Christ did on the cross for salvation. They do not preach salvation by faith. Jesus Christ is the only person who has ever claimed that He died and rose again in order to save sinners.

Now saving faith is to trust Christ as the One who dealt with our sins; who paid the sin-debt. *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,"* Galatians 3:13. *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,"* Galatians 4:4-5. Who redeemed us with His own precious blood, who satisfied the divine justice we have offended by our sins. *"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one,*

(Continued on page 3)

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

BY: C. D. COLE

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching," Hebrews 10:23-25.

This text is a large order for the greatest of preachers and yet simple enough for babes in Christ to understand. It is a two-fold exhortation.

First, we are to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. This means we are to keep on believing in Jesus of Nazareth as Savior and Lord and never give up the good hope that is in Him. It is the same exhortation Peter gives "...*hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*" I Peter 1:13. Hope is a child of hard times. Hope has to live in a wicked world. The very word "hope" implies present trouble. It means something better in the future. If the present benefits of salvation are all that we will ever have, there would be no place for hope, and salvation would not be a blessing but a curse.

Salvation is free because it is priceless. *"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price,"* Isaiah 55:1. We have nothing to pay, it is free because Jesus paid it all. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God,"* Ephesians 2:8. But the working of it out in daily living is a costly thing. *"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,"* Philippians 2:12. It means a life dedicated to God and separated from the world, and these two things go together. There can be no dedication of life to God apart from separation from the world. God and the world are incompatible. *"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,"* I John 2:15. Someone has said that you might as well talk about a heavenly devil as a worldly Christian. And this is the truth so far as living the Christian life in our daily walk.

Now the basis for this exhortation is that God is faithful who promised. God has made promises in His Son, and every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can pin his faith and hope to Jesus Christ with the assurance that God will keep His promises.

Second, is the exhortation to consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. Here is a vital question for us to con-

sider: How may I stir up my fellow believers, my brethren in Christ, to love and good works? Does it matter to you how your brother lives? Do you take the position that it is none of your business what your brother or sister does? This is the spirit of Cain who asked, *"Am I my brother's keeper?"* Genesis 4:9. We certainly are, everyone of us, our brother's keeper and to say it does not matter to us what becomes of our brother or sister is to be guilty of great sin.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Now the text we wish to emphasize is a clause taken from this second exhortation: *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."* Here is a bad habit; a prevalent sin, but how few are awoken to the seriousness of it. Even the most faithful do not think of it as a sin. It would create a sensation if the pastor should tell of the sins told him about various members of the church. Bad language, untruthfulness, and drinking. A lost man was quoted as saying that if he ever made a change he would not be found in some places he finds some of our prominent members. I question the accuracy of his statement that they are prominent members. How does he know? He is never here to see who is prominent. But to give occasion for the enemies of the cross to blaspheme is a terrible wicked thing, and woe to the member who does.

But the point I wish to put to the front right now is that I never hear of failure to attend church spoken of as if it were a sin at all.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

1. It is a command of God. It is not a mere piece of advice. It is not something that is optional; it is as obligatory as the command of God can make it.

It is not merely the wish of the pastor; it is the command of God who cannot be trifled with. To hem and haw and offer excuses is to make reply against God. *"O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"* Romans 9:20. Here God and man are put in sharpest contrast; God in His infinite greatness and holiness and power and wisdom; and man in his infinitesimal smallness and ignorance. In the Greek there is strong emphasis on the "thou" - *"O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"* It will be a happy day for

some of us if God will brand the text upon our hearts so that we will never be able to forget it. If God leaves us alone to criticize Him and object to His commands, it will be absolutely fatal to us. And He may do that. *"Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways,"* Acts 14:16. *"Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth,"* Romans 9:18. O man, who art thou anyway? And who is God?

As an individual, man is only one of the more than two billion, 500 million human beings now inhabiting this globe. And what is this globe we call the earth? It is but a speck in that part of the universe we know about. This earth is so small that if the sun were hollow, you could pour into it 1,200,000 earths like ours and still rattle around in it.

Also, the sun is very, very small as compared to Arcturus and some of the other stars whose diameters have been recently measured. And there are now known to be more than 225 million of these great worlds we call stars, and God made them all.

Will you defy Him and say His commandments are grievous?

It is this God who made this vast and stupendous universe and who made you and me, and who holds our very breath in His hand, who is the author of my text, and He says, *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together."*

2. It is one way we encourage one another. *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another..."* Of all the people who need help and encouragement, it is those who love the church and want to see it prosper in its work for Christ. The church is a workshop for Christ, and all the members need to be at their post of duty. The church is a school of religious instruction, and all members ought to be faithful scholars.

The church is a lighthouse for Christ and every member needs to *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,"* Matthew 5:16. *"Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house,"* Matthew 5:15. It is sin to put our light under a bushel or under a bed, and that is what people do who try to hide the good they do. Of course, we are not to parade our good works to receive praise of men, but we are to do them before men that God may be praised. If the motive is wrong

We certainly are, everyone of us, our brother's keeper and to say it does not matter to us what becomes of our brother or sister is to be guilty of great sin.

in displaying it for your own glory, it is just as wrong to hide it through pretended humility.

If I give for the support of the church, or if I do anything else for its good, and nobody knows about it, how can it be any encouragement to anyone?

To neglect church attendance, and I mean regular attendance, I mean attendance at all services, is the most ridiculously senseless thing anybody can possibly do.

It is like employing a foreman and not furnishing him with any workers. Or like appointing a general and not giving him any soldiers. Or like hiring a shepherd and not giving him any sheep to feed. Or like having a leader without any followers. Or like employing a teacher and having no pupils to be taught. Or like a doctor with no sick people to be ministered unto.

Now, the pastor has these several relationships in his spiritual ministry. He is a shepherd, teacher, minister, captain, and leader of spiritual forces, but what can he do without the forces? What can a pastor do without deacons? What can a Sunday School superintendent do without teachers? What can the preacher do without hearers?

Every church member ought to feel it as binding on him to be in his pew as the pastor does to be in his pulpit. There is nothing that so takes the spirit out of a preacher as to face empty pews. It is not the opposition of the outside world that breaks the preacher's heart; it is the absence of those who once made a pledge to God.

I suppose no name stands out as representative of devotion to Christ and consecrated courage than that of Paul. He was, approximately at least, all that any faithful minister might hope to become. He often stood alone in the midst of foes, and yet no man was ever more dependent upon the sympathetic help of his associate. You know how he lamented the departure of Demas. His words seem to drip with tears as he says, "*Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,*" II Timothy 4:10. And about the last word he ever wrote he said to Timothy, "*Do thy diligence to come before winter,*" II Timothy 4:21.

Writing to the Corinthians, the great apostle Paul says, "*Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia,*" II Corinthians 2:12, 13. Paul had a wide open door at Troas, but he was so depressed at the absence of Titus that he could not preach. Where is the God-called preacher who does not understand the meaning of the absent Titus? Titus may be a deacon upon whom the pastor depended. Titus may have been one with no official position, but some godly woman whose regular attendance has come to be expected and if she is absent, it throws the pastor into a state of

depression. The absence of the faithful makes the preacher feel as though the church were empty.

3. There can be no church without it. The word "church" means assembly, and an assembly is a congregation of people. And if the members do not meet together, there can be no church.

You can have a church without money, for the members can meet in the homes or under the branches of trees, or even in the open, but you can't have a church without the members coming together. I say all this, not to minimize money, but to magnify church attendance.

In some churches there may be some who give large offerings, as important as that may be, but of more importance is their regular church attendance. We need faithful members who will meet with us at least twice on Sundays, and once on Wednesday nights. I think I speak sincerely when I say that if you can't both give money and come to church too, if you must leave one of them off, then leave the money off and come to church.

(Continued from page 1)

Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," Romans 5:15-19.

4. As a believer how do I know my sins are forgiven? By the way I feel? No! It is not a matter of feeling, but of faith. "*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God....These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off....By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous....By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him.....By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house....By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went....Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had prom-*

ised....By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac....By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter....By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace....And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise....Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith," Hebrews 11.

If you had wronged me and I told you that I forgave you, how would you know that I had forgiven you? Only by faith in my word. Is it something you feel? No! It is something you take by faith in my word. You might have a good feeling, but the good feeling would be because you believed what I said, that I had forgiven you.

A poor widow has no money to pay her debts. The realtor comes demanding his righteous dues. A friend steps in and says to the creditor, "I'll pay you the widow's debt." He puts down the money and the creditor hands him a receipt, a slip of paper saying, "Received from Widow Blank the sum due," with his signature. The receipt is handed to the widow and she feels happy because she knows her debt is paid. If you were to call that day and ask her if she felt her debt was paid, she would laugh and say, "Feel it! What do you mean? Here is the receipt and I know it is paid. I do feel happy to know that it is paid, but I do not know it is paid because I feel

good.

How did the Jew in Old Testament times know that his sins were forgiven. Suppose you had met a Jew returning from the temple where he had taken his lamb or heifer for the priest to slay and offer for his atonement and had asked him how he knew his sins were forgiven. He should say, "Well, when my sin came to my knowledge I took the sacrifice that was prescribed in the law. I put my hands upon its head and confessed my sins over it. I saw the priest cut its throat and catch its blood and sprinkle it on the altar. But how do you know that the blood saved you? He would say because God said in His word that it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul. *"And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements,"* Exodus 30:10.

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:...In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," Ephesians 4:7. *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,"* Colossians 1:14. *"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God,"* Hebrews 10:12.

It is an awful night in Egypt. God is about to send the last plague upon the country. Order has gone out to an angel to go up and down the land and slay every firstborn in all the land except in the homes where the blood was sprinkled on the doors. *"And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go....And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant....And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel....Take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the*

first year.... And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And ye shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it....It is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt," Exodus 11 and 12.