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“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.

The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.” — Isaiah 59: 1-3, 8.
JESUS, THE RESTORER

“And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten.

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.

“And it shall come to pass, that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered.” (Joel 2: 25, 28, 32)

A number of church movements have had as their purpose the restoration of the faith and practices of the First Century Church. Several denominations claim to have accomplished this badly needed restoration, but we find none that fully lives up to its claims.

One denomination boasts of restoring the First Century Church’s mode of baptism—by immersion. Another stresses the return to the custom of taking communion each Lord’s Day. Still another lays claim to the original church name. Another believes that they have discarded all man-made creeds and restored the Bible as their only literature and Christ as their only Creed. Another stresses the restoration of the early church mode of priestly succession, another free and autonomous local congregations, another Divine Healing, another the Holy Ghost, another the laying on of hands, another Prophecy or other of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

One church may stress one or several of the attributes of the First Century Church, some churches practice many of them, but to date we have not found any denomination or movement or church that believes, preaches and demonstrates ALL that the First Century Church believed, practiced and preached.

One church accepts the original mode of baptism, serves communion each Sunday, requires converts to Believe, Repent, Confess and be Baptised; but they refuse to accept Divine Healing or the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Another accepts Divine Healing but repudiates the Holy Ghost as evidenced by speaking in “other tongues.”

Still another stresses Divine Healing, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with speaking in other tongues as evidence, while adopting some un-Scriptural name, and following the world’s practice of race prejudice and segregation, and repudiating Christ’s command to ‘Put up thy sword,” “Love your enemies,” “Turn to him the other (cheek) also,” “If thine enemy hunger, feed him.”

Another takes seriously Christ’s injunction ‘Thou shalt not kill,” works earnestly with men and women of all races, but would be horrified at the thought of “speaking in tongues” or of laying hands on the sick so that they might be healed.

But Jesus is interested in restoring ALL the original purity and power of His church—His Bride—for which He gave His life. Jesus came to make three great Restorations.

First, Jesus came to earth and died on the Cross to restore to mankind what man lost in the Fall, when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden and came under the curse of the Devil. Because of man’s sin, the Devil was enabled to put three curses on the human race: Sin, Sickness, and Death.

“The wages of sin is death.” (Rom. 6: 23)

The wages of sin is sickness. The wages of sickness is death. The wages of sin and sickness is death.

Because of man’s sin, he was driven out of the Garden of Eden, his life span was limited, and he died. Because of man’s sin, sickness and disease came upon him, bringing pain, suffering and death.

But Jesus came to deliver man from the curse, He became a curse for us:

“For Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;” (Gal. 3: 13)

By His atonement, sin could be blotted out, washed in His blood.

Then Jesus spent much of His time healing the sick, thus undoing the work of the Devil:

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.” (Acts 10: 38)

“And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.” (Mark 6: 36)

Jesus, by His atonement enabled man not to die but to live forever:

“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)

Second, Jesus is tremendously concerned in restoring to a decadent Church, the passion, purity and power with which He endowed it at Pentecost, that it may do the job He established it to do.

Jesus was very explicit about the more important aspects of Christianity. He set them forth so clearly and with so much emphasis and repetition that they should not be overlooked. On lesser points he evidently thought them of too little importance to waste time making them clear in His teaching or in His Word.

It is upon these lesser points, which Jesus did not deem sufficiently important to make crystal clear, that much of our Church differences are built.

Take the Church name, for instance. “On this rock I will build my Church.” (Matt. 16: 18) but He gave it no specific name. “Christ’s Church or “Church of Christ” would either one describe it. The Scriptures speak also of :Church of God.” “Church of the First Born,” “Christians.”

It is too bad that Jesus did not Himself put His stamp of approval on a certain name. Perhaps He was concerned with more important questions. Or perhaps He realized that adopting a name would not necessarily make the Church like Him or the early church.

Likewise, the frequency of taking communion was never quite made clear. Jesus said:

“This do in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22: 19)

Paul said:

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.” (I Cor. 11:26)

The disciples apparently took of the Sacraments on the Lord’s Day. (Acts 20:7). But no direct command for taking it each week has been given us.

And so it is with many other minor questions over which denominations furiously battle.
Paul devoted an entire chapter to explaining the work of the gift of tongues and the regulation of its use (I Cor. 14) and specifically listed it as one of the nine gifts of the Holy Ghost. (I Cor. 12: 10)

When believers received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost in the Early Church, they spoke in tongues, prophesied and manifested God, and Jesus is tremendously concerned in having the power of the Holy Ghost restored to His Church, that prophecies may come forth and God be magnified as of old.

But along with Power and closely connected with it is another attribute of the Early Church which Jesus is concerned in restoring to His Church. That is Purity, Sanctification, Holiness. Not as a doctrine to argue about, but as a reality in the lives of His disciples, even as in Peter, James and John.

Men today do not like Holiness or the mention of it. The Church today repudiates Holiness and the mention of it. But God loves Holiness and so does Jesus.

"Be ye holy; for I am holy." (I Peter 1: 16)

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12: 14)

The Church is Christ's Bride.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. 21: 2)

You who choose a bride would hope to find her chaste and pure, unpolluted by the sin of the world. Christ has even more concern about the purity of His Bride, the Church.

"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." (Eph. 5: 25-27)

We are warned that Jesus is coming soon for His Bride. I am afraid He will have to wait until she takes a bath.

Will He take to His spotless bosom the cocktail-drinking, cigarette smoking, worldly ministers and men and women that dare to call themselves His Bride? I doubt it. I doubt very much if even Peter and James and John or Paul would "keep company" with many who call themselves His disciples.

Jesus is also interested in restoring the Brotherhood of all believers which existed at Samaria and Ephesus and Antioch. At Antioch, Niger (the black) laid his hands on Paul and Barnabas as the Church sent the two men out as missionaries. Paul said "God made of one blood all nations of men" (Acts 17: 24, 26) and that there was no longer Jew or Greek. (Col. 3: 11)

In America and the world today we are a far cry from brotherhood, even in the so-called Church of Jesus Christ. And race discrimination and prejudice is one big factor in the world's unrest. Yet the "lily-white" Church goes blandly on her way boasting to be "His Church." I wonder.

Then, Jesus is concerned about restoring in His Church the Way of the Cross rather than the way of the sword. He rebuked Peter for drawing his sword in defence of the only pure and holy and righteous One on earth, Jesus Christ. (Matt. 26: 52)

"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9: 55-56)

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5: 44-45)

"If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." (Rom. 12: 20)

For three centuries after Christ showed them His Way, His disciples refused to serve in the army, to kill their fellow men.

(Turn to page 4)
Yet the Church today, though claiming to be His Church, goes blindly in the footsteps of the World, using the old Mosaic code of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,” leaving to un-Christian Gandhi to prove to a world sick of war that Christ’s Way of Love is the only Way to Peace.

The Church’s hands are red with blood as an accomplice in war, and so it is helpless to save the world that is dying from the sickness of war and hate.

Jesus is probably more concerned about the restoration in His Church of Love, than any other characteristic. He gave a clear test as to how men might distinguish His followers from other folks. Not by their church name, or profession, not by their mode of baptism or the frequency of taking Communion, not by the color of their skin or the degrees after their name.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another.” (John 13: 35)

Yes, I am “all for” restoring the Early Church, but I am for restoring ALL of its attributes, ALL of its PURITY, ALL of its Passion for lost humanity, ALL of its Power to face and conquer the world, the flesh and the Devil. Halfway measures have failed and will continue to fail to stop the Devil, to subdue the flesh or to impress the world.

Jesus came not only to restore man to His original estate as a Son of God, the estate lost in the Fall; He is not only concerned in restoring His Church to its original Purity, Passion and Power; but He is tremendously concerned in restoring individuals, you and me, to the place in His Kingdom planned for us from the foundation of the world and stolen from us by the Devil through his three curses put upon us: Sin, Sickness, Death. Jesus can deliver us from Sin by three works of Grace: He can turn us back from our sin in repentance; He can deliver us from the consequences of punishment for our sins by our acceptance of Him as our Saviour; and by coming within us with His Holiness He can save us from our desire to sin.

Second, Jesus wants to restore us to the enjoyment of His Divine Health if we will only believe Him and accept Him only as our Physician.

“If his stripes ye were healed.” (I Peter 2: 24)

Thirdly, Jesus wants to deliver us from the premature death that the Devil, through sin and sickness, would put upon us, and allow us to live out our allotted span.

“With long life will I satisfy him.” (Ps. 91: 16)

And, lastly, Jesus wants to save us from everlasting death and permit us to live forever with Him.

“I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” (John 11:25)

Friend, whatever is your need, whatever your bondage, whatever your lack, Jesus wants to restore you to the place for which you were born, the place prepared for you before the world was made, the place of a son or a daughter of God, a joint heir with Christ, an overcomer, a doer of exploits. Not merely for your own joy and satisfaction, but that you may help Him restore many others to the same place you enjoy.

No matter if you have wasted your health and strength in sinful living, no matter if your body has been stricken with sickness and you have been marked for premature death, Jesus can restore the years the locusts have eaten.

He can wash away the blackness of your sin, clear your heart of regret and remorse and condemnation, free your shoulders of the load of worry and doubt and fear, restore your health, quicken your mind and your body by His Holy Spirit, and make you a new man in Christ Jesus.

He can thus restore, through you and through me, the original beauty and love of His Church, His Bride, the only institution that can save a dying world. And through His Church He can restore man to his original estate as a Son of God.

“I will restore ...”

Every Day Is a Fresh Beginning

"Every day is a fresh beginning,
Every morn is the world made new,
You, who are weary of sorrow and sinning,
Here is a beautiful hope for you;
A hope for me, and a hope for you.

All the past things are passed and over,
The tasks are done, and the tears are shed.
Yesterday's errors, let yesterday cover;
Yesterday's wounds which smarted and bled,
Are healed with the healing which night has shed.

Let them go, since we cannot relive them,
Cannot undo and cannot atone.
God in His mercy receive, forgive them!
Only the new days are our own.

Today is ours, and today alone.

Here are the skies all burnished brightly;
Here is the spent earth all reborn;
Here are the tired limbs springing lightly
To face the sun and to share the morn,
In the chrism of dew and the cool of dawn.

Every day is a fresh beginning,
Listen, my soul, to the glad refrain,
And, in spite of sorrow and older sinning,
And puzzles forecasted, and possible pain,
Take heart with the day, and begin again."

—Author unknown, quoted by Hartland Law.
Suffered 40 Years.
Healed Instantly!

I want to thank and praise the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ for healing me, in a moment's time, of an affliction with which I had suffered for forty years.

When I was a young girl I was thrown from a horse and hurt internally which resulted in an ulcer of the colon. It caused me intense pain, drawn muscles, and I could not sleep at night because of the pain.

All these forty years I had doctorred with medical doctors and chiropractors. A chiropractor has given me temporary relief from pain but could not cure me. I had frequent attacks when I would become unconscious. The last attack I suffered was especially severe and occurred about two months ago, resulting in hemorrhages. The doctors said there was nothing they could do except to operate, and I was considering an operation in order to get relief.

About six weeks ago we began attending a revival at Revival Center, Pharr, Texas, conducted by Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Dennis whom we had known years ago as our former pastor and wife. We did not go to the revival for healing but for a closer walk with God. I had always believed that God could heal the sick, but I had never witnessed any cases of Divine Healing or been acquainted with anyone who had been healed by the power of God.

Since we had known them, both Mr. Dennis and his wife had been healed, he from wearing glasses and his wife from a tumor, so they were preaching on Divine Healing and praying for the sick. After attending the revival for two weeks, morning and evening, I had a vision while I was praying at home, of my sister who had passed away thirty years ago. In this vision she was saying to me, "You are healed!"

That night at Revival Center I and my husband went to the altar and knelt for prayer. Mr. Dennis and his wife and a Spanish girl, Anita Rodriguez, laid their hands on me and anointed me with oil in the name of the Lord Jesus, according to James 5:14.

All our married life my wife has suffered internal pain as a result of a childhood injury. She could not sleep at night, but would get up frequently, take soda or seek other relief. She doctorred with medical doctors, then found some relief at the hands of a chiropractor.

At times the attacks of pain would be so severe that she would become unconscious and I would revive her by rubbing ice cubes on her spine or the soles of her feet.

A recent attack was especially severe, causing hemorrhaging, and medical doctors advised an operation, which we were considering.

About six weeks ago we began attending a revival at Revival Center in Pharr, Texas where Rev. L. L. Nash is Pastor. J. A. Dennis, my former pastor and friend, was conducting the revival. We did not go for healing as I was a "Doubting Thomas" and did not believe in Divine Healing or in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, as we had not been taught these things.

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When they laid their hands on me I again saw my sister in a vision and again she was saying, "You are healed!" The power of God, feeling like electricity, went through my body from the top of my head to the soles of my feet and I was instantly healed. All pain immediately left and my muscles were relaxed, and I KNEW I was healed. I thanked God for my healing and told the group that I was healed.

That night, for the first time in many years, I slept all night without any pain, and I have been relaxed and with no pain whatever since. It has now been three weeks since the lord healed me and I have had no pain, no medicine or no treatments. I thank and praise my wonderful Saviour who has now become also my Physician, Jesus!

WANTED YOU TO BE HEALED?

There's nothing wrong with that knee
Except its lamed from pushing your
Overstuffed body around.
Nor with heart or stomach,
But wearied of fending off loads
Of deadening food and drink.
Would you be healed?
'Tis vain to pray
Until you learn my rules of health
And discipline your pampered
Appetite to obey.
How To Become A Christian

To some folks, being converted or becoming a Christian is a mysterious thing, something that has to do with emotional disturbances, probing questions, fear of death, etc. And they shrink from any mention of it.

Becoming a Christian is not unlike the other decisive choices we make in life. Like buying a new car for instance.

DIS-SATISFACTION

The first stage in purchasing a new car is becoming dissatisfied with the old car we now have. As long as we are satisfied with it, the new car salesman will make little headway with us.

The first requisite in becoming a Christian is a dis-satisfaction with our present life, our old self. As long as we are satisfied with the status quo of our inner lives the preacher or evangelist or Holy Spirit will have little success winning us to Christ.

But once convinced that there is something better for us than we now have, and once is born the yearning to be better than we now are, we are well on our way to purchasing that new model, or of receiving that new man.

WHICH?

Once determined to have a new model the car owner begins looking around, in this show room and that for the car that will fit his fancy, his purpose and his pocketbook.

The dis-satisfied soul will likewise begin searching for the thing in life that will satisfy the longings within.

Before long the prospect for a new car will find the particular make and model he is looking for. Information gotten from folders and the talk of salesmen have thoroughly convinced him that this is "it." By comparing the new car with his old one he is thoroughly persuaded that the old car is a "wreck," that to keep it is unwise, that to drive it is unsafe, that he'll never be happy until he is under the wheel of the streamlined object of his desire.

The seeker after truth and inner peace has become dis-satisfied with his old life, looked until he became convinced that Christ was the only one who could satisfy his longings. Then he must "say he will take it," "sign the contract," bid goodbye to the old man and walk out in newness of life with Jesus.

Signing the contract is by the act of repentance and baptism. That is putting your "hand and seal" on the instrument, "obeying the gospel," "fulfilling all righteousness." It is the "initiation" ceremony or the "oath of allegiance," the final act that breaks with the old life and embraces the new.

These common sense and practical steps are usually spoken of in more Biblical terms.

The inner unrest is the prodigal son's "coming to himself" in the far country, his dis-satisfaction with the husks of life and his determination to go home. That is BELIEVING.

"Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but shall have everlasting life." (John 3: 16)

REPENTANCE is the comparison of our old lives with that of Christ and a determination to make the trade, to turn from the old man to the new, the low life to the high.

"Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 5: 32)

CONFESSION is the public announcement that the deal is made. The buyer says "I'll take it." The convert says, "I'll do it. I accept Christ."

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven." (Matt. 10: 32)

BAPTISM is signing on the dotted line. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2: 38)

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28: 19)

Baptism is a dramatic portrayal of three great changes that take place when a sinner comes to Christ.

1. It portrays the fact that Jesus has forgiven and washed away all the penitent's sins.

   "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." (Ps. 51: 7)

   "As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." (Ps. 103: 12)

2. It portrays the re-birth of the penitent, the death of the old man, the birth of the new. The believer is literally "buri ed" in a watery grave. He rises from this watery death to walk in newness of life.

   "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6: 4)

3. It portrays the promise, and the belief in that promise, that if the believer remains faithful to his Christian "contract," some day when he is buried in the earth as he is now being buried beneath the water,
he will likewise rise again with His Lord at the Resurrection.

"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 will you be also." (John 14: 2-3.)

Are you dis-satisfied with your present life? If so, that is evidence that God's Holy Spirit is speaking to your soul. He put a divine discontent in every man's heart, so that man continually seeks something better, and is never happy with less than perfection. And the only perfect person to walk this earth is Jesus.

Have you intelligence and will enough to trade in your old car for a new one?

Use the same good sense and judgment in your spiritual life. Turn in your old self for a new model, patterned after Jesus.

The new car you buy will soon become as old and out-modeled as the one you had before. But Jesus will always remain new and perfect.

"Provide yourselves bags which wax not old." (Luke 12: 33)

All it takes to become a Christian is to take one look at Jesus and say, "I'll take Him!"

"Lord, I'm tired of this old life of mine. It will be my death, I know. If you'll take it in on a new model, like yourself, I'll do whatever you say; I'll keep my promise. I'll pay the price of obedience.

I now publicly state I've made the trade. I hereby seal the bargain by baptism, on my part with water, on yours by blood. I accept forgiveness, peace, and life everlasting. I was a sinner, now I am a Christian. Thank you, Lord." The deal is made.

And the new model is guaranteed.

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11: 28)

"The fruit of the Spirit is Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Gal. 5: 22-23)

"There hath not failed one word of all his god promise." (I Kings 8: 56)

The BIG DIFFERENCE between buying a car and becoming a Christian is that the first is a contract, the second, the acceptance of a promised Gift. In the first, we do most of the deciding and all of the paying; while in the soul's salvation, Jesus does much of the deciding and ALL of the paying. We cannot merit forgiveness, buy salvation or earn our way to Heaven. The best we can do is to furnish the need and let Jesus provide the remedy, furnish the desire to be a Christian, and accept Jesus as our Saviour.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2: 8-9)
CHAPTER 18

PAUL AND THE JUDGMENT

“O men that forge the fetters, It is vain. There is still a hand Stronger than your chain. 'Tis no avail at last To bargain, sneer and nod And shrug your shoulders In reply to God.”

—“He Took it Upon Himself,”

By Margaret Slattery

Why is Paul’s fate left obscure? Why are we not given the result of his trial at Rome, the final outcome of his many days in court, his years in prison?

Paul’s hearing before the council, his trials before the Roman courts—there were not the real trials of Paul. In a deeper sense he was not even on trial there, his accusers were. Paul’s real trial had taken place many years before.

In Paul’s mind as he stood before the council and the courts was an undying picture of a much more important court than any Rome could convene. A Court before whose bar he had stood one day at Damascus, accused of the sins of murder and blasphemy and rejection of the Christ, sins that meant the penalty of death, everlasting death. And he well remembered how he had been tried and found guilty, yes, had pleaded guilty to those crimes and had been sentenced to death. How he had cried for mercy and how his Defense Counsel in loving pity had taken and pleaded his cause before the Judge, and had won his pardon by paying the death penalty Himself. And how the Judge had agreed to the substitution, how his sentence had been suspended for the duration of his life, how he had been paroled in care of his risen Master, to work out his pardon in following Him. That picture forever graven on his soul, made this trial before the pagan Romans seem more or less unimportant to Paul, so far as his own safety was concerned. But it was extremely important that he do his Master’s will and say what his Master would have his say. Extremely important to those in that court room that they hear God’s truth from his lips, see God’s love in his face, feel God’s interest in his voice.

It was extremely important that this be their day of trial, that they see and admit their guilt, that they cry out for mercy and win their pardon, as he had won his. That is why he forgot the accused, the defendant. He was God’s prosecutor now instead of persecutor. They were bound and he was free. Free on suspended sentence and parole.

That trial faces everyone. It faces you and me. It is the trial to which these lesser trials of Paul are meant to turn our thoughts. Paul knew the Judge of that court.

“God the Judge of all.” (Heb. 12: 23)

He knew the Prosecutor, the conscience, the Holy Spirit of God.

“Their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.” (Rom. 2: 15)

He had met the Defense Counsel face to face and had asked that mediator to plead his cause.

“It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” (Rom. 8: 34)

“And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:” (I John 2: 1)

Paul knew the witnesses to that trial,

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight

“In this and like communities public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed; consequently he who moulds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible to be executed.”

—Abraham Lincoln.
"The wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6: 23)

He knew there was only one way of escape from the punishment.

"That they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." (Acts 26:20)

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19)

Paul never got over being grateful for his pardon, his suspended sentence, his parole. The rest of his life he labored night and day to bring others to trial while they yet lived, to convict them of sin, that they too might win their pardons. To this end he had braved suffering, persecution, stoning, stripes, lions, shipwreck, imprisonment. After these things the comparative safety of a Roman court held no terrors for Paul the Defendant. He could say:

"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 at that day: and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing." (II Tim. 4:7-8)

Now we see why the result of Paul's Roman trial was unimportant. The final decision could not be written until that day when he stood before a Higher Court and gave account to the Righteous Judge for his parole, his discipleship. He was determined that on that day the verdict for Paul the Defendant would be:

"Not Guilty!"

CHAPTER 19
TRAIL'S END

"And I believe that Evil dies
And Good lives on, loves on, yes,
conquers all.
All war must end in Peace. These
clouds are lies!
They cannot last. The blue sky is the
Truth
For God is Love. Such is my Faith
and such
My reasons for it and I find them
strong
Enough. And You? You want to
argue? Well, I can't. It is a choice, I choose the
Christ."
—"He Took It Upon Himself,"
By Margaret Slattery

So ends our voyage over the seas of life with the Apostle Paul. Where has the journey brought us? In every question, every experience, it has led us straight to Jesus Christ. Paul had no theology of his own, no special doctrine, no new message. He only followed Jesus. Jesus has the answer to every problem in the world today, as in Paul's, whether it be capital or labor, marriage or divorce, happiness or sorrow, war or peace. It is no longer a question of religion whether we accept or reject Him; it is a question of life or death for our civilization.

To the extent that a man, a group or a Nation follows His rules of conduct, they achieve happiness and true success; as they disobey Him they insure misery for themselves and others. We tell our man-made schemes for advancement and security, and at one breath from Heaven they are as nothing.

Whether the Bible be true is no longer a valid question to be argued. The authenticity or the inspiration of its authorship need not be debated to prove Christ right. All the centuries of history that we know, all the records of crime and divorce in every law court, all the suffering on every battle field, all the sorrow in all the world, but prove His infallible wisdom.

Not only history but science, psychology and medicine are proving that Christ spoke the truth when he said,

"I am the Way." (John 14:6)

"God has a plan for man. There is wisdom greater than any man possesses. There are fixed laws that limit human discretion and demand a sound judgment. Man can succeed only as they discover these laws and harmonize their own deeds with them. Men of science have succeeded because with test tube and micrometer, they have studied God's laws and followed along. Men of government have not."

—Author unknown

Peter and John Are Arrested

(News as it might have been if there had been newspapers 1900 years ago.)

Peter, the ring-leader of the Nazarene radicals, and John, his accomplices, were arrested yesterday by local police.

The two men were followers of Jesus who was recently executed for treason and blasphemy. After spending the night in jail, they were arraigned today and charged with practising divine healing and creating an uproar in the city streets.

The man who was healed was over forty years old and had begged for years at the temple gate. By some strange power which Peter claimed was given by Jesus whom he says is still alive, this cripple was walking, leaping and shouting today and a mob soon formed, which the police could not handle.

The court warned Peter and John to cease preaching this radical doctrine that seems to make fanatics of its followers, but two thousand shouting converts added themselves to the three thousand that were baptised last week.

After stern threatening by the court, the two leaders, still defiant, were released.

Jerusalem Herald, May 29, A.D. 30.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner, upon which rock men are continually breaking themselves in a futile attempt to live successfully some other way.

If the millions of intelligent Christians in America used the same sound judgments and enthusiastic energy in building the Kingdom of Heaven that they put into business and sports and war, the world could be remade almost overnight. Building a factory we hire an architect and scrupulously follow his plans. Building a business we study methods of service and salesmanship and practice them. Waging a war we put a man in power and follow his commands. Playing a game we study the rules and follow them.

Life is the greatest of all games; difficult, challenging. We seek the answers to life in far-off places while, like four-leaf clovers and the Holy Grail, they lie overlooked nearby. Practically every home in the United States owns a Book of Rules, with the answer to every question: success, peace, how to live abundantly and forever.

God's Word has been shelved as a Book of Religion; it is a Book of Rules for Living. Those Rules are as sure as two times two equals four. His promises are as cashable as government check—when properly endorsed. The penalties follow as inevitably as night follows day.

Yes, some of the Rules are difficult, some of the answers hard, for life is quite an important game. But whether we like the Rules or not, there they are laid down by the Author of the Game, Himself. Either obey the rules and win, or disobey and lose, either accept Him and live, or reject Him and die. Take your choice.

Life is as simple—and as hard—as that.

We can never build the Kingdom, or have peace, or call ourselves Christians, until we accept His authority, adopt His methods, and obey His rules.

Is it a "Back to Christ" movement that we need? No. Christ is not 2000 years behind; He is perhaps 2000 years ahead of us, striding along so far in advance we can scarcely catch a glimpse of Him through the shadows cast by our man-made troubles. Nineteen centuries after His demonstration, we are just beginning to get a vision of what He meant for the world to be, what it would be, if we lived as citizens of His Kingdom.

Some day men will see in Jesus the wisest realist of all time. Not just a pious religiousist, but one who has the answer to every human problem, every situation, the key to success, happiness, peace. That is the tragedy of His crucifixion: He was killed because He was actually trying to bring them the very things they wanted most! Killed because He dared to question the answers that those in authority said were the right answers, the best methods. Today millions are challenging the very authority He challenged, seeking to gain by any means except obedience to Him, the very things He offers: brotherhood, joy, peace.

(Turn to Page 12)
CHRIST
AND THE HEADLINES
An earnest attempt to look at today's events through the eyes of Jesus.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
I come to you today as the highest official in the United States of America. My title is Citizen. You and I own America, we rule America, we ARE America.

In theory, at least, the men we elect and send to Washington every two or four years are our hired servants, whom we employ to run the different branches of our government. If they fail to do their job properly, we have the right to terminate their employment at the end of their term and hire someone else to do the job.

Will Rogers once said that what this country needed was a good hired hand who, for the time he had worked for us, wouldn't get to the end of the month he owned the place. Some of our officials have gotten that attitude after one term in office.

Sad to say, this nation, especially during the last 20 years, has leaned towards the Old World theory of government and its citizens are increasingly thinking in terms of the men in Washington ruling us, telling us what to do, instead of being our employees.

America was not formed by accident. God called men and women from monarchies, tyrannies, from conscription, poverty, to this new, free land where they might worship Him according to the dictates of their own consciences; where they might enjoy Freedom — Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship, Freedom of the Press, Freedom from Want, Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Conscription, Freedom from War.

God called our forefathers from the Old World to this new land "Flowing with milk and honey" for a very definite purpose; just as He called the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and led them to their Promised Land, for a very definite purpose.

God's purpose with the Israelites was that they might worship Him in Spirit and in Truth, as the one and only God—Jehovah. They were to avoid marriages with the pagan tribes surrounding the Holy Land, to be renounce their pagan worship and shun any entangling alliances with pagan powers. They were to worship and serve only God, and trust only Him for their provision, their health, and their protection.

So long as the Israelites obeyed these commandments, they prospered; the land brought forth plentifully, their vines did not cast their fruit, and their enemies lived at peace with them.

But when the Israelites disobeyed, when they began to worship Baal, to desecrate the Sabbath, ignore the Sabbath years, to be lifted up with pride and riches, to make war and form alliances with other nations for protection and power and profit; then all the curses warned of God came upon them. They suffered drought, pestilence, disease, war, and were finally carried off into captivity, while the land they had inherited enjoyed its promised rest.

God's purpose in calling our fathers from foreign lands to this new land abounding in rich soil, gold, silver, coal, oil, virgin forests and golden grain, seems to have been for a similar purpose in His great Plan for Man.

Here, under God's guidance and conceived in prayer, was born a Constitution and a Nation dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, a nation of the people, by the people, for the people. A nation where the individual was supreme, important and the State a servant of the citizen. Contrary to this, most nations exist on the theory of the supreme importance of the Nation, and individuals merely servants of the State.

God's purpose in America was not merely that a few million people, whom He loves no more than He loves all of His creation, might enjoy cars, radios, fat stomachs and fat purses, or enjoy for themselves the Freedoms here made possible. God intended that America, like chosen Israel, should point the Way to all mankind.


Here, in the United States, is probably the only place in the world today where men can LEGALLY live in obedience to God's commands, can LEGALLY live as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, can LEGALLY obey God rather than man.

Here, His children were not only to live in peace and plenty, not only were to show a pattern of how men might live as citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven; but America was to be the storehouse from which He could feed and clothe and win the world to Himself. We were not only to give the starving peoples of the world the bread they so desperately need, but were to give the world the more important Bread of Life.

We were not only to show the world the great advantages of living as free citizens of a Democracy, but to point men to the greater advantages of citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven, on earth, here and now.

For, as much as we love America, and great as are the advantages of citizenship here, American Democracy is not the highest type of government in the world. There is a government whose laws are even better than our Constitution, a flag more beautiful than the Stars and Stripes, a ruler more honest and wiser than our President, a citizenship more worthwhile than American citizenship.

That citizenship is in the Kingdom of Heaven, world-wide and eternity-long, with Laws greater than our laws, with Cross more beautiful than our flag, with the only incorruptible and all-wise ruler ever living, Jesus Christ, as our King of Kings.

What does it take to become a citizen in the Kingdom of Heaven? A devoted and total allegiance to Jesus Christ and His Way of life, above every other allegiance on earth.

We have many loyalties. When I was young my only allegiance was to my family. When I reached school age family allegiance was no longer supreme. I had to go to school. Today, when a young man reaches draft age he may no longer continue in school, he may have to go off to war; allegiance to the Nation supersedes the authority of the State.

But here, for most people, the progressive steps of allegiance stop. Few have stepped up into the higher realm where allegiance to God supersedes allegiance to his Nation. Consequently we have Christians in China, Russia and North Korea, killing their brother Christians from America and Great Britain, and vice versa. Why? Because their respective governments order them to do so and they obey—reluctantly, half-heartedly—but they obey. They have not yet caught the vision of living and acting as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, where men and women all over God's earth are their brothers and all potential sons and daughters of God. They have not yet come to the place where they "must obey God rather than men."

Why aren't more Christians living today as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven? First, because they have not been taught about the Kingdom. The church today preaches the Church, and usually their own particular denominational branch of the Church, and their own local congregation within that particular denomination. The Church does not preach the Kingdom of Heaven.

But Jesus did. He mentioned the Church only twice in all the four Gospels. But He constantly preached about the Kingdom of Heaven. The first word that John the Baptist came preaching was:

"Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:2)

Jesus began His ministry with the same command:

"Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17)

He continued to preach and to demonstrate the Kingdom of Heaven:
"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." (Matt. 4: 23)

Very many of Christ's parables began: "The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto . . . . . ." leaven, treasure hid in field, householder hiring labourers, a king making a marriage feast for his son, etc.

Paul spoke often of the Kingdom and continued preaching it until the end:

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." (Acts 28: 30-31)

Another reason why the Kingdom of Heaven grows so slowly is because governments oppose any idea of an allegiance higher than to the Nation. For it would limit their power over their citizens. If the Kingdom of Heaven really took hold, where would the nations get the men to go out and kill other citizens? Yes, Where?

Then business interests oppose the idea of a higher allegiance because it would limit their using power for profit.

Christians themselves oppose the idea of a higher allegiance to God than to their nation because of fear, and so become fifth-columnists and traitors to their King.

Frank Laubach, Stanley Jones, Glenn Clark and a number of others have caught Christ's message, "Seek ye first the Kingdom." (Matt. 6: 33) and are working at extending the Kingdom and getting men and women to see it and to live as citizens in the Kingdom.

But, as Jesus said:

"Except a man be born again, he cannot SEE the Kingdom of God." (John 3: 3)

"Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 18: 3)

What does it do to a Christian when he "Sees" and "Enters" into the Kingdom of Heaven as a Citizen whose first and supreme allegiance is to Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

First, denominational differences dwindle in importance as the world-wide Kingdom which Christ preached dawns upon us. Once in West Texas, an amateur pilot took me up in a small airplane and we flew over the fields and farm houses. The pretty green rows of corn and feed were like tiny miniatures and the fences dwindled to insignificant heights.

In the Kingdom, denominational fences do not disappear, but they diminish in size and importance and the Kingdom becomes our first concern rather than our local congregation or our own particular denomination. We begin to ask with Paul: "Is Christ divided?" (I Cor. 1: 13)

Second, in the Kingdom, racial pride and intolerance have no place. One begins to realize that God loves the little black babies in Africa, the little brown babies in India, and the little Negro babies across the tracks, fully as much as He loves our own children. We can see with Paul:

"God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." (Acts 17: 24, 26)

And with Jesus:

"One is your Father . . . . all ye are brethren." (Matt. 23: 9, 8)

Third, in the Kingdom of Heaven, one cannot go forth to kill his brother Citizens, or permit them to starve to death, though they live in another nation or are of another race. Jesus is very jealous of His other children, even as of us, and He is very much concerned about their welfare and how we treat them.

"As much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25: 40)

Division, race, war — these are the issues that threaten our lives, our nation and our civilization. The Kingdom of Heaven transcends them all and is Christ's one and only solution to them all.

Some people say that Jesus came preaching an individual gospel only and that He did not meddle in national or world affairs. The Kingdom of Heaven is His answer to all who argue thus. Jesus ever dared to "meddle" with the affairs of men. As He began His ministry, He laid down His platform:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4: 18-19)

"To preach the Gospel (Good News) to the poor" What good news do the poor wait to hear? That their poverty will be ended!

"Deliverance to the captives!! What will satisfy the captives except their freedom?

Jesus dared to point His finger of truth in the face of the Pharisees and accuse them of injustice:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widow's houses, and for a pretense make long prayers." (Matt. 23: 14)

You can preach Christ in Russia or China or in Spain today, if you preach merely a relationship between the individual and his God, and steer clear of economic, racial or governmental issues. Government, business, liquor and tobacco men would confine preaching today to "religion" and ask the church to refrain from "meddling" in their affairs.

But Jesus, as all His true prophets, will continue to point His sword of Truth at any point in man's existence that is inconsistent with God's perfect plan for man; the Kingdom of Heaven.

Men today are tremendously concerned about peace. They seek in conferences, leagues, United Nations, in alliances, and pacts, for peace. Yet they overlook God's own plan for peace, the plan Jesus and John the Baptist and Paul preached: the Kingdom of Heaven.

And America has failed God in His purpose for our existence. For we are the one nation in the world where, by His grace, it is legal to give first and supreme allegiance to God. Charles Evans Hughes, late Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, stated:

"But in the forum of conscience duty to a moral power higher than the State has always been maintained . . . The essence of religion is belief in a relation to God involving duties superior to those arising from any human relation." (U. S. vs Macintosh, U. S. 605)

"Peace on earth" awaits the day when Christ's followers catch the vision of the Kingdom of Heaven and dare to say with Peter and John:

"We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5: 29)

But isn't this way dangerous? Yes. It meant the death of Jesus, of Peter and Stephen and of Paul. But men by the thousands are dying for lesser causes. And only in this way is there any hope of peace.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech. 4: 6)

To a lost world, tottering on the brink of disaster, Christ hurls His challenging answer:

"Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4: 17)

When Christians begin to take the Kingdom of Heaven seriously, the world will begin to take the Christians seriously, and Christ will begin to rule the world.

"The strength of a country is the strength of its religious convictions." —Calvin Coolidge.
But these things can only be gotten on His terms. The road is straight and narrow, and we've demanded an easier way. The church for centuries has tried the conventional, easy way, the way of compromise. But today there is a growing feeling among leading Christians that the brand of Christianity we've been feeding our people isn't good enough to long satisfy them, that unless we give them something real and vital to their life and death struggles of today, something with the power of Christ behind it, that they will cast us out as the church was cast out in Germany and Russia.

Man has sensed the insincerity, the inconsistency, the weakness of the church, and in time of crisis he has turned to something that seemed stronger, his nation and her army. Yet never before has there been such a world-wide hunger for peace, for the elimination of war. Never before has there been such a vision of world brotherhood, of a possible world government. World War II has shown us that events on one continent affect all continents, that poverty and unrest in one nation affect the security and living standard of all peoples.

Truly today "None of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself." (Rom. 14:7)

Men were never closer to realizing the truth of Christ's statement, "One is your Father . . . All ye are brethren." (Matt. 23: 9, 8)

The world is dying for the answer to its problems, and too blind to see that He is that answer. Millions wait the day when a deep, spiritual revival will sweep this truth around the world.

But if the time is ripe for a sweeping religious revival, an actual living of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, no place is quite so favorable for its beginning, so far as government is concerned, as is the United States. America is a child of Christianity; founded in large measure on Christ's laws and His conception of man as a son of God. Here is already accomplished the separation of church and state. Here is already recognized freedom of speech, press, conscience, assembly, worship, and final allegiance to God.

It is not Government in the United States that stands in the way of our living as Citizens of the Kingdom, so much as our selfish materialism, our pride, our loving the ways of the world more than the will of God. A revival that would bring America to the feet of God must first come within the church itself. That is why, though conditions are favorable, the chances of an immediate religious awakening in the United States are slender. The church in America is too smugly self-satisfied with the compromise it has effected with the world of business and government.

It may take the day of rigid regulation, of persecution, or of poverty to prod the church into action, as happened in Jerusalem under Herod. Or it may fall to the suffering church of some devastated land like Norway or France or China to kindle the fires that will lead the world to God and sanity. Unless we use effectively for God the great heritage He has given us He will choose some other people to carry on His work.

"If it is a divorce you are seeking, seek a divorce from sin."

"I will smite them with pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." (Numbers 14:12)

God is never left without a witness. Today, when the church has deserted the ways of Christ, when "Christian" nations are drunk with killing, God has provided several witnesses to His Way, scattered in various lands and among people that we do not accept as Christian.

We find in Godless Russia a concern for the economic well-being of the poor and the discarding of class and race prejudice. We find in Hindu India, Gandhi demonstrating the way taught in the Sermon on the Mount. And in many lands a fanatical sect know as Jehovah's Witnesses, reminding us that Christ and Paul and most all saints have been among the persecuted. When the church was losing its faith in prayer, God placed eight men on a raft in the Pacific, one an atheist, as witnesses of its practical power.

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." (I Cor. 1:27-29)

When the church combines the concern for economic and race equality of Russia with the fanatical zeal of the Witnesses, the discipline and bravery and sacrifice of the soldier with the suffering love of Gandhi, and when her members pray with the simple desperation of soldiers in foxholes or flaks lost at sea, we will begin to be Christ's church.

It will be hard on those who dare to do it just as it was on Him. They must be absolutely self-surrendered, willing that they be persecuted or crucified or forgotten, willing to fall into the ground and die that the seed might bring forth fruit.

But you need not wait for someone to start this "movement." Jesus started it long ago.

"In friendly tones that breathed of love and heaven He talked with his Disciples by the sea. One simple, forthright word to them was given—A word that we have lost: Come, follow me."

—Thomas Curtis Clark

When you literally follow Him, the peace and joy and love of the Kingdom are realities in your own life at once. As you become Christ-like you may be the spark that will touch off a revival of His Way in your church, as I might in mine.

At least as we purify ourselves, by so much will the world be purer. Jesus began at the point where He had the most influence: with Himself; and so did Paul.

Now as we end this journey, let us ask ourselves again; if we who hold up Paul as an ideal, had lived in the first century and had been in the court room when Paul, the Defendant, was brought in, on which side would we have stood? With the angry mobs that jailed this fanatic who spread disunity and doubt and ridicule of present systems, or would we have dared stand with the fool who gladly faced stoning and jail and death in order to proclaim Jesus' Way of life, and who not only proclaimed it but actually demonstrated this way of non-violent love in return?

We are grateful to Paul for having strengthened our faith in God and His promises, in Christ and His Way, in demonstrating that "I can do all things through Christ." Court Adjourned.

THE END