

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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HOW CAN IT BE RIGHT TO TURN A CHILD OF GOD OVER TO SATAN?

Roger D. Campbell

Have you ever heard of the proposal that there comes a point when the Lord's church should somehow deliver its unfaithful members to the devil? Does that idea strike you as being unreasonable or unthinkable? The truth is, beloved, that is exactly what the God of heaven instructs us to do. Really? Yes, really. Here are two New Testament passages in which we read such teaching:

I Cor. 5:4,5, *"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."*

I Tim. 1:19,20, *"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."*

Obviously, the matters about which Paul wrote in these two instances were extremely serious. In the first scenario, there was a brother in the church at Corinth who was a fornicator, and at the time Paul wrote this inspired letter (I Corinthians) to them, the saints there had not yet properly dealt with this immoral man. What was the Holy Spirit's instruction to them? To purge out the old leaven (5:7), have no company

with this man (5:9), not eat with this man (5:11), and put him away from among them (5:13). By doing those things, what would they actually be doing? They would be delivering or turning over this brother to Satan.

What does it even mean to turn over or deliver a person to the devil? It seems that if we will look at the intention of such action, that will help us to understand what it means. The notion that Christians should turn a brother, one of their own, over to Satan, may sound horrible to some. But let us read 1 Corinthians 5:5 again: *"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."* Do you notice the motivation behind such action?

What is the ultimate desire of turning a fellow saint over to our adversary? "That the spirit may be saved" — rather than the mindset being, "Let's cast him off to the wolves and let him burn in hell." The real goal is that his soul will be saved from hell! With that in mind, the Bible says that such a brother is to be delivered to Satan "for the destruction of the flesh." Folks, the man is already in a lost condition, so delivering him to Satan does not make things worse (God does not prescribe remedies that make things bad or worse). Rather, the hope is that by turning him over to Satan, which is

the same as refusing to have company with him, he will open his eyes, see his horrible condition, hate the thought of losing all social association with his beloved Christian family, and resolve to fulfill the lusts of the flesh no longer, including being a fornicator.

Why is it right to turn a child of God over to Satan? It is proper to do so because that is the action which the Lord instructs us to take. If God counts it as a good and necessary step, then that is just what it is. Someone might still wonder, "I do not see why the Lord would tell us to do such a thing. Would it not be better to work patiently with people and try to encourage them to do what is right, rather than just write them off?"

First of all, to make the scriptural decision to withhold fellowship and support from a rebellious child of God does not mean that we are not concerned about them. On the contrary, it shows that we love them and ultimately want what is best for them — for them to be restored to their first love (Rev. 2:4,5).

Second, to refuse to have company with a member of God's family does not mean we never want to see or hear from them again. God forbid! Should a child of God that the church has delivered to Satan for the

(Continued on page 95)
Can It Be Right?...



Editorial...

ANSWERING QUESTIONS ON SALVATION #4

Garland M. Robinson

We continue with this month's issue (and one more) to review passages set forth by "faith only" advocates in an effort to refute what the Bible teaches concerning faith and obedience. The passages below are used by them to support their man-made doctrine of "faith only" or "faith alone." We take in hand a brief examination of these passages as was set forth in a letter we received some months ago. The following was written in answer to this letter.

Romans 3:30, "*Seeing [it is] one God, which shall justify the circumcision by **faith**, and uncircumcision through **faith**.*"

One is made "just" before God by or through faith; that is, the "law of faith" (Rom. 3:27). The law of faith is the law of the New Testament, not the law of works (the Old Testament).

The law of faith is the "system of faith" (Gal. 3:23-27). It is the Lord's new law by which sinners learn what is required for them to do to be saved. Therefore, all who will be saved, both the circumcised (Jew) and uncircumcised (Gentile) are saved exactly the same way, by or through faith. Those whose faith is an active obedient faith, are those who follow the Lord's system of faith (the New Testament). These are the ones who will be saved. They are justified by God. The law of Moses does not save, whereas the law of Christ does. "Faith only" is not found in this verse.

Romans 5:1, "*Therefore being justified by **faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Are the saved justified by faith? Certainly they are. This verse says so. Does it say the saved are justified by "faith only?" No, it doesn't say that. Man says that, but not God. You don't find "faith only" here.

Romans 10:9, "*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt **believe** in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*"

This is a great verse. I'm glad you know it's in the Bible. It absolutely kills the doctrine of "faith only." It demands "confession" of Jesus. And, since confession of Jesus is required to be saved, then salvation cannot be by "faith only." "Faith only" excludes confession. This verse requires BOTH "confession" AND "faith." Not confession only. Not faith only. Both are required.

Romans 10:11, "*For the scripture saith, Whosoever **believeth** on him shall not be ashamed.*"

This is a quotation from the Old Testament. It talks about the time when the Messiah would come. Moses told about one who would come and that the people must listen to him or be cut off (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22-23). That one on whom people must believe is Jesus the Christ. There is salvation in no other name than Jesus (Acts 4:12). Nothing is said about "believeth only." I know how frustrating it must be to hold to a doctrine and not be able to show authority for it from the Scriptures. This is the trouble men run into when they decide what they want to believe then turn to the Bible in an effort to support it. Every place they turn, they run into dead ends. False doctrine always contradicts the Scriptures.

Romans 10:13, "*For whosoever shall **call upon the name** of the Lord shall be saved.*"

This verse doesn't have "faith only" in it. As a matter of fact, it doesn't even have faith in it. I wonder why you would use it to support your "faith only" doctrine?

Like all other verses, this verse is

absolutely true. It is so refreshing. Salvation is promised to all who call upon the name of the Lord. Now, all we have to do is learn what is involved in calling upon the name of the Lord. How is this done? We read in Matthew 7:21-23 of how it's not done. This tells of multitudes who called upon the name of the Lord but were not saved. Why weren't they saved? Verse 21 tells us why they weren't saved, it's because they did not DO (obey) the will of the Father. They had faith, but it was "faith only." That's why they weren't saved. So "faith only" is a damnable doctrine.

God gives us a specific example of one who called upon the name of the Lord to be saved and as a result, he was saved. We read about it in Acts 22:16, Saul of Tarsus was told, "*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and **be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.***" He was not told to "believe" (or even "believe only") and wash away his sins calling on the name of the Lord. He was told to be baptized. This was the action by which he called upon the name of the Lord. Actually, calling on the name of the Lord is not "baptism only." Calling on the name of the Lord is obeying, by faith, all that the Lord made essential to receive the forgiveness of sins. This is *faith* (John 8:24), *repentance of sins* (Luke 13:3,5), *confession of faith in Jesus* (Matt. 10:32-33) and being *immersed in water* (Mark 16:16). This is calling on the name of the Lord. The process culminates in the act of water baptism. This is proven by Saul's baptism in Acts 22:16.

I Corinthians 15:1-2, "*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have **believed** in vain.*"

This verse says nothing about "faith only." Where did you come up with this doctrine? The Gospel begins with the cross of Christ. The message of the cross is essential in preaching. But it also includes all that the saviour taught and what he revealed through the apostles and other inspired teachers in the remainder of

the New Testament. Verse two mentions “keeping” everything Paul had preached unto them. That is, they had to obey the Lord’s commands. If they did not do so, their belief was in vain. If all they did was “believe only,” then it was in vain. “Belief only” (belief without obedience) is vain, useless, pointless, futile.

Galatians 2:16, “*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have **believed** in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*”

This is the same as Romans 3:28,30 above. The works of the law are the works of the law of Moses. They do not save. This is the whole theme of Galatians, Hebrews, and much of Romans and I Corinthians. Jesus brought in a new system, a new law, the New Testament. Here, it is called “the faith of Christ” and is put in contrast to the “works of the law.” Sinners are not justified through or by the works of the law, the Old Testament law, the law of Moses. This cannot mean “any law” or “all law” period, if so, then no one is obligated to follow Jesus. Jesus has a law. It is the New Testament law. We are commanded to be obedient to it (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 6:2; Phil. 3:9; Gal. 2:16). We will be judged by it (John 12:48). If we believe in Jesus, we believe his new law (New Testament) and obey it. By God’s grace then, those who believe and obey will be saved.

Galatians 3:2-9, “*This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if [it be] yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, [doeth he it] by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto*

Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

In verse two, “the works of the law” refers to the Old Testament while “the hearing of faith” refers to the New Testament. All men from the day of Pentecost onward (Acts 2), live under the New Testament, not the Old Testament. The miraculous deeds done in the early church were done by the Holy Spirit under the administration of the New Testament, not the Old Testament (Gal. 3:5). The Jewish mind of the first century held so strongly to the law of Moses (the Old Testament) that they would not open their eyes (mind) to the possibility that Jesus was the promised Messiah and that he ushered in the new law (New Testament), which was not according to the old law (Jer. 31:32; Heb. 8:9). They held firmly to Abraham, yet it is shown that Abraham was justified in God’s sight by faith without performing the works of the law of Moses because he lived before the law of Moses was ever given. James 2:21 says, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, WHEN he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” His strong faith, coupled with his obedience, made him to be counted righteous before God. So, those who are of faith and obedience today are blessed along with faithful Abraham. We don’t find “faith only” in these verses. They do not help the “faith only” doctrine because they don’t say anything about faith only. Quite the contrary, they show faith and obedience because saving faith is a faith that obeys.

Galatians 3:14, “*That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*”

Same as above. It is stated that we, the saved, receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. But it doesn’t say “faith only.” It doesn’t support your case.

Galatians 3:24, “*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by **faith**.*”

The law, the Old Testament law of Moses, governed the Israelites and

was their law until Christ gave his new law, the New Testament. It is here spoken of as “faith.” “Faith” is contrasted with “the law.” The law of Moses was done away and was replaced by the law of faith (the New Testament). Consequently, we are justified “by faith.” However, it does not say we’re justified by “faith only.” There’s nothing in this verse that supports your case. This is further examined below.

Galatians 3:26, “*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*”

Beautiful verse. Love it! Christians are God’s children. But HOW? How are we God’s children? We are children of God “by faith.” However, it doesn’t say we’re children of God by “faith only.” Man says that, the devil says that, but not God. The very next verse, verse 27, tells us WHEN Christians become children of God by faith. “*For as many of you as have been BAPTIZED INTO Christ have put on Christ.*” Paul refers them to the time they became children of God by faith in Christ. He does not say it was when they believed on Christ because that is not when one becomes a Christian. He did not say it was when they repented of their sins. He did not say it was when they confessed Jesus as their savior because that is not when one becomes a Christian. He reminds them of the time WHEN they were BAPTIZED INTO Christ. You see, Paul had not read the creed books of men and swallowed the devil’s doctrine of “faith only.” He was inspired of God and wrote what heaven revealed to him. Water baptism is the point at which one is united with Christ.

No one will be saved without being IN Christ (united with Christ) because that’s where salvation is, IN Christ (II Tim. 2:10). Are you willing to say that some will be saved without being IN Christ? This verse tells us WHEN we get INTO Christ. It is when we’re baptized. Read verse 26 and 27 together and we learn HOW we are children of God, it’s by FAITH (v.26) and then we’re told WHEN faith actually joins us with the Lord, in water BAPTISM (v.27). This does not mean baptism is more important than faith. We are not saved by baptism only. In all my life, I’ve never

heard anyone say that or even believe that. This verse simply points out that when sinners *believe* (have a living active faith), they *repent* of their sins, *confess* faith in Jesus and are joined as ONE with the Lord WHEN they are *baptized* INTO Him.

Only two verses tell us HOW and WHEN we get into Christ. It is in the act of water baptism (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27).

Ephesians 2:8-9, *“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.”*

Another beautiful text. It tells us of God’s love, his grace, the great bounty he bestows upon us. We do not deserve his favor. Cannot earn it. It is a gift. It does not come about through anything we have done on our own. Man has never devised a plan, nor can he, whereby God would owe us salvation. Salvation comes through the Lord’s sacrifice on the cross. Jesus tells us WHAT to DO to benefit from God’s grace. We *believe* him (have faith) and *do* (obey) what he says. This is summed up by simply saying “through faith.” Oh, by the way, nothing here about “faith only.”

II Thessalonians 2:10, *“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”*

Nothing here about faith or faith only. It tells of the tragic cause of why people don’t have saving faith. It’s because they don’t love the truth. They don’t love God’s word. They don’t believe Jesus meant what he said in Mark 16:16 when he made the announcement, *“He that BELIEVETH and is BAPTIZED shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* People that don’t love the truth explain it away. They seek to convince sinners that “faith only” is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort. They would have sinners do what the demons do, believe only (James 2:19). Tragic, tragic indeed.

II Thessalonians 2:12, *“That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”*

Same context as above. How sad

when people don’t love the truth. Those who love the truth will study it and rightly divide it (handle it correctly). Because people don’t love the truth, II Peter 3:16 tells us they will twist and distort the scriptures unto their own destruction.

I Timothy 4:10, *“For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.”*

Don’t see anything about faith only in this verse. The New Testament teaches that we are saved “by faith.” I don’t deny this. Never have. Salvation is by faith, BUT it is not by “faith only.” This, I do deny because the Bible does not teach it.

There is no one thing, by itself, that saves us. There are many things that save us. We are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8), faith (Rom. 5:1), confession (Rom. 10:10), repentance (Acts 2:38), baptism (I Peter 3:21), works (James 2:24), the blood of Jesus (Eph. 1:7), the church (Eph. 5:23), Christ (Acts 4:12). Many more things can be included. But no one of them by itself brings salvation. All of them work together.

II Timothy 3:15, *“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*

By reading and studying the scriptures, one is moved to have faith in what they say. Such knowledge makes us wise unto salvation. But if all we do is believe what they say, we will never be saved. One must ACT, perform, obey, comply, heed, follow, submit to what they say. Nothing here about salvation by “faith only.”

Titus 3:8, *“[This is] a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”*

Nothing about “faith only” in this passage. It shows that saving faith is NOT FAITH ONLY. Saving faith is one that is careful to maintain good works. That is, saving faith WORKS the works that God commands that we do. The works mentioned here are not the works that man invents and

believes is good. These works are the works God invented (designed). As a matter of fact, BELIEF itself is a WORK. If you are going to claim that sinners are not saved by any kind of works, then you’re going to have trouble with what Jesus said about faith in John 6:29. Jesus said that believing on him is the work God commands men to do. It is God’s work. Not man’s work. Yet it is the work God commands men to do. So, as the Bible teaches all along, we are saved by doing the works God commands that we do: believing, confessing, repenting, being baptized, living faithful unto the Lord. But none of these things man dreamed up. They are works of God. But, they are works that man must act upon — man must perform.

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WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS... READ THE INSTRUCTIONS

The Bible is not a book to place upon the shelf to look impressive. The Bible is the communication of the God of heaven to each and every man to guide him through this life that he might have life eternal.

The box comes with an item that says, "Assembly required." But, you are a man, you don't need any instructions to assemble something so simple. When you finish, you wonder why they packed so many different extra parts. Or did they? Perhaps you didn't get that far before you realize that something just isn't going right. The parts are not going together as they should.

Instructions to some people are a last resort. They are for people who can't figure things out for themselves. They are for everyone else. Instructions are only there if you get in trouble.

Isn't that how a lot of people treat God, Jesus and the Bible? When all else fails, then they turn to God. When something goes wrong, they turn to Jesus. When they can't think of anything else that might help, they read their Bible.

Our holy Father says, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (II Tim. 2:15). It is amazing how many difficulties can be avoided by reading the instructions first. Each part is for a particular purpose. Each part needs to be used in a particular order. When everything is put in order, in the right place, everything comes together and works the way it should.

Isn't that how our lives work? Each thing in our life has a purpose (see Eccl. 3:1-11). Without the instructions, it's hard to see how those parts fit together. Yet, with faith (which the instructions create, Rom. 10:17), all things fit together, everything comes together and works the way it should.

"*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matt. 6:33). In a past century, a reader complained to the editor of the *London Times* that sermons, and

reading the Bible, was an exercise in futility. For all the time that was spent in hearing and reading, little was remembered. The response was different than you expect from many editors (and sadly, even many preachers) today. The editor had been married for several decades. We will use thirty years for purposes of our illustration. In thirty years, his wife had prepared approximately three meals each day, for 365 days each year. Mathematically, that is 30 x 3 x 365 for a total of 32,850 meals. However, out of those 32,850 meals prepared and eaten over the years, very few of them could be remembered. The editor asked, "Does that mean that eating those meals was an exercise in futility?" What would have been the result had he not eaten the meals? Did they not provide him with the nutrition he needed even though he could not remember them? Did not the sermons and readings of the Word of God do the same for the soul?

One of the older ladies in Bible study one Sunday morning told this story from her childhood. A preacher was visiting their home and she told the preacher that reading her Bible did her precious little good since she could not remember well what she had read. Sitting on the porch was a basket they brought vegetables out of the garden in. It had sat in the wet dirt in the dew of the morning and was caked on the bottom with mud. The preacher asked her to take the basket to the pump and fill it with water from the well. She objected, pointing out that a basket does not hold water. He asked her to humor him. After a few minutes of pumping water into the basket, she came back to the porch where he was seated and proudly showed him that she was right. The basket did not hold any water. However, he asked her if the basket was any different. She noted that it no longer had the mud caked

to it and was clean. He then asked her a question, "Do you think that reading the Bible might be able to do the same thing with your mind? Even though it might not hold all that you read, your mind and thoughts might be considerably cleaner for the effort."

The Bible is not a coffee table book. It is not a decoration to make the living room look better. Neither is it a motel night stand book. It is not to be hid away in a drawer. Neither is it a library edition. It is not a book to place upon the shelf to look impressive. The Bible is the communication of the God of heaven to each and every man to guide him through this life that he might have life eternal.

Read, peruse and study your Bible every day. Take the fifteen minutes a day to read through your Bible in a year. Take a few more minutes to carefully note what it says in the context: 1) of the entire Bible, 2) of the dispensation it is in, 3) of the testament it is part of, 4) of the book to which it belongs, 5) the chapter where it is located, and 6) the paragraph and sentence which it composes. Then, meditate not only upon what it means, but upon how it applies to your life, and how it can be applied to your life.

"*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth [therein], he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed*" (James 1:22-25).

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YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT

Marvin L. Weir

We do not have the option of lighting our light one moment and then putting it out at the moment we are ridiculed or persecuted. Our light must shine brightly — shine forth for the Lord year in and year out!

The year 2008 is about to be closed out and the year 2009 will begin. It is traditional for people to gather together on New Year's Eve to have a good time and acknowledge the beginning of the New Year. Some suggest that this is the period of time where we close one chapter of our life and begin in another. I suppose that one can view the Old and New Year in such a manner, but there is something much more important to be considered. At some point in time, you and I will close out our life in this world and begin eternity! When this moment occurs, it will matter greatly whether or not we have faithfully served the Lord year in and year out. Let us make sure that we take the time to evaluate our lives in view of the coming Day of Judgment.

Am I concerned about sacred matters year in and year out? The Lord's church and proper worship is so important that God's inspired Word regulates both. The religion of the Bible is not something that one can successfully trifle with. The cost of Christianity and the Lord's church is indeed high. In order for the redemption of man to be possible, the Father gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16), and the Son willingly gave His life (Matt. 27:20; Rom. 5:8).

It is no wonder that Christ said, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The Savior paid a tremendous price for being the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29) and the "good shepherd" (John 10:11). His precious blood was shed to purchase His church (Acts 20:28).

Never forget that it was not your blood or my blood that purchased the church! Such being the case, all authority belongs to Christ as the head and savior of the body (Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23). Those who desire to go to Heaven will respect what God has said regarding the proper worship of the church. We must be concerned about sacred mat-

ters year in and year out. The Lord was and is.

Am I committed to worshipping and serving the Lord year in and year out? Some things in this life are hit or miss, on again, off again, or seasonal or periodic. Normally, however, we are more committed to those things that are near and dear to our hearts. Can we truly say that worshipping and serving the Lord is something that we are determined to do year in and year out?

Spasmodic or half-hearted allegiance is in vain and is detested by the Lord. To the church at Laodicea He said, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16). After one's conversion, he must continue to faithfully walk in the light of God's Word (I John 1:7).

Allegiance to the Lord and His cause is second by second, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year. There are no vacations when one is enrolled in service to the King. May we remember that our sights are set on things above (Col. 3:2) and on a "city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10)?

Am I concerned about being the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" year in and year out (Matt. 5:13-16)? Some members of the Lord's church do good for a while, as they seem to be concerned about their influence and being a good example. But then something happens, and perhaps at least part of the credit goes to a most formidable foe, Satan (I Peter 5:8). Members of the body either forget or do not care that their light is not to be hidden or covered up. God would have our light to always shine like a beacon so that all can see, and so that He might be glo-

rified. We do not have the option of lighting our light one moment and then putting it out at the moment we are ridiculed or persecuted. Study carefully Matthew 5:13-16! If the salt ever loses its savor (flavor and preserving power) it is "good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13). Our light must shine brightly — shine forth for the Lord year in and year out!

Am I committed to loving lost souls year in and year out? Man-made denominations are more than confused when it comes to the subject of love. Many advocate love without obedience but such love is not the love that God demands. The writer of Hebrews proves such in saying, "though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9).

One cannot love God who does not keep (obey) His commandments (John 14:15). One cannot be saved without obeying the Gospel (II Thess. 1:8). It is not a gospel or my gospel but the Gospel that saves (Gal. 1:6-9; Rom. 1:16). If we are committed to saving lost souls, we will always speak the truth as only the truth can free one from the bondage of sin (John 8:32).

Faithfulness to God is required year in and year out!

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MAN'S LOVE FOR GOD

God is love and he desires that we love him (I John 4:8; Matt. 22:37). Jesus said, “If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love” (John 15:10). Jesus also said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings” (John 14:23-24).

It is easy to claim we love God, but our actions may show our claim to be false. John wrote, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (I John 3:18). Our deeds will show if we truly love God. If we truly love God we will study to know his will for us and then obey it. He tells us that we can understand his will. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

When we truly love God's word we will not try to change it to match our own will. Jesus said, “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my

Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

The apostles were commanded, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). These words are easily understood, yet we hear people say, “I believe in salvation by grace alone” or others says, “I believe in salvation by faith alone.” Yet, these people claim to love God and his word. How can one say he loves God when he refuses to obey his word? Hear Jesus, “For laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the traditions of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandments of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mark 7:8-9).

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Can It Be Right?...

(Continued from page 89)

destruction of the flesh come to his senses (as the lost son did, Luke 15:17), repent of and confess his wrong, we would with great rejoicing receive him with open arms. What a great day that would be! Through the years there have been many fallen saints who have been properly delivered to the devil by a faithful congregation, and in the course of time those fallen saints have repented and come home.

Each sinful situation has to be considered individually. There is a need to try and restore the ones overtaken in a fault (Gal. 6:1,2), to convert or turn back those members of the church that are willfully living in sin (James 5:19,20), and to warn the unruly (I Thess. 5:14). The Lord even said of a woman that had led others into error, “And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not” (Rev. 2:21). Obviously, in her case, this woman needed to be granted time in order to give her an opportunity to get herself straightened out. Yes, there are some situations that do demand ongoing instruction, gentle pleading, and longsuffering. Even in such cases,

though, when a person defiantly remains in sin despite our sincere efforts to help them make the necessary correction(s), there comes a time when the leaders of a local church must take the action that the Lord prescribes: lead the church in refusing to have company with the sinning member.

On the other hand, there are times when the sin is of such a nature that the church needs to deal with it quickly and clearly. The matter with the fornicating brother in Corinth was such an example, and so was the one of the two brothers (Hymenaeus and Alexander) about whom Paul wrote to Timothy (I Tim. 1:20). They needed to learn not to blaspheme, and they needed to learn that pronto, so Paul said that he had delivered them to Satan.

If God commands us to take the step of delivering a brother or sister to the devil for the destruction of the flesh, but we somehow convince ourselves that that is not really the best course of action, so we refuse to do it, what do you suppose the Lord thinks about our failure to obey Him? Here is what the Master said: “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)? If someone were to suggest that we should stop partaking of the Lord's supper, what

would be your reaction? I am confident that we would all in unison say something like, “We've got to partake of the Lord's supper — the Lord commands it.” Or, what if someone were to propose that we stop baptizing people? What would be your response to that? Again, I am convinced we would all make it clear: “We can't stop baptizing people — the Lord told us to do it.” And, we would be right again.

Why is it, then, brothers and sisters, that in some cases congregations keep on having company with members that willfully remain in sin and have no intention of changing? Among other things, God commands us to (1) partake of the Lord's supper, (2) baptize people, and (3) deliver ungodly members of the church to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. How can we justify the decision to comply with the first two commands, but disregard and reject the third, which is just as much a decree of the Almighty as the other two are?! This is not a trivial matter.

Let us love our brothers and sisters in the same fashion that the Lord does. He said, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” (Rev. 3:19).

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CANCER

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This is a word we all dread. The diagnoses of cancer in ourselves or a loved one is a devastating and fearful thing. Cancer in most cases if found early can be eradicated from our body and we can live a normal life. However, if not found early it can permeate our physical being and cause much pain, suffering and even death. Not only does it affect those who are diagnosed with it, but it affects our family and friends as well. We all have had family or friends that have had to face this terrible disease. We've seen the hurt it causes in so many ways.

Sin is very much like cancer to both a Christian and non-Christian. But in this short article, we're addressing our thoughts to those who are Christians. If diagnosed early and eradicated from one's life, a Christian can continue to have the hope of eternal life with God and Christ in heaven. However, if it's allowed to grow instead of being removed, we face eternal death. *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Rom. 6:23).

The word canker (II Tim. 2:17) indicates something that unless removed will continue to eat away. Sin operates in much the same way, if we do not remove it, it will continue to eat away at our lives and we will end up succumbing to it. We may think we are happy, faithful, Christians, but if we let sin remain, we have allowed the cancer of sin to permeate our life and it will lead to eternal death. We have to remove this disease of sin from our lives if we expect to receive life eternal in heaven.

The apostle John gives instructions on how to remove the cancer of sin. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us"* (I John 1:9-10). He goes on to say: *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"* (I John 2:1-4). We can plainly see the harm done in the life of one that does not remove sin by repentance and prayer.

We also need to consider the damage and hurt to one's family. The influence our sin can have on our loved ones can cause them to fall away and be lost as well as ourselves. *"And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea"* (Mark 9:42). To "offend" is to cause them to sin. This was so important that the words of Jesus are recorded three times regarding this subject (Matt. 18:2; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2).

What is the affect of sin on the church? We have seen how a church can gradually slip away from the old paths and sink into false teaching. How does this happen? We allow just one little scrap of false teaching to get a very small hold and it will grow into other false teachings and soon you are off the path that leads to heaven. I cannot recall a church going off all at once. It usually is a little false teaching at a time. Just a small false teaching is like a cancer. If allowed to go unchecked, it will eventually kill the whole body.

Jude tells us to *"earnestly contend for the faith"* (Jude 3). To earnestly contend is to stand fast in the teaching of Christ and his apostles. We must not vary to the right hand or the left.

We must defend the Gospel. The sanctity of the church depends on its members clinging to the word of God and not letting the cancer of false teaching go unchecked. Sadly, today, we have seen many congregations fall into this category of sin. Why does this happen? Because we as members have allowed the cancer of sin to permeate our lives and have not studied to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (II Tim. 2:15). It is possible to contend for the faith and the congregation will still not heed the warnings. In that case, save yourself and move to a faithful congregation.

It is a sad thing to see a family member or friend suffer and die from cancer. However, it is a much sadder thing to see a fellow Christian or even a congregation succumb to the cancer of sin. Physical cancer can kill our body but it cannot condemn us to hell. But sin, spiritual cancer, will condemn us to hell if allowed to go unchecked. *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Matt. 10:28).

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