

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11.

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Special Issue

"AN UNCHANGING KINGDOM IN A CHANGING WORLD"

MAN'S UNCHANGING NEED

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This is a changing world. One-fourth of all the people who ever lived are alive today. With every pulse-beat the population of the world increases by one. Ninety percent of all the scientists who ever lived are alive now, and creating change is the work of scientists. Time does not wait for anybody. It leaves behind those who do not keep step. Styles, political ideas, and scientific theories are subject to change. Religious denominations revise their creeds. We are in the age of the atom, jet engine, space travel, mass communication, and medicines so new and powerful that they are often called miracle drugs.

All changes are not evil or destructive. Some things need changing. Many modern discoveries and scientific accomplishments are a blessing to all mankind. They enable man to live a better life, accomplish more, alleviate suffering and prolong life itself.

But the exercise of human wisdom can be dangerous. The amazing accomplishments of man within the past few decades (based upon the cumulative knowledge of all men of all ages) have caused some to conclude that man has changed, and that he has modern answers to life's most perplexing questions and scientific solutions to all problems. They should remember that while men were walking on the moon they had the same basic needs which they had on earth. What was unavailable there had to be supplied from earth — man's God-given home.

Let us approach this subject, and establish truth according to the scriptures, by asking and answering some simple questions:

HAS MAN CHANGED?

No, not really. Men have the same desires and dislikes, virtues and vices, strength and weakness, sin and righteousness in all ages. Our needs are unchangeable. We need so little — and for such a short time! Our Creator knows us — and our need. You may study men of all ages from both secular and sacred history and you will find the same basic characteristics in all. The man in the spaceship is the same man who followed the ox cart.

WHAT DOES MAN NEED?

From a temporal or physical consideration, he needs food, clothing, shelter, love, companionship, a sense of responsibility and a goal. This has always been true. But man has a need far greater than the material and transitory things of earth. He needs salvation, spiritual guidance, a clear conscience, and a right relationship with God. It is to this need that we now address ourselves in this study, for this is the area in which many people feel that there must be constant change and revolution.

HAS GOD CHANGED?

No. He is still omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. The God whom we now serve is the one who talked with Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and now speaks to us through His son Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1,2). "For I am the Lord, I change not" (Mai. 3:6).

HAS SATAN CHANGED?

No. He works the same as always. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). John also says of him, "...he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth..." (John 8:44). The apostle Paul spans all time from Christianity to Eden when he warns, "But I fear,

lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; (2 Cor. 11:3). Peter warns us in these words, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

HAS SIN CHANGED?

The Bible defines sin as a transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). Every sinful person from Adam until now has sinned in the same manner — by transgressing the law of God applicable to him. Paul described the general nature and practice of mankind by saying, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). God has changed His laws from time to time as he desired (Heb. 7:12), but all men have been under law from God and have sinned when they were disrespectful and disobedient.

HAVE THE AVENUES OF SIN AND TEMPTATION CHANGED?

No. Man is tempted and transgresses the law of God through one or more of three avenues, the lust of the eye, lust of the flesh, or the pride of life. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eye), and a tree to be desired to make one wise (pride of life), she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6). There you have it. The devil tempted Jesus through the same avenues by commanding that he turn stones into bread (lust of the flesh), deliver himself from the pinnacle of the temple (pride of life), and by showing him the world (lust of the eye) (Matt. 4:1-10). John shows that this is true for all time when he says, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16).

HAS THE GOSPEL CHANGED?

If man has not changed, and his spiritual disease and its source have not changed, why change the remedy? Since "that which is perfect" has come, we need not look farther. The gospel is still God's power to save just as it was on Pentecost and since that time (Rom. 1:16), and it will save every man and woman on earth who will obey it (Heb. 5:8,9). As was true "at the beginning" on Pentecost (Acts 11:15), all who will believe in Jesus, repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins, will be saved and added by the Lord to his church (Acts 2:36-47). All such will be saved through the power of the incorruptible seed which "liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:22,23).

Let us not be in a continual search for something new, as were the Athenians. Rather, let us trust Him who has supplied our every need for life and salvation both now and forever. He who knows the end from the beginning (Acts 15:18) can perfect a plan of salvation for all men for all time to come. The blood of Christ still saves (1 John 1:7); it is applied the same way (Rom. 6:3,4); eternal life is a gift (Rom. 6:23) upon conditions that please Him (Rom. 9:19-24); the church, the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22,23), is the saved of the earth and is

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fulfilling its divinely-authorized mission of preaching the gospel, edifying itself and caring for its needy. Thank God that this is so!

DOES GOD KNOW OF MANS UNCHANGING NEED?

Yes, our Creator is conscious of all our needs and has supplied them. Of our temporal need, Jesus said, "...your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matt. 6:32). John 3:16 proves that He understands and has supplied our spiritual need.

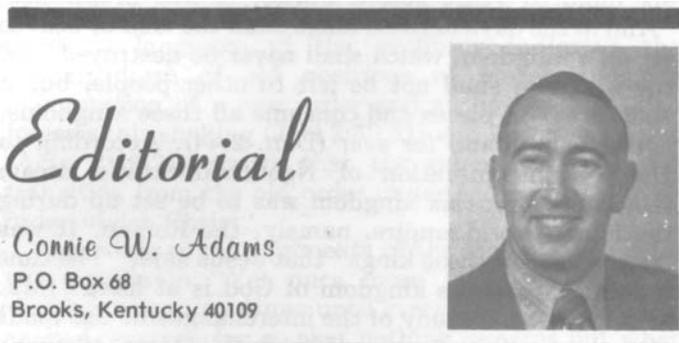
Christ called attention to the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field. As He cares for the birds, He will care for us — His children by adoption and grace. By considering the fields, we see that he provides our actual needs by flocks and herds and harvests. He has clothed the earth with beauty; mountain and valley, sunlit seas, waving woods and gleaming rivers bear witness to the goodness of the Lord.

He knows our need; He bids us ask for our daily bread; He listens when we pray. Christians must "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" — that

kingdom which is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). That must be the first and paramount object of the Christian's hope and earnest effort; the glad submission of his whole heart — with all its fears and hopes, joys and sorrows, desires and thoughts — to the heavenly King who would make that heart His dwelling-place, reigning there with undivided sovereignty. Seek that first, above all things else; above riches, honor, comfort, ease, even those who are nearest and dearest. Be not over-anxious for the morrow. Do not allow the day to be darkened, and its work marred, by gloomy forebodings of possible troubles in the future. Do your duty, and then leave the future in the hands of Him to whom alone the future is known. The present is yours; the future is God's.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccles. 12:13). "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8).

His demands are as unchanging as is our need!



A CHANGING WORLD

Ours is a world of change. The progress of civilization has relegated to the background many ideas and items once held in great respect. Man is learning so much about the world and the universe that it is said that more has been learned in the last generation than in all time before that. A textbook on science is scarcely off the press before something in it is outdated. The electric light, the telephone, radio, television, combustion engines, jet engines, travel through the skyways — these are but a few of the wonders we have come to accept daily. We have lived to see men walk on the moon, not once, but several times. Technological advances have placed at our fingertips conveniences and gadgetry which have revolutionized our lives.

But all of the changes have not been for good. At best we have advanced at a frightful price. Industrial out-put has polluted the air we breath, defiled our rivers and devastated our landscape. The splitting of the atom holds prospects of great advancement for the good of humanity, but its advent wrought a nightmare of death and destruction as a military weapon. Now the world is caught in an arms race as one nation after another flexes its muscle at the world by its own nuclear blast. The balance of power is precarious.

POLITICAL CHANGES

The centers of empire have shifted. The oriental empires of the fertile crescent, whose operations touched the lives of the nation of Israel and embedded the names of some of its rulers on the sacred pages of Old Testament history, have gone. Assyria, then Babylon, then Persia ruled, and Israel had to adjust to changing masters. In 333 B.C., Alexander the Great defeated Darius 111 at the battle of Issus and two years later pierced the heart of the Persian Empire in his campaign against Arbela. From then on the center of empire shifted to the west and relegated the glory of the eastern kingdoms to the history department. Then it was Rome which arose upon the fragments of Alexander's empire to rule for several hundred years in what must have seemed an endless era. But Rome fell beneath the weight of its own corruption in government and throughout the fabric of its society. The world has seen first one ruler and then another prance across the stage of human history, preening himself on the glory of territorial conquest and each thinking his domain would prove invulnerable. We have had Charlemagne, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler; these, and many others. Now they are gone.

Today the British Empire is gradually falling apart. Uneasy truces have made strange partners in governments ideologically opposed to each other. Our own republic will soon be 200 years old. That is longer than many governments have lasted. Yet our own system is groaning with almost daily revelations of crime in high places. Confidence of the people in those who rule us is at a very low ebb. Can a people be expected to rise above the moral strength of her own rulers? The God of all the earth has a way of bringing down corrupted governments and nations. Rulers and their subjects would do well to ponder the statement of Daniel when he reviewed the rise and fall of Nebuchadnezzar. Once he feared God and was exalted. But "when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne" (Dan. 5:20). This was done "till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will" (Dan. 5:21).

MORAL CHANGES

As people lost faith in God, they abandoned his word as a standard of conduct. No people can rise higher than the standard which they respect. Chief among sinners in the moral corruption of humanity has been the acceptance of the hypothesis of organic evolution. Man has been viewed, not as a creature just a little lower than angels, and fashioned in the image of God, but the product of a long climb out of the swamp. His ancestors are said to be apes and tadpoles. If he is not the product of God's creative art, but has survived through the law of the jungle, then he owes God nothing, is here for only a little while with no good reason and has no hope in the world to come. If he is descended from the brute he might as well live up to his expectation! It does not take a Solomon to see that we are facing a moral crisis. This will continue until people are convinced that "the way of man is not in himself,

for it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23).

RELIGIOUS CHANGES

The inception of German rationalism into the mainstream of theological thought worked a revolution in religion as pronounced as the shift of empire from east to west was politically. The Bible was no longer viewed as the infallible, verbally inspired word of God. When the Doctors of Divinity finished dissecting the word of God, those who accepted their verdict were left with very little to believe. The seminaries became staffed with instructors whose minds were filled with these ideas and who taught them with evangelistic fervor. Gradually these views filtered down to the people in the pew. Many have had a startling awakening and do not like what they see, and with good reason. One man voiced this sentiment well when he asked this writer "What has happened to the churches, have they gone crazy?" Preachers may be found to advocate almost any cause, however bizarre. Premarital sex, trial marriages, homosexuality, wife-swapping and you name it, have their advocates among the "clergy."

One denominational church member after another has lamented to this writer that they are not hearing the Bible anymore and that they are sick of sermons on social causes and politics. Religious news today is really a spectacle. One preacher makes the papers for his interpretative ballet instead of a sermon, another for dancing in the aisles with a young girl to the beat of a rock group. Recently the students at a mid-western seminary (with 690 students preparing for a life of church work) boycotted classes and closed down the school in protest against the president who held that the Old Testament is factual and not just a myth. The World Council of Churches recently voted to spend \$100,000 to help Portugese draft dodgers and deserters. Had enough?

In the midst of all the turbulence, it desperately needs to be said that there are some certainties, some unchanging things in this world of change. We are trying to say that to you in this special issue of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES*. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom...And thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail" (Heb. 1:8-12). "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:24-25). Amid the turmoil of an ever changing world, we want you to know there are some eternal verities which change not. For those who will listen, above the clamor and clatter of this changing world, may yet be heard the unchanging invitation of the unchanging Christ — "Come

unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28). For this reason we bring you this special issue on **AN UNCHANGING KINGDOM IN A CHANGING WORLD**.

**THE
INDESTRUCTIBLE
KINGDOM**

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It is gratifying to find in the midst of a world that is shaking, crumbling, and falling apart, something that is everlasting, unshakable, and secure — an unchanging kingdom in a changing world.

That there is an indestructible kingdom is not without overwhelming and conclusive evidence. About six hundred years before Christ, it was prophesied: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever (Dan. 2:44). According to Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2:31-45), this kingdom was to be set up during the fourth world empire, namely, the Roman. It was "in the days of these kings" that Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk. 1:15). A further study of the interchangeable use made of the terms "kingdom" and "church" (Matt. 16:18-20; Col. 1:13,18; Heb. 12:23,28) shows this kingdom to be the church which was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, a record of which we find in Acts 2. This is corroborated by Paul's statement to the effect that the church is not an accident, afterthought, or substitution, but rather "according to the eternal purpose" of God (Eph. 3:10,11). It is the same thing God had in mind from eternity, whether it be called "kingdom," "church," or some other divine appellation.

A further study of Mk. 9:1; Acts 1:8, and Acts 2:1-4 shows that this kingdom came "with power" before any of the apostles, except Judas, "tasted death," and that it came simultaneously with their baptismal reception of the Holy Spirit. The setting up of this indestructible kingdom is, therefore, not a matter of future event. It is here! Paul, together with the Colossians, were in it (Col. 1:13). The Hebrew Christians had received it (Heb. 12:28), and John, along with those of the seven churches of Asia, were in it (Rev. 1:9). Furthermore, Paul taught the Corinthians that Christ was king then and would continue his reign till all things are subdued unto him (1 Cor. 15:22-28).

The indestructible nature of this kingdom was not only prophesied by Daniel, but was also solemnly

affirmed by the Hebrew writer: "And this WORD, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptable with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:27,28). The "word" in the above reference is the prophecy of Hag. 2:6,7: "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."

When the second Temple was built under Zerubabel, some of the elderly men who had beheld the glory of Solomon's Temple wept at its inferiority (Ezra 3:12). God sent Haggai to comfort them with the promise that the latter shall surpass the former in glory by reason of the presence of "the desire of all nations." The "desire of all nations" was the Messiah. Hence, Haggai's prophecy definitely relates to the new order under Christ. However, associated with the coming of the Christ, there was to be a mighty shaking by the same voice that shook the earth at Sinai (Heb. 12:26). The symbolic language of the prophecy indicates the casting down of old positions of power and the inauguration of a new order and authority. Joel also foresaw this shaking (Joel 2:30,31) and Peter's use of it (Acts 2:16-21) shows that the reference is to the transition from the old order under Moses to the new order under Christ.

According to the comments of the Hebrew writer on the expression "Yet once more" (Heb. 12:27) the shaking was to continue until every thing that can be shaken ceases to be; so that nothing remains but what is eternal. It is in the midst of this setting that the Hebrew writer affirms that we have received "a kingdom which cannot be moved" (Heb. 12:28). This kingdom which was set up on Pentecost (Acts 2) continues in a world that is shaking. Everything temporal serves its purpose and then yields to the shaking power of the Almighty God. Temporal kingdoms rise and fall, false religions come and go, philosophies of men are soon terminated, but the kingdom of our Lord "stands forever."

This does not necessitate the visible succession of the church through all the years since Pentecost (Acts 2). Efforts to prove such by Matt. 16:18 "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," fail of their objective. The word "hell" or "hades" (A.S.V.) means the intermediate state of the dead, both good and evil, between death and the judgment. When Jesus died his spirit entered "hades," but did not remain by reason of his resurrection (Acts 2:31). It was not "hades" nor "demons" thereof, but rather the "GATES of hades" which "shall not prevail against it." Since DEATH is the only gate or entrance into "hades," I conclude that Jesus was simply teaching that his death would not keep him from building his church. His triumphant resurrection and the subsequent establishment of the church (Acts 2) vindicates his claim.

The perpetuity of the church inheres in the indestructible seed of the kingdom, which is the word of God (Lk. 8:11). While the church may visibly disappear from the earth — be lost in apostasy — it, nevertheless, continues to exist in the seed. God's immutable law of procreation, namely, that all seeds bring forth after their kind (Gen. 1:11,12) finds no exception in the spiritual realm (Lk. 8:5-15). When and wherever the PURE "word" is sown into "honest and good" hearts, the kingdom is made visible and perpetuated on earth. The kingdom, however, is always here — inherent in the "word of God which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1:23). Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Herein lies our assurance of the indestructible kingdom today.

Ours is a shaking world. This is a time of uncertainty and doubt. The political world is rocking. Society is crumbling under the pressure of immorality, promiscuity, and the acceptance of things not formerly tolerated in a decent society. Theological and ecclesiastical systems are being "weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." THANKS BE UNTO GOD! IN THE MIDST OF ALL THIS DISINTEGRATION, THERE IS SECURITY THAT PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING. There is a kingdom that changes not! Even when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10), the kingdom of our Lord shall stand. "It shall never be destroyed"! "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28).

TEMPORARY THINGS in the NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

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"...And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31). The context of the above passage "sets the stage" for the thoughts in this lesson. Although the nature of the kingdom was and is unchangeable, some of the means of establishing it were temporary. Also, some of the customs that were binding then, though the principles still remain, are not binding on us. First, along this line, we will discuss:

APOSTLES

The word "Apostle" means "one sent forth." Christ chose twelve such men who were constantly with him during his personal ministry. Christ chose them for the purpose of sending them forth as "ambassadors" to carry his message to a lost and dying world (2 Cor. 5:20). An "ambassador" is one who is sent in behalf of

another to carry his message. In this instance, they were to be witnesses for Christ (Acts 1:8), and they were to carry the message of salvation, which is in Christ, to the world (Mark 16:15-16).

Although we are to carry the message today (2 Tim. 2:2), we are not "hand-picked" messengers receiving "the word" directly from Christ and the Holy Spirit as they were (John 16:13; Mt. 10:19-20). Now, we must "study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Thus, when they delivered the message they were sent to deliver, their work was completed and the need for Apostles ceased.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

There are nine spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12. These spiritual gifts also had a purpose. Christ points out the purpose in Mark 16:20 when he said, "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and CONFIRMING THE WORD with signs following."

We need to recognize that during the days when the Apostles preached, they could not turn to the New Testament and confirm what they were saying as God's Word; for the words they were speaking WERE (and are) the New Testament. There was no written word to which they could turn and say, "yes, God said this — here it is in black and white." Miraculous gifts were afforded them to CONFIRM that what they were saying was from God. Now if we had no scripture to tell us that these gifts had ceased, since the spiritual gifts were to confirm the word, common sense would tell us that when the PURPOSE for the gifts had been fully realized (the word had been confirmed, Heb. 2:1-4), then the gifts would cease. However, 1 Corinthians 13 tells us that the people in the days of the Apostles knew in part, but when the perfect (complete) was come, the part (prophecy, tongues, etc.) would be done away. James says the complete or perfect revelation has been revealed (Jas. 1:25); and Paul said even an angel from heaven could not add anything to it (Gal. 1:6-9). Thus, the temporary (gifts) have ceased.

Also, the Holy Spirit was given to people in the apostolic days only by the laying on of the Apostles' hands. For although Philip could perform miracles, two Apostles had to come from Jerusalem to lay hands on the "believers" that they might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-19). Thus, when the last Apostle died and those who had had the Apostles hands laid on them died, the MEANS of receiving the Holy Spirit to perform miracles passed.

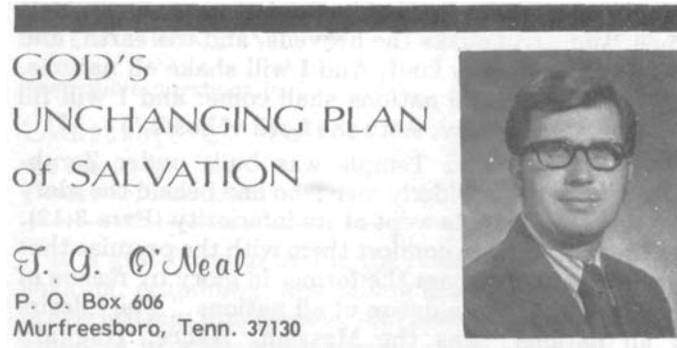
CUSTOMS

Holy Kiss; This was, and still is, a custom in the eastern countries. We in the United States greet each other with a hand shake today. This command of Paul's in Romans 16:16 is simply suggestive of an attitude that Christians are to have one for another.

FEET WASHING is another custom found in the eastern countries because of the fact that most people walk where they are going. Also, they wear sandals and in those very hot, dusty countries, one's feet are very tired and dusty at the end of a journey. Thus, it is their

custom to wash their feet as a means of showing hospitality to their guests. The same principle of showing hospitality applies to us today.

There are, perhaps, other customs set forth in the Bible that are not binding per se on us today although the principle involved may be. However, these things do not change the nature or terms of entrance into Christ's unchangeable Kingdom.



The title of this article says God, not man, has a plan that does not change with time for the purpose of saving man from sin. Since man needs salvation, it is implied that man is lost. This the New Testament teaches (Mt. 26:28; Lk. 19:10; Rom. 3:23; 6:23). "All have sinned" and are separated from God (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Isa. 59:1-2).

Since man is lost and needs salvation, if ever there was a plan of redemption adequate to save man, that plan will accomplish in any age the salvation of man. If this is not so, the need has changed, the remedy has changed or both. Man has not changed since the first century even though he flies in a 747 instead of walking or riding a beast of burden. He is still a sinner and needs salvation. Since men were saved in the first century, the same scheme of redemption will save men today.

HEAVEN'S ANSWER

The words of Christ to the apostles concerning salvation were not his own, that is, they **did** not originate with him but **were the words of the Father** (John 17:8, 14, 17; 12:49).

Specifically, **before Christ ascended to heaven, he gave the terms upon which lost man could be saved. He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"** (Mt. 28:18-20). "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" (Mk. 16:15-16). "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk. 24:46-47). "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them,

and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:21-23).

Looking at the four gospel accounts of the terms of salvation, one learns that sins would be "remitted" or "retained" by the apostles as they "preached the gospel to every creature" and by the response people made to the preached gospel. If men "believed" the preaching, "repented" of their sins, would "be baptized" the results would be their sins "remitted" or men "saved." However, those who rejected the preached gospel and full and complete obedience to it, the result would be sins "retained", the end result being "damned." This plan of heaven when obeyed would result in sins "remitted" or their being "saved."

With the chart we summarize the words of Jesus as to what one must do in order to be saved.

| | PREACH | BELIEVE | REPENT | BAPTISM | SAVED |
|----------------|----------|-----------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Matt. 28:18-20 | Teach | | | Baptizing | |
| Mk. 16:15-16 | Preach | Believeth | | Baptized | Saved |
| Lk. 24:46-47 | Preached | | Repent | | Remission |
| John 20:21-23 | | | | | Remitted |

MAN'S QUESTION

Three times in the book of Acts in the New Testament, the question "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" is asked, though in different words (Acts 2:37; 9:6; 16:30). In the book of Acts one learns that man asked the question "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" and heaven records the answer with a number of illustrations of men and women from all walks of life obeying heaven's answer and being saved.

The question "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" implies several things. "What" implies there is something to do. "Must" indicates the "what" is essential, not optional. "I" suggests it is a personal response; none can be saved for others. "Do" tells there

is action or obedience. "Saved" informs one of the result of his action.

(1) RELIGIOUS JEWS were told as believers in Christ (Acts 2:37) to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

(2) SAMARIA had Christ preached unto them (Acts 8:5), and they believed and were baptized (Acts 8:12) with the result that they were saved (Mk. 16:15-16).

(3) SIMON who practiced WITCHCRAFT "believed also" the "preached Christ" and was "baptized" resulting in his salvation (Acts 8:5, 13; Mk. 16:16).

(4) THE QUEEN'S TREASURER of Ethiopia heard Phillip "preach unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). He "believed" that "Jesus is the Christ the Son of God" (Acts 8:37) and confessed this with his lips, upon which he was "baptized" (Acts 8:37-38). He was saved (Mk. 16:16).

(5) The good man, CORNELIUS (Acts 10:2), who was a MILITARY MAN (Acts 10:1) was told "words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14). Upon hearing these words, he believed (Acts 10:43), repented of sins (Acts 11:18), and was baptized in water for the remission of sins (Acts 10:47-48). Peter preached water baptism "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38; 10:47-48).

(6) A BUSINESS LADY, Lydia, "heard" the preaching of Paul and Silas and was baptized for the "remission of sins" (Acts 16,13-15).

(7) A JAILOR heard "the word of the Lord" spoken unto him, he believed and "was baptized" and that at "the same hour of the night" (Acts 16:30-34).

(8) IDOL WORSHIPPERS (1 Cor. 6:9-11) in Corinth heard the gospel preached, "believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

(9) Saul of Tarsus, a PERSECUTOR of the Lord's church, heard the will of God, believed it, turned in repentance of sins, and was baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 9, 22, 26; 22:16).

We summarize what these did with the chart:

| CASES OF CONVERSION | PREACH | HEAR | BELIEVE | REPENT | CONFESS | BAPTIZE | SAVED |
|---------------------|----------|-------|----------|--------|---------|----------|--------------------|
| Jews - Acts 2 | 2:14 | 2:37 | 2:36 | 2:38 | | 2:38 | 2:21,38 |
| Samaritans - Acts 8 | 8:5 | 8:6 | 8:12 | | | 8:12 | |
| Simon - Acts 8 | 8:5 | | 8:13 | | | 8:13 | |
| Treasurer - Acts 8 | 8:35 | | 8:37 | | 8:37 | 8:38 | |
| Cornelius - Acts 10 | 10:34 | 10:33 | 10:43 | 11:18 | | 10:47-48 | 11:14 |
| Lydia - Acts 16 | 16:14 | 16:14 | | | | 16:15 | |
| Jailor - Acts 16 | 16:32 | | 16:31,32 | 16:33 | | 16:33 | |
| Corinth - Acts 18 | 18:4 | 18:8 | 18:8 | | | 18:8 | 1 Cor. 15:2 |
| Saul - Acts 9,22,26 | 22:22-13 | | | | | 22:16 | 22:16 |
| SUMMARY | PREACH | HEAR | BELIEVE | REPENT | CONFESS | BAPTIZED | SAVED REMISSION |

WHY VARIATION?

Often the question is asked, "Why are there different answers given to the same question of 'What Must I Do To Be Saved?'" One going from New York to San Francisco could ask "How far is it to San Francisco?" along the way and receive different answers. Yet, the answers would all be correct, but they would be answered in relation to where one would be from San Francisco when the question was asked.

Unbelievers were first told to believe in Christ. Believers did not need to believe, they needed next to repent. Those who had believed, repented of sins and confessed faith in Christ needed only to "be baptized for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), if men today will do what men did in the book of Acts, God will save them just as he did those whose conversions are recorded in the fifth book of the New Testament.

THE UNCHANGED ORGANIZATION

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"Whenever individuals unite for any purpose whatever, commercial, industrial, political, social, educational, benevolent or religious, there must be some kind of organization and government. There must be some basis of operation and co-operation, official superintendency and administration, and co-operation in execution, in order to the accomplishment of the object sought" (Church Polity, p. 12).

The New Testament supplies an organization through which citizens of the kingdom are to do the work of the church. It is simple but most efficient. The structure is unchanging — being designed by the wisdom of God, set-up by Jesus Christ, and revealed by the Holy Spirit. The organization of which we speak is the local church. Unless the Bible has changed, the organization is the same as it was in the first century.

In this short treatise we will deal with our subject under three headings: (1) the unchanged nature of the organization, (2) the unchanged relationship of the organization, and (3) the unchanged offices of the organization.

THE UNCHANGED NATURE

The nature of the organization in the New Testament is local or congregational. Paul wrote, "Unto the church of God at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2). Luke records, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers" (Acts 13:1). Phebe was a servant of the church which was at Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1). When Paul returned on his first missionary journey he ordained elders in every church (Acts 14:23). To the Philippians Paul wrote, "...to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons (Phil. 1:1). More passages could be offered to show the kind of organization that is set forth in the New Testament, but these will suffice presently.

Conspicuously absent is any kind of federation or organic union that tied the churches together. There were no associations like the Baptists use, nor conferences like the Baptists use, nor conferences like the Methodists employ, nor synods like the Lutherans and Presbyterians have. Neither was there any sort of hierarchy that resembles the Catholic church. Church government was congregational, each congregation functioning independently of one another under Jesus Christ.

The local church is the largest and the smallest organization that one can read about in the word of God to do the work of the church. For this very reason all

other organizations are excluded through which the church may function. This specified organization excludes all others. Just as gopher wood excluded all other kinds of wood in building the ark, in like-manner the one specified organization excludes all other organizations. This is why societies, set up to do the church's work, such as missionary, benevolent, and edification societies, are wrong. They are not in the Bible. The same thing could be said of the ladies aid society and the young people's society within the church. There is no authority for them. The Bible just mentions the local church with its bishops and deacons.

THE UNCHANGED RELATIONSHIP

New Testament churches were independent of one another, equal before God regardless of size, and each congregation was self-governing. Never was one church or churches ruled by another church or dominated by it. You do not read of the uniting of churches under one eldership to do a brotherhood work. No church acted as a brotherhood agency for all churches. Every church attended to its own business, running its own affairs. There was no organic combination of congregations for any purpose.

There is no *first* church in the Bible in the sense of superiority or preeminence. Whether it was the large church at Jerusalem or the church in Philemon's house, each stood equal before God. The mother church idea is human in concept and has no biblical basis whatsoever.

The Corinthian church decided on its own, without any outside interference, the matter of disciplining one of its members. Paul stated, "When ye are gathered together...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" (1 Cor. 5:4-5). The Jerusalem church had the prerogative as to whether it extended fellowship to Paul or not. They accepted him on the recommendation of Barnabas (Acts 9:26-28). Each of the churches of Asia Minor was made responsible for its own conduct (Rev. 2:2; 2:9; 2:19; 2:23). The Corinthian church chose its own messengers to carry the funds to the place of destination (1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:19). These scriptures show explicitly the rights and privileges of churches of Christ to run their own business.

Peter told elders to "tend the flock of God among you;" not all other flocks (1 Pet. 5:2). The Ephesian elders were told to take heed to the flock over the which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers (Acts 20:28). When elders take on a work larger than their own local work, they cease to be local elders and become brotherhood elders. They need to learn to confine their activities within the sphere God authorized — the local flock or church. The evil fruit of elders not respecting God's limitations nearly 2000 years ago is seen in the Roman Catholic church hierarchy. It seems man never learns from history.

THE UNCHANGED OFFICES

In the New Testament church there are only two offices — bishops and deacons (Phil. 1:1). The bishops are also referred to as elders (Acts 14:23), presbyters (1

Tim. 4:14), and pastors (Eph. 4:11). The inspired historian, Luke, uses bishops and elders interchangeably in the 20th chapter of Acts. In verse 17 Luke stated that Paul, from Miletus, called for the elders of the church at Ephesus. In verse 28 these same elders are addressed by Paul as "overseers." Some translations have "bishops" in the place of "overseers." Hence, Paul called the elders, "bishops." Elders and bishops are also used interchangeably in Tit. 1:5, 7.

Both Paul and Peter told the elders to "feed the flock" (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). The same word translated "feed" is rendered "pastor" in Eph. 4:11. It could be translated shepherd and convey the proper meaning. Elders were the pastors or shepherds and not the preachers. Nowhere in the word of God is a preacher or evangelist called a "pastor." Preachers had no oversight or charge of churches. Their authority is not to rule the church, but to preach the gospel (2 Tim. 4:1-2; Tit. 2:15).

Elders rule the local church under the authority of Jesus Christ. He is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23) and thereby determines the teaching and practice of the church. The Hebrew letter says to "Obey them that have the rule over you" (Heb. 13:17). 1 Tim. 5:17 states, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor." Although elders are to rule, they have no right to alter or change any of the divine precepts. Their duty is to see that the will of the Lord is executed in the congregation in which they are overseers. Their qualifications are plainly set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Tit. 1:5-9.

Deacons' responsibility is to take care of the material aspects of the congregation. In Acts, chapter 6, the Jerusalem church chose seven men to serve tables in relieving the destitute widows. While elders spend their time primarily seeing about the spiritual needs, deacons, serving under the elders, are involved in helping the destitute saints as well as other physical and temporal matters connected with the function of the church. Deacons' qualifications are given in 1 Tim. 3:8-13.

When additional offices are added to the government of the church or substitute offices supplant the Bible offices, then church organization is perverted. Churches that are ruled by the preacher, or a board of deacons, or committees, or a district bishop, etc., have changed God's design and order for the governing of His church.

CONCLUSION

Let us be content with the divine organization in the New Testament and make certain we do the church's work within the framework of this Bible organization. It is complete, sufficient, lacking nothing. God planned it and a perfect Bible reveals it. Dare anyone say we need something else?

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THE UNCHANGING WORK

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When one talks about the work of the church it is necessary to define certain terms. I mean by the work of the church, that segment of the Bible which tells us how the money collected on the first day of the week, is to be spent. Since some, even in the church, feel that every individual is doing the work of the church when he acts in his individual capacity it behooves one to clarify the issue.

Most churches of Christ, to my knowledge, collect money on the first day of the week, and since the early church did the same (1 Cor. 16:1-2), we must find out how inspired men authorized the spending of these funds. It must be observed, in the beginning that the collection on the first day of the week, in the above text was for benevolent purposes. However, we read in the Bible that churches also supported the preaching of the gospel. In 2 Cor. 11:8 Paul said, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service." One may read also where the church at Philippi supported Paul (Phil 4:15,16). Thus, the conclusion is inevitable; churches in Paul's day either had two treasuries—one for benevolence and the other for evangelism or they accomplished both works of the church out of ONE treasury. I doubt that many people would argue a two treasury system. This leads us to the firm conclusion that first Corinthians sixteen furnishes us with a Bible pattern of collecting money but not on spending it!

Thus far in our study we have found out from the Bible that the church has a scriptural way to raise its money. That is, each individual giving as he has been prospered on the first day of the week. Compare this to the modern schemes of some churches. It is a known fact that many churches raise money by pie suppers, rummage sales, etc. If God has not made known to us in the Bible how the church is to raise its money, it would be a matter to expedite under human judgment. However, when one reads that the early church raised money by each individual giving as he had been prospered this changes the picture. Since God has given us a pattern, we do not have the authority to raise money under human judgment.

It might be well to also mention that in the Bible, early Christians always sold possessions and gave to the church. There is no example of any individual giving real estate to the church (See Acts 4:34-37). We have also observed that this money may be spent for two things; benevolence for the poor saints and supporting preachers in the proclamation of the gospel.

Gentle reader, the work of the church has always been the same. This is one of the ways the church of our Lord stands unique in the religious world. Christians still believe in following the scriptures with reference to this important work. While many of our religious neighbors take money out of the treasury for all sorts of unscriptural practices, we must stay within the confines of the Bible. One only has to read the religious publications of churches today to see how they are using their money. Some spend money for gymnasiums and all kind of apparatus to build up the body. Others spend money for pleasure trips, taking both young and old on sight seeing tours. Am I opposed to sight seeing trips and gymnasiums? Certainly not, but friend these things are a function of the individual and not the church. The unchanging Book tells us that the work of the church is also unchanging.

Many things are not wrong within themselves but become wrong when purchased with money out of the church treasury. It is not my purpose in this article to say that providing entertainment for people is wrong. Neither am I saying that buying candy for children is wrong. But I am affirming that one does not have one vestige of authority for doing these things out of the church treasury. Some of the modern day "bus ministries" offer candy as a bribe to children in order to get them on their bus and thus build up their attendance. Such conduct is antagonistic to the very spirit of Christ. When one does this out of the church treasury, he is acting without the divine approbation of God.

Yes, man has changed but God and the work of his church has not. Like "Ole man river" it just keeps rolling along. Gentle friend, there is not a greater work in all the world than preaching the gospel to the lost. Jesus told his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Mk. 16:15-16). This gospel, which is God's dynamite to save (Rom. 1:16) has facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed and promises to be enjoyed (Acts 2:38-39).

THE
UNCHANGING
WORSHIP

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Some one has well said that the highest privilege of man is to think God's thoughts after Him. Man may walk on the surface of the moon but the plan of God is unchanged. All of the advancements of science that let man fly through the air with the wings of a bird and glide across the planet on ribbons of steel do not change the eternal purpose of the almighty. After all, Jesus was a space traveler almost two thousand years ago

when he was transfigured and rose from the disciples' sight.

The early church was not left to wander with aimless feet in regard to the gospel, organization, or the worship. The divine plan is ever present to the congregation that will take the time to find it in the sacred oracles. We are told in Acts 2:42 that the early church "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers". Attention is called to the expression "they continued steadfastly". This simply means the early church gave not only attention but great importance to these items of worship.

There is and has been two different ideas about Bible authority. One is, that men should speak where the Bible speaks but that a command forbidding an act is necessary. This position is denied by the worship of God. There is no command forbidding corn-bread on the communion table but to put it there would be sinful. The scriptural position values the silence of the scriptures, and thus we say "Speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent." This position allows no room to add to or take from the worship of God.

The items are very clear and simple.

1. The apostles' doctrine is simply the teaching of the apostles as found in the gospel.
2. The fellowship, things of common interest and benefit. These things belonged to all and they were to be shared by every member of the church.
3. The breaking of bread was the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. If there is any doubt of this see 1 Corinthians 11:24. The Lord's Supper is called the (a) "breaking of bread" (Acts 20:7), (b) "the communion" (1 Corinthians 10:16), (c) the "Lord's Supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20).
4. They continued in prayers, for under the law there was a set time to pray and great importance was attached to this act. Prayer is equally important under the new covenant. Prayer is always scriptural.

The early church existed for some time without a formal treasury. The disciples sold what they had and gave to the apostles that distribution could be made to all. See Acts 4:32,37. Instruction was given to the church at Corinth by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:1,2. It was that a contribution was to be made on the first day of the week. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." The church at Corinth was getting ready to make a gift to the poor saints in Jerusalem. We know that the early church paid wages, for Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 11:8 "I robbed other churches taking wages of them, to do you service." Wages involved money and the early church received instruction as to how and when it was to be collected.

SINGING

The church of the Lord does not use mechanical instruments in its worship, although this is not peculiar to the churches of Christ. There are nine scriptures that tell us what kind of music Christ will approve in His worship. They can be found in the New Testament in the following places: Matthew 26:30, 1 Corinthians 14:15, Ephesians 5:18, 19, Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 2:12, James 5:13, Revelation 14:3, Romans 15:9, and Acts 16:25. The simple explanation for this is that we live under a spiritual covenant and mechanical things regardless of what they are do not fit. It is true that at one time under the law of Moses and under a material covenant the greek word "psallo" meant to pluck the strings of an instrument, and this fitted the covenant under which it was found but now it means to pluck the strings of the heart. Paul tells us exactly this in Ephesians 5:19, "Speaking to yourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord". When we sing we pluck the strings of the heart and this is the instrument authorized by the New Testament.

PURPOSE OF WORSHIP

Remember the purpose of worship is to please God. If worship was to please the worshipper we would do those things that please us, but its purpose is not to please us but to please God. Men use instruments of music today, not because they can find its use in the New Testament but because it pleases them. This is not the object and purpose of true worship. When I debated Morris Butler Book in Orlando, Florida on the use of instrumental music in worship he asked, "How do you know God cares if I play on a mechanical instrument? He did not say you shall not." I answered with 1 Corinthians 2:10 "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." It was the work of the Holy Spirit therefore to reveal these things to man. This is the only way man can know what was in the mind of God. The Holy Spirit did not reveal the use of instrumental music save to make melody on the heart, therefore such was never in the mind of God. This is another way of saying what the Lord said in John 14:26 and in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit would guide the disciples into AIL truth. The Spirit would make a complete revelation and did so to the apostles and they in turn to us. See Ephesians 3:3,4.

The items of worship in the early church were therefore;

1. Singing
2. Apostles' Doctrine
3. Fellowship
4. Breaking of bread
5. Prayer

This is how the early church worshipped and how we ought to worship today. It is simple yet deep in its nature. Men may walk on the moon, and fly like a bird but the word of God does not change. It is incorruptible seed that abides forever. Peter puts it this way in 1 Peter 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever."

Indeed, the simple worship of the early church was and is one of the unchanging things in a changing world.

GOD'S UNCHANGING STANDARD of CONDUCT

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Can a book over 1900 years old be relevant for the twentieth century? Is Biblical morality out of date?

One's answers to these questions will hinge upon what he believes about God, the Bible and the nature of man.

If God is, and if the Bible is His message, and if man's nature has remained unchanged, then the Bible remains a relevant standard of conduct for today.

Though many things in this world have changed, man's nature, basic problems, and great questions have not changed. For this reason the word of God remains living and active (Heb. 4:12) in the first, twentieth, or one-hundredth century when and if that time comes. It addresses man as he is, provides solutions to his basic problems (guilt, fear, sin, despair, death, etc.), and answers his great questions (man's origin, purpose, and destiny).

That the nature of man, his problems and questions have remained constant through the centuries is reflected in the fact that his attempted solutions for these have not varied to any great extent.

Modern situation ethics and playboyism had their counterparts in ancient philosophies. Most of the people in Bible times devoted their lives to the satisfaction of physical desires and material wants. Carnal approaches to moral issues, then as now, were rooted in the absence of hope for the future. As Paul said, "If the dead rise not...let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:32).

Joseph Fletcher says in his book "Situation Ethics, The New Morality" that it is sometimes good to break the commands of God and in many circumstances it would be evil to keep His commands. He writes, "...every man must decide for himself...any act...even lying, premarital sex, abortion, adultery, and murder... could be right depending upon the circumstances."

Such teaching is not restricted to the writings of scholars like Fletcher or John A. T. Robinson or Rabbi Richard L. Rubenstein. It is prevalent in practically every level of communication.

For example, the moral stance of the Roman Catholic Church is purely situational. This religious body has accepted the teachings of the theologian Alphonsus Liguori as authoritative. He wrote:

"Notwithstanding, indeed, although it is not lawful to lie, or to feign what is not, however it is lawful to dissemble what is, or to cover up the truth with words, or other ambiguous and doubtful signs, for a just

cause...for a just cause it is lawful to use equivocation in the modes propounded and to confirm it (equivocation) with an oath." (Less.1,2, c. 41)

Think of the applications the above doctrine can have and no doubt have had in the court rooms and political offices of our nation!

In Vol. 3, p.258 of his writings, Liguori said, "If anyone on an occasion should steal only a moderate sum either from one or more, not intending to acquire any notable sum, neither to injure his neighbor to any great extent, by several thefts, he does not sin grievously, nor do those, taken together, constitute a mortal sin."

Lest one think that such teaching is not disseminated to the public, in "The Manuel of Christian Doctrine" a textbook for use in Catholic high schools, academies and colleges, we find theft condoned when there is: 1) Extreme necessity. 2) Secret compensation. The latter applies mostly to employees who feel that they are underpaid. According to this doctrine, the pilfering of so much money from the cash register is justifiable in such a situation.

The same immoral concepts are taught in some of the textbooks used in our public school systems. One such book reads, "There are exceptions to almost all moral laws, depending on the situation. Most children learn that it's wrong to lie. But later they may learn that it's tactless, if not actually wrong, not to lie under certain circumstances." (Inquiries In Sociology, Allyn and Bacon, 1972, p.37).

Even more insidious is the manner in which this philosophy is radiated from practically every direction. The beer commercial says: "You only go around once, so go around with gusto!" Popular novelists subtly suggest the futility of our existence and the message is conveyed, "Yield to temptation. It may not knock again." Rock songs shout, "If it feels good do it."

Our society has chosen a changeable moral standard over God's unchanging standard. But I feel that there are some pragmatic reasons for accepting Bible morality rather than some form of situationism or do-your-own-thingism.

1) In the language of youth, the so-called new morality is a cop-out. It claims to be a superior approach to moral decision making while actually it is but a convenient excuse for doing what one wants to do without the inconvenience of feeling guilty (ideally).

2) The new morality has failed. Any objective analysis of the moral scene should convince us that whatever most people have accepted in lieu of God's unchanging standard has not worked. One of the greatest illustrations of the failure of such approaches occurred in Russia after the 1917 Revolution.

Old standards of sexual conduct were swept aside. Abortion became legal and adultery, bigamy and incest were no longer considered crimes. As a result family life and society almost completely collapsed. Parentless children roamed the streets in hordes.

In the middle 1930's legislation was decreed making divorce difficult. Abortion was outlawed, and solid family units were encouraged by tax exemptions. The

Russians learned that dancing may be fun but the fellow who plays the tune must be paid. (The Great Sex Swindle, John W. Drakeford, Broadman Press, 1966, p. 78,79)

3) The "new morality" violates the law of love. While advocates of the philosophy claim that love is the only standard or norm, their ethics actually violate this standard itself. Fletcher says, "It's not wrong to commit adultery or fornication unless someone gets hurt." It's been observed that this is like saying it is not wrong to drive 90 miles per hour in a 15 miles per hour school zone unless someone gets hurt."

This one rule standard is like a football game with only one rule, fair play. Can you imagine the chaos if such a general rule for any sport were enacted? There could be no game without rules and there can be no order in our existence without adherence to God's unchanging standard of conduct. Man needs this standard to know HOW to obey the law of love. People may with "the best intentions" make messes of their own lives and the lives of others.

4) The "new morality" is based upon the false and naive premise that man will by nature do the loving and right thing toward others. Our observation and experience confirms the Bible view that man is inherently selfish and rebellious (Prov. 22:15; 1 Cor. 9:27; Rom. 3:10-18). People want freedom but they need control. Only then can they enjoy true freedom.

5) The "new morality" advocates consistently misrepresent God's unchanging standard of conduct. They would have people believe that the word of God teaches that the basic appetites and normal desires of men and women are sinful.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Bible does not teach that possession of things is wrong or that ambition is wrong or that fleshly appetites are wrong. It does teach that all these things are wonderful servants but tyrannical masters. The Christian must control these areas of his life and not allow any of them to control him.

The description of physical love in Solomon's Song 7:6-9 is quite erotic and explicit: "How fair and pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.. I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof; now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples; and the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved..."

But the same inspired volume says, "For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell." And later, "Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love" (Proverbs 5:3-5, 18, 19).

6) The "new morality" makes no provision for the spirit. Jesus has promised, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for

my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:25,26).

Joe Creason told in the Louisville Courier-Journal of a country boy from Indiana at a State track meet. He didn't have a starting block like most of the others. One of the directors asked him if he was going to dig a toe hold. "No sir", he replied, "I ain't gonna be here that long."

As Abraham of old, we're not going to be here long enough to dig a toe hold either. We look for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10). Therefore let us hold to God's unchanging hand and adhere to His unchanging standard of life.

THE SIN of CHANGING the UNCHANGEABLE

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Since brother Adams asked me to write an article on the above subject, I have given considerable thought to three or four approaches to the subject and have finally decided upon the one which is presented here.

WHAT IS SIN?

Sin is defined in the Bible as the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). It is knowing to do good and not doing it (James 4:17). It is all unrighteousness (1 John 5:17). It is acting without conviction, or conduct in doubt as regards right and wrong (Romans 14:23). All of these definitions of sin may be condensed into the simple statement that sin, in the sight of God, is any THOUGHT or ACTION that is without divine authority, without conviction and in violation of conscience in conduct, and failing to respond to whatever is good and right according to one's ability. This definition of sin makes it applicable to every phase of one's life.

CHANGING THE UNCHANGEABLE

From the point of view of one sinning by "changing the unchangeable," it would be, by the very terms used, an impossibility. Man could not, if he tried, change the rising and setting of the sun. He could not change the seasons and the course of life and death as they are unalterably and immutably decreed by God. Such changes are utterly impossible with man. But these are things that may be changed by God with the passing of time and at the day of the coming of the Lord when the entire universe will be burned up with the fire described in 2 Peter 3.

But there is another sense in which one does commit sin by "changing the unchangeable;" the only sense in which this is possible is that change by substituting that which is another, a perverted likeness, for that which is unchangeable.

THE UNCHANGEABLE CHRIST

One characteristic so well described and illustrated in the Bible is the unchangeable nature of the Godhead. In Old Testament times, both individuals and nations learned that God was unchangeable in his ways and that every effort to change the nature and purpose of God brought disaster to those who attempted to do so. Romans 1 describes some of the sins of those who tried to change some of the things of God. They changed "the glory of the uncorruptible God" into idols (Rom. 1:23), and they changed "the truth of God into a lie" (Rom. 1:25). Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8). His characteristics as Saviour remain unchanged; his word, his redemptive work, his faithfulness as a high priest and mediator are unchangeable.

The songs, pictures, slogans, poems, and preaching of the masses today have pictured Jesus the Son of God as an entirely different person with different goals and different methods than those that are clearly set forth in the New Testament. Space does not permit a detailed description of all these sins, but they add up to the despicable sin of trying to change the unchangeable Christ who sits at the right hand of God with all power and authority and who is the only way one may come unto the Father (John 14:6).

THE UNCHANGEABLE WORD

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever...But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:23,25). "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5)

The word of God, which is the gospel of Christ, is as impossible to change as it is to change the Son of God. For example, the apostle Paul said, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6-7). The expressions, "removed from him" and then "unto another gospel" and "pervert the gospel of Christ" all express the nature of the sin we have under consideration. To be removed from the gospel of Christ unto another gospel would have to be a changed or perverted gospel, but it is clearly stated that this is not another gospel because there is only one gospel, immutable and unalterable, for time and eternity.

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Paul said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8-9). The significant emphasis is here placed upon the fact that anything other than the revelation delivered by the apostles under the power of the Holy Spirit that would be preached by any other man, or the apostles themselves, or even an angel from

heaven, was to be rejected as a substitute for the gospel. This is the sin of changing the unchangeable.

Rejecting the words of Christ is equal to rejecting him (John 12:48). Since he said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35), any effort to change, modify, delete, add to, or substitute for his revealed word is sin.

The gospel of Christ is complete to make one perfect unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:3; Rom. 1:16, etc.). Some of the "enlightened intellectuals" and progressive "spiritually mature" sages who claim to be "heirs of the Restoration" are among the most grievous sinners in changing the unchangeable gospel of Christ.

Men also sin against the unchangeable word of God by preaching and practicing that which is not authorized in the word of God. They act without divine authority and are workers of iniquity. Jesus said that those who work iniquity will be cast away from the Lord at the judgment (Matt. 7:23). The word also says, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10,11). The word of God and all that it authorizes is as unchangeable as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and men who try to tamper with the word of God either to add to it, take from it, or simply disregard it, have an awful day of accounting before Christ for trying to change the unchangeable.

THE UNCHANGEABLE KINGDOM

The kingdom spoken of by the prophets, described by the Lord as "at hand," and declared to be fulfilled by the inspired apostles, with its promise of an incorruptible inheritance that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven, which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, is unchangeable. The materialists who would change this glorious kingdom into an earthly existence are sinning by trying to change the unchangeable. The modernists who deny a life after death by the gospel of Christ, and the premillennialists who have given a carnal concept to the kingdom of Christ are but a few examples of the sin of changing the unchangeable, kingdom.

The KINGDOM and the CHURCH of the Lord are two different terms referring to the same people, the same law, the same head, with the same destiny from two points of view. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said he would build his church upon the rock that Peter had just confessed, i.e., that Christ was the Son of God, and then said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Isaiah 2:2, Daniel 2:44, Joel 2:28, Acts 2 all point out the features of the kingdom that the prophets said would never end and the reign of Christ that would continue until the kingdom was delivered back to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). The kingdom or church will never be destroyed (Heb. 12:22-23). "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28-29).

The sin of changing the unchangeable in regard to the church is that perversion of the organization and function of the local congregation of God's people. Moses was admonished to make all things according to the pattern delivered thee in the mount (Heb. 8:5). When men try to change the worship, the conditions of entrance into the kingdom, the organization of the church or its function and mission, they are committing the sin of changing the unchangeable.

"IN THE NAME OF..."

Ronny Milliner

"What does 'in the name of' mean?" "By the authority of comes the quick reply. However, this brief answer hides a deeper meaning of this phrase as it is used in different passages.

In Matthew 28:19 the phrase is used with the Greek word EIS being translated "in." In Acts 2:38 it is used again, but with EPI being translated "in." Another usage is found in Acts 10:48 with even still another Greek word, EN, being translated "in." Three different words; three different shades of thought.

In Matthew 28:19 Jesus says we are to baptize "in (EIS) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." One of the basic meanings of the word EIS is "into" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 227). James D. Bales in The Case of Cornelius comments on this verse by saying, "To be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit indicated that one was baptized into their possession. Thus the one who is baptized belongs to them." We then are to be baptized into the ownership of the Father, Son and Spirit.

This teaching is nothing new, for it is taught in the Scriptures. Peter tells us we are a purchased ("peculiar" — KJV) people (1 Pet. 2:9). We are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27). We are said to be sealed or stamped (the seal being a sign of ownership) "with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). Those who have been baptized no longer belong to self, but to God, Christ, and the Spirit. "... I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20).

The next passage noted is Acts 2:38. Here Peter tells us to repent and be baptized "in (EPI) the name of Jesus Christ." (Thayer (p. 232) defines this word, "Of that upon which any action, effect, condition, rests as a basis or support; prop, upon the ground of; relying upon the name." Correlating with this thought is the statement made in the Expositor's Greek Testament (Vol. II, p. 91), which reads, "St Peter's address had been directed to the proof that Jesus was the Christ, and it was only natural that the acknowledgment of the cogency of that proof should form the ground of the admission to baptism was the recognition of Jesus as the Christ."

Believers are to be baptized (Mk. 16:16). In order to know one's belief, a statement of belief, or confession, is essential (Rom. 10:9, 10). When asked what was hindering him from being baptized, the Ethiopian eunuch was asked if he believed with all of his heart. To this question the eunuch replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). **Then** Philip baptized him. We are to be baptized **upon the ground** that Jesus is the Anointed One of God.

Finally, in Acts 10:48 Peter commanded Cornelius and his household "to be baptized in (EN) the name of the Lord." It is here, according to Thayer (p. 447), that one is "to do a thing . . . by one's command and authority, acting on his behalf, promoting his cause." EN means "in," and Vincent (p. 84) states, "In the name has reference to the sphere **within which alone** (emphasis mine — RM) true baptism is accomplished." It is this same phrase found in Colossians 3:17, where we are told to speak and do all "in the name of the Lord Jesus."

It is hoped that these brief comments have shed a little more light on this phrase to the readers. Now, let us go, teach, and baptize **into the possession** of the Father, Son, and Spirit, **upon the ground** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and **by the authority** of our Lord.

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