"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (JOHN 20:3).

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THIS PAPER IS DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF UNDENOMINATIONAL, NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

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OBEY OBEYED OBEDIENCE

By E. H. Cavin

Webster's New Supreme Dictionary defines "obey" as follows: "To submit to the rule of authority; do as bidden." From this we learn that someone is to give orders. "Obeyed" signifies that something has been done. It is in the past as per Rom. 6:17: . . . but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Obedience manifests a continuation to obey. If the world could and would realize the importance of obeying the Law of God, then Christianity would progress. If this were realized, not only would those out of the kingdom be benefited, but also the ones that profess Christianity.

Let us consider some of the Old Testament Scriptures: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye **obey** the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day" (Deut. 1 1 :26,27). From this we see that the blessings are to those who **obey.** Samuel declares and teaches that to obey is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. 15 :22). We can clearly see by investigation of these and other Scriptures that God has always demanded obedience.

Now to the age in which we are living: God demanded Abraham and Moses, that is, during the administration, to obey him. In this age we have two classes of people so to speak, i.e., the saved and the unsaved. Those who have not " . . . obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine . . . (Rom. 6 :1 7) are the unsaved. We are aware that some contend that God does not recognize any thing the man or woman does outside of the kingdom. Let us go "to the law and testimony" and see what the Scriptures teach. Who does God command to have faith? Is it not those who do not believe him? Hear the Savior: " . . if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). There is a command to be obeyed. Again, those who have not repented are unsaved. God commands all men everywhere to repent **(**Acts 1 7;30). Likewise does he command men to confess Christ (Matt. 1 0:32), and he also commands all to be baptized (Acts 10:48).

Now, the above must apply to the sinner, and if this be so, God certainly recognizes the things which the sinner is doing. Again: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begottm Son that whosoever believeth . . (John 3:16). Notice, not just a part of the world, but **whosoever, all** mankind. From the Scriptures cited I believe that it is established that God does recognize the work of the sinner as being a violation of the Law of God, but obedience does not stop at this point.

The child of God is given commands to be obeyed. Paul said to the Galations, "0 foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not **obey** the truth . . . ?" (Gal. 3:1). Here is a group of the children of God who are being exhorted to obey the truth. See also Gal. 5 :7. In the Roman letter, Paul teaches us that to whom we yield ourselves to obey, to them we are servants, whether unto sin or unto righteousness. Thus we learn that there are two voices to obey, i.e., the voice of God (which if **obeyed** will bring us a blessing) and the voice of Satan (which if obeyed will bring a curse).

Let us now consider a few things that we, the church, are commanded to obey. First, wherever a command is given obedience is involved. For example, consider Abraham. He was commanded to go to a certain place and make a sacrifice of his son. If he had not gone to this place his sacrifice would not have been acceptable. The obeying was a part of the act of going as well as offering the sacrifice, so it was his obedience that God respected. Another example is that of King Saul. He did not **obey,** and the sacrifice they were going to offer availed nothing. We must first **obey;** then our sacrifice will be accepted.

We are commanded to meet upon the first day of the week (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; and by example 1 Cor. 11:1). Paul said to follow him as he had followed Christ. We either obey this, or we do not. We are to continue in the apostles' doctrine stedfastly (Acts 2:42). That is, we are not to be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14). We are to "earnestly contend for the faith .....(Jude 3). There are many items that we must obey in order that we may receive the blessings of eternal life. Paul said that Christ was coming to take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:8).

Some are going to receive a blessing (those who **obey God),** and some will receive a curse. Now to one and all I ask, which group are we trying to be with, those who obey, or those who disobey? — 12560 E. Persing Drive, Whittier, Calif.

IS HOPE IMPORTANT?

By H. R. Dye

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). We are not under the law and the prophets, but there are facts and prophecies in the old scriptures for our consideration.

Here are some facts: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Jer. 17:78). Again: "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord" (Ps. 31:24).

Hear likewise the prophecy of Joel: "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (Joel 3:16).

We also have proof: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1). These scriptures should be evidence enough to add to our faith. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Again: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24, 25). Let us find out more about hope. Hear Paul again: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:1-5). We find then more reason to believe that hope is very important in the Christian life.

IT IS WRITTEN

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What are we hoping for?

1 Jno. 3:2,3: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The hope of salvation in our Christian armour is the helmet (1 Thess. 5:8). Yes, brethren, hope is certainly part of the Christian. "Fm the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:11-1**3).---828** Oak Dr., Yuma, Arizona.

A CANDIDATE FOR ELDERSHIP
(How many is "children" ?)

By Maurice C. Link

One point that is a matter of disagreement in the brotherhood is that which ensues over 1 Tim. 3:4 and Tit. 1:6. This dispute concerns the matter of qualification for the eldership. It is, I believe, primarily caused by a lack of understanding of the reason for God's injunction contained in these two scriptures, and of the Greek word from which the English "children" is taken. Permit me to quote these two references for you as they appear in the 1901 edition of the American Standard Version of the Bible. "If any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having **children** that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly" (Tit. **1:6).** "One that ruleth his own house, having his **children** in subjection with all gravity" (1 Tim. 3:4).

Some of my brethren refuse to accept the obvious, that when Paul said believing children, he **meant** a **plurality** of believing children, two or more children. Instead of accepting what Paul says of its face value, my brothers try to read into "children" the meaning of **one** believing child **or** two or more children. Either one believing child, or many children meets this qualification, say these brethren, and a father of one faithful child can qualify as an elder so long as he meets the other conditions found in 1 Tim. 3:1-7. But when this claim is pitted against Greek scholarship on the matter, does this claim pass the test? Let us see.

Mr. Thayer is an interpreter and student of the ancient Greek (in which the apostles and disciples wrote the New Testament) whose scholarship is accepted by every religious body claiming to follow Christ. Mr. Thayer is also accepted by all gospel preachers and freely quoted by them on all points of Bible doctrine. On page 617 of Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon we find the following: **Teknom-teknon to** (Greek singular) : "the child−; without the article to, "a child."

Tekna (Greek plural) : "children." **Tekna,** the word meaning a **plurality, children,** which is found in 1 Tim. 3:4 and Tit. 1:6. This form is also used in Matt. **7:11; 10:21;** 15 :26; Acts 21:5 ; 2 Cor. 12 :13; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; 1 Th. 2:7,11; 2 Jno. 1,**4, 13. Ta tekna:** "the children"; without the article, "children." **Tekna** is in the plural accusative neuter case. The following will serve as explanation of what this signifies. **Tekna:** Plural, showing the number (more than one) ; accusative, showing the object (children) ; and neuter, indicating children of either sex. Thus we see that Greek scholarship disagrees with these brethren and assigns the meaning of two or more (plural) to the Greek word translated "children" in 1 Tim. 3:4 and Tit. 1 :6.

These brethren always bring up the matter of "to whom." Say they, when you are speaking to a group of fathers, who may have anywhere from one to twenty children apiece, you refer to their 'children." Paul was speaking in the same sense, they continue. What he really meant was that elders must have at least one believing child. It would have been illogical for him to have said child **or** children, when children covers the subject just as well. This looks very reasonable and correct at first sight. But, was Paul speaking about the qualifications of a **group** of candidates for the eldership? **Again,**

let us see if this will stand the test of authority, in this case, Paul.

"Faithful is the saying, If **a man** seeketh the office of **a bishop, he** desireth **a** good work. **The bishop** therefore must be without reproach. . . ,. (1 Tim. 3:1,2). Now, let us examine the above. Paul says if **who** seeketh the office of a bishop? A man, singular in both instances. Paul then in the second verse commences to list the qualifications of **the** bishop, singular case once again. Paul was speaking of a **man,** not a group of men, who must be "**one . . .** having **his** (singular) children (plural—Thayer) in subjection...

In Tit. 1:5 Paul commissions Titus to ordain — K.J. — (appoint, install — Thayer) elders in every city, and then proceeds to give an elder's qualifications beginning with the sixth verse. "If **any man** (singular) is blameless, the husband (singular) of one wife, having children (plural—Thayer) that believe . . . ." Again, Paul is speaking of **one** man who is (1) "the **husband** of one wife"; (2) the father of believing "children." So, says Paul, one qualification that a man must have to be an elder is that he must have two or more believing, Christian children.

Lastly, a very important point is why God felt it necessary to decree that a man must have believing children, children who have obeyed the gospel, as one of the conditions of attaining to the eldership. Again, hear Paul on this score: "(but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" (1 Tim. 3:5). One of the saddest pictures a Christian can see is that of the Christian father who commands so little respect on the part of his children that he is unable to lead them to God. Indeed, many fathers are looked upon with so little regard (and I am speaking of Christian (?) fathers) that they are unable even to lead their children to the study of God's word. Of course, there is the father who is too shiftless about his Christian duty to his children (see I Th. 2:11) to bother about leading them to the,obedience of the gospel.

As an elder is the overseer (plurality of overseers) of the work of the church and therefore responsible for the teaching, the feeding of the flock (1 Pet. 5 :2), could the church rely upon such men who thus conduct themselves towards their own children, to provide the best scriptural teaching program for the children of the congregation, or anyone else for that matter? Obviously not. Therefore, a man who has brought up his children in the Bible so that they obeyed the gospel on their part, has proved his ability to rule his own house. Actions speak volumes. "By their works shall ye know them." A man who has had to deal with the many complex problems encountered in the raising of two or more children, and has done so successfully, is far better equipped from the standpoint of both results and experience obtained, than is the successful father of only one child to deal with the complex problems encountered in such a diversified gathering of personalities as a congregation.

A man who has dealt with conflicts and problems arising among a number of children will feel more at home in mediating difficulties arising in a congregation. Likewise, a man who has taught his children, whether two or twenty, will feel more at home teaching several Christians and/or unsaved sinners than will the father whose experience has been with just one child, one personality.

God has his own good reasons for his ordinances. The church has never had any trouble in doing its work when it has conformed to God's way. As a contrast, look at those churches of Christ where scriptually unqualified men have been appointed by the congregations as elders. They (the churches) are often weak in both numbers and doctrine, lax in spirit, torn by dissension, and blown hither and yon by every wind of false doctrine blowing its blustering way along.

Beloved, there is only one way to walk. That which is pointed out by God's standard of faith and practice, the Bible. Let us leave behind these vain contentions of men, and choose

those men only who meet God's condition of a plurality of believing children as well as His other qualifications for eldership. Brethren, I would far rather see two scriptural elders in the whole church of God, than ten thousand scripturally unqualified elders.- 1146 W. 78th St., Los Angeles 44, Calif.

WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM BEING A CHRISTIAN?

By L. R. Pampliin

The spiritual provisions that God bestows upon those who love Him are abundant, gracious, and glorious. It is a tragedy that all men throughout the world do not obey God and allow Him to give to them the many spiritual blessings which he gives so freely to His people. The door of the Lord's house is perpetually open. Isaiah records Him as saying: "Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1: 18). Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. **1 1:28-30).**

Any truly born-again Christian is able to testify that the above words of the Master are true and meaningful. This is a wide invitation extended to all. God is like a father stretching out hands to a wayward son. While Jesus was walking the streets of earth, He taught that God was a loving, kind, merciful, heavenly Father who cares and is ready and willing to forgive and abundantly pardon, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3 :9) .

Why do not all who know of Christ accept this great invitation? To the faithful believer in Christ this is a question hard to comprehend and answer. We might say though that one feeble excuse in answer to this question is that some have been overcome by the cares of this world (riches). The almighty dollar and what it can buy of temporal goods is so important to some that they don't have time for God and the spiritual aspect of life. I fear that even some children of God are concerned too much with the cares of the world. It would seem so, at any rate, when one puts his job before the Lord. The apostle John exhorts to "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world" (1 Jno. 1:15), and James bears testimony as to why we shouldn't love the world. Concerning this life, he says that it is "a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (Jas. 4 :14) .

Any easy thing to do is to become too absorbed in commercial pursuits. This is another excuse and reason why some fail to accept Christ. Though our means of making a livelihood are extremely important to us, if they come between the Lord and ourselves, they are a detriment to us.

A third excuse is exemplified in the parable of the sower, i.e., the attraction of earthly ties. In the Last day, this excuse will be the downfall of many souls. How hard is it for us to realize that the pleasures, cares and riches of this life will some day pass away, "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).

nese excuses are all refuted by Christ. In regard to riches let us hear Jesus as He teaches in a parable that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13 :44). To those who might have another plow to follow, Jesus warns, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62).

Though man has offered many excuses to God down through the stream of time, he has never accepted them. The first man and woman offered excuses to Jehovah for eating of the forbidden fruit, but these were rejected, and they were driven from the garden

and punished. God didn't accept the excuses of Moses as He sent him to deliver Isreal from Egypt (Ex. 3:9, 10 f.). Likewise in the case of King Saul, as he was commanded and sent to destroy the Amalekites and the flocks, etc. When he failed to obey the command of God and made the excuse that "the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God at Gilgal" (1 Sam. 15:21), God didn't accept it and punished King Saul by removing his kingdom from him (v. 26).

There is a variety of excuses offered by man nowadays in an effort to justify himself in failing to accept and obey Christ, but as God didn't accept excuses in the past, there is no reason to believe that He will today. God is unchangable (Mal. 3:6). Nevertheless we may hear one say am a good moral man, ¯ seeking to justify himself. We have, in the Bible, a divine example of a good moral man who was lost. I speak of Cornelius (Acts 10), a just, God-fearing man of whom men spoke well. Peter was chosen to take this man words whereby he and all his house should be saved (Acts 11:14). Though Cornelius was good morally, had he not obeyed the gospel of Christ, he would not have stood justified in the sight of God and would have been e:ernally lost.

"I don't know what church to join," is another common statement made by men. With the maze of church organizations in the world today, for one who isn't acquainted too well with the New Testament scriptures, this seems like quite a problem. First of all, however, the church of the Bible cannot be 'joined." On investigation of certain scriptures we see that Jesus "built" His church (Matt. 16:18). From Acts 20:28 we learn that he purchased this "church of the Lord" (ASV) with his own blood. The apostle Paul in writing to the Ephesians told them that there is but one body (Eph. 4:4) which is the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22,23). God's people are one body or church in Christ (Rom. 12:5) so man should not seek to "join" any church but should seek out through the New Testament the manner in which Christians became a part of this church in the first century. An examination of Acts 2:47 will show that the obedient were "added" to the Lord's church. When one obeys the gospel of Christ today, he is added by God to the church of Christ and is only a Christian and a Christian only.

Many more excuses are offered which could be examined and refuted by the Bible, but space does not permit. Let us learn a lesson from the way that God dealt with people in ancient times and not try to guide our own steps but turn to the Lord who cares for us all and is able to mercifully pardon from past sins and save. By faithfully repenting of your sins, confessing the Master before men and being buried in the waters of Christian baptism, you may become just a simple New Testament Christian and a member of the Lord's body. Live faithfully unto the end and God promises a rich reward (Rev. 22 :14.-

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"YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN"

By Paul Ferguson

Jesus, speaking to Nicodemus, said, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Jno. 3:5). Most every- religious person will agree that the new birth is necessary to get into the kingdom. But as to the "how" that this birth takes place, I am sure that if you should ask a number of different religious people, you would get about that many different answers. We want to notice some scriptures on the subject, so we can arrive at a Biblical conclusion, as the scriptures thoroughly furnish unto every good work (II Tim. 3:17).

In the beginning, God made man and woman and placed them in the garden which he had prepared for them, and he gave them a law of procreation, that all generations should come through them, that the earth might be replenished (or filled) (Gen. 1:27,28). When the kingdom (or church) was established, God set some

in the church (I Cor. 12:28). As God made Adam and Eve a full grown man and woman, not born into existence, he also made these full grown, not born, into the kingdom. They were set in, and he gave a law of procreation. Since then, those that get into the kingdom, are born into it. They grow to maturity, or become full grown.

Jesus says, . . . born of water and the Spirit" (Jno. 3:5). Notice the two factors by which we are born, i.e., water" and "the Spirit." Each has its part in the Spiritual birth, and being born again places us into the kingdom of Christ. Hear the Saviour again: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). By being converted, we enter the kingdom. Therefore, being born again and being converted are the same in meaning as they place us into the kingdom. Again, Jesus said, 'Not everyone 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). God's **will** is equal to being born, since doing the will of God puts us into the kingdom. In the kingdom are found the blessings spoken of. Notice, if you will, all promises are in Christ (II Cor. 1:2), and all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Paul says, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13,14). From these two verses we learn that when we are in the kingdom, we are redeemed, our sins are forgiven. Therefore, we are born again, converted, or saved, meaning the same thing, for we receive the same result—salvation.

Now, since we have learned that by doing God's will he will save us, we shall see what God wants us to do, or what his will is. Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth . . . (Rom. 1:16). The gospel of Christ is the power that God uses to save the believer, as Paul says to the Corinthians, "I have begotten you through the gospel" (I Cor. 4:15). Again Paul says, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation . . . (Eph. 1:13).

Jesus, as he was speaking to his apostles before he went away, said that he would send them another Comforter, or the Holy Spirit, "and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin" (Jno. 16:8). The 13th verse says, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . .- We can see what part the Spirit has in the New birth. It guided the apostles in what to say, so the Spirit furnished the word or truth, as the word of God is the seed of the kingdom, the life giving principle (Lk. 8:11). Hear the testimony of the apostle Peter: "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth . . . Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:22,23). As Jesus said, "The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life (Jno. 6:63).

To obey God's will (or word), **we must hear** Christ (Matt. 17:5). "So then, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). **We must have faith.** "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6) . **We must repent** and turn away from our sins, for Jesus said, "Except ye repent ye shall . . . perish" (Lk. 13:3). **We must confess** our faith in Christ (or acknowledge him), or he will not confess us (Matt. 10:32) . **We must be baptized,** for "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16) .

On the day of Pentecost when the gospel was first preached in fact, the question was asked of the apostles, "What shall we do?" Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2:38). It is evident then that baptism is the last

act that puts us into Christ. "For as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). In obedience to the necessary steps of faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, we are put into the kingdom, where salvation is. We are saved, redeemed, converted, or born again. All of these terms are used. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Cor. 6:1 7), a child of God.

May the Lord bless us in learning his will, that we may do his commandments, that we may all have a right to the tree of life, is my prayer.-6392 Stanton Ave., Buena Park, Calif.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

By E. L. Pamplin

In this modern world, in which there are many goals of life and objectives that may be striven for, there dwells a being that is peculiar to the rest of the world's inhabitants. This peculiar group of people bear their originator's name and are called Christians. The name is not new, but has been altered so varyingly throughout the centuries that it is unrecognizable today, except for these people who have gone back to their originator's day, by way of the Holy Scriptures that were written during the period of his life and immediately thereafter, and have uncovered the truth, whereby we, today, may have a perfect plan of salvation if the plan which has been provided is followed unerringly.

Let us examine eight factors in the life of a Christian, that we may have a clearer understanding. Since the Creator of this society has been absent from us in the flesh for some 1900 years, there must be a sincere faith in that his teachings will some day be brought into being. This faith is defined for us in his teachings: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" **(**Heb. **11:1).** "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Again: "As it is written, the just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). Faith is an important factor in being a Christion. However, important as it may be, it must be accompanied by other important factors, as well. James tells us that "Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone" (Jas. 2: **17),** which brings us into our next condition, that of **self-denial.**

The entire Christian life is a sacrifice. We find Scripture for this in the first verse of the 12th chapter of the letter written to the Romans, by Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." A Christian cannot follow the ways of the world, even in part, for to deviate from the narrow pathway that has been shown us, is to sin. Hear John: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I Jno. 2: **15).** Jesus once said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30). Hear James again: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" **(**Jas. 2:**10).** From these passages, then, we understand that the Christian cannot associate with or indulge in worldly activities, without endangering his inheritance.

Our third situation will deal with **vigilance.** We must be mindful of our **thoughts:** "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adultries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. **15: 19)** ; also watchful of our **words:** "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" **(**Matt. **12:37)** ; and vigilant toward our **conduct:** "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me" (Ps. 31:1). Why? Because our "adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8). We must continually be vigilant so as not to alter our course for a minute, as Paul says to "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith,

quit ye like men, be strong" **(I** Cor. 16:13).

Now let us explore the next topic, that of pr+ayer. The prayer of the Christian is his direct line of communication to his heavenly Father. He does not hear those outside of Christ: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth" (Jno. 9:1). We find, too, that praying is a regular activity in the life of a Christian. "Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12) is the Pauline injunction. Again: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18). Again: "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (I Tim. 2:8). Prayers will build faith and faith will ward off temptation. The Saviour told his disciples to "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation, the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41).

Whenever there is a conditional prize or goal that may be gained, there must be a plan or formula in which it may or may not be won, the success or failure depending on the contestant's observance of these rules. Thus it is with the Christian's inheritance, which is dependent upon his **obedience** to the commandments that have been adapted for his salvation. Hear the Master: "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). Hear John concerning Christ's commandments: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I Jno. 5:3). Love invariably produces obedience. The absence of obedience is evidence of the absence of love. The Christian's inheritance will undoubtedly be measured against his will to obey the gospel. The Hebrew writer informs us of Christ that "being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation um° all them that obey him" (-1-leb. 5:9).

Now, let us consider the process by which the Christian assimilates a more thorough knowledge of the word of God, called **growth.** From I Pet. 2:2 we find where growth is necessary in the Christian life: "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." For this growth, we must acquire a state in which there is freedom from sin. Peter, speaking of the divine power of Christ, says, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Pet. 1:4). Peter also gave us the steps by which spiritual growth might be attained: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue• and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness, charity¯ **(II** Pet. 1 :5-7).

The seventh factor in the life of a Christian will be **abiding in Christ.** Jesus said, **"I** am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned¯ (Jno. 15:5,6). Listen to Paul as he speaks concerning the oneness of the body of Christ: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another" (Rom. 12:4,5). It is imperative that we abide in Christ, for to do otherwise is to be against him: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathered' not, with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12 :30) .

Lastly, the Christian must **work with God.** To the Corinthians, Paul wrote, "For we are laborers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (I Cor. 3:9). Again: "We, then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (II Cor. 6:1). Our work for the Lord must be

from desire. Again, hear Paul: "There•-fore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable. always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 1 5 :5 8) .

Thusly, shall the Christian's life be guided by the word of God, for he knows that therein lies the fulfillment of all the promises of eternal life in heaven. But for them that are contentious, doers of evil, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, the Son of Man "shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:42).

This earthly life, then, for those of us with heaven as our goal, must contain the strongest of **faith; self-denial** to the point of sacrifice; a **vigilance** for the coming of the Lord; earnest and fervent **prayer;** the strictest **obedience** to the word of God; and a desiring of spiritual **growth** while **abiding in Christ** and **working with God.-1 71 1** Bush St., Santa Ana, Calif.

"SEPARATED"

By J. W. Bedingfield

To be separated from our loved ones is an unhappy experience in this life. To be separated from God is the greatest tragedy that can befall mankind.

Consider Isaiah 59:1,2: "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that ii cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear." Likewise hear the Psalmist: "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth" (Ps. 34:16). We see that man's sin is the thing that separates between him and his God, and that God no longer watches over him (His face is against him), and He no longer hears his prayer. We learn from many Old Testament examples how God regards sin, and how He deals with man, when he continues to sin. As we read the stories of Adam and Eve, the destruction of the idolaters, when they made the golden calf, and many others, we can almost feel the wrath and indignation of God, at man's sin. We must learn and understand that God hates sin in the life of man; that sin will not go unnoticed by God; that those who sin will not escape the wrath of God, and that sin will not go unpunished, "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation . . . ?" (Heb. 2:2,3).

We learn from the apostle Peter that God "spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell" (II Pet. 2:4-6). We also learn that "He spared not the old world" but that he "brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" and that he "turned Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes" making them an example to those who should after, live ungodly. Truly the apostle Paul says that "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

Now sin is the transgression of God's law (I Jno. 3:4), and "All unrightousness is sin" (I Jno. 5:17). So many times man will say, "I don't see any harm in doing so and so." I am afraid that man and God don't look at sin in the same way. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Pro. 1 **4:12).** Again: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 55:8). Man should "lean not to thine own understanding" (Pro. 3:5) but should "keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your Gods' (I Chr. 28:8).

The very nature of God is against sin, be it small or great in the opinion of man. The very nature of man seems to be to sin. Therefore God has set before man a straight and narrow path that he may walk in, and it leads to life eternal, but he must put away the sin that has separated between him and God. Then when he has put the sin away "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ear is open unto their cry" (Ps. 34:15), and also "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also

make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

Dear friends, think seriously for a moment about the terrible consequences of sin, and the tragedy of being separated from God for eternity, on account of sin. Then think of the blessing and the joy of walking hand in hand with God, and the wonderful reward that awaits the faithful, beyond this life, and make your decision now to walk with God.—Box 441, Magdalena, N. M.

NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

"We had a very good meeting in Somerton, Ariz. Two sisters came forward to confess. Brother Bedingfield seems to be so understanding of one's problems. We pray that he continues the good fight of faith. There is so much need for men like him in this old world."—Harry B. Dye, 828 Oak Dr., Yuma, Ariz.

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"If the paper is run according to the open letter sent to the churches, we at Yakima feel it will do more good than the issues we have been getting, being filled with so much bickering and controversy between our preachers. Our prayers are that you will make a success of the paper and that it will be one which we will be able to hand to outsiders without causing a reflection on the church of Christ.

The church here at Yakima has had three immersions since we last reported to the paper."—Howard McCay, 1615 So. 27th Ave., Yakima, Wash.

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"The church of Christ which meets at 818 No. Washington St. in Elk City, Okla., had two very enjoyable services on Lord's Day, Nov. 13th. Bro. W. E. Daniels of Broken Bow, Okla., was with us and preached at both morning and evening services. His topics were: The "Oneness in Christ," and "watch" and were presented in a manner that all should be benefitted. Another thing that made the day so pleasant. was the visitors present from other places. Among those were Bro. and Sister L. E. Atchley of Gateway, Ark., Bro. and Sister Laney and son of near-by Huntsville, Ark., and Bro. Floyd Cantrell and sons of Stillwell, Okla., and also Sister Daniels. Such assemblies of brethren and sisters in the Lord are encouraging and up-building and we invite them to come often."—The church of Christ at Elk City, Okla., by W. R. Farrar, Rt. 2, Carter, Okla.

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"I enjoy the paper and hope to continue receiving it . . . I do hope there are less articles on the cups and classes though we oppose both. I believe more of the gospel should be taught." —Leonard Starnes, 233 S. C St., Springfield, Ore. Amen, Bro. Starnes. —Ed.

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. . . Let it be as "it is written" and leave out our theories, pet peeves and ideologies. These have caused in the past more dissension, discord, brothers and sisters forsaking the Lord and church division than all the rest."— B. 0. Weakley, 413 Rowland Ave., Modesto, Calif.

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. . . We need the truth put before the people in an humble Christian manner.

I hope we will have more admonition to the church on love and kindness for one another.– — Sister Paul R. Bruce, 305 S. Olive, Carlsbad, N. M.

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"Last Lord's day (Nov. 27) I preached at Aztec, N. M., and visited with the brethren there. This is a small congregation. The brethren there are sound in the faith, faithful in teaching and practice, and are making a real sacrifice for the cause of Christ. Aztec is a town of seasonal work, and now that winter is here, some families have moved away and the financial burden is very heavy on a few. They built a new building and equipped it for use last summer, but they are making monthly payments on the note, and they need help badly through the winter months. Any assistance, however small, will be truly appreciated by these faithful brethren, and they are most worthy of your support.

Send the offerings to Bro. Roy Dabbs, Rt. 1, Box 19, Aztec, N. **M.**

Anyone having friends or relatives in this section of the country, whom you think might be interested in finding a place to worship according to God's plan will be contacted and invited to attend, if you will send me their names and addresses. We are also still seeking others to meet and worship with the faithful at Carlsbad, N. M.—J. W. Bedingfield, Box 441, Magdalena, N. M.

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The newly established church of Christ, located in the Ontario, California, area has recently found a place to meet for worship in nearby Bloomington, the address of which is 17044 Valley Blvd. Services begin at 10:30 a.m. on the Lord's day. It is requested that names of all persons in this area who might be interested in attending, be sent to Bro. Isaac Ferguson, 422 Maple St., Ontario, Calif., and they will be contacted. Bro. Ferguson's telephone number is YUkon 617162.

* * *

A debate concerning the communion cup and class questions is scheduled to take place at Somerton, Ariz., beginning Jan. 11 through Jan. 15, with two nights devoted to each question. The propositions to be debated concerning the cup question are as follows:

I. In an assembly of the church of Christ for the communion, it is Scriptural to use individual cups (drinking vessels) in distribution of the fruit of the vine.
   Affirms: John M. Burnett
   Denies: Paul Ferguson

II. The Scriptures teach that an assembly of the church of Christ for the communion, must use one cup (drinking vessel) in distribution of the fruit of the vine.
   Affirms: Paul Ferguson
   Denies: John M. Burnett

Bro. J. W. Bedingfield will debate the Bible class question with Bro. Burnett denying that such methods of teaching in the church of Christ are Scriptural. Each session will commence at 7:30 p.m. every evening at the Somerton meeting-house. Accommodations will be provided for any visiting brethren who would like to attend this debate.

TRACTS

Brother L. C. England, 358 North Gretna Ave., Whittier, California, has mimeographed some material written by tiro. **J.** S. Bedingfield on the communion cup and Sunday school questions. One tract is in answer to a tract written by Bro. P. C. Key; another is in answer to a tract written by a brother trom Lorenzo, Texas. Both of these tracts are concerning the cup question. The one on the Sunday school is written in answer to a sermon preached by Bro. Gordon Teel of Pasadena, Texas, which was put into tract form. The tracts on the cup question may be secured tree of charge by simply writing to Bro. England and making request, and the one on the Sunday school question by writing to J. C. Spurlin, Reydon, Okla.

Brother Isaac Ferguson, 422 W. Maple St., Ontario, Calif., likewise has made available a tract written by Bro. Bedingfield in answer to a tract written by Bro. M. L. Lemley on the cup question. Any number of this tract may be obtained free of charge by writing to Bro. Ferguson.

Also in the past, Bro. J. S. Bedingfield wrote some material exposing the errors made by Bro. J. Ervin Waters in his tract on "The Communion." This material concerns the breaking of the bread, and it has recently been put into mimeographed tract form. As many copies as is desired can be had free of charge by writing to the editor of It **Is Written** and making request for the same.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

(from Nov. 7)

Yakima, Wash., church of Christ	$5.00
Elk City, Okla., church of Christ	10.00
Ontario, Calif., church of Christ	5.00
Carlsbad, N.M., church of Christ	5.00
J. D. Brown	10.00
Lochie Cole	10.00

(To Dec. 12)

Bellflower, Calif., church of Christ	10.00
Somerton, Ariz., church of Christ	10.00
La Habra, Calif., church of Christ	5.00
Anonymous	5.00
Paul Ferguson	5.00