

HOW TO BECOME A TRUE CHRISTIAN Clergy Often Angered By The Truth-Hungry

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Hungry Souls Ask for the Bread of Life—Indigestible Stones and Fetid Errors Repel Them—Only the Bread from Heaven Truly Satisfies—God’s True Message is Delicious

Repeatedly we meet with people inquiring for the Bread of Life. These seem to know that there is something radically wrong with the preaching of the nominal churches. They tell that they are importuned for money; but that when they ask for soul-food they meet with evasion and subterfuge from many of the great and learned, who appear to have lost sight of the Bible and heart-conversion.

Or, on the other hand, they are met by the Salvation Army, with traditions as indigestible as a stone, to anybody of ordinary intelligence. They are told with all seriousness that God created our race, with knowledge and intention that nearly all of them would spend eternity in torture. They are told that to be saved from that awful fate they should become Salvationists, and storm the slums for Jesus. Their experiences remind one of Jesus' words respecting a father who, asked for bread, would give his son a stone; who, asked for fish, would give him a serpent.

It is our hope that this article may minister comfort to some of these hungry souls. We propose to give them no human theories or speculations nor would we compromise the Truth nor dodge the question. We shall endeavor to make the way to God so plain that a wayfaring man need not err therein; not by wisdom of our own but by presenting God’s arrangement and quoting God's Word.

Where Eternal-Torture Error Leads

No doubt those who invented the theory of eternal torture thought that they were taking the proper steps to drive the whole human family to God. But, on the contrary, it seems to drive away from God and the Bible the most intelligent people of every land, who have naturally a more reasonable and just conception of the Creator than the one presented in the church creeds. Instinctively they are repelled with the thought that the Creator would pursue a course which would be beneath the most degraded.

Undoubtedly the Bible is true in declaring such fallacies “doctrines of demons”. (1 Timothy 4:1) From this Bible viewpoint we can see that it was a master stroke on the part of Satan and his subordinates to misrepresent the teachings of the Bible so as to repel those who might be “feeling after God.”

Truth-Telling Provokes the Clergy

To tell the truth to the people, even on so simple a subject, means the angering of the clergy: Why, do you ask? Because it proves them to be in the wrong, and proves that they have not been feeding the people with the Bread of Heaven. Instead of building up the House of God, the Church, they have been building meeting-houses—seeking for numbers and popularity, rather than to instruct the people in God’s Word. Remarkably few church members of any denomination know what they believe. They give evidence that, if Christians at all, they are the merest babes in Christ. None is able to judge another’s heart, but all should be able to judge of each other’s lives—fruits. “By their fruits ye shall know them,” said the Master. Matthew 7:20.

If the majority of Christians have the fruits of the Holy Spirit, they keep them hidden; and surely many of them manifest the fruits of the Evil Spirit—“anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, bitterness, slander,” etc.—which the Apostles style works of the flesh and of the Devil. Ephesians 4:31; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 John 3:8.

We would not be misunderstood; we are not complaining that there are not nice people connected with all the churches. On the contrary, we compliment them on their education, their refinement, their wealth, their influence. Moreover, we compliment them on their humanitarian sympathies, as represented in hospitals, asylums and other benevolences. But all these things are shared evenly by people who are not members of churches. A participation in good works is by no means a proof that one is a Christian. A Christian is a person who has come into a very special relationship to God through Christ; and this relationship exists not in respect to education, wealth, color or sex.

With the popularizing of Christianity came such a modification of teachings as invited all decent worldly people into the Church, and made them think that they were consecrated saints of God and heirs of the blessings promised in the Scriptures. By inference, rather than by direct statement, the theory has gone forth that the penalty for sin will be visited only upon those who neglect to say, “God forgive me,” a few moments before they die. Notwithstanding the plain statements of the creeds, every funeral discourse lands the dead in Heaven, so far as the auditors can understand. A misinterpretation of the Savior’s words to the dying thief is made the basis for this absurdity.

With all kindness toward those who are deceiving themselves and others, it is apparent that the vast majority of church members and of preachers are not Christians at all, according to the Bible standards. This does not mean that the Bible condemns them to eternal torment. Thank God, no! It does mean, however, that these self-deceived ones will have neither part nor lot in the wonderful blessing provided for God’s elect Church. It means, further, that God’s Church is separate from all human institutions that only saintly persons, regardless of denominational lines are members of the true Church, “whose names are written in Heaven.”

Surrender Self—Sacrifice to God

According to the Bible, no human being is fit for Divine fellowship or eternal life. The reason is given that all are sinners. The explanation of the sin is that it was committed by Father Adam when he was perfect in God's image; and that, cut off from God, the race deteriorated, passing imperfections of mind, morals and body from parent to child. Psalm 51:5 Imperfect beings would be quite out of place amongst the perfect; and so long as imperfection continues sin will continue, and with it, necessarily, sorrow, pain and death, sin's consequences.

God declares His sympathy for the sinner, and that He has made provision for man's recovery from his present deplorable state. Not only so, but a time has been set for the recovery; and the Bible tells us how it will be accomplished—by Messiah and His Millennial Kingdom. We pray, "Thy Kingdom come," not with the thought that God will neglect His promise to establish that Kingdom, but by way of giving acknowledgment to the fact that that Kingdom is the hope of the world and the Church.

The Church's hope in the Kingdom is that of becoming sharers with Christ in the glory, honor and work of that Kingdom—for the blessing and uplifting of humanity out of sin and death. There is no attempt being made at the present time on God's part to convert the world. Few now hear the Gospel Message and still fewer believe it. They are deluded by the Adversary into thinking that God has been trying to convert the world for six thousand years and has been making a miserable failure of it all along; and that whatever is done we must do for ourselves.

Nevertheless, the Lord declares, "My Word that has gone forth out of My mouth shall not return unto Me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isaiah 55:11 God's Word was sent forth to invite a very special class of humanity—a class loving righteousness and hating iniquity, weary and heavy-laden with sin, ignorance and superstition, and desirous of coming back into harmony with God.

For nearly nineteen centuries the Message has been going hither and thither, quietly, unostentatiously. The world and the nominal churches would say that it had accomplished nothing—that everything great had been accomplished by them. But we prefer to stand by the Bible and to recognize that God's consecrated ones have indeed lifted up a light which the world has hated—a light on account of which they have frequently been put to death, or have had "their names cast out as evil," or have been boycotted, socially or otherwise.

If their hopes were merely in the present life, these would be making a miserable failure of their opportunities. But not so; they are waiting for their reward in the future—at the

Second Coming of Jesus—by a share in the First Resurrection. And even now their joy, peace and fellowship with God more than offset all their trials, difficulties and ostracism. Besides, “To them it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.”

Shepherd’s Voice, “Come Unto Me”

The trials and difficulties of life pressing many today are giving them a hearing ear for the Great Shepherd’s words, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest.” He does not say, “Go to the Lutheran Church; go to the Presbyterian Church; go to the Methodist Church; go to the Roman Catholic Church”; or “Go to any other Church”; He says, “Come unto Me.”

It is the privilege of whoever hears this Message to go immediately to the Lord, direct. True, he cannot go to the Heavenly Father direct; for as we read, “God heareth not sinners.” But he can go to Jesus, because Him hath God set forth to be our Savior, our Redeemer. Thus Jesus said, “No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” (John 14:6) He did not say, “No man can come unto Me except through a preacher, or a priest, or a bishop, or a pope.”

But when we desire to come to the Father, and learn that we must come through Jesus, what shall we say to Him? We have only one alternative; namely, to ask Him upon what terms He will introduce us to the Heavenly Father, and thus bring us back from the condition of condemnation into the family of God. When we suggest that Jesus would raise conditions the proposition seems astounding to some. They have somehow gotten the impression that the Heavenly Father and Jesus are in great distress because so few people desire to become members of the Church; and that they would be ready to receive anything and anybody on any terms, simply to have another name added. How absurd, when we come to think of it!

We call to mind the teaching of the Master. He did not say, “So many of you as wish to hit the sawdust trail can go to Heaven!” He did not say, “Seek to excite the people and get them to do something that they would not afterward fully understand and appreciate.” He did the reverse: He said, “Sit down first and count the cost,” before complying with the terms of discipleship. Do nothing rashly.

Some of us can count more rapidly than others. Many of the poor ones who are weary and heavy-laden through sin are ready to say, “I know the cost of sin in my personal experiences. The cost of being disciples of Jesus cannot be greater than the cost of being rebels against the Divine Law.” Such are frequently ready to decide quickly and take their stand firmly on the Lord’s side.

How to Become a Christian

It should not require long to count how much more we shall receive than we give. We give a condemned and dying existence; we give mental, moral and physical imperfections—we have no more except as our Saviour, by imputing His merit, makes our sacrifice of value in God's sight. But in exchange we receive riches of grace in the present life—peace, joy, blessing of heart, which the world can neither give nor take away—and in the life to come, “glory, honor, and immortality,” joint-heirship with our Savior in the Heavenly Kingdom which shall dominate the world for the thousand years, for its blessing and uplift.

Really, after counting the cost, there is a danger that we would feel so ashamed of the littleness of our offering that we would fear to come to the Lord with it. We gain courage to present our bodies only by a knowledge of the Lord's Word, and a realization of the mercy and favor which has prompted His kind invitation for an exchange of something of little value for great things of inestimable value. The covenant with the Lord is the beginning, and to each covenanter comes “grace to help in time of need.” Jesus said, “Without Me ye can do nothing.”

But, says one, Surely this is not the only way of coming into God's family! Yes, we answer, it is the only way. “There is none other Name given under Heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved” from our condition of condemnation, and be brought back into the family of God.

Have you ever heard the limitations and obligations of the Christian so Scripturally defined before? Have not the facts been hidden from you by the clergy? Have they not rather sought to set aside the words of Jesus because they conflict with their theories? Is not this really why so many have been unable to find the satisfying “meat in due season” in the nominal churches? We believe it is; and we urge all—ministers, everybody to return to the Bible simplicity of a fully consecrated Church of Christ, and then a restitutionary blessing for mankind through Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

The blessing upon the world will be earthly restitution to human nature, instead of a change to the Divine nature, as promised to the Church. All who refuse both the Call of the present time and the opportunity of the future Restitution will die the Second Death, which St. Peter describes as like that of the natural brute beast. Acts 3:19-23; 2 Peter 2:12.