

Is There a “Stranger at Your Door?”

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

There’s an old Hymn entitled, “THERE’S A STRANGER AT YOUR DOOR,” based, as I recall, on Revelation 3:20, which reads, “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone will hear My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and him with Me.”

This is, indeed, a sad scene! In that text Jesus is “outside the door” of His church in Laodicea, pleading for someone to OPEN THE DOOR AND LET HIM IN! Can you imagine that? – Jesus, the Son of God, Who had died for their sins; had given them the gospel; to which they had given heed; becoming His disciples; and now they have “shut Him outside!” But wait, could this be YOUR door? – the door of YOUR HEART!? You will note that He says, “If ANYONE hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him and DINE WITH HIM, and HIM WITH ME!” Can you think of such an opportunity being offered to you? But it is, if Jesus is not already dwelling in you, and you in Him. (consider Galatians 2:20)

Jesus died for YOUR sins! John wrote of “Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” (Revelation 1:5) The writer of Hebrews says, “But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels, FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH, crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God, might taste death for EVERYONE.”(Hebrews 2:9) That includes YOU! SURLY, SUCH A ONE SHOULD NOT BE A “STRANGER” to you! And surly He should not be closed outside your “door”(Heart & Life)! Jesus says, “If you love Me, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.”(JOHN 14:15) You will note that hearing His “knocking” is HEARING HIS VOICE! Then Opening Your door would be GIVING HEED TO HIS VOICE (WORD)! The Hebrew writer tells us that, in His suffering, He “Became the Author of eternal salvation TO ALL THOSE WHO OBEY HIM.” (Hebrews 5:8-9)

Someone might be a “Stranger” to us because we have never “become acquainted” with them. Or, having become acquainted; even “friends;” we might, for some reason become so “estranged” from them that we no longer recognize them when we see them, but we “recognize that voice!” Hearing the Savior’s Voice: “Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, for the remission of sins...”(Acts 2:38), or “Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray to God ... that the thought of thy heart might be forgiven you.” (Acts 8:22); HEARING HIS VOICE, will you “Open the door” of your heart; enjoy the wonderful joy of having Him “dine with you;” share your life with you!” Consider also His offer, as seen in John 14:23, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and my Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him!” ... NO LONGER A “STRANGER,” but “close friends!” with both the Father and the Son!

Is Jesus shut outside of YOUR heart and life? Please; “We pray you in Christ’s stead; be RECONCILED to God (and his Son – cm).” (2 Corinthians 5:20) As another line of that old familiar song pleads, “Open now to Him your heart. Let the Savior in!”

Vol. 9 No. 10 – June 2012 – Elon Challenger

“Beware, Lest We Drift Away!”

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

After the Inspired writer of the Hebrew letter had made appeal to the Superiority of the One through Whom God speaks to us, over those through whom He had spoken “in times past,” he warns us to “give more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest haply we **drift away** (from them).” – Hebrews 2:1, NASV

Of the word, “Drift,” W.E. Vine, in his study of N.T. Words, says it means “to glide by...things heard.” Random House Dictionary says, “...deviation from a set course...to be carried along...by force of circumstances...to wander aimlessly...”

Inspiration warns that “...many will DEPART from the faith...giving heed to doctrines of demons...!” (I Timothy 4:1), and the writer says in 1:20 that Hymenaeus and Phyletus had “rejected” matters concerning “the Faith,” and were guilty of “blasphemy!” (v. 21)

Of this later, WE are in much less danger of becoming guilty, than in the former – “DRIFTING.” Whereas the former carries with it the idea of WILFULNESS, the later might result from simply a lack of CAREFULNESS or ATTENTION to directions or instructions. Jesus describes “the way” as “Narrow” (Matthew 7:13f), and this alone would suggest that the slightest “drift” is dangerous! We would be wise to heed the caution often given to learning drivers, “Keep your eyes on the road!” In 3:12 of the same letter of our text, Inspiration warns us; individually and collectively; “take heed therefore brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” He goes on to warn that we might fail to “enter into Rest...” or heaven! Simply “Drifting” can cause us to be lost! If the helmsman is not careful, the ship will DRIFT off course, and possibly onto the rocks! If the driver becomes drowsy, or careless, the car might DRIFT into oncoming traffic! God, in His divine wisdom, has established the Course to heaven. We are warned, over and over, not to “deviate from that set Course,” but to CAREFULLY pursue – follow it!

THE DANGER OF DRIFTING IS CONSTANT! Note that the writer says, “...AT ANY TIME...!” As was true of God’s people, Israel, so it is with His people in this dispensation and time! The “falling away,” of which the apostle Paul warned in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, DID come; and such has happened over and over! The same inspired apostle warned the elders of the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:28-31); the “bottom line” to them being, “...therefore WATCH...!” That warning was not heeded; at least not for long; as we see indicated in Revelation 2:4-5. There is never a generation that can “just relax,” and feel immune to this danger! In recent years (even

now!) we have observed brethren drifting from the “right way,” into many speculations of human wisdom!

“NEGLECT” IS A THIEF! Neglect in teaching, study, knowledge...Lack of WATCHFULNESS, as noted above in the case of the church at Ephesus. Losing sight of our “aim;” taking our eyes off of the “compass,” can rob us of “eternal salvation!” BEING “BEWITCHED” (Galatians 3:1; 1:1ff), into exchanging “Truth” for “lies!” (Rom. 1:25) “Brinkism” – the philosophy that encourages disciples to steer a course just as close to “the outside line;” as close to error as they THINK the Lord will allow; presents a constant danger of “DRIFTING” outside the line! (2 John 9)

CONSIDER SOME CONSEQUENCES (and there are many!): (1) Getting “out of step” with Christ! (I Peter 1:21; cf. Rev. 2:5!) (2) We might so sicken our Lord that He will “vomit (US) out of His mouth!” (Rev. 3:16) (3) We might be consumed by “savage wolves!” (Acts 20:29) (4) We might be “carried away with every wind of doctrine!” (Eph. 4:4) RESULT: We might ultimately fail to “enter into His Rest!” (Hebrews 3:12 thru 4:1)

“LET US THEREFORE GIVE THE MORE EARNEST HEED to the things we have heard, lest WE drift away!” In the words of the apostle Peter, let us “be even the more diligent to make (OUR) calling and election sure, for if we do these things (vs. 5-7) we will never stumble (or “drift away”), for SO an entrance will be supplied (to us) abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:2-11)

Vol. 9 No. 7 – March 2012 – Elon Challenger

“We Must All Appear!”

Charles Maples, Sr.

“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, be destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens... (But) we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one of us may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad...therefore we make this our AIM, ... to be well pleasing to Him!” (2 Corinthians 5:1, 10, 9)

All of us – you, I, everyone else – will “appear” at certain places, at certain times, under certain circumstances, for certain purposes, but there is no place on earth – in this life – where/when we shall “ALL appear,” at the same time, under the same circumstances!

However, in the above text, Inspiration assures us that there will come a “time” when, under the same circumstances, EVERY accountable person, from Adam, to the last one living at the return of Christ – WILL “APPEAR!” That place, “THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST!” Whether we obtain that “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,” will depend upon whether we are “well pleasing to Him” when we appear!

He who will “call that assembly together” has told us all that we can, or need to know about that august assembly! Consider with me some six things of which He has assured us:

1 – The CERTAINTY of it is well established, in the above, as well as other Inspired Scriptures. To a “devoutly religious,” but idolatrous people the apostle Paul declared, “...God...commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given ASSURANCE of this to all by raising Him from the dead...!” (Acts 17:30f) In Hebrews 9:27 we read that, “...it is APPOINTED unto man to die once, but after this the judgment...”

Many “appointed” meetings never take place! Notice in Hebrews 7:23 a statement of this principle, “Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing...” But, even death will not hinder this “APPOINTED” meeting! It is CERTAIN; for Me, for You, and for ALL!

2- The UNCERTAINTY, as to WHEN! “But of that day (His coming – Matthew 24:3) and hour no one knows, not even the angels, but My Father only!” (V. 36) The apostle Peter warns us, “But the day of the Lord will come AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT, in which the heavens will pass

away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” (2 Peter 3:10) In fact, just when we might feel certain that “There Is Time Enough Yet,” as a line in one of our songs states, THAT might be the very time when we are all called upon to MEET THAT APPOINTMENT!

3 – **THE JUDGE** – Note that in our text the apostle tells us that we shall “APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST! We read before in Acts 17:31 that God “has given us witness” that the One whom He has appointed to be our Judge is the One whom He had “raised from the dead.” He DIED that we might have “remission of sins, (Matt. 26:28; Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:7; Acts 2:38), and He is anxious to be our SAVIOR, as seen in such Scriptures as 2 Peter 3:9; Matt. 11:28 and Rev. 22:17. But He THEN, at that “appearance,” will be our JUDGE! In that judgment He will show “no partiality” (Romans 2:11). We can be sure that He will neither “condemn the righteous,” nor will He “justify the wicked!” (Proverbs 17:15) To reject Him, is to be “judged” (condemned) by Him! (John 12:48)

4 – **“Judgment” suggests a STANDARD.** The STANDARD upon which that judgment shall be based is of vital importance! Note that in the previous verse Jesus added, “THE WORD THAT I HAVE SPOKEN will judge you in the last day.” At that great “APPEARANCE” John reminds us that “The Books” will be opened, and that we will “be judged according to (our) works, by the things which are written in the books.” (Revelation 20:12) The Judge will not appeal to the Creeds of men, nor to what we might “think,” or “feel” is right, but to “THE WORD OF THE LORD (which) IS RIGHT!” (Psalm 33:4)

5 – **“EACH ONE OF US...(You/I, personally, individually) MUST APPEAR...!”** No one of us shall “escape the judgment of God!” (Rom. 2:3) And no one else can fill that appointment for Me/You! Neither of us will be able to; as in some events here; “send a proxy!” Also consider that as surely as I can trust that I shall not be charged with another’s sins, neither shall I be given “credit” for the obedience of any other! Remember, “each one of us...according to what he has done...!”

6 – **Think of the FINAL RESULTS!** In giving the picture of this great “appearance,” Jesus ends by saying, “And these (the wicked) will go away into EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT, but the righteous into ETERNAL LIFE!” (Matthew 25:46) If I desire the reward of the righteous, then I must “live soberly, righteously and godly IN THIS PRESENT WORLD!” (Titus 2:11-12)

CONCLUSION: It is difficult to get every member (even the “able-bodied”) to be present at every, or even any given assembly of the church, but “WE WILL ALL APPEAR...” WE WILL all BE PRESENT “BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST...” In light of those facts, give attention to verse nine, of Second Corinthians five, “THEREFORE WE MAKE IT

OUR AIM ... TO BE WELL PLEASING TO HIM!" Does YOUR life/does MY life presently "Please Him" well? Please "Examine yourself, whether you are in the faith!" (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Vol. 9 No. 5 – Jan. 2012 – Elon Challenger

Are You Listening to God?

Charles Maples, Sr.

The Inspired writer of Hebrews tells us that “God...has spoken to us...” and that “...we ought to GIVE MORE EARNEST HEED to the things which we have heard..!” (Hebrews 1:1f & 2:1f) Jesus promised His apostles that the Holy Spirit would “...guide (them) into ALL TRUTH.” (Jn. 16:13ff) We are assured by the apostle Paul that by the Inspired Scriptures we are “completely furnished unto every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:16f)

In addition to these, and an abundance of other Scriptures, our God wishes to SPEAK UNTO US everything that is needed (See Deut. 29:29) to prepare us that we might be with Him in Heaven when this life is over. In addition to that, we are assured that “...when (we) read it, we may understand” all that we need to know. (Eph. 4:3-4)

We read the words of Jesus in John 8:31,32, that “If (we) continue in His Word, (we can be his) disciples, indeed,” (and that we can) “know the Truth, and the Truth will make (us) free!” Then when we read in Matthew 7:13-14 that only “few will go in thereat (that is, Heaven), we might ask, “What’s The Problem?” Whereas God has given His “Only begotten Son,” that our sins might be forgiven (See Jn. 3:16; Heb. 2:9; Eph. 1:7, etc.), then why will only “few” be Eternally Saved?

THE ANSWER is really implied in a very sad statement made by God in Jeremiah 16:12, wherein God says, “NO ONE LISTENS TO ME!” On one occasion, when God plead with Israel to seek for “the Old Paths...walk therein...” their response was, “we will not walk therein!” He then urged, “...listen to the sound of the trumpet (His warnings!)...” They replied, “...we will not listen!” (Jer. 6:16f) Can you imagine such a calloused way to REPLY TO GOD, WHO “Gives us life, and breath, and all things?”

In a very sad sound of exasperation, the God of heaven said, further in that same book of Jeremiah (16:12), “And you have done worse than your fathers, for behold, each one walks according to the imagination of his own evil heart, so that NO ONE LISTENS TO ME!”

WHY SHOULDN’T EVERYONE “LISTEN” TO GOD? Any skilled craftsman; carpenter, machinist, etc., who “creates” something, expects that “something” to serve the purpose for which he made it. In His Book, it is Jehovah God who is speaking to those creations whom He was pleased to Make in “His own image!” The Psalmist says of us [guided by the Holy Spirit], “It is He who made us, and not we ourselves.”(Ps. 100:3) It is “in Him that we live and move and have

our very being!” (Acts 17:28) Then, keep in mind that ALL that He says to us is FOR OUR OWN GOOD; not the good of Him who speaks!

BUT OF WHOM WAS HE SPEAKING in Jer. 16:12? He was not speaking of the Atheist, who says, “there is no God” (Psa 14:1). This was not said to/of those who thought there were “many gods and many lords” (I Cor. 8:5) This was not said to/of the Humanist, who says there is no higher power than SELF!

GOD WAS THERE SPEAKING OF HIS OWN PEOPLE, ISRAEL! And we might respond, “What A Tragedy! How could they be so calloused, when God had done so much for them?” But, when we bring this principle to its practical application, on a present-day, and individual basis, HOW TRAGICALLY applicable it is of many of His people TODAY! – “the Israel of God!” (Gal. 6:16) Many are NOT LISTENING TO HIM!

When God says, “Seek ye FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” Do we “...give the more earnest heed?” (Heb. 2:1) How many things in our lives come BEFORE HIM & HIS CAUSE? When He says, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” Do we “LISTEN?” When our Maker says, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN!” (Ecc. 12:13), DO WE PAY ATTENTION??

When God, Almighty; our Father; urges, “...do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2), do we “listen to Him?” When He challenges, “Test all things; hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil”(I Thess. 5:21-22). Do we “pay attention?” When He pleads, “Therefore my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58). Do we “listen to Him?”

Inspiration tells us that Christ “left us an example, that we should walk in His steps...” (I Pet. 2:21), and that “He who says he abides in Him, ought himself also to WALK JUST AS HE WALKED.” (I Jn. 2:6) But Jesus says, “...I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent me.” (Jn. 6:38) And again, “...I ALWAYS do those things that please Him.” (Jn. 8:29) Jesus ALWAYS “listened;” paid attention; to His Father! THAT is our EXAMPLE! Are we “listening” to Him?

Remember, whether we “listen” to Him while here, will make the difference as to what we will HEAR from Him at the Judgment! – whether it will be “come ye blessed,” or “depart from Me!” (Matt. 25:34, 41) Abel listened to God; his brother, Cain, did not! Just consider the different

results! Are we “LISTENING?” Or, are we among those of whom God said, “No one listens to me?” HEAR HIM, in a solemn warning in Hebrews 12:25 (which is an extension of that in verses one and two!), “See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, MUCH MORE SHALL WE NOT ESCAPE if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven...!”

“God .. has spoken unto us through His Son.” (Heb. 1:1-2) and He says, “HEAR YE HIM,” (Matt.17:5) God, the Father has given unto the Son, “all authority” (Matt. 28:18), therefore, to “hear Him” is to hear His Father. He says, “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, he who believes and is baptized shall be saved, he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mk. 16:15-16) – ARE YOU LISTENING?

Yes, it is sad to know that people in Jeremiah’s day were refusing to “Listen” to God! But it is much more so today; when we know that His “Only begotten Son” HAS DIED in our stead! AND, yes, He did that for “the whole world,” (cf. I Jn. 2:2), but note that John says, “He is the propitiation for OUR SINS..” and if we want the benefits of that blood we are urged that we must “WALK IN THE LIGHT, AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT!” (I Jn. 1:7), and we can do that ONLY IF WE “LISTEN TO HIM!” “The Light” is His Word! – Ps.119:105. ARE YOU/AM I “LISTENING?”

Vol. 9 No. 5 – Dec. 2011 – Elon Challenger

“YOU HAVE TAKEN AWAY THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE”

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

In Luke 19:10 we are told that Jesus’ mission here on earth was to “seek and save the lost,” while Inspiration reveals that the “mission” of Satan is to CAUSE ALL TO BE LOST! (cf. I Peter 5:8) In going about to accomplish his purpose, the devil uses many “devices,” and the apostle Paul says, “*We are not ignorant of his devices.*” (2 Corinthians 2:11) Jesus said, and we see it demonstrated constantly, that “FEW” will enter by the strait gate into the narrow way! (Matthew 7:13-14). The reason that so few enter that narrow way, that leads to life, is that Satan succeeds in hindering them; turning them into the BROAD WAY that leads to DESTRUCTION!

In Luke 11:52 Jesus was condemning the lawyers of His day, for they were not only not willing to enter the “way unto life,” but they were bent on hindering others from doing so! He said their means of accomplishing that was “TAKING AWAY THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE.”

THE ROLE OF “KNOWLEDGE” in God’s scheme for our salvation is abundantly demonstrated throughout the Scriptures: (1) We are told in Hebrews 11:6 that without FAITH it is impossible to please God; but one cannot come to have FAITH without KNOWLEDGE of the Word of God! (Romans 10:17; John 20:30). (2) In such Scriptures as Hebrews 5:8f.; I Peter 1:22f.; etc. we are told that those who would have the Spiritual blessings, which are only “In Christ” (Eph. 1:3), must OBEY His will. Yet, it is not only true in the spiritual realm, but even in the material matters, that KNOWLEDGE is essential to true OBEDIENCE! If we do not know what one’s will is, we cannot DO what it is that he/she requires of us! (3) It is also seen in the above that FAITHFULNESS to the will of another, in the same way, requires KNOWLEDGE, and yet we see in such Scriptures as Revelation 2:10 that in order to enter Heaven, one must “Be...faithful unto death..!” (4) Preparation for JUDGMENT (“testing”) requires KNOWLEDGE, inasmuch as we are to be JUDGED by “the things which are written in the Book!” (Revelation 20:12)

The devil, not lacking in the knowledge of all of the above, is well aware of one of the most effective “devices” in his efforts to have us with him in eternal damnation. He wants to PREVENT US FROM “..coming to a KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH!” (2 Timothy 3:7) Thus, today, we see a LACK OF KNOWLEDGE of the Inspired Scriptures (not using the “key”) on the part of individuals, among both the Children of God and those who are not in His family. In either case, the effect is the same! But as it was in Jesus’ day, as in our text, so it is in our time, that the “LAWYERS” / “CLERGY,” in so many ways “TAKE AWAY THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE!

The real barrier which the lawyers (and remember that those were “lawyers” of the LAW of God) had thrown in the way of those who would have otherwise entered was IGNORANCE of the Will of God! Recall that Jesus says, “If you CONTINUE IN MY WORD, then you are truly my disciples, and YOU WILL KNOW THE TRUTH, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32) By any means, to keep one in ignorance of the Will of God, is to “take away the Key of Knowledge.” Satan certainly knows that one of his most effective means of accomplishing this is the use of what the apostle Paul called his “ministers,” (servants) – 2 Corinthians 11:14-15; 4:3-4. In times past, and in a sense today, the “Clergy” leads people to believe that the “common people” are incapable of understanding the Bible– that they, with their degrees of human wisdom, need to “explain” the Scriptures to “the laity.” By this means and others, they hinder the study of the Scriptures, which is a responsibility of every accountable person (2 Timothy 2:15; John 5:39; Acts 17:11).

Satan, fully aware of the critical role of KNOWLEDGE of Truth, will utilize any means at his disposal to keep people ignorant of Truth. In many cases, where people have “come to a knowledge of the Truth,” he “comes and takes away the word out of their hearts...” (Luke 8:12), or he will entice, through “riches and pleasures of this life,” (v. 14), causing them to become unfaithful to the Lord. Then there is no greater barrier to true faith than the commonly taught false doctrines of “one way is just as good as another,” “join the church of your choice,” “all of these lead to heaven,” etc. Jesus prayed that all of His followers be ONE, “...that the world might BELIEVE that You sent Me...” (John 17:21). A divided “Christendom” presents a DIVIDED Christ (see I Corinthians 1:10-13), and fosters UNBELIEF, as almost nothing else can! The unbeliever, who knows anything about God, knows that He is “not the Author of confusion,” as is stated in I Corinthians 14:33. The “many ways” of Denominationalism represents Christ as a maze of confusion, and so they turn away in disbelief! This effectively “takes away the key of knowledge!”

Of course, we must not overlook the fact that much of the ignorance of the will of God is WILLFUL ignorance! (cf. 2 Peter 3:5). People are UNWILLING TO STUDY, and investigate for themselves the Word of God, that they might come to knowledge of the Truth. (discarding “the Key of Knowledge!”) Such are those who “LOVE NOT THE TRUTH...” to whom the apostle Paul refers in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11. The solemn warning is that God might “send them a working of error, that they might believe a lie, that they all may be condemned, who (do) not believe the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.” (v. 12) With such, “the Key of Knowledge” has simply been ignored!

One other way that this “device of Satan” might be utilized is by professed Christians, by their MANNER OF LIFE, “Taking away the Key of Knowledge!” For shame, all too many disciples of Christ so conduct themselves that the unbeliever is sometimes heard to say, “if that is

Christianity, then I want no part of it!” This is often, at least the “excuse” given, for someone not being willing to engage in a study of the Bible, or to attend assemblies of the church. HEAR THIS! “The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, TEACHING US that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHT- EOUSLY AND GODLY in this present age.” (Titus 2:11-12) By the “light” that is supposed to be in us, being “darkness,” then WE surely “TAKE AWAY THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE!” Thus we serve the purpose of Satan, rather than that of THE CHRIST! Let us BE CAREFUL that we never be guilty of such! In this we not only HINDER others from “entering into life,” but we will surely NOT enter ourselves!

Vol. 9 No. 1 – August. 2011 – Elon Challenger

What God Has Joined Together, Let Not Men Separate!

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

There are a number of things, of which we read, in His Inspired Word, that God has “Joined Together.” eg. Grace & Obedience (Ephesians 1:5; Hebrews 5:8f); Faith & Works (James 2:21-24); Baptism & Salvation of the alien sinner (Mark 15:15-16); The saved & His church (Acts 2:38-47), etc. But in this study I want us to consider what we might think of as His first such command/warning.

But first, just think for a moment of the arrogance of any mere man who would dare to; in any way; tamper with God’s arrangement of anything! A number of times, at the conclusion of His Creation and Arrangements, that He concluded with, “and it was good.” – that is, it was JUST AS HE WANTED IT TO BE! But He who desires that “all things work together for (our) good...”(Romans 8:28), knew that men (“considering themselves to be wise”), would come along and dare to rearrange things; to “separate;” in order to make them more pleasing to them! And so it has become so commonly accepted in our society, that most; even religious men; think nothing of obtaining, granting and approving “Separating that which God has joined together, and particularly in that which is under consideration in our Text!

“In the Beginning,” God, who “made man from the dust of the ground” (Genesis 2:7); “In His own image” (Genesis 1:27); arranged what was “good” for man and woman (Genesis 2:18-24). He then declared them to be “One Flesh” (v. 24) Jesus Christ, who was with Him in that “Beginning” (Note John 1:3), was enlarging upon that when He stated the above, “So then, they are no longer two, but one flesh. THEREFORE, what God has joined together, LET NOT MAN SEPARATE.” (Matthew 19:6)

We observe on every hand expressions of “deep concern;” the “wringing of hands;” from the religious and the non-religious; about the “breaking up of homes;” that it is “one of the greatest curses of our society!” According to common statistics, more than half of all marriages come to be broken by divorce! This means that most children of our time will grow up without the benefits of a home, as God designed it, AND that, because “men” HAVE assumed the power to “separate what God has joined!”

At the heart of this problem is a profane attitude toward marriage, as God ordained it! HEAR HIM: “A wife is bound by law to her husband as long as her husband lives;...” (I Corinthians 7:29). “For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law (of God – cgm.) to her husband as

long as he lives, so then if while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called (by God – cgm) an adulteress...” (Romans 7:2-3).

Marriage is a THREE-WAY Covenant! That is, between a man and a woman and GOD, their Creator, and to Whom they must give account for their conduct in that marriage! A couple was asked what had kept them together for 60 years; the reply by the woman, “WE MADE A VOW!” Hear Almighty God: “When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed. It is better not to vow, than to vow and not pay.” (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5)

In Malachi 2:16 we read that “The Lord God of Israel says that HE HATES DIVORCE...” and so He says, “A husband is not to divorce his wife” and “let her not divorce him” (I Corinthians 7:11-13). A divorce that comes about, “Except for sexual immorality” (Matthew 19:9), often causes one, or both, persons involved in that sin to add to that sin the sin of adultery, and cause someone else to “commit adultery!” (Matthew 5:32).

God’s wrath against this prevalent sin is seen in His warning; “Do you not know that...neither...adulterers...will inherit the kingdom of God?” (I Corinthians 6:9-10), and in Galatians 5:19ff it is listed among those “works of the flesh,” which will keep one out of “the kingdom of God!” Then, in addition to those Scriptures, we read in Revelation 21:8 that the ultimate reward for adultery is “...the lake which burns with fire and brimstone...!”

HEAR THE CHRIST: “...I say to you, WHOEVER divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and WHOEVER marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” (Matthew 19:9) Those words, from the Savior, are not difficult to understand! Whether one “understands” those simple statements by Jesus is likely to be determined by whether they have reverence for Him and what He has spoken unto us! (See Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-3; Psalm 119:128). Indeed, “WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER, LET NOT MAN SEPARATE!”

Vol. 8 No. 11 – June 2011 – Elon Challenger

The Church Does Make a Difference

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

A commonly accepted philosophy, relative to one's spiritual welfare, is that "the church doesn't make any difference," and so the conclusion is that one should just "join the church of his choice," or "you don't have to be a member of any church to be saved." But I submit to you that this is NOT what the Word of God teaches! Following are some plain, concrete reasons why we must conclude that the church to which one belongs DOES "make a difference!"

THE CHURCH WAS IN THE "ETERNAL PURPOSE" OF GOD! Read with me in Ephesians 3:8-11, "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to His eternal purpose, which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,..." Does this not suggest that the church would "make a difference!?"

CHRIST BUILT HIS CHURCH! (Even the thought of that Scriptural Fact, should surely suggest that "The Church DOES Make A Difference!") After having asked His disciples about just Who did they consider Him to be; being answered by the apostle Peter "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God;" Jesus replied, "...upon this rock (Peter's confession) I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:14-18) Surely, no thoughtful person would conclude that HIS "church doesn't make any difference!"

JESUS PURCHASED THE CHURCH WITH HIS BLOOD! The apostle Paul urged the Ephesian Elders to "...take heed to yourselves and to all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28; cf. Ephesians 5:25) Can anyone even think that the Christ would be required by God the Father to die that cruel death of the cross; shedding His blood for something that "Makes No Difference?"

CHRIST PUTS ALL OF THE SAVED INTO THE CHURCH! In Acts two we read of the first preaching of the gospel of Christ under the great commission, and the first offer of "Remission of Sins." We are told that what was preached "pricked the hearts" of many of those who heard, and when they asked "...what shall we do?" they were told to "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins..." (v. 38), then in verse forty-one Inspiration tells us that "...As many as gladly

received the Word were baptized, and there was added to them that day about three thousand souls.” Then in verse forty-seven we see “the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” Could we possibly conclude that the in which all the “Saved” are admitted by God “makes no difference?”

ALL, IN BECOMING CHRISTIANS, ARE “BAPTIZED INTO THE ONE BODY.” “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:13), and we read in Ephesians 1:22f that the “body is the church.”

THE CHURCH IS THE KINGDOM OF “KING OF KINGS!” In addition to the fact that in Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus used the terms “church” and “kingdom” synonymously, other Scriptures indicate the same. In Mark 9:31 Jesus assured His apostles that some of them would not die before His kingdom would “come with power.” In Acts 1:8 He promised that the “power” would come with the Holy Spirit, and in verse five He assured the apostles that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from the time of that statement. The apostles WERE baptized with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and we read of people being added to His church (as seen before) that day (Acts 2:1-47). In Hebrews 12:23 and verse 28 we see again the terms “church” and “kingdom used with reference to the same institution! Indeed, can anyone say that the KINGDOM of “the King of Kings” (I Timothy 6:15), “makes no difference!?”

“CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER...!” (Eph. 5:25-26) How could something that Christ loved enough to die for, be considered to “make no difference?” And then add to that, as seen in verse 27 of that same chapter, that Christ will finally “PRESENT HER (THE CHURCH) TO HIMSELF...!” Do you think that at the end of time, the Lord will present to Himself something that “makes no difference?”

IN CONCLUSION, let it be understood that all of the above Scriptures speak of THE LORD’S CHURCH; they have nothing to do with the many churches founded upon, and directed by the wisdom of men! THOSE CHURCHES, not only do not “make a difference,” in that they do not contribute to one’s salvation; but they believe, teach and practice doctrines which are CONTRARY TO SALVATION! In light of that, please read carefully 2 John 9; Colossians 3:17 and Revelation 22:18-19!

Vol. 8 No. 10 – May 2011 – Elon Challenger

“Can That Faith Save Him?”

Charles G. Maples Sr.

“What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?” (James 2:14 NASB)

Since man; of his own free will; separated himself from God (Genesis 3; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23, etc., it is inconceivable that man could be returned to fellowship with his Maker, without FAITH IN HIM, and in Him through Whom God would extend His Grace; His *“Only begotten Son!”* In fact, through the Inspired writer of the book of Hebrews, He tells us that *“Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes (back-cm) to God must BELIEVE that He is, and that He is a rewarder of all those who diligently seek Him.”* (Heb. 11:6) And in John 8:24 we hear the Savior say, *“...if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”*

From our knowledge of Scriptures such as John 3:16; Mark 16:16 Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:8 and others, we must conclude that FAITH DOES SAVE. In the case of the conversion of the Jailor at Philippi (Acts 16), when he asked Paul & Silas, *“Sirs, what must I do to BE SAVED* (v. 30), their answer was, *“Believe (have faith in) on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved...”* (v. 31) We know that salvation; both of the alien sinner and the child of God; is *“BY FAITH.”* When one reads in the KJV or the NKJV of the above text, the question is, *“CAN FAITH SAVE HIM?”* The answer to that question is, YES. But note that in the NASB rendering of it, the question is, *“Can THAT faith save him?”* – that is, can the kind of faith that is under consideration in those verses – faith WITHOUT WORKS – save him? And the answer is *“NO!”*

There are several KINDS of “faith” which CANNOT SAVE. Let us consider three of them:

1) **Faith from the WRONG SOURCE cannot save.** In I Corinthians 2:5 we read, *“that your faith should not stand in THE WISDOM OF MEN, but in the power of God.”* (Caps mine, cm.) In Matthew 15:9 we hear the words of Jesus, *“And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.”* The only SOURCE of saving faith is the Word of God, as we find it clearly stated in Romans 10:17, *“So then faith comes by hearing...the Word of God.”* In John 20:30, 31 we have stated by Inspiration the only source of Saving Faith, *“...Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book; but THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST...”*

2) **Faith that WILL NOT “WORK,” CANNOT SAVE!** Or, “Faith Only,” as we hear taught and believed by so many; cannot save, as is clearly shown in our text of James 2:14-19. Consider

v. 17, “*Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, IS DEAD.*” Such faith CANNOT GIVE “LIFE,” as spoken of in Ephesians 2:1. It is no better than that of demons! (v. 19) Then consider verse twenty-four of this context, “You see then that a man is justified by works,, and NOT BY FAITH ONLY.”

3) **Faith that “draws back” WILL NOT SAVE!** In Hebrews 10:39 we read, “*But we are not of those who DRAW BACK TO PERDITION, but of those believe to the saving of the soul.*” That same writer urges Christians to “*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of UNBELIEF in departing from the Living God.*”(3:12) In other words, “faith” that will not KEEP ONE “FAITHFUL,” will not save! Hear the admonition of the Savior, as found in Revelation 2:10, “*Be FAITHFUL until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*”

BUT CONSIDER THE KIND OF FAITH THAT WILL SAVE:

1) **Faith that comes from HEARING THE WORD OF GOD; He “...has spoken ... unto us...”** (Hebrews 2:1f). We are urged to “Give earnest heed..” to the things which He has spoken!(2:1f) As we have before seen, “*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*”(Romans 10:17) As Paul urged Timothy, “*...give attention to reading...meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all...continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*” (I Timothy 4:13-16)

2) **Faith that OBEYS** – Inspiration speaks of “OBEDIENCE OF FAITH” in Romans 1:5 & 16:25. You will find that everyone of those EXAMPLES OF SAVING FAITH, recorded in Hebrews eleven was faith that MOVED THEM TO OBEDIENCE UNTO GOD! Abraham, in a wonderful way, demonstrated the kind of faith that WILL SAVE! Consider what is said of him in Hebrews 11:8 and 17! His faith lead him to leave home; go into a land that he knew nothing about; and then, above all, to be willing to offer his son (“of promise”) as a sacrifice, because God was requiring it of him! Those of Rome who had become Christians were said to have ceased to be servants of sin, and became servants of righteousness WHEN THEIR FAITH LED THEM TO OBEDIENCE! (Romans 5:1 and 6:3-18). Note that in verses three & four, they were “baptized into Christ, being baptized into His death.” The Savior had said, “*...he who believes and is baptized shall be saved...*” (Mark 16:16)

3) **Faith that is STEADFAST, even “...until death!”** (Revelation 2:10) The apostle Paul urged Christians at Corinth to “*...be STEADFAST, UNMOVABLE, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*” (I Corinthians 15:58) As we noted before, the Hebrew writer stated, “*...we are of those who BELIEVE UNTO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL.*” (Hebrews 10:39) The CONFIDENCE that the apostle Paul had of his eternal reward, when he faced death, was based upon the fact that he “*...fought a good fight .. KEPT THE*

FAITH...!” (2 Timothy 4:6-8) Indeed “THAT FAITH (did) SAVE HIM!” Another expression of SUCH FAITH might be seen in Paul’s letter to the Philippians (3:12-14)

“CAN THAT FAITH SAVE HIM?” YES, the kind of faith that comes from a study of the Word of God; faith that moves one to OBEY THE WILL OF GOD; faith that keeps one “FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH;” YES, “That (kind of) faith” CAN save; for it brings us into the Grace of God! (Romans 5:1-2; Ephesians 2:8-9) DO YOU HAVE THAT KIND OF FAITH?”

Vol. 8 No. 9 – Apr. 2011 – Elon Challenger

A Church Kitchen – And Why Not?

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

In talking with brethren concerning kitchens, “fellowship” halls, etc., etc., I find that many who object to such do not know just why they object. Many have concluded that such is wrong, but cannot say just WHY. On the other hand, there are many who, although a part of a congregation opposed to such practices, would not object if suddenly some one should propose to start a drive for a “fellowship” hall in the church building.

Now, I am thoroughly convinced that the Lord’s church should have no part in such... but just WHY? I shall proceed to briefly state some objections.

First, let it be clearly understood that we do not object on the basis that “the building is sacred.” The building WAS built with the LORD’S MONEY, and for the purpose of WORSHIP—not FUN and FROLIC, but this does not make it “Holy.” There is no objection (Scriptural) to a “workman eating a sandwich in the basement,” nor to “the preacher bringing his lunch and eating it in his study.” However, these are far from parallel with the “fellowship” halls!

When the Lord commanded his people to assemble (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2), He authorized whatever “expedients” necessary to such assembly; such as rest rooms, water coolers, furnaces, lights, air-conditioning, etc. All of these “expedients” have to do with the assembly for the purpose of worshiping God. But the kitchen and “fellowship” halls are provided for an assembly, NOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP, but FOR FUN AND FROLIC! Which assembly God never authorized! Now, if God had commanded us to assemble for such a purpose, then within this command would be found authority for kitchens, etc. which would be necessary to the carrying out of the command. The kitchen would, by virtue of the command to assemble for feasting, become LAWFUL, and then brethren would have a right to decide whether or not such were EXPEDIENT under given circumstances.

Another point of objection is that these things place the emphasis on the physical man, instead of the spiritual. These things appeal to the appetites of the FLESH, and not to the HEART of man. These devices of meets wisdom are rapidly replacing the appeal of THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST as God’s drawing power. Many brethren have concluded, as their sectarian predecessors have, that unless we have these things we’ll not be able to “draw the crowds,” nor HOLD them after drawing them! I don’t believe such! I believe the simple gospel of the Son of God is just as appealing to the HONEST heart as it was in the first century. And of this one thing I’m sure; people who will

not be drawn by it, but must be coaxed by coffee, cake and comestibles, would not be worth very much to the Cause of New Testament Christianity!

Hear the apostle Paul: “What, have ye not houses to eat in? Or despise ye the church of God and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.” (I Cor. 11:22.) It is true that the apostle is here condemning the Corinthians for profaning the worship; but at the same time he reminds them, and US, that the place for feasting is our homes!

We all recognize that the Lord’s church is authorized to function in three fields; namely, Evangelism, Edification and Benevolence. Now, under just which of these would one place these festivities of fleshly frivolity? It couldn’t be called Evangelism, for that is the preaching of the gospel; God’s power to save the souls of men. Neither does it fit under Edification, for that is the building up and strengthening of the SOULS of saints. Nor could it by the greatest stretch of the imagination, be called Benevolence, for the work of the church in this field, as authorized in the New Testament, is the caring for Needy saints. Of course since there is no authority for such, some brethren have “reasoned” (?) as their denominational counterparts; “show us the Scripture that says ‘thou shalt not.’”

And so, WHY NOT A CHURCH KITCHEN? THERE IS NO BIBLE AUTHORITY FOR IT! And “Hear ye!” “And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of (by the authority of cgm.) the Lord Jesus.” (Col. 3:17.)

Truth Magazine VI: 7, pp. 14-15
April 1962

“Repent Ye Therefore”

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

Repentance - a commandment of God, an obligation of man, but at the same time a wonderful privilege extended by God, to man. What if, after committing sin, there were no chance for repentance ? Since sin cannot enter heaven, all who ever sinned (and "all have sinned") would surely stand condemned before God in the judgment, and be shut out of heaven. Therefore, whatever else we might say the subject, repentance is an expression of the longsuffering mercy of God. The Jewish disciples were thankful that God had "granted" repentance unto the Gentiles. (Acts 11:18.) So, when we come to think of repentance as a burdensome obligation, we should remember that without it all are doomed! and that it therefore is one of the manifold blessings of God.

But, what is repentance? As is most often true, instead of giving us a dictionary-like definition, inspiration gives us a number of illustrations of such. One of these is found in Matthew 21:8 ff. Here Jesus, in showing his disciples the meaning of this commandment, without obedience to which all would perish, says that a man had two sons who were ordered to go work in his vineyard. One said he would, but did not. The other said he would not, but later "repented and went." It is easily seen here that repentance is a complete change of mind. This is seen also on the part of God concerning His creation of man, when we are told that "it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth." (Gen. 6:6.) God had changed his mind about man, and had Noah not found favor in His sight, He might have brought an end to the human race then.

Repentance can only be brought about by godly sorrow, which in turn must be produced by genuine faith. One of the many erroneous ideas concerning repentance is the confusing of godly sorrows, or any other kind of sorrow, with repentance. Sorrow, even godly sorrow, is not repentance, but if it be of a godly sort, will lead to repentance. (2 Corinthians 7:10.) A person might simply conclude that it is wise, because of social reasons, for business purposes, or even for fear of the "powers that be," to change his way of living. This is not a result of "godly" sorrow, and therefore is not the results of Bible repentance. On the other hand, one might be genuinely sorry, with sorrow of a godly sort, and yet be short of repentance. We see then that since godly sorrow worketh repentance, it is not repentance itself. And, since godly sorrow worketh repentance, the changes brought about in one's life because of some other motive, are not the results of repentance.

Repentance, as faith, can only be proven to be a reality by practical evidences. Just as James shows that saving faith is only that which is shown by works, so John the baptizer demanded of those

who came for his baptism, in pretense, that they "bring forth fruits meet for (as evidence of C.G.M.) repentance." (Matt. 3:8.) Until there was practical evidence of such, he would not believe that they had repented, which they must do in order to be fit subjects for baptism. Genuine repentance will lead one, first of all, to frankly admit having been wrong. One who will not admit guilt of sins has surely not come to repentance. A penitent individual will also repudiate every former practice found to be out of harmony with the will of God. The individual who continues to practice old sins, has obviously not repented, no matter how much he might say so.

Repentance is UNTO LIFE (Acts 11:18). Man, short of repentance, is "dead in trespasses and sins," and there can be no spiritual life short of true repentance. Peter told the Jews on Pentecost, "repent and be baptized unto the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). To another similar group, he said, "repent ye therefore and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). This being so, one is still in his sins as long as he has not genuinely repented, regardless of how many religious groups he might belong to, or how pious he might seem to be.

Of course repentance is not the only command which must be obeyed in order to obtain the remission of sins, but one whose faith and godly sorrow have led him to repent, will gladly confess the blessed name of Christ, and be buried with Him in baptism, for the remission of his sins.

Let us not conclude that repentance is demanded of the alien sinner only (seemingly many "Christians" have so concluded), for Jesus once and for all denounced that idea when he said to his own disciples, "I tell you nay: but except YE repent, YE shall all likewise perish." (Lk. 13:3.) Indeed God does command "that all men everywhere repent" (Acts 17:30), whether it be one out of, or in covenant relations with Him. Peter told Simon, who had obeyed the gospel, as the others of Samaria had done, to "repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart be forgiven thee." (Acts 8 :22.) In the letters to the seven churches of Asia, the Lord, over and over calls upon them to repent. (Rev. 2-3.) As then, so today, there needs to be much repenting done by many members of the Lord's church.

The impenitent heart is always abominable in the sight of the Lord, regardless of by whom it might be possessed. While on the other hand, God has always respected the penitent and contrite heart. Christ suffered on the cross that "repentance and remission of sins" might be preached in His name (Lk. 24:47). God desires that all come to repentance, and continues his longsuffering for that very purpose (2 Pet. 3:9). Therefore, good reader, in the words of the Lord to the church of the Laodiceans, "be zealous therefore, and repent."

“Dangers of the Modern Dance”

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

Among the many problems confronting youth today, and especially young Christians, is what should be their attitude toward so-called "recreation." Instead of re-creating, much of it is demoralizing and destructive. (WRECKreation) High on the list of activities paraded under this guise of Satan is the modern dance.

I realize that we live in a time when most young people have time on their hands and Satan has deceived young people, and many parents, into thinking that the dance is a fine and wholesome way to spend that time. But, my dear young friends, and deceived parents, please study with me some of the many evils of this trap of Satan, and ask yourselves the question, "Is it worth the risk."

FIRST-the very fact that it poses such a problem is evidence enough that dancing is QUESTIONABLE. As we shall note later by testimony, many even worldly people admit the evils of it. Those things which are doubtful are sinful for Christians. (Rom. 14:23.) Therefore, if it could be proven to be right otherwise, this is enough to demand that every Christian abstain from such.

SECONDLY-it is destructive to one's Christian influence. The dancing church member is looked upon by the people of the world with little respect and by the faithful Christian as a weak and erring brother. One participating in such can have little or no influence. for good, and at the same time might become a "stumbling block" to others. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16.) The very fact that dancing destroys one's influence demands that every Christian have no part in such.

THIRDLY-the modern dance is of the world. All who have named the name of Christ are to be a "peculiar people," that is, they are to be different and easily distinguished from the world. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." (I Peter 2:9.) "Friendship with the world is enmity with God" (Jas. 4: 4) and therefore for one to participate in such makes him an enemy to God! John urges, "love not the world, neither the things that are it the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (I John 2:15.) Paul warns, "Be not deceived, evil companionships corrupt good morals." (I Cor. 15:33.) Therefore, for a church-member to participate in such is to destroy that distinctiveness which must be seen between him and the world.

FOURTHLY-the fruits of the modern dance are only evil always! Jesus declares, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." (Matt. 7:17.) Young

friends, and poor deluded parents, please consider this: a small portion of the abundance of undeniable testimony available: "Most juvenile crime had its inception in the dance hall, either public or private."-J. Edgar Hoover. (Those foolish enough to argue that they should provide "supervised" dancing to keep our young people out of the public dance halls should give careful notice to this.) "Dance halls are the modern nurseries of divorce courts, training shops for prostitution and graduating schools of infamy and vice."-Dr. Frank Richardson. "Seven-tenths of the girls received here have fallen through dancing and its influences."A Matron of a home for fallen women in Los Angeles, California. Need we consider further testimony? But lest some young man, or parents of young men, reason, "All this testimony concerns girls only; therefore has nothing to do with me," remember, even if you could participate without falling, you are still held accountable before God for every case of a fallen girl with which you participated, for in this you surely contributed to her fall! "Think not that ye shall be held guiltless"!

FIFTHLY-the modern dance is enslaving. After one has participated in such, he considers other means of entertainment "too tame." It will cause its participants to disregard the feelings and wishes of others. When a school dance is planned it just must be regardless of how many object, or how many must "stay at home" or violate their conscience.

SIXTHLY-the modern dance is specifically condemned in the Word of God! It is REVELRY- "Envyings, drunkenness, revelings and such like; of which I forwarn you, even as I did forwarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:21.) In Whedon's commentary he states, "REVELINGS - Inclusive of drinking, feasting, dancing, etc. And here we record our testimony against all dancing, even in private circles. It is a branch of a whole system of connected revelry, just as card playing is a branch of a whole connected system of venture and gambling." In Webster's unabridged dictionary dancing is one of the listings under revelry. "Those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

FINALLY-dancing is lasciviousness. In the nineteenth verse of that same fifth chapter of Galatians, as Paul begins the list of works of the flesh he states, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness." Webster defines lasciviousness as, "Tending to produce lewd emotions." Anyone who has participated in the modern dance who will be completely honest will have to admit that such certainly produces "lewd emotion." In A. G. Hobb's tract IS IT RIGHT TO DANCE? he states that an audience of 1500 men were asked the question, "How many can dance and not have evil thoughts," and not one hand was raised! Hear this testimony from one in a position to know: "I attack the modern dance as a reversion toward savagery. As a medical man, I flatly charge that modern dancing is fundamentally sinful and evil. I charge that dancing charm is based entirely on sex appeal. I charge that dancing is the most advanced and most incidious maneuvering preliminary to sex betrayal. It is nothing more than damnable, diabolical, animal, physical dissipation. I tell you the basic spell of the dance

is the spell of illicit physical contact. Under what other shield can a man, or woman, a youth or maiden so promiscuously fondle so many of the opposite sex in a single night, or a lifetime - Dr. E. S. Sonners, M.D.-nerve specialist of Chicago, in THE CARNIVAL OF DEATH, pp. 68, 69.

This, my dear reader, is unquestionably one of the insidious devices of Satan, and as Paul states . . . we are not ignorant of his devices." (2 Cor. 2:11).

Truth Magazine IV:1, pp. 15-16
October 1959

“What Must I Do To Be Saved?”

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

Note: Salvation is BY GRACE (Eph. 2:5); but CONDITIONAL (Heb 5:8-9).

1. You must HEAR the gospel of Christ (Romans 10:14; Matt. 17:5; Acts 3:22f)
2. You must BELIEVE in Jesus as the Christ (John 8:21-24; Acts 8:37)
3. You must REPENT of your sins (Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38)
4. You must be BAPTIZED for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15f)
5. You must be FAITHFUL unto death (Revelation 2:10; 1 Corinthians 15:58)

“What Must I Do To Be Lost?”

NOTHING! If you are accountable, you have sinned (Romans 3:23). If you die in your sins, you cannot go to heaven! (John 8:21-24). Salvation was provided by the Savior for a”all who OBEY Him” (Hebrews 5:8f). Therefore if you DO NOT OBEY HIM, you will be eternally lost! (1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). *PLEASE DO NOT TAKE THAT RISK!*

“We pray you in Christ’s stead, be reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. 5:20)

Vol. 1 No. 2 – Sept. 2003 – Elon Challenger

“Set Thine House in Order”

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

Many times we have planned, and made arrangements for expected guests, sometimes having weeks, or even months, to set things in order. But how many times have you suddenly learned that otherwise unexpected visitors are to arrive in a very short time? You rushed around to "set the house in order," to tidy up things. Even if you manage to get things looking "decent," chances are that you are not nearly so pleased to invite your guests in when they arrive, as when you had been forewarned earlier, and therefore had more time to "get ready."

But That Is Not The House Of Which We Ask!

Although we cannot expect God to give us a special warning, as He did Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1), He is, in His Word, warning us to set our spiritual house in order. He shows us what it means to be ushered into eternity, either prepared or unprepared, in Luke 16. Lazarus had made proper preparations, and was at rest "*in Abraham's bosom*," while the rich man had failed to "*make ready*," and therefore awoke in flaming torment!

So many of us have things "deranged" in our spiritual houses: Envy, strife, bitterness, etc. have moved into our hearts, crowding out the "furnishings" of love, forgiveness, sober thinking, meekness, etc. still others, through unfaithfulness, indicate they are not really concerned about the appearance of their spiritual house. And, of course, there are so many, many others, some of whom will read this, who have made no preparation at all- they have not obeyed the gospel of our Saviour! (See 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Stop! Take a good look at your spiritual house. The Lord will return without warning, other than found in His word, and then you will find that it is too late to "straighten up things!" Have you obeyed the gospel? Are YOU living faithfully to Christ? Would you be happy to have Christ come and find your house in its present condition? If not, then why do you wait?

"Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." Do it now!

***Gospel Guide
March, 1981***

According to the Bible

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

"*ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE*:" only those who come to God through Christ can have spiritual life here, and hope of eternal life when this earthly life has ended. Jesus declares, "***I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by me.***" (John 14:6). To reject the Christ is to reject the salvation offered by God, in Him (Ephesians 1:3,7; 2 Timothy 2:10), and this means NO SPIRITUAL LIFE HERE, and the "*SECOND DEATH*" for eternity! (Revelation 21:8)

Come to Christ, "***that they (you) may have life, and that ... more abundantly.***" (John 10:10)

The Instructor (East Albertville Church of Christ Bulletin)

Volume 25, Number 10 – October, 1988

How Do You Know You Are Saved?

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

The above question was asked by a religious surveyor of a young woman who was recently baptized into Christ. Seemingly the purpose of that question was to cause doubt in the mind of that young child of God. The suggestion was that in order to be certain that we are saved, we must trust in our "feelings"; and that we must believe the doctrine of "once saved, always saved"; that if you are not now absolutely sure you will make it to heaven, then this is a sign that you have not been saved!

Well, among other reflections on this, we would have to conclude that the apostle Paul was "never saved," for when he wrote the Phillipians he was not "sure he would make it to heaven." Hear him: ***"Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold on it yet, but one thing I do; forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ."*** (Phil. 3:13f, NASV). Again he said, ***"... I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified."*** (1 Cor. 9:27). In the next chapter (verse 12) he says, ***"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."*** And so, the apostle did not know, at that time, whether he would make it to heaven. Am I at an advantage over him? Can I "know for certain" now, when the inspired apostle did not? In view of those Scriptures, and many others, we must conclude that I can not!

However, I can know whether or not I am now saved! This can be shown in a number of ways, but consider this: I know that ***"God is not slack concerning his promises"*** (2 Peter 3:9), and that whatever He promises me I will have when I meet His conditions.

He says, ***"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,"*** and ***"Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."*** (Acts 2:38). Therefore, I know that when my faith in Him led me to repent and be baptized, He remitted my sins! I was then saved; I ceased to be a "servant of sin," and became a ***"servant of righteousness."*** (Romans 6:17f.) I know that! However, the Scriptures teach that this individual who has been ***"born again"*** is not ***"sinlessly perfect."*** As we have seen in that case of the apostle Paul, we must make a diligent effort to ***"live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."*** (Tit. 2:11-12). John says that one who says he does sin is a liar! (1 John 1:8). But look further: the child of God is admonished to ***"sin not"*** (1 John 2:1), but then we are assured that when we do sin, ***"we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins."*** (v.2). We see in 1 John 1:9 that the child of

God must "*confess (his) sins*," of which he must also repent. (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30). He then assures us that "*He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

We therefore conclude that the child of God can know whether the sins he has committed since being born again not are forgiven, determined by whether or not he has met the Lord's conditions. He can know whether or not he is now saved!

Have you met His conditions for salvation? May we assist you in doing so?

Gospel Guide
October, 1982