



# Seek The Old Paths

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

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## IS CHRISTIANITY THE ONLY TRUE RELIGION?

*Matthew Carver*

In our postmodern society wherein truth is reduced to the personal worldview of the individual, it has become increasingly unpopular, even politically incorrect, to claim that only one religion holds the answer to life's ultimate questions. One is looked upon as narrow and bigoted if it is insisted that God has revealed Himself decisively in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The reasons for this are varied and stretch back many years. However, in our contemporary times it is unfashionable to claim any degree of exclusivity for one's religion. This, in the eyes of many, becomes the height of intolerance. All views, so the position goes, should be held with equal respect and validity. When applied to religious matters, this view is known as religious pluralism.

### RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Religious pluralism has been defined as that position which states, “Any (or perhaps all) religions lead to God or salvation. Following any religious path enables believers to reach the religious goal” (Clark 292). Although this maxim rings pleasantly in the ears of many within our society, the general principles upon which it is founded are inherently contradictory. A number of avenues can be traversed to expose the innate weaknesses of this philosophy, but for the sake of this article the two weightiest flaws will be considered.

First, this ideology is erected upon a crumbling foundation of poor logic. The contention that all religions ultimately lead to spiritual edifica-

tion and salvation through the same God, violates a fundamental law of logic known as the *Law of Non-contradiction*. This law states that “no two contradictory statements can both be true at the same time and in the same sense” (Geisler & Brooks 16). When one affirms the validity of all religions, the implicit affirmation is that all of the claims of each religion are true. Otherwise, such a broad contention could not be made. However, a review of the major claims of the leading worldviews of our day reveals stark and contradictory differences.

If the pluralist insists that Christianity can be true along with all other world religions, then we must insist that it is true in every particular, including the claims that it makes about itself. But Christianity claims to be the only way to God. If this claim is false, then it can no longer be said that Christianity is true. As the Law of Non-contradiction affirms, something cannot be both true and not true at the same time. This leads to our next observation.

A second and most important area in which this ideology (i.e., all religions lead to salvation) fails is that it contradicts the testimony of the word of God. Granted, this fact only concerns those who style themselves “Christian” while also adopting the worldview of religious pluralism. However, such individuals exist and it is important to demonstrate their error here.

The Bible is explicit that there is no other path to communion with

God and salvation outside of the one blazed by His divine Son, Jesus Christ. One of the most well known passages in all the Bible captures these words of Jesus: “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*” (John 14:6). Obviously, to affirm that salvation can be accessed through the Hindu god Brahma or the spiritual teachings of Siddhartha Gotama (Buddha), is in direct conflict with Jesus' statement. Furthermore, when standing before the Jewish rulers of first century Palestine, the apostle Peter declared, “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12). Again, no occasion for another god or gods can be seen. Hence, the foundation for salvation is found only in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11) in whom alone God has located (placed, deposited) eternal life (1 John 5:11). To be without Christ is described as “*having no hope and without God*” (Eph. 2:12). No one is said to have God while denying His Son (1 John 2:23). In fact, to deny God's own testimony concerning the Son is described in terms of making God Himself a liar (1 John 5:10). Hence, for anyone to claim Christianity as their own while affirming religious pluralism, is to completely surrender the convictions and distinguishing features of the Christian faith.

*(Continued on page 79)*

**Only True Religion?...**



Editorial...

## BACK TO THE BIBLE #2

Garland M. Robinson

It's not uncommon to hear people say that what we believe and teach is just our interpretation or opinion. They tell us "everybody has their own belief and that one church is just as good as another." These words come from those who don't know the truth and frankly, don't love the truth. As a matter of fact, they don't think anyone can know the truth. The devil would like nothing more than to convince people that we can't really know the truth. He knows the truth can save men from their sins, so he desperately seeks to keep them from the saving word. He wants people to believe that the Lord's church is just one of many in the world.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus reveals that when men hear the Gospel (the seed is sown), the devil comes along and quickly snatches it away. *"Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved"* (Luke 8:12). Why the urgency? The answer is that Satan knows the power of the Word of God to change men's lives. *"For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Heb. 4:12). *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"* (Rom. 1:16). Satan does not want the Word to linger in one's heart. He wants desperately to get rid of it and not give it a chance to grow. Sadly, he has plenty coworkers, even in the church, that try to tell us it's arrogant to think we can know the truth. Therefore, they have no respect for the word of God and cast doubt on it with their suppositions and theories.

If men can't know the truth, then

whose fault is it? The end result of this absurd idea makes it God's fault. What they're saying is that God, the One who made the universe and all things that exist, is not smart enough, nor is he able, to communicate his will to man whom he created. Who is willing to believe such a preposterous error? The truth is, God is *omnipotent* (all powerful, Jer. 32:17), *omniscient* (all knowing, Heb. 4:12-13), and *omnipresent* (everywhere, Psalm 139). It is foolish man who thinks he is smarter than God! God is fully capable of revealing his holy divine will unto mankind; and, he has done so in the holy Scriptures, the Bible. But, he does not shove it down our throats. He expects us to dig and study. *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Tim. 2:15).

God's word, the Bible, is "truth" (John 17:17; Psa. 119:142,151). It "alone" is Truth (2 Tim. 3:16-17); and, it is "all" Truth (2 Peter 1:3). Nothing has been left out that man needs. Psalm 12:6 says, *"The words of the LORD [are] pure words: [as] silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."* The 19th Psalm reveals that, *"<sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD [is] perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD [is] sure, making wise the simple. <sup>8</sup>The statutes of the LORD [are] right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD [is] pure, enlightening the eyes. <sup>9</sup>The fear of the LORD [is] clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD [are] true [and] righteous altogether. <sup>9</sup>Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed [thereto] according to thy word"* (vs.7-9). Who in the whole world would be brazen enough to stand up and say we can't understand these verses? A man would need help to misunderstand what God plainly says. Sadly, there are multitudes willing to offer such help! No wonder the world is bewildered

and confused.

The Lord Jesus tells the world we can KNOW the TRUTH and we can know that we know. Jesus said, *"If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:31-32). If man cannot understand the Bible, then he cannot be saved. That would make salvation impossible and God a liar. It is only by the truth (the word) that we learn of God's offer of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Jesus said the truth shall make you free — free from the consequence and penalty of our sins. How can the truth make us free? It makes us free by informing us of our sins (Rom. 3:10,23) and telling us what to do to have forgiveness of our sins. The inspired word says, *"Seeing ye 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 for ever"* (1 Peter 1:22-23). Man cannot go to heaven without being "born again." Born again of water and of the Spirit — water baptism according to the word of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-5).

Without the Truth, mankind is stranded, forever lost in his sins. The only way God communicates to us is IN and BY and THROUGH his all inspired word. We do not know God's will by feelings, nudges or premonitions. By inspiration, the Psalmist was caused to record the power of God's word (cf. Rom. 1:16). He had great respect for it. Notice what he says in Psalm 119: Blessed are they who seek God's word and walk in it (vs.1-2). It is by heeding God's word that we cleanse our way (v.9); and, when we keep it in our heart, we're able to keep from sinning (v.11) because it's only by violating his word that we sin (1 John 3:4). How can we keep it if we can't know it? How foolish men can be.

The wicked forsake God's word (Psa. 119:53,155,158) but the righteous keep it (v.61). God's word teaches us (v.102) because we can understand it and hate every way that is contrary to it (vs.104,128). It is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (vs.105,130). We are made alive (quicken) according to the Word (v.154). It teaches us to live soberly, righteously and godly (Titus

2:12).

Our plea is to go back to the Bible. There's nothing wrong and everything right when we call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. This is called a "thus saith the Lord" — a phrase found in 413 verses of the Bible. It is in accordance with having Bible authority (book, chapter and verse)

for all we say and do. This great principle is pointed out in Colossians 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

So, what's wrong with going back to the Bible? Not one single thing! Liberals and progressives hate it because they don't love the truth.

They had rather please men. They make every effort to excuse and explain away what the Bible says. They go to great lengths to circumvent the Scriptures and they do so to their own destruction (cf. 2 Peter 3:16). Don't be a partaker of their evil deeds (cf. 2 John 9-11).

## Elder's COLUMN

### ELDERS

*Franklin Camp, deceased*

There is a growing disregard for elders. This is symptomatic of our day where human wisdom is substituted for divine revelation. I want to say something on the other side.

I appreciate elders because this is God's plan (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). The one that does not respect elders fails to respect God's word and God's way. I cannot be faithful to the Bible and disregard elders.

**I appreciate elders because of the responsibility they accept.** No men on earth have a graver responsibility than elders. The president of the United States with all of our problems does not bear the responsibility of elders. Elders are responsible for carrying the Gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). But that is not the end of the elders' responsibilities. They must watch after souls. They will have to give an account of the souls that are under their oversight. I appreciate the man that is willing to accept the responsibility of an elder.

**I appreciate elders because of the time they give to the Lord's work.** While others are free to use their time in various ways, elders must use much of their time in fulfilling their duties. There are meetings where time must be given to planning the work, dealing with problems, and many other things. This requires a great deal of time. I appreciate the man who is willing to take the time necessary to do the work of an elder.

**I appreciate elders because they work with the least encouragement of any people I know.**

I've often wondered how long I would continue to preach if I received criticism as elders do with so little encouragement. Few people in any congregation think to give a word to encourage the elders. I appreciate men that will give years to helping the church grow, struggle with its problems, accept criticism, receive little or no encouragement, and continue to do its work.

**I appreciate elders because of their families.** First, they have done a good job in training their children and in building a stable mar-

riage. My hat is off to the man that has a family that makes it possible for him to serve as an elder.

**I appreciate elders because of the sacrifices they make so they can serve.** Time that might be spent with his family is often used in doing the work of the Lord. I appreciate families that are willing to allow the husband and father to spend the time that is needed in dealing with the problems, planning the work of the church, and being concerned about the welfare of people that are under their oversight.



The world of substance abuse affects every facet of our lives: physically, emotionally, socially, financially and spiritually. Few have been immune from it's evil clutches. More attention needs to be given to this imposing plague. The Bible addresses the issue plainly (Gal. 5).

**Fri. 7 pm:** *The Lighter Substances: Tobacco, Marijuana & Alcohol*

**Sat. 7 pm:** *The Hard Drugs*

**Sun. 9 am:** *Unspotted From The World Of Substance Abuse*

**Sun. 6 pm:** *Be Not Conformed To The World*

**November 7-9, 2014**

**Leoni Church of Christ** | 6818 McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190

**TOM HOUSE**, Gospel Preacher, Commissioned Deputy Sheriff

# WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #10 (PART 1)

Nathan Franson

**T**he Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is driven largely by a creed of thirteen “Articles of Faith.” To see our ongoing examination of these “Articles,” go to [seektheoldpaths.com/stop2014.htm](http://seektheoldpaths.com/stop2014.htm).

The tenth *Article of Faith* states, **“We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.”** We will examine this in two parts. The first part in this issue and the second part next month.

The Mormon Church holds a *Postmillennial* view. This means they believe there will be an age of peace and prosperity on the earth, after which the coming of Christ will occur at the end of the millennium. Premillennialism on the other hand, is the belief that Christ will physically and literally come to earth before his 1,000 year reign in peace on the earth. The entire Millennial system fails for a number of reasons that contradicts Bible history.

Context is imperative when examining the *land promise* made to Israel. Millennialists contend that the land of Canaan was unconditionally promised to the descendants of Abraham. They claim that since the promise was never completely fulfilled (in their minds), Abraham must be raised from the dead and the Jews must be restored to their land so the Abrahamic covenant can be fulfilled. However, the Bible reveals the fulfillment of the land promise to Abraham through his descendants (children of Israel).

First, there were six cities of refuge mentioned in the Bible. Moses writes, *“And if the Lord thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the Lord thy God, and to walk*

*ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three”* (Deut. 19:8-9). Joshua also makes clear there were six cities (Josh. 20:7-8). Since there were six cities, it is clear God kept His promise.

When David was king, he recovered the land which had been taken by their enemies (2 Sam. 8:1-3). How could David recover something without it first having been possessed and then lost?

The Scriptures show that Solomon reigned over the land promised to Abraham. Moses writes, *“In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates”* (Gen. 15:18). First Kings 4:21 confirms that *“...Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.”* It is further stated in the book of Second Chronicles: *“And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt”* (2 Chron. 9:26). How could Solomon reign over a land which they did not possess?

Moses records the promise made by God to the children of Israel. ***“And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I [am] the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I [am] the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land,***

***concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I [am] the LORD”*** (Exodus 6:4-8).

Joshua confirms the promise was fulfilled: ***“And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass [emph, FF]”*** (Josh. 21:43-45).

The promise by God that the land was given to Israel is validated in numerous places in the Bible (cf. 1 King 8:56; Neh. 9:7-8). However, possessing the land on a continual basis was conditional. If they disobeyed God they would lose it. Joshua writes, ***“When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you”*** (Josh. 23:16). Moses had given the same caution (Deut. 8:19-20; 30:15-20).

Just as they had been warned not to do, the nation of Israel forgot God and He caused it to perish. Through Jeremiah, God prophesied the nation would never be made whole again (Jer. 19:11). Christ made the same declaration six hundred years later to His apostles (Matt. 21:33-45). This was settled in A.D.70 upon the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24). A future restoration of Israel to the land of Canaan (Palestine) is not possible because all records, including the Ten Tribes, were destroyed. In order for the restoration of the Jews to be accomplished in returning from Babylonian captivity, they were

required to establish descent, family, tribe and estates, without which Ezra said they could not be restored (cf. Ezra 2:59,61-62).

Millennialists fall short in their alleged prediction since the promise was fulfilled long ago. Whereas the children of Israel lost their land when they were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, they later came out of captivity and possessed the land. This restoration occurred during the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia when he defeated Babylon.

Ezra writes, *“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and [put it] also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah. Who [is there] among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he [is] the God,) which [is] in Jerusalem”* (Ezra 1:1-3).

Jeremiah writes, *“And this whole land shall be a desolation, [and] an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, [that] I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, [even] all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations”* (Jer. 25:11-13).

Nehemiah prayed for the children of Israel to be restored according to the promise made unto Moses (Neh. 1:8-11). God answered that prayer in Nehemiah’s day. Millennialists constantly try to find passages to corroborate their confused theology. They argue that Isaiah’s prophecy will be fulfilled with the establishment of the “millennial kingdom.”

Isaiah writes, *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, [that] the mountain of the LORD’S house shall*

*be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem”* (Isa. 2:2-3). Paul clarifies years later that the “house” under consideration is Christ’s church (church of Christ). He writes, *“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”* (1 Tim. 3:15). Peter spoke of the last days as beginning on Pentecost (Acts 2:16-17). Notice, Peter did not say we are in the “next to the last days.”

Millennialists also argue that Isaiah’s prophecy refers directly to a future kingdom by using Isaiah 11:1-16. However, Daniel identifies the “holy mountain” as the church (Dan. 2:35,44). Furthermore, Isaiah 11:10 is quoted by Paul in the New Testament in reference to the acceptance of Gentiles coming into the church. He writes, *“And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust”* (Rom. 15:12).

In order for true restoration to occur, several things would need to be in place. First, there would need to be an identification of all tribes. Since all records were lost in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, it is impossible to establish that. Second, there would need to be a division of the lands according to the Old Testament. Third, there would need to be a reestablishment of the Levitical priesthood. With this there would also need to be a return to the method of worship under the Old Testament. Finally, there would need to be a full restoration of the Law of Moses. Consider that all of this would nullify the work Christ did and destroy the entire Gospel system. The Law of Moses was taken away, being nailed to the cross (cf. Heb. 10:9-10; Col. 2:14).

In the next issue of STOP, we will continue examining their *Tenth Article of Faith* by addressing their belief that there will be a “New Jerusalem”

on the American continent. We will also examine if Christ will personally reign upon the earth and if the earth will be renewed.

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Baker C/C, Baker, FL.....	\$25
Macedonia C/C, Dresden, TN .....	\$300
Anonymous .....	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$80
Molly McDonald .....	\$70
Anonymous .....	\$100
Tiftonia C/C, Chattanooga, TN.....	\$100
Bradford C/C, Bradford, TN.....	\$100
Beginning Balance .....	\$9,964.16
Contributions .....	\$3,535.00
Debits	
Postage.....	\$1,832.13
Paper.....	\$1,875.00
Supplies .....	\$43.06
Ending Balance .....	\$9,748.97

# THE LIGHT THAT THE WORLD NEEDS

Roger D. Campbell

God, Who “knoweth all things” (1 John 3:20), knew that the world needed physical light. In Genesis 1:3 we read, “And God said, *Let there be light; and there was light.*” In the Bible we often read of light being set in contrast to darkness. “And God divided the light from the darkness” on the first day of creation (Gen. 1:4). In the spiritual realm, there is also a plain distinction between light and darkness. For example, Jesus explained Paul’s mission to the Gentiles this way: “*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God...*” (Acts 26:18). There are but two possibilities: one either walks in the light, or else he walks in darkness, he cannot do both at the same time (1 John 1:6,7).

Mankind desperately needs spiritual light in order that he might see how to walk. Just what is that spiritual light the world needs so badly? Let us note three Bible answers.

**The world needs God, for He is light.** The Psalmist declared, “*The LORD is my light and my salvation*” (Psa. 27:1). Again, we read, “*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*” (1 John 1:5). No Bible description of God is more plain than the three words, “God is light.”

In the writings of the apostle John, we often read that Jesus the Christ is light. “*In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*” (John 1:4-9). Of whom did John the Baptizer witness? Of “the Light.” Later in that same chapter we learn that the One about Whom John witnessed was Jesus (John 1:29-34). Thus, Jesus was “the Light.” Jesus Himself said, “*I am the light of*

*the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. ... As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world ... I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness*” (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). In addition, it is written of that great “city” whose builder and maker is God, “*And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof*” (Rev. 21:23).

How blind is the person who does not see his need for Jehovah! The world needs God, and not vice versa. We need God for our very existence. “*God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing; seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things*” (Acts 17:24,25). Further, we need the Lord for spiritual guidance. Why? Because no matter how educated a person might be, by his own wisdom he still cannot know the proper way to go in life. The proof? “*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*” (Jer. 10:23). Man’s greatest need is salvation from sin. The only One Who can save us is the God of heaven Who created us. Without His grace, no one could be saved: “*For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God*” (Eph. 2:8). Let us never be ashamed to bow before the great I Am and confess our need for Him!

**The world needs God’s word, for it is light.** “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. ... The entrance of thy words giveth light*” (Psa. 119:105,130). The Holy Spirit speaks also of the light of the Gospel: “*In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them*” (2 Cor. 4:4). Paul instructed the Christians at Philippi to shine as

lights in the world by “holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:15,16).

Yes, a person can live physically, even though he does not obey the Gospel of Jesus. But, without the Gospel the world lies in spiritual darkness. “*And the whole world lieth in wickedness*” (1 John 5:19). Through the Gospel, God calls men out of that darkness into the light of His dear Son (2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9). Also, without the Gospel, man lives in ignorance, not knowing the good to which he should hold and the evil from which he must abstain (1 Thess. 5:21,22). Only in the Gospel does God show us what is truly “good” and “bad” for us.

We should never entertain the slightest doubt that the world needs the Gospel, seeing that Paul by inspiration wrote, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom. 1:16). We should never be ashamed to tell the world this great truth: God’s word “*is able to save your souls*” (James 1:21). If we accept this plain Bible fact, then should we not use our energy to preach the Gospel to the world that needs it so badly?! The Jewish leaders once told the apostles, “*And behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us*” (Acts 5:28). Brethren, how much are you and I doing to fill the place where we live with the Gospel of Christ? It will not happen by accident! We must work diligently! Every man and woman needs the Gospel, and it is God’s will that you and I, as His children, teach it to them. How much effort are we really putting forth to get the Lord’s message of light to the lost people of our community?

**The world needs the light of Christians’ godly example.** To the Christians in Ephesus the Holy Spirit said, “*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light*” (Eph. 5:8). As children of light, we must walk in the light as our Lord is in the light (1 John 1:7). Jesus said, “*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. ... Let your light so*

shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:14,16). We understand that our example does not produce faith. Faith comes only by hearing the Gospel (Rom. 10:17). We also recognize that our example cannot wash away another person’s sins. However, Jesus’ words plainly show that our light or good example (“good works”) can play a role in influencing others to glorify our Heavenly Father. “*This present evil world*” (Gal. 1:4) needs the light of our godly example!

Where is our light at work when our co-workers openly admit they sometimes call in sick, when in reality they are not sick at all? Where is our light when our “friends” begin to tell us dirty jokes? Where is our light when other parents are screaming and swearing at the coach, blaming him/her for the team’s loss? Where is our light on Wednesday nights, when the saints assemble to study, sing, and pray together? Where is our light when the faith of others begins to waver?

Our light must shine at all times, not only on Sundays when we are with other Christians. Our family must see our light. Our friends and co-workers must see it, too. The Holy Spirit told Timothy, “*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation [conduct, NKJV], in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity*” (1 Tim. 4:12). Do we doubt that the Lord wants us to be the same kind of example? Paul also instructed Titus, “*In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works*” (Titus 2:7). Suppose others imitated the pattern of your life and mine. Would our pattern help lead them to the Christ, or away from Him?

No one doubts the need for physical light. As God’s children, though, we see beyond that and are ever aware that the kind of light which the world needs above all others is spiritual light.

The Bible points out three “lights” that the world cannot do without: 1) God, 2) the word of God, and 3) the godly example of Christians. Are we giving and showing the world the true light that it needs?

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## Only True Religion?...

(Continued from page 73)

### CHRISTIAN PLURALISM

There is another brand of religious pluralism that does not operate on the worldview scale. Rather, this form of pluralism abides within the worldview itself, namely the Christian worldview. We shall call this *Christian pluralism*. The concept is much the same as the more general pluralism treated above. However, in the place of affirming all world religions as equally valid and efficacious, one affirms the validity and truthfulness of all “Christian religions.” The idea is the same. Only the “neighborhood” is smaller.

It is ironic that our denominational friends fail to recognize this lingering strain of religious pluralism that violates the very same principles that they have used to combat the wider pluralistic form. Nevertheless, that Christian pluralism can be shown to be equally fallacious as the more general brand of religious pluralism, is patently evident. One need only use the same two standards mentioned above.

First, Christian pluralism manifests the same element of logical inconsistency as does the more broadly defined religious pluralism. As already observed, the Law of Non-contradiction forbids two contradictory claims from being true at the same time and in the same sense. Thus, by way of example, the conflicting affirmations, “Infant baptism is permissible and acceptable” and, “Only those with the capacity to believe and respond may be acceptably baptized,” leads unavoidably to the conclusion that one of these statements is incorrect. Either the *baptism of infants* is acceptable or it is not. Some religious denominations affirm that the practice is acceptable. Others, however, do not. Based upon the Law of Non-contradiction, one group is incorrect.

Further, many denominations affirm that *salvation comes at the moment that faith in Christ arises within the heart*. Others affirm that faith must act in repentance and baptism before salvation is granted. Based upon the Law of Non-contradiction, both parties cannot be correct. These “disputes” can be resolved

by appealing to the unchanging standard of God’s inspired revelation. This is the means by which religious truth must be decided.

If one believes the Bible to be the revealed will of God, then one must acknowledge that any claim contrary to biblical testimony is false. Thus, as in the previous examination, that which contradicts the word of God must be soundly rejected. With respect to *baptism*, the word itself is defined in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament as “To dip in or under, to immerse” (*oepke*, “*bapto*, *baptizo*”). The New Testament imagery when the subject is discussed is that of “burial” and “raising” (cf. Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). Hence, any “baptism” wherein a dipping or immersing or a burial and a rising do not occur, does not qualify as a scriptural baptism. Further, the prerequisites to scriptural baptism are *faith* (John 8:24; Mark 16:16; Acts 18:8; cf. Heb. 11:6), *repentance* (Acts 2:38; 3:19; Acts 17:30) and *confession* (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10). Thus, any baptism unattended by these elements is likewise invalid. This effectively nullifies the legitimacy of infant baptism. Unless one is prepared to level the charge of “contradiction” against the Bible, one must accept the testimony of all that it purports to teach on a given topic.

Hence, it becomes evident that Christian pluralism possesses the same flawed features of the broader religious pluralism position. All “Christian” religions, regardless of their degree of sincerity, cannot possibly be correct. The Bible declares: “*[There is] one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who [is] above all, and through all, and in you all*” (Eph. 4:4-6). The religious institution that teaches and practices these precepts to their fullest, stands with the truth. The religious bodies teaching and practicing those things contrary to these precepts finds themselves at odds with the teaching of God and in urgent need of repentance and full obedience to God’s will. Therefore, we must soundly reject both *religious pluralism* and its lesser known companion, *Christian pluralism*.

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## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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