God's Answers to Man's Questions

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The Way of Salvation Made Plain

> *If you are not a Christian, and*
> *if you do not know how to become one, but*
> *if you are interested in the subject, and*
> *if you would be willing to give it a fair hearing,*
> *then you will find the following pages of interest.*

The Christian message is here presented as a series of questions and answers: questions such as you might possibly ask, and answers based directly on the Bible.

Well, then, where shall we start? We shall start with the subject that gave rise to the necessity of the Christian Gospel in the first place, that is, with the subject of

Sin

What is sin?

Sin is lawlessness, that is, doing one's own will without restraint of God or man. It is missing the mark, or coming short of God's standard of perfection in thought, word or deed. It is the failure to do what one knows is right. Romans 3:23; James 4:17; I John 3:4.

Where did the first sin take place?

The first sin took place in heaven, when Lucifer, the chief of the angels, desired to take God's place. He was then cast out of heaven and became known as Satan. Isaiah 14:12-15.

How did sin enter the world?

Sin entered the world through Adam when he disobeyed God by eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:1-13.

Why did God allow sin to enter?

God made man as a free, moral agent with the power to choose between good and evil. His desire was that His creatures should choose to love and worship Him voluntarily, and desire good rather than evil. But if a creature has the power to choose good, he must of necessity have the power to choose evil. Genesis 2:15-17.

What would have happened to Adam if he had not sinned?

He would have enjoyed long life in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 2:17.

What happened to Adam when he did sin?

1. He became spiritually dead toward God.

2. He became subject to physical suffering, sickness and death.

3. He lost his innocence, became unrighteous and unholy, guilty and lost, an enemy and an alien. Genesis 3:7; Ephesians 2:1-3.

4. If he died in his sin, he would suffer eternal doom.

How did Adam's sin affect his children?

His sinful nature was passed on to all his posterity. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12 (See also vv. 13-19.)

Do you mean that we are all born into the world sinners because of Adam's sin?

Yes! Adam could only beget children with his own nature, and that nature was sinful. All children have to be taught to do right, but they know how to do wrong without being taught. Psalm 51:5.

As an illustration of this principle, a metal jelly-mold gives its shape to all the gelatin desserts or salads that are made in it. If you should drop the metal pattern and it becomes dented, all the future gelatin molds will show the effects of the fall.

Well, does that seem fair that Adam's sinful nature should be passed down to all of us?

Adam acted as a representative of the human race. Since we are all created as free, moral agents, perhaps we would all eventually have done the same as Adam did anyway.

Is there not some good in all men?

It depends on whether you are looking at it from God's standpoint or man's. God can find no good in man that would help to earn him a place in heaven. As far as righteousness or fitness for heaven is concerned, God says there is none. Man is totally depraved. Isaiah 1:6.

What is meant by the expression "totally depraved"?

It means that sin has affected every part of a man's being, and that although he might not have committed every sin, he is capable of doing so. Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18; Romans 7:18. In addition, it means that he is totally incapable of pleasing God, as far as salvation is concerned. Romans 8:8.

But will God find fault with a person who has not committed the terrible sins of murder, drunkenness, immorality and so forth?

God sees not only what a person has done but what he is in himself. What a man is, is a lot worse than anything he has ever done. A filthy thought-life, a hatred of some other person, a lustful look—these are terrible sins in God's sight. Matthew 5:27, 28; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 8:7, 8. They separate man from God. Isaiah 59:1, 2.

But are not some sinners worse than others?

Undoubtedly they are, but we must not compare ourselves with others. People who do that are not wise. We will not be judged in comparison with others but in the light of God's holiness and perfection. Romans 2:1-3; II Corinthians 10:12.

Will all sinners suffer the same punishment?

No! All who die in their sins will spend eternity in hell. However, there will be degrees of punishment, depending on the opportunities a man has had to be saved and the sins he has committed. Matthew 11:20-24.

What about the heathen who has never heard the Gospel?

God has revealed Himself to all mankind in creation as well as in conscience. If a heathen lived up to this knowledge, God would send him further light so that he might be saved. But the heathen has rejected the knowledge of the true God and has worshipped idols of wood and stone. Therefore, he is without excuse. Romans 1:20. Without Christ, the heathen is lost, and that is why Christian missionaries go into all the world with the Gospel.

How could you prove to me that I am a sinner?

If you have to answer "No" to any of the following questions, then you are a sinner. If you have never trusted Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you are lost and you need to be saved.

1. Do you love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind?

2. Do you love your neighbor as you love yourself?

3. Would you like your friends to know the most impure thought you have ever had?

4. Is your life as holy in the dark as in the light?

5. Is it as pure when you are alone as when you are with others?

6. Is it as clean when you are away from home as when you are at home?

7. Have you always performed all the good you knew you should do?

8. Can you honestly say, "I have never taken the Name of the Lord in vain"?

9. Have you an unbroken record of never having told a lie?

10. Are you as perfect as the Lord Jesus Christ?

The Necessity of Salvation

What is God's attitude toward sin?

Because God is absolutely holy, He cannot approve or excuse sin. Because He is absolutely just, He must punish sin wherever He finds it. He has decreed that "the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23.

What is God's attitude toward the sinner?

God loves the creatures whom He has made. While He does not love sin, yet He does love the sinner. Romans 5:8.

What is God's desire with regard to all sinners?

God's desire for all is that they be saved. He does not want them to perish. II Peter 3:9.

What problem was raised by the entrance of sin into the world?

It raised the problem as to how God could save ungodly sinners and still be righteous in doing so. Romans 3:26.

Why was this a problem?

God's love desired the salvation of sinners. Ezekiel 33:11. Yet, because of His holiness, He could not permit sinful creatures to enter His heaven. I Corinthians 6:9, 10. In fact, His justice demanded that all sinners must die as a result of their sins. Hebrews 9:27. The problem then was this: how could God's love be satisfied without violating His holiness and His justice?

What would have happened if God had done nothing?

All sinners would have perished in hell. Psalm 9:17.

Isn't God too good to send men to hell?

God is good but He is also righteous and holy. No one of His attributes can triumph at the expense of another. His love can only be exercised in a righteous, holy way.

Would God have been right if He had done nothing?

Yes. Then we all would have received exactly what we deserved. But God's love impelled Him to action.

How could God solve this problem?

He could solve it only by finding a substitute to die in the place of the guilty sinner.

What requirements would such a substitute have to meet?

First of all, he would have to be a man; otherwise the substitution would not be a fair one.

Then he must be a sinless man. If he were not sinless, he would have to die for his own sins.

Thirdly, he must be God, since the Substitute must be able to put away an endless number of sins of an endless number of people.

Finally, he must be willing to die for sinners; otherwise Satan would charge God with unjustly making an innocent victim die unwillingly for guilty rebels.

Could such a substitute be found?

Yes, God found a Substitute Who met all these requirements in the Person of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 53:4, 5.

The Work of Christ

Was Jesus truly man?

Yes, He was born as a baby in a hotel stable in Bethlehem, grew up in Nazareth, and ended His ministry at Jerusalem.

Was He sinless?

Yes, He was born of the Virgin Mary and thus did not inherit Adam's sin. He knew no sin; He did no sin; there was no sin in Him. II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:22; I John 3:5.

Is Jesus God?

Yes, Jesus is truly God just as He is truly man. John 1:1; 10:30; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:8.

Was Jesus willing to die as a Substitute for sinners?

Yes, He expressed complete willingness to do His Father's will, even if it meant death. Psalm 40:7; John 10:17, 18.

Could we not have been saved by Jesus' sinless life?

No, our sins could never have been put away by His sinless life. John 12:24.

Why did He have to die?

Our sins deserved eternal death. He must bear the punishment in His body on the cross. I Peter 2:24.

Was there any special requirement in connection with the death of the Substitute?

Yes, His blood must be shed. I Peter 1:19.

Why was this necessary?

God had decreed that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. Hebrews 9:22.

What is the importance of the blood?

The blood is the life of the flesh. The shedding of Christ's blood indicated the giving of His life as a Substitute for sinners. Leviticus 17:11.

What actually happened on the Cross?

In the three hours of darkness, God caused all our sins to be placed on the Lord Jesus. He died the death which those sins deserved. Luke 23:44.

What did Jesus say at the end of those three hours?

He cried "It is finished!" John 19:30.

What did He mean by this?

He meant that the work of redemption had been completed, that everything necessary for the salvation of sinners had been provided. Hebrews 10:14.

What happened to Jesus after His death?

His body was buried in a tomb, but on the third day God raised Him from among the dead. Luke 24:1-7; John 19:42.

Why was this necessary?

God indicated His complete satisfaction with the work of His Son by raising Him from the dead. Romans 4:25.

Did Jesus rise from the dead in a literal body?

Yes, His body was a real body of flesh and bones. Luke 24:39.

Could men be saved apart from the resurrection?

No, the resurrection was absolutely necessary for the salvation of others. I Corinthians 15:14-19.

What happened after the resurrection?

Forty days later, the Saviour went back into heaven where He was honored and glorified by God, the Father. Acts 1:9.

Then He sent the Holy Spirit back to the earth to announce the wonderful news that a way had been provided whereby guilty sinners might be saved. Acts 2:1-4.

The Way of Salvation

Since Christ has finished the work of redemption, then are not all men saved?

No, Christ's work is sufficient in its scope and power to save all men, but it is effective only for those who are willing to receive Him. This may be illustrated by an incident from American history.

In 1830 George Wilson was tried by a United States Court in Philadelphia for robbery and murder, and sentenced to be hanged. Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, pardoned him. But Wilson refused the pardon, and insisted that it was not a pardon unless he accepted it. The question was brought before the Supreme Court, and Chief Justice John Marshall wrote the following decision: "A pardon is a paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the person implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that one under sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon, but if it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must hang." And he was hanged.[1]

Why doesn't God save everyone?

He desires to do so. I Timothy 2:4.

However, He has chosen to give men their choice in the matter of salvation. Otherwise He would take men to heaven who didn't want to be there, and for such it would scarcely be heaven.

What must happen to a person before he can go to heaven?

His sins must be put away and he must be given a new nature that enables him to enjoy heaven. John 3:3, 5.

How is a person saved?

"By grace are ye saved through faith." Ephesians 2:8, 9.

What is meant by grace?

Grace is the unmerited favor of God shown to people who deserve the very opposite. It is God offering salvation to man as a free gift. Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:7.

What is faith?

Faith is belief or trust. It is man receiving salvation from God as a free gift.

What must a person believe to be saved?

He must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:16, John 20:30, 31.

Is it not enough to believe that there is a God?

No, even the devils believe that, and tremble, but they are not saved. James 2:19.

What does it mean to believe on Jesus?

It means to confess that you are a sinner needing salvation and to receive Him as your only hope of salvation, acknowledging Him to be Lord of your life. Romans 10:9.

Is it not sufficient to believe all the historical facts about Jesus?

No, a person may believe all that the Bible says about Jesus and still be lost.

What else is necessary then?

True belief involves a commitment of one's entire self to Jesus as only Lord and Saviour.

Can a man have faith and not be saved?

Certainly! Faith in an unworthy object will only bring disappointment. Our faith must be in Christ if we are to be saved.

Can anyone do this?

Salvation is offered to all, but it is only those who admit themselves to be lost who will ever want to be saved. Luke 19:10.

Who produces this conviction of sin in a person's life?

The Holy Spirit of God is the One who produces conviction of sin. John 16:8-11.

What can a person do, then, who does not realize he is a sinner?

He should read the Bible and be honest. Romans 10:17.

What will happen then?

He will see that he is a sinner and that if he dies in that condition he will go to hell. John 8:21, 24.

Will he be saved whenever he sees this?

No, he must then repent of his sins and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as His Saviour. Proverbs 28:13, Acts 16:31.

To be saved simply through faith seems to be too easy, doesn't it?

It might seem to be too easy, but it is God's only way of salvation. While it may seem easy to us, we should remember that it was a very costly transaction for God; it cost Him the death of His only begotten Son. So it is an easy salvation but not a cheap one. Isaiah 1:18.

Why did God decide that salvation should be given on the basis of faith?

The reason probably is that believing on Him is the only proper thing that all normal people can do. Even a child can believe.

But isn't there some work a person must DO in order to be saved?

No, there is no work a person can do. Christ finished the work on Calvary's cross. All the sinner has to do is believe. Titus 3:5.

Well, isn't that a contradiction? You say there is nothing to DO. All you have to DO is believe.

There is nothing you can do by way of earning or meriting God's approval. There is nothing you can do to buy your way or help purchase your admission to heaven. Romans 4:4, 5.

Faith is a non-meritorious act. A person cannot be proud because he believes in the Lord; what is more

reasonable than for a man to trust his Creator? Thus, faith excludes human boasting, and is the only thing a person can do without doing a "good work" that he might think would entitle him to heaven. Romans 3:27.

You mean to say then that we are not saved by good works?

That is what the Bible says: ". . . not of works lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:9.

Why couldn't man be saved by doing good works?

Man is a sinner and everything he does is stained by sin. The best he can do is like filthy rags in God's sight. Isaiah 64:6.

But suppose that I could live a perfect life from this day forward, would I not be saved?

No, you would not, because God requires that which is past. Your past sins must somehow be put away before you could enter God's presence. Ecclesiastes 3:15.

You mean to say, then, that decent, self-respecting, cultured people don't go to heaven?

The only people who go to heaven are those who acknowledge themselves to be sinners and who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Matthew 21:31.

Are there not some people who are not good enough for heaven and not bad enough for hell?

No, there are only two classes of people, saved and unsaved. I Corinthians 1:18.

Well, then, are there not some people who are too wicked to be saved?

No, the Gospel invitation is extended to all mankind, and whosoever will may come. Isaiah 55:7, I Timothy 1:15, Hebrews 7:25.

Doesn't a person have to clean up his life before he can be saved?

As long as he thinks he can clean up his own life, he won't feel the need of the Saviour. He should simply come to Christ just as he is, sins and all, and receive pardon and peace. Isaiah 1:18; Matthew 9:13; Luke 19:10.

Couldn't I be saved by following the example of Jesus?

Jesus' life was sinless. No mere man is able to follow that example. Moreover, the only reason Jesus died is because men could be saved in no other way. I Peter 2:24.

If believing on Jesus is the right way, then why do the vast majority of people refuse to accept Him?

Satan has blinded the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should

shine unto them. II Corinthians 4:4. There is a way which seems right unto men, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Proverbs 14:12.

Couldn't a person be saved by trying to keep the Golden Rule?

No, when Jesus said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," He was speaking to those who were already saved. He never intended it as the way to heaven.

Well, could we not be saved by obeying the Beatitudes or by living according to the Sermon on the Mount?

Once again, these teachings were addressed to those who had already acknowledged Jesus as Lord. To obey them requires Divine life, and a person receives this life when he is saved.

Surely, you aren't going to tell me that a person cannot be saved by keeping the Ten Commandments?

No one can fulfill what is demanded by the Ten Commandments. Romans 3:20.

Exactly what do the Ten Commandments require?

The Ten Commandments are as follows:

1. Thou shalt have no other god before me.

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, etc.

3. Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord, thy God, in vain.

4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

5. Honor thy father and thy mother.

6. Thou shalt not kill.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8. Thou shalt not steal.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

10. Thou shalt not covet. (See Exodus 20:1-17.)

Were the Ten Commandments not given by God to His people?

Yes, they were, but He never intended that they should serve as a means of salvation. Galatians 2:16, 3:11.

Why then did God give the Commandments?

They were given to show the people what sinners they were. Just as a straight line shows up a crooked line, so the law shows men how far they have departed from God's standard of perfection. Romans 5:20, Galatians 3:19.

Has anyone ever kept these laws perfectly?

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only One who has ever kept the law perfectly.

Then are we not saved through His keeping of the law?

No, we are only saved through His death, burial and resurrection. We are condemned and cursed by the law. Galatians 2:21.

If a man could keep the law all his life, would he be thereby saved?

Such a man would not need to be saved. He would be a perfect being.

Suppose that a man could keep nine of the Ten Commandments! Would he be saved?

No, the law demands continual and complete obedience. If a person breaks one commandment, he is guilty of all. James 2:10.

What is the punishment for failing to keep the law?

Death, now and forever. Galatians 3:10.

Weren't the Ten Commandments made for good people?

No! ". . . the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine . . . ." I Timothy 1:9, 10.

What effect should the Ten Commandments have on us?

They should make us realize what guilty sinners we are, and should cause us to cast ourselves on the mercy of the Lord. Romans 3:19.

But does it seem reasonable that we should be saved by faith alone and not by faith plus good works?

The Scripture says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us . . . ." Titus 3:5.

Does it say somewhere in the Bible that faith without works is dead?

Yes, it says that in James 2:20.

Doesn't that show that salvation is by faith plus works?

No, it does not. The teaching of the passage is that a man may say that he has faith but if he does not have good works, it shows that he was never truly saved. That kind of a faith never saved anyone.

What kind of a faith does save?

The kind that is not merely a matter of the lips but is a matter of the heart and which results in a new life filled with good works.

Then you mean that good works follow salvation, but do not secure it.

Yes, that is right. We are not saved by good works, but we are saved unto good works. Ephesians 2:8-10.

Is it not necessary to join some church in order to be saved?

Joining all the churches in town wouldn't save a person. "Ye must be born again."

But doesn't God expect us to join some church?

Whenever a person is saved he becomes a member of the true church composed of all true believers in the Lord Jesus. Then he should find fellowship in some local church where Christ is acknowledged as Head and where the Bible is accepted as the only inspired Word of God, our sufficient guide in all matters of faith and morals.

Does not the fact that I was baptized as an infant mean that I am saved?

Baptism is not the Saviour. Only Jesus Christ can save. John 14:6.

But shouldn't people be baptized?

Those who have been born again should be baptized. There is no clear record in the New Testament of unsaved people or infants ever being baptized, however.

Then I am not saved by partaking of the communion service either?

No. Once again, the communion service was only intended for those who are already born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you mean to say that church attendance, gifts to charity, participation in the ordinances and similar observances will not help in my salvation?

They will not help at all. The only thing that will help you is to come to Christ as a sinner, repent of your sins and trust Him as your only Hope for heaven. Acts 4:12.

Note

1. Lee, Robert G., The Sinner's Savior (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1950) pp. 35, 36.

General Difficulties

How do I know that the Lord will accept me if I believe on Him?

He has said that He will, and He cannot lie. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37.

But doesn't it seem like a leap in the dark—this business of believing?

No, it is the surest thing in the world. Banks may fail, businesses may go bankrupt, governments may topple and men may break their promises. But God cannot go back on His Word. He has promised to save all who accept Christ by faith. John 3:18.

Could I be saved if I am not one of the elect?

The Gospel isn't for the elect, but for all the world. God makes a genuine offer of salvation to any person in the world who will receive Christ Jesus as Lord. You can be saved if you will do what God says. John 3:36.

I would like to be saved but I am afraid I wouldn't be able to hold out.

No one has the strength in himself to hold out. However, when God saves you, He gives you strength you never had before. Every believer has the Holy Spirit of God living within him. It is from the Holy Spirit that the child of God receives power to live the Christian life. Romans 8:14.

Suppose I have committed the unpardonable sin?

The unpardonable sin, according to the Lord Jesus, was saying that the miracles He performed were done in the power of the devil. Have you ever said this? If not, then you have not committed the unpardonable sin. Matthew 12:31, 32. But if you die rejecting Christ, you will have committed an equally serious sin for which there is no forgiveness. Mark 8:36, 37.

But trusting Christ means that I will have to give up a lot, does it not?

Christ does not come to steal, kill or destroy, but to give life and to give it more abundantly. John 10:10.

An unsaved sailor once said to his Christian buddy, "I just can't face the cost of becoming a Christian." The buddy's reply was, "Have you ever faced the cost of not becoming a Christian?"

But there are so many hypocrites in the church.

Don't despise those who are real, just because some are hypocrites. Determine rather that you will be out and out for the Lord.

Sometimes I think I have believed in the Lord Jesus but have I believed in the right way?

If you have no other hope for heaven apart from Jesus Christ, if you have repented of your sins, if you made a complete commitment of yourself to Him, then you have believed in the right way.

Would it not be all right for me to postpone any decision about salvation until I am near the end of my life?

Four Scriptures answer this question.

1. "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Proverbs 27:1.

2. "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy." Proverbs 29:1.

3. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Ecclesiastes 12:1.

4. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." II Corinthians 6:2b.

Is there no other way I can come to God except through Jesus?

There is no other way. I Timothy 2:5, 6.

Relationship and Fellowship

Do Christians sin?

Yes, Christians sin every day in thought, word and in deed. They are guilty of sins of omission as well as sins of commission.

Should Christians sin?

No, God's will is that Christians should not sin. I John 2:1.

When a Christian sins, does he lose his salvation?

No, salvation is the free gift of God, and once it is given, it is never taken back again. Romans 6:23.

But doesn't the penalty of those sins have to be paid?

Jesus Christ bore the penalty of those sins when He died on the Cross of Calvary. God does not require the penalty to be paid twice.

You mean, then, that a Christian is still a child of God, even though he sins?

Yes, his relationship in the family of God is eternal. When a son is born into a human family, he will always be a son of his parents. He may subsequently disgrace them by his behavior, but he is still their son. So it is in the Divine family; relationship is established by the new birth and nothing can ever change it. John 1:12.

What does happen, then, when a Christian sins?

One thing that happens is that fellowship with the Lord is broken. I John 1:6.

What is fellowship?

Fellowship is the happy family spirit that results from all the members having the same interests, and sharing things in common. Consider the following illustration. A judge in the criminal court finds a robber guilty and sentences him to twelve months in jail. When the judge goes home that night, he finds that his little boy has been naughty. But does he sentence him to twelve months in jail? No, he no longer acts as a judge, but as a father in a family. The child is still his son, even though naughty. Because of sin, the happy family spirit has been broken and it remains broken until that sin has been confessed and forgiven. So the child is probably sent upstairs and he remains there until he is willing to confess his wrong. The great point is that relationship was not affected but fellowship was.

When a person is a sinner, God is his Judge. But when that person becomes saved, God is henceforth his Father.

Then you mean to say that once a person is saved he can never be lost?

That is what the Bible says. "They shall never perish." John 10:28. "Shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24, Romans 8:38, 39, II Timothy 1:12, I Peter 1:5, Jude 24, 25.

Cannot a person decide to be saved and later change his mind?

When a person has once committed his life to the Lord Jesus Christ, then his eternal salvation becomes the sole responsibility of the Saviour. John 6:39. The Lord is honor-bound to take that person home to heaven. And because the Holy Spirit dwells in the true believer, he will never change his mind about being saved.

Does that mean that a Christian can sin all he wants and still be saved?

A true Christian will not want to sin, because he has a new nature that hates sin. II Corinthians 5:17.

But suppose a Christian goes on in wilful and habitual sin?

If a person lives that kind of a life, it is certain proof that he was never truly born again. I John 3:9, 10.

Can a Christian sin and get away with it?

No, he can not. While it is true that the legal penalty of his sins has been paid once for all at Calvary, it is also true that God administers parental discipline to his erring children. Galatians 6:7, 8.

How does God discipline his children?

Sometimes it is through sickness or adversity and in extreme cases through death itself. I Corinthians 11:30.

Does sin in a believer's life have any other consequences in this world?

Yes. He loses his joy. His prayers are hindered. His fruitfulness is marred. His guidance becomes obscure. He suffers shame and remorse. Opportunities are neglected and privileges forfeited. Finally his testimony is ruined.

Does sin in a believer's life have any eternal consequences?

Yes, he suffers loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ. I Corinthians 3:15; II Corinthians 5:10.

Suppose that a Christian should die with unconfessed sin?

As mentioned previously, the penalty for all a believer's sin was borne by the Lord Jesus. When he died, all the Christian's sins were future. Since he paid the complete penalty, we can say He died for the believer's past, present and future sins.

Unconfessed sins, however, will result in a loss of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Is it possible for a Christian to backslide?

Yes, any child of God may wander away from the Lord.

How may we guard against backsliding?

By reading the Word of God, by spending time in prayer and by maintaining fellowship with the people of God.

What is the remedy for backsliding?

The cure for backsliding is confession and forsaking of sin, and, if possible, making restitution for wrongs which we have committed.

How to Know for Sure!

If I trust Christ as my Lord and Saviour, what will happen inside me to tell me that I am saved?

If you mean some mysterious feeling or emotional experience, then it is quite probable that nothing like that will occur.

How then will I know that I am saved?

In a very simple way. God says He saves those who believe on the Lord Jesus. Whenever you believe on Him, you can know that you are saved because God says so. I John 5:10-12.

You mean to say that I may not feel it in my body?

That is correct. The real act of salvation takes place in heaven. That is where the fact is recorded. When God sees your faith, He justifies you.

But shouldn't a person feel different when he is saved?

Certainly, he should, but feelings are not the proof of his salvation. A person will not really feel happy until he knows he is saved. The order is this:

Salvation through faith in Christ.
Assurance through the promise of God.
Joy because of this assurance.

Then a person knows he is saved through the promises of God in the Bible?

That is the first and foremost way by which he knows he is saved. I John 5:13.

Would you say that feelings are not a dependable guide?

The trouble with feelings is that they are so changeable. One day a person may feel he is saved and the next he may not.

The Word of God never varies. How much better, then, to have our assurance of salvation based upon the Word of God.

Is the Bible the only way by which we can know we are saved?

No, there are several others.

1. A love for our fellow Christians. I John 3:14.

2. A new love for holiness. Romans 7:22.

3. A new hatred of sins. Romans 7:24.

4. A steadfast continuance in the faith. I John 2:19.

5. The witness of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Romans 8:14, 16.

May a person be saved and not know it?

It is possible that a person may really have been born again and yet not know it, either because of inadequate teaching or because of doubts placed in his mind by Satan.

May a person think he is saved and yet not be?

Certainly, many think they are saved because of their character or works, but they are not saved at all. Matthew 7:22, 23.

Is it necessary to know the day and hour of one's conversion?

No, it is not. Many people have such a distinct experience that they can tell the exact time and place. Others may not remember when they first trusted the Saviour. The important thing is to be able to say, "I know I am saved right now because my faith and trust are in the Lord Jesus Christ alone."

Do most Christians have doubts about their salvation at one time or another?

Most Christians are probably subjected to Satanic doubts some time after their conversion.

What should one do when he is plagued with doubts?

The best thing to do is to quote Scripture to answer the doubts. When Satan insinuates that the believer is not saved, the latter should quote Gospel promises, such as John 5:24, which assure salvation to all who receive the Lord Jesus. Just as the Lord used the Word to repel the temptations of Satan in the wilderness, so we should use the Bible to drive away his doubting lies. Matthew 4:4, 7, 10.

If I am not sure whether I have ever really accepted Christ, what should I do?

You should get it settled right now by saying from your heart, "Lord, if I have never trusted Thee before, I here and now receive Thee as my only Lord and Saviour."

Holiness

Doesn't a person have to live a holy life in order to become a Christian?

No, a sinner is not able to live a holy life until after he is saved.

Does God expect Christians to lead holy lives?

He most certainly does. I Thessalonians 4:3, Titus 2:11-13.

Does any Christian live a life of sinless perfection?

No Christian lives sinlessly. I John 1:8, 10. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Person who ever lived a perfect life.

How is it that Christians can still sin after they are saved?

The reason is that the believer still has the old, evil, corrupt nature with which he was born. This is not removed at the time of conversion. Romans 7:17.

In what way, then, is the believer different from the unsaved?

The believer has a new nature which he receives at conversion. Scripture speaks of this as "the divine nature." II Peter 1:4.

What is the difference between these two natures?

The old nature is incurably bad and continually seeks to drag the Christian down into sin. Romans 7:21.

The new nature is only capable of good and seeks to lead the believer in paths of holiness. Romans 7:22.

Why did God allow the evil nature to remain after conversion?

The old nature teaches us our own nothingness and weakness and makes us continually dependent on the Lord for strength to resist temptation. Romans 7:24.

Are all Christians tempted?

Yes, all Christians are tempted. I Corinthians 10:13.

Does a Christian ever have to yield to temptation?

No, a Christian only sins when he wants to. He has the power of the Holy Spirit living within him, and this power is sufficient to deliver from all temptation. Galatians 5:17.

What is God's attitude toward the old nature?

God saw that it was worthy of death, so He condemned it at the Cross of Calvary. He does not try to reform it, improve it or clean it up. It is utterly hopeless and so God sees it as having been put to death when Christ died. Romans 6:6.

What should be the believer's attitude toward the old nature?

He should keep it in the place of death; that is, whenever the old nature tries to tell the Christian what to do, he should refuse to obey that which has been condemned by God. Romans 6:11, 12.

What should be the believer's attitude toward the new nature?

He should feed it, cultivate it and encourage it through study of the Scriptures, spending time in worship and prayer, serving the Lord and otherwise doing those things that are pleasing to the Lord. Galatians 5:22, 23.

What, in brief, is the secret of living a holy life?

The secret is in being occupied with the Lord Jesus in worship. We become like what we worship. There is no once-for-all way of achieving holiness; it is a life-long process. II Corinthians 3:18.

Can you give any other practical helps toward holy living?

1. Guard your thought life. You can control what you think. Philippians 4:8.

2. Make no provision for the flesh. Romans 13:14.

3. Remember that Christ lives within your body. Colossians 1:27.

4. In moments of temptation, cry to the Lord to deliver you. Matthew 14:30.

5. Keep busy for the Lord. Ecclesiastes 9:10.

6. Engage in some physical exercise. I Timothy 4:8.

But doesn't the Christian have to keep the Ten Commandments in order to live a holy life?

The Scripture teaches that the believer is not under the Ten Commandments as a rule of life. Romans 6:14.

1. The purpose of the law is to make men realize they are sinners and not to make them holy.

2. The law condemns to death all who do not keep it perfectly. No one can be under the law without being under this curse.

3. Christ paid the penalty of the law which we had broken, and now the law has nothing more to say to the child of God. Romans 10:4, Galatians 3:13.

Does that mean that the Christian can go out and commit murder and adultery?

Not at all. The Christian doesn't want to do these things because of his new life. Men under law live in fear of punishment. Men under grace are constrained by love to Christ. Love is a much stronger motive than fear. Men will do for love what they would never do because of fear.

If the Ten Commandments are not the believer's rule of life, what is?

The life and teachings of Jesus are the pattern and guide for the Christian. I John 2:6.

In what way are the teachings of Jesus different from the law?

This is answered in the fifth chapter of Matthew. The law said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Jesus said, "Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." See verses 27, 28.

The law said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Jesus said, "Resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." See verses 38-42.

The law said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." Jesus said, "Love your enemies." See verses 43, 44.

Is it possible for men to live as Jesus taught?

Humanly it is impossible. But the Lord has given the Holy Spirit to all believers so that they will have the power to live in this supernatural way. I Corinthians 6:19, Galatians 5:16, 17.

Standing and State

If believers still sin, how can God ever take them to heaven?

All who believe on Christ are given a perfect standing before God, even if their state may be far from perfect. Colossians 2:10.

What is meant by a believer's standing?

It means the position of complete favor he has with God because He is in Christ. Romans 5:1, 2.

The Christian has no right or merit in himself to stand before God. His only title to heaven lies in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus. Thus God accepts us, not because of who or what we are, but because we belong to Christ. Ephesians 1:6.

How can God look upon unrighteous people as righteous?

He can do it because Christ bore the punishment of their sins in His body on the Cross. Ephesians 2:13.

Does it teach this in the Bible?

Yes, it distinctly says this in II Corinthians 5:21: "For He (God) hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

Do I understand, then, that God accepts all believers because they come to Him in the Person of His Son?

Yes, that is right. Christ is man's only title to heaven.

> "*I stand upon His merit,*
> *I know no other stand,*
> *Not e'en where glory dwelleth*
> *In Immanuel's Land.*"

How long does a believer enjoy this perfect standing before God?

He enjoys it as long as Christ enjoys it, because he is in Christ, accepted in the Beloved One. Ephesians 1:13, 14.

What is meant by the believer's state?

This means his everyday spiritual condition here on earth. Just as his standing is what he is in Christ, so his state is what he is in himself.

Is the believer's state sinless?

No, the believer's state is oftentimes far from being what it should be. Colossians 3:8, 9.

What is God's will concerning the believer's state?

God's will is that his state should grow more and more like his standing. This is a process that should be taking place continually throughout the Christian life. Colossians 3:1.

Will a believer's state ever correspond exactly to his standing?

Yes, when Christ takes him home to heaven his condition will be as perfect as his position. I John 3:2.

Why should a Christian want to have his state correspond increasingly with his standing?

His love for Christ should make him desire this. John 14:15.

After Salvation—What?

What is the first thing a person should do after he has trusted Christ?

Common courtesy would suggest that he thank the Lord for saving his soul. Luke 17:14-19.

Is it necessary to confess Christ to others?

Confession is not necessary to obtain salvation, but it is certainly necessary for growth in the Christian life. No one can ever expect to advance in the things of God who is ashamed of his Saviour. Matthew 10:32, 33; Romans 10:9, 10; I Peter 3:15.

How does a person go about confessing Christ?

It is simply a matter of telling others what great things the Lord has done for you. Mark 5:19.

How long should a new convert wait until he is baptized?

Obedience should be prompt. Baptism is a lovely opportunity to publicly identify oneself with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. By this act we are saying that we deserved to die but that Christ died for us. Therefore, when He died, we really died, because He died in our place. We witness that we likewise were buried with Him, and that we rose with Him to walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3-10.

Does baptism give us merit before God as far as our salvation is concerned?

No, baptism is an act of obedience to the teaching of the Lord Jesus. Those believers who die without being baptized will be unbaptized for all eternity.

How should a young convert know which church to join?

First of all, he should realize that he became a member of the true church, the Body of Christ, whenever he was saved. I Corinthians 12:13.

In addition, he should seek to identify himself with some local church where Christ is acknowledged as Head, where the Bible is accepted as the only guide, where the two ordinances of the church (baptism and the Lord's Supper) are observed, where a good teaching ministry is carried on, and where the Gospel is faithfully proclaimed.

In associating with Christians, he should feel a deep sense of responsibility to contribute to the welfare of the fellowship by loving service, fervent prayer and sacrificial giving.

What do you consider the most important things which a Christian should do each day?

Spend time in the Word of God and in prayer each day, and confess and forsake sin whenever it is allowed into one's life. Psalm 119:9, 11.

Discipleship

What does the Lord expect of one who is saved?

He expects a total commitment of that person to Himself. He expects the person to go where He leads, to do what He says, to be what He wants him to be. He expects him to forsake all he has, take up the cross and follow Christ. Romans 12:1, 2.

Is it reasonable that God should expect this?

Yes, it is the only reasonable response that a person can make to the Lord.

Doesn't a person have to think about himself?

Our chief responsibility in life is to please God. If we seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, He will see that we have some means of livelihood. Matthew 6:33.

Does that mean that I may have to go to the mission field?

It may mean that and it may not. But it does mean that you should be willing to go. Luke 9:23-26.

But I see so many Christians who are enjoying the comforts and luxuries of the world, and who do not seem to be all-out for Christ.

You must not compare yourself with other Christians. Your example is the Lord Jesus, and you must follow His steps. Luke 14:25-35.

Does Christ really expect us to "hate" our relatives?

He expects our love for Him to be so great that all other loves are hatred by comparison. Luke 14:26.

Can I not acknowledge Jesus as my Saviour and not as my Lord?

Scripture gives no encouragement to such an attitude. If the Lord Jesus is not worth everything, He is not worth anything.

Then salvation involves a complete surrender to Christ?

That is exactly right. Nothing short of this will do.