

THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

Volume 2

DECEMBER, 1965

Number 12

DO WE REALLY HAVE A CHOICE?

It is frequently said by uninformed people that one should "join the church of his choice," meaning that one should choose one of the 250 or more different churches in the United States as a "church home on earth." It is also said that one has a right to the faith of his choice, the baptism of his choice, the name of his choice and to worship the way he pleases. These statements are based upon the belief that one is as good as another and that it makes no difference which one we choose. But is this true? **DO WE REALLY HAVE A CHOICE, SCRIPTURALLY SPEAKING?**

It is true that our constitution grants religious freedom to the citizens of America. We have the **LEGAL** right to worship the one true God, a stone idol, a man, bird, snake or beast. We may **LEGALLY** offer a bloody animal sacrifice in worship, burn incense or dance. We may **LEGALLY** trust in Christ, Mohammed or Buddha as our Saviour. We have the **LEGAL** right to reject all and embrace atheism. We can **LEGALLY** call God a myth and Christ a fake, according to the constitution. We may pray in the name of the devil, **LEGALLY** speaking. But we need to understand that one can be **SCRIPTURALLY** wrong, yet within his **LEGAL** rights. Our constitutional freedom of religion does not guarantee acceptance with God. **WE SHALL BE JUDGED BY THE BIBLE, NOT BY THE CONSTITUTION.**

(See John 12:48).

Man does not have a Scriptural right to choose something contrary to God's revealed will in the Bible. When God reveals His choice in any matter, man only has the right to accept God's choice; he has no right to choose something different. God revealed His choice in the following matters as His Holy Spirit guided the apostle Paul to say: "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.) How many is **ONE**? Can we choose between **ONE**? Notice what Paul said:

1. "There is **ONE** GOD." Is one god as good as another god? Do we have a choice of gods?

2. "There is **ONE** LORD." Is one Lord as good as another? Do we have a choice of Lords (Saviours)? Can one Scripturally choose Mohammed or Buddha as his Saviour? It's **LEGAL**, but is it **SCRIPTURAL**? Can one be saved if he chooses a Lord other than **CHRIST JESUS**?

3. "There is **ONE** SPIRIT." Do we have a right to follow the spirit of our choice? Is one spirit as good as another spirit? Would it be just as well to believe an evil spirit of the devil as God's

(Continued on page 3)

THE INSTRUCTOR

Published monthly in the interest of truth and righteousness by the congregation of Christ, meeting at 1033 Baltimore Ave., Albertville, Alabama.

CARROL R. SUTTON
EDITOR

Send all questions, comments, and criticisms to the editor, 1033 Baltimore Ave., Albertville, Alabama.

Editorial . . .

A SIN THAT MAY SEEM SMALL

As we consider sins, no doubt there are some sins that are usually considered small by many people. Although some sins may be far-more reaching in their effect in some respects than others, no sin should be considered so small that it is of no serious consequence. **GOD SIMPLY DOES NOT COUNTENANCE ANY SIN!** Sin will bring its victim to eternal misery! Let us now consider a sin that may seem small to many people.

EVIL THINKING

We learn from Matthew 5:28 that Jesus said: "That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Obviously, one does not have to commit the overt act of adultery in order to be guilty of the sin of adultery. The very thought of the heart may be adultery; hence sinful! One should not speak, dress, or act in such a way as to produce lewd thoughts or lustful passions in others! Such is a work of the flesh called lasciviousness.

Another good example of an evil thought being a sin is found in Acts 8:13-24. Simon the sorcerer heard Philip preach Jesus Christ. He believed the message preached by Philip, and was baptized and was therefore saved from his past sins. Later, when he saw that through the laying on of the Apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." But Peter said unto him,

"Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast **THOUGHT** that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: **FOR THY HEART IS NOT RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.** Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps **THE THOUGHT OF THINE HEART** may be forgiven thee." Thus, the very **THOUGHT** of Simon's heart constituted unrighteousness which is sin! He therefore stood in need of forgiveness that he might once again stand before God in a saved condition.

In Matthew 15:18-20 Jesus said, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed **EVIL THOUGHTS**, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man." We can see very conclusively from this passage that "evil thinking" constitutes sin!

In Prov. 23:7, the wise man said "**FOR AS HE THINKETH IN HIS HEART, SO IS HE . . .**" Since our heart is the seat of thinking, we are admonished to keep our hearts with all diligence. We should think on things that are true, things that are honest, things that are just, things that are pure, things that are lovely, and things that are of good report. Our life will not be one of holiness and purity if our heart is evil. My thinking will direct my actions. In view of this, we should not allow our minds, or the minds of our children to "feast" on filthy, lewd scenes that often appear on television programs and in magazines. We should strive to train our children to think properly that they may be able to discern both good and evil. Their lives will be directed by their thinking. Their eternal destiny will be determined by their thinking!

A person who is ignorant of God's **HOLY WORD** will **NOT** think as he should.

THINK! THINK SOBERLY AND RIGHTEOUSLY! THINK ON THESE THINGS IN VIEW OF DEATH AND THE JUDGMENT! (CRS)

(Cont'd from page 1)
**DO WE REALLY HAVE
A CHOICE?**

Holy Spirit?

4. "There is ONE HOPE." Is one hope as good as another? Is the Jewish hope of heaven as good as the Christian's hope? Would you as soon have a hope based upon a rejection of Christ as Saviour as a hope based upon acceptance of Christ?

5. "There is ONE BODY . . . which is the church." (Eph. 1:22-23.) Is one church as good as another? Do we have a choice of churches? Since God has chosen ONE, do we have the right to choose another?

6. "There is ONE FAITH." "Oh, it makes no difference what one believes so long as he is honest and sincere," many argue. Is this true? Do we really have a choice of faiths, such as Mohammedan, Methodist, Buddhist or Baptist? Is one faith as good as another? Is the Jewish faith which rejects Christ as good as the Christian faith? What about believing in Mohammed instead of Christ? **IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE!** [See John 8:24; Mk. 16:16; 2 John 9-11; 2 Thess. 2:10-12.]

7. "There is ONE BAPTISM." Since there is one, do we have a choice? Is sprinkling or pouring as good as Bible baptism, which is a burial? (See Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12.)

Reader, be not deceived by good words and fair speeches of men (Rom. 16:18) who says, "choose YOUR way," in religion. Unless we choose GOD'S way we shall be eternally lost. There is no choice of gods, saviours, spirits, hopes, churches, faiths or baptisms for those who want to escape the horrors of hell, because there is only ONE of each accepted by the one true God.

The same Bible which says there is one God also says there is one church. Thus the Buddhist has as much right to choose an idol god as one does to choose a denominational church not built by God, such as Baptist, Methodist, or Mormon. Again, the same Bible which says there is one Lord says there is one baptism. Hence, one has as much

right to choose Mohammed as saviour as to choose sprinkling or pouring as a substitute for Bible baptism. Furthermore, the same Bible which says there is one Spirit also says there is one faith. If we have a right to the FAITH of our choice, then we have a right to the SPIRIT of our choice.

Your eternal destiny will be determined by the choices you make on earth. If you allow yourself to be deceived by the vain promises of men in religion and fail to obey the gospel of Christ, you will pay the penalty in eternity. (See 2 Thess. 1:6-9.) We urge you to study your Bible and investigate for yourself. Test the claims of preachers, for "many false prophets are gone out in the world." (1 John 4:1) They will tell you that you have a choice. But be not deceived: We must accept God's choice!

If you want to be saved you must believe in God (Heb. 11:6), in Christ (John 8:24), repent of all sins (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30), and be buried in baptism (Rom. 6:4) for the remission of your sins. (Acts 2:38.) Then you can rise to walk in a new life (Rom. 6:4) as a new creature in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17), having been born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5), saved by God's grace (Eph. 2:5), washed in the blood of Christ. (Rev. 1:5.) Hence, if you will believe in the one God and the one Lord, listen to the voice of the one Spirit as He speaks from the pages of the Bible, believe and obey the one faith revealed therein, submit to the one baptism, God will add you to the one body (Acts 2:47), and you will have the one hope of heaven.

We urge you to consider the uncertainty and brevity of life, the certainty of death, the surety of the judgment, and the fact that all souls shall live in the ceaseless age of eternity either in hell or heaven, depending on the choice they make in this life on earth. We pray that you will choose God's way and obey — NOW!

—The above article was written by EARL FLY and is taken from the August, 1957 issue of GOSPEL DIGEST.

WHAT KIND ARE YOU?

Are you an active member, the kind that would be missed,
Or are you just contented that your name is on the list?

Do you attend the meetings, and mingle with the flock,
Or do you stay at home and criticize and knock?

Do you take an active part, to help the work along,
Or are you satisfied to be the kind that just belongs?

Do you ever voluntarily help, at the guiding stick,
Or leave the work to just a few and talk about the clique?

Come out to the meetings often, and help with hand and heart.
Don't be just a member, but take an active part.

Think this over, member, you know right from wrong;
Are you an active member, or do you just belong?
—Selected, via "THE GOSPEL LIGHT"

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation.

1. DATE OF FILING: 11-19-65. 2. TITLE OF PUBLICATION: "The Instructor". 3. FREQUENCY OF ISSUE: Monthly. 4. LOCATION OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 1003 Baltimore Ave., Albertville, Alabama, 35950. 5. LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS OR GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICES OF THE PUBLISHERS: 1003 Baltimore Ave., Albertville, Alabama, 35950. 6. NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PUBLISHER, EDITOR, AND MANAGING EDITOR: PUBLISHER: Church of Christ, 1003 Baltimore Ave., Albertville, Alabama, 35950. EDITOR: Carrol R. Sutton, Route 3, Albertville, Alabama 35950. MANAGING EDITOR: Same as above. 7. OWNER: Church of Christ, 1003 Baltimore Ave., Albertville, Alabama 35950. 8. KNOWN BONDHOLDERS, MORTGAGEES, AND OTHER SECURITY HOLDERS OWNING OR HOLDING 1 PERCENT OR MORE OF TOTAL AMOUNT OF BONDS, MORTGAGES OR OTHER SECURITIES: None. I certify that the foregoing statements are correct and true.

SIGNED BY:
Carrol R. Sutton

Sentence Sermons

When Jesus chose His disciples, He selected busy men, but not too busy to put first things first.

Perhaps one thing wrong with the "Battle of Life" is that there are too many generals and not enough privates.

We should use candid (but not candied) speech in teaching the truth.

Truth is sometimes stranger than fiction — probably because few people have been introduced to it.

The kind of ANCESTORS we have had is not nearly as important as the kind of DESCENDANTS our ANCESTORS have.

CHURCH OF CHRIST
1003 Baltimore Ave.
Albertville, Ala. 35950

Entered as second-class matter at
Albertville, Alabama