Knowing that the Spiritual Sword Publication is presently mailed into 90 countries is a source of joy to every Christian at Getwell. Our thanks is given also to all who make special contributions to this work! We appreciate brother Alan Highers and all of the writers for their faithfulness to the Truth and their love for the souls of the lost.

We are always happy to hear from former members of the Getwell congregation and for their comments about our work. The following email note from sister Barbara Boshers to sister Wynona Murray is certainly of interest. She wrote:

“As I was reading the latest issue of the Getwell bulletin I noticed that a contribution to the Spiritual Sword had been made by one of my friends at the congregation where I attend. I asked how he knew about the journal and he said that he was baptized in 1981 and that his minister had suggested it to him. At that time he would have been living in New York. So, see? We have no idea who might see it! (signed) Love to you and your family and the Getwell family, Barbara.”
Impossible To Renew Them Again - I

Gary Colley

One of the most moving and powerful scriptures in the Bible reads,

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6).

Many have been the questions about this reference because of the false doctrines of Calvinism which deny that the saved person can fall from grace or apostatize. Unless one has the colored glasses of error blocking his view, we believe this passage along with many others on this question to be crystal clear: the once sincere, faithful, truly converted Christian, who departs from following the Lord and His Word, will be eternally lost. Since God’s powerful means to save is the Gospel (Rom. 1:16) and the Gospel is the only means which was brought to bear on any lost soul to bring salvation (Jas. 1:21), if that power is now neglected and rejected, there is no other power promised nor to be expected which will be exerted upon the heart to benefit our eternal welfare.

Paul’s Pleadings

Most consider Paul to be the writer of the book of Hebrews and that the book was written for the purpose of preserving from apostasy the Jewish Christians to whom he wrote. The key word in the book is the word “better,” mentioned some thirteen times, to show the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, in the priesthood, law, benefits, promises, etc. These to whom Paul wrote were exposed to the dangers of apostasy because of the sticklers for the Law of Moses who desired and worked diligently to return those who followed Christ to the yoke of bondage from which they had been delivered (Gal. 5:1).

Paul had written to the Galatian Christians that if they returned to the tenets of the Old Law, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4). The foreign teachings of men, then and now, have often departed from the true teaching of God’s revelation. Therefore, proper living and understanding of the grace of God found in the Gospel plan of salvation have not been followed. Some now contend there is nothing we can do in obedience to effect God’s grace toward ourselves; or, some say that grace covers unrepented sins; and even some say, in further accord with Calvinism and not the Bible, that once one is saved by the grace of God he cannot fall so as to be lost. Some seem to cast away the scriptures that do not suit them and finally decide in favor of universal salvation.

We Can Fall Away

Paul’s description of the blessings enjoyed in Christ, by the faithful (Heb. 6:4-6) whose hearts are no longer love and practice sin but are alive unto righteousness (Rom. 6:14, 19), are very vivid. He is clearly not referring to those who have remained in the world of sin and out of Christ, but he refers to those who through faith, repentance, confession and baptism have entered Christ. But something has happened since then! They have fallen away! Hence, he shows the former blessings enjoyed by Christians have now been lost by neglect in the hardened heart of the apostate.
When Moses and Elijah appeared alongside Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter declared, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” (Mark 9:5 NKJV). Rather than allow Peter to proceed with his ill-conceived plan, God spoke from the heavens and established Jesus’ superiority: “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” (v, 7). Although Moses and Elijah were important figures, God’s statement exalted Jesus. All attention must be focused on Him!

Jesus also emphasized His exalted position when He issued the Great Commission. He declared, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). It follows that if Jesus has “all authority,” He must be heard. Our task, then, is twofold: we must both hear Jesus and encourage others to do the same. Consequently, we must point others to Jesus. But what does this mean?

Some would have us believe that preaching Jesus excludes preaching about matters of doctrine. Such an approach, however, cannot be consistently sustained, for when Jesus is properly identified, His purpose for coming to earth must also be communicated. God became flesh so humanity might be saved, and Jesus made this very clear when He stated “for the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). What is accomplished by preaching about the Savior if individuals do not realize they need salvation? And how can one be shown he or she needs to be saved if there is no discussion of why such is the case? Either individuals need salvation because they are born in sin (as some religious groups wrongly teach), or individuals need salvation because they have, through their own freedom, transgressed God’s law (1 John 3:4; cf. Ezekiel 18:20). To show the latter to be true, we must emphasize not only who Jesus is but also what He demands.

Paul stressed Jesus’ expectations for His followers in his letter to the Ephesians. He encouraged the brethren to “no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind” (4:17). Instead, the Ephesian Christians were expected to conduct themselves as those who had “learned Christ” (v. 20). Importantly, this must mean they not only learned who Christ is but also what He demands. Thus, Paul continued, “If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus” (v. 21). The truth Paul referenced involves putting off the old man of sin and putting on the new man “created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (v. 24). This truth advances beyond one’s initial impression of Jesus’ identity.

When we point others to Jesus, we will teach them about both His identity and His expectations. We will preach the Man and His plan. We will preach Jesus and His doctrine. When we point others to Jesus, we fulfill the Great Commission by “teaching them to observe all things that [Jesus has] commanded” (Matthew 28:20). To do anything less is to fail to listen to our Lord.

--Chad Ramsey
Gospel Advocate
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