

WHAT'S NEW ABOUT IT?

The apostle Paul stated, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). A number of other passages likewise show us that when we become Christians, we have begun a new life in Christ Jesus. But, the question might arise, "what's new about it?". We wish to notice a few "new" things that begin with our conversion.

Let us start with the fact that we have a new master. Paul told the Romans, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom. 6:16). Who was our master prior to conversion? According to Paul, sin was our master. Also according to Paul, that changed when we obeyed from the heart the gospel plan of salvation, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18). Jesus stated, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). In Christ, we have a new Master.

Another thing that is new when we become God's children is our goal of life. No longer is the accumulation of material prosperity and pleasure that which is most important to us. The question asked by Jesus, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?", becomes one that is easy for us to answer. Paul stated, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). Our efforts turn toward laying up treasures in heaven where they remain safe rather than these material things of this life which will soon fly away.

A third new thing for us to look forward to as God's children is a new family. When we use the term, "children of God", we are already recognizing we are family with all others that are "children of God". The words "brother" and "brethren" are used often in the New Testament for fellow Christians. Peter tells us that after having "purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Pet. 1:22). "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (I John 3:1).

Robert

THE WORD IS VERY NIGH UNTO THEE

If one truly believes in God, then they would necessarily have a great desire to know what God would have them to do. In other words, they would yearn to know what God has to say. No distance would be too far, no effort too extreme, no cost too great, nothing would stand in our way of finding God's word. However, the distance is not so far, the effort required not so extreme and the cost not so great. God told the nation of Israel, "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" (Deut. 30:11-14). Many years later, the apostle Paul applied these words to the message of salvation in Christ Jesus when he wrote the Romans saying, "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach" (Rom. 10:6-8).

There is really no problem with the availability of God's will for man. God has revealed it to man. Paul said, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10). The word of the Lord liveth and abideth for ever, "And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (I Pet. 1:23, 25). "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).

No, the problem is not in an inability to reach God's word, for it is nigh unto us. The problem is in our willingness to open our eyes and our ears and listen to what God has said. As with those of Paul's day of which he quoted from Isaiah, "For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Acts 28:27).