

What Is a REAL Christian??

It's SHOCKING, but it's TRUE! Most professing "Christians" today are not REALLY Christians! Read this frank, vital article proving it—and find out what YOU need to be doing about it!

by Garner Ted Armstrong

WHAT IS A REAL Christian? Perhaps you've heard many different, conflicting definitions. I have. But have you ever heard the real BIBLE definition?

It is time you understood the very basic, down-to-earth, FUNDAMENTALS of Christianity—the very HEART, the root and core of the teachings of Christ!

So listen! I want you to realize, once and for all, that most professing Christians today believe the exact opposite from the very SIMPLEST, the clearest teachings of Christ!

And so, let's go to the very basis of REAL Christianity!—what is commonly called the "Sermon on the Mount."

The "Sermon" on the Mount

Actually, the scriptures found in Matthew's 5th, 6th and 7th chapters are not a "sermon" though they have been labeled as such by men who did not understand the Bible.

This is one of the very first opposites you will see in comparing these plain, clear statements of Christ with the commonly accepted beliefs and practices of a modern "Christianity."

"And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain, and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him . . ." (Mat. 5:1). Yes, Christ wanted to ESCAPE the big crowds. Notice it!

But haven't you always heard differently? Haven't you always taken for granted that Christ spoke in parables, similes, or analogies so the people could understand more easily? But that's NOT what Christ Himself said!

"And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is GIVEN UNTO YOU [His disciples] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. . . . For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, LEST at any time

they should see . . . and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Mat. 13:10-15).

Christ said, in quoting Isaiah, that the people could not understand—that He deliberately clouded His meaning, LEST they should be converted!

HOW UTTERLY DIFFERENT from what you've always assumed!

You see, Jesus did not come to convert the world! He came to ESTABLISH HIS CHURCH to DIE FOR THE SINS OF all mankind, to commission His disciples who were to carry His MESSAGE to all nations. Christ came for MANY reasons—none of them to save the entire world at that time!

He was a Divine Messenger, sent from His Father in heaven, to teach and train His disciples. "Disciple" merely means "student," or "learner."

Notice then, Jesus "opened His mouth and taught THEM [His disciples, or His students] saying . . ."

So, you see the "sermon" on the Mount was not a sermon at all, but a private, personal lesson Jesus gave to His disciples. He was sitting down.

"The Beatitudes"

The next few verses are among the best-known in the entire Bible. Perhaps many of you can say them by memory. That is exactly why I wanted to write this article. I wanted to ANALYZE, CAREFULLY, EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM! I wanted to take the CLEAR, BEST-KNOW parts of Christ's teachings—and show you FROM THEM how UTTERLY REMOVED from true Christianity are most professing Christians today!

Christ said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (verse 3).

What does it mean, to be "poor" in spirit? Certainly Christ didn't mean to be LACKING in the Spirit of God, for He urges, through Peter, "GROW in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (II Pet.

3:18), and inspired Paul to write, "Now if any man have not the SPIRIT of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). Jesus said, "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father GIVE the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 11:13.)

No, Jesus doesn't mean to LACK the Spirit of God, as the foolish virgins, but means blessed are those who are truly LOWLY, HUMBLE, YIELDING in attitude of heart and mind!

How MANY "Christians" are truly Christlike in spirit? Jesus was completely "poor in spirit!" He was completely HUMBLE! A greater man never lived—a man never lived who could exercise more gigantic, all-encompassing POWER than Christ! There never was a more dynamic, lively, energetic, personable, talented man! There never was a man with more REASON to get all "puffed up" and proud—filled with HUMANITY! But yet—Jesus was humble! Paul wrote, "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Rom. 12:16).

Christ went about with publicans, sinners, harlots and the very lowest (in man's eyes) of the society of His day. For this He was constantly criticized by the haughty, proud, puffed-up denominational leaders of that time.

What about OUR time?

It just isn't too "popular" to help out a tramp, to comfort a diseased, afflicted person, to care for invalids, to GIVE something of yourself to someone who is really in need, is it? To be really poor in spirit is a great RARITY today!

"Theirs Is the Kingdom of Heaven"

Here is the next diametric opposite!

Skipping ahead just two verses, Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for THEY shall inherit the earth!" Does Christ mean to imply the "poor in spirit" are

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going to "heaven," but the MEEK are going to remain on earth?

Look at it! What does it SAY? If Jesus promised HEAVEN to the poor in spirit—then it is VERY CLEARLY stated the MEEK are going to stay ON EARTH!

But did Jesus promise "heaven" to the poor in spirit?

No! Nowhere in all the Bible is HEAVEN promised as the reward of the saved. Here is another GREAT OPPOSITE that is the very BASIS of "Christian" doctrine today—and did not come out of the Bible!

Read it again carefully. Christ said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven" (verse 3). That little word "OF" qualifies the verse, makes it plain! It is a KINGDOM God promises His elect—a kingdom ruled by God, FROM HEAVEN! It is a kingdom OF heaven—but not a kingdom IN heaven, and there is a great difference! Notice just a FEW of the HUNDREDS of Biblical proofs!

Jesus is pictured in Luke 19 as a young nobleman who went into a FAR country to get for himself a kingdom—and to return! When He returns, he apportions: RULERSHIP to His faithful servants over cities, on this earth! Read Luke 19:12-27!

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The Apostle Paul wrote of our citizenship which is IN heaven! He likened the Saints to foreigners, as did Peter, and as strangers, sojourning in a strange country! "For our CITIZENSHIP [margin] is in heaven, FROM whence [He is to return to the earth] also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20).

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Notice Micah's 4th chapter! Read all of it! "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . and people shall flow unto it . . . for the law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation, and the Lord shall reign OVER THEM IN MOUNT ZION from henceforth, even forever!" (Micah 4:1-2, 7).

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Remember! The Bible does NOT contradict itself! The oft-quoted and well-loved scripture in I Thessalonians the 4th chapter means what it says! But you have not heard what it actually SAYS!

And so now, after reading these MANY scriptural proofs that Christ is coming to this earth to REMAIN here, ruling with His Saints, let's candidly read this often-quoted, completely misunderstood text.

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord!" (I Thess. 4:16-17).

Notice there is not one single word about Saints going to heaven!

What this passage does NOT say is clear! It does NOT say the Saints are going to HEAVEN!

What it DOES say is equally clear! It DOES say the saints will rise to meet the Lord IN THE AIR! Notice it! Jesus is going to "DESCEND FROM HEAVEN" and the resurrected and changed Saints will be caught up "IN THE CLOUDS, to MEET the Lord IN THE AIR!"

Recently, my father and I returned from Rome to New York on a big, Boeing 707 jet airliner. We were sped through the thinner upper atmosphere, HIGH ABOVE THE CLOUDS at the flashing speed of about 600 miles an hour! We actually flew in a man-made air-plane MUCH HIGHER than your Bible says the Saints will rise when Christ returns! The Bible says IN THE CLOUDS—NOT UP IN HEAVEN! This earth is

enveloped by layers of air, composed of PHYSICAL SUBSTANCES. Air is composed of oxygen, carbon dioxide, and many types of gases. Clouds are merely formed of vapors and mists, the condensation of moisture when cold air masses meet warmer masses. As such, air and clouds are a PART OF THIS EARTH! They belong to EARTH, not to Heaven, which is far beyond the outer reaches of man's telescopes which only begin to probe the vast, incomprehensible reaches of the universe!

Think for a moment!

If an intimate friend of yours were returning to stay with you after a long absence, and you went to the gate to meet the friend—wouldn't it be silly if you left your home, turned around and went back to His home with him? Christ is to RETURN to the earth, FROM heaven!

Paul wrote, "... and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (verse 17). Yes—we shall be WITH the Lord, where HE WILL BE! And where will HE BE? ON THE EARTH, as you have already seen PROVED from your own Bible!

Christ said, "... I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, THERE YE MAY BE ALSO!" (John 14:3). Where will Christ BE?

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"Blessed Are They That Mourn"

"... for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4).

Surely you would believe there is no conflict HERE. Surely all professing "Christians" believe this scripture?

I suppose hundreds of thousands do believe these words of Christ—but how many really discern their meaning?

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Christ was called a "... man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . ." (Isa. 53:3). But why? Because of the EVIL of man! Because of SIN!

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Yes, the One who became Christ was made MOURNFUL and SORRY, when He saw the wretchedness, the sickness, poverty, squalor, war and death man was bringing on himself! And so it is with a TRUE Christian! Even though Christ wants us to have more abundant life, He also inspired Solomon to write, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. . . . a time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance . . ." (Ecc. 3:1-4).

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Christ said only a very FEW—the very elect of God, who were being kept from the clever deceptions of Satan—would not be deceived. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24).

SATAN has deceived the world — and God has warned repeatedly through the New Testament that this would be so — in this age, NOW! In Revelation the twelfth chapter, the devil is described as a great dragon "which deceiveth the whole world!"

Either this world is deceived, or your Bible is not true!

But the Bible is true—and this world is in the grips of a tremendous deception! A deceived person doesn't KNOW he's deceived! He's sincere! But he's sincerely WRONG!

And so it is that scores, hundreds and thousands of SINCERE, well-meaning people—believing themselves to be in a "saved" condition, believing they are "Christian"—are actually in tacit disagreement with REAL Christianity!

The Sermon on the Mount

No simpler teachings, no clearer meanings can be found in the Bible than in the much-loved and often-quoted teachings of Jesus Christ in the "sermon" on the Mount, found in Matthew's 5th, 6th and 7th chapters.

Christ said the meek would inherit the EARTH, not heaven, as is supposed by millions. He pictured Himself as the young nobleman, who went into a far country to get for himself a kingdom and RETURN. He said the saints would rule on EARTH. His feet are to stand on the Mount of Olives—on this earth, at His return. Here, then was one of the very BASIC DOCTRINES of the vast majority of all professing "Christians" of today — which Christ refuted by very PLAIN statements, even in the sermon on the Mount!

But let's continue!

Do You HUNGER For Righteousness

Jesus said, in the next of the "beatitudes," "Blessed are they which do

HUNGER AND THIRST for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). Just what is righteousness? It is to be RIGHT rather than wrong. It is to follow the RIGHT way, rather than the wrong way, which seems "right" to a man.

But more than that—what is the Bible definition of "righteousness?"

It's this! "ALL THY COMMANDMENTS ARE RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Ps. 119:172.)

The perfect, holy, Ten Commandments of God are RIGHTEOUSNESS!

In this same fifth chapter of Matthew, Christ said, "Think NOT that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am NOT come to destroy, but to fulfill" (verse 17). And yet, haven't you always heard the exact opposite? Haven't you always heard Jesus came to DO AWAY with the LAW?

WHY have you heard this? The Bible doesn't say so—rather, it says the EXACT OPPOSITE! Notice it! "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, but whosoever shall DO AND TEACH them, the same shall be called GREAT in the kingdom of heaven" (verse 19).

Christ was talking about the LAW of God—again in the same breath, in the same thought. He explained He was talking about the WAY TO BE RIGHTEOUS! "For I say unto you, that except YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS DOING AND TEACHING GOD'S LAWS shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (verse 20).

Christ said, "Not every one that saith 'unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven'" (Matt. 7:21).

Jesus inspired Paul to write, "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but [on the other hand, that which is important] THE KEEPING OF THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD!" (1 Cor. 7:19.) This does not say some supposed "new commandment" Jesus Christ. There is no way around it. There is no "spiritualizing" this plain statement away.

Later, we read in 1 Corinthians 13 that without God's LOVE we are NOTHING! Unless we have real LOVE in our hearts,

we are not Christians! And it is LOVE that will LEAD US TO KEEP GOD'S TEN COMMANDMENTS! "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore LOVE is the fulfilling of the law!" (Rom. 13:10.)

God inspired John to confirm this fact further, when he wrote, "For THIS [the love of God, that we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, His commandments are not grievous]" (1 John 3:3).

To hunger and thirst for righteousness is to yearn, to strive, to STRUGGLE—eventually to BE OBEDIENT TO GOD! To KEEP His laws, which are given in LOVE, for our GOOD.

Those who are truly hungering and thirsting for righteousness will be studying constantly for new light, being willing to change when they see they've been wrong, admitting their wrong beliefs, their mistakes, their sins. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God" (1 Tim. 2:15), wrote Paul to Timothy. "Prove ALL THINGS" (1 Thess. 5:21) Paul said to the Thessalonians.

Do modern Christians really KNOW their Bibles? Are MOST professing Christians YOU KNOW studying diligently, searching the scriptures daily, as the Bereans did (Acts 17:11), hungering and thirsting for God's righteousness? Are MOST professing Christians you know praying, fasting, getting closer to God daily by a constant contact with His word? "Thy word is TRUTH" (John 17:17) said Jesus. But most "modern" Christians DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT HIS WORDSAYS!

You would be amazed to realize a vast percentage of professing Christians can't even name the first four Gospels. They don't KNOW the Bible—they aren't studying the Bible—because they don't really HUNGER AND THIRST for it!

Do you? If you really are "hungering and thirsting" for righteousness, you'll be doing as the ones Jesus described in Matthew's 13th chapter. You'll be like the merchant who sold all to gain the one pearl of great price. You'll be like the man who found the treasure in the field, and sold everything to buy that one field!

ARE you like that? Most professing Christians today are not. If you want

eloped by layers of air, composed of physical substances. Air is composed of oxygen, carbon dioxide, and many other gases. Clouds are merely formed vapors and mists, the condensation of moisture when cold air masses meet warm air masses. As such, air and clouds are a PART OF THIS EARTH! They belong to EARTH, not to Heaven, which is far beyond the outer reaches of man's escapes which only begin to probe the vast, incomprehensible reaches of the universe!

Think for a moment!

If an intimate friend of yours were turning to stay with you after a long absence, and you went to the gate to see the friend—wouldn't it be silly if you left your home, turned around and went back to his home with him? Christ is to RETURN to the earth, FROM heaven!

Paul writes, "... and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (verse 17). Yes—we shall be WITH the Lord, where HE WILL BE! And where will HE BE? ON (THE EARTH, as you have already seen PROVED from your own Bible!

Christ said, "... I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, THERE YE MAY BE ALSO!" (John 14:3). Where will Christ BE?

ON THE EARTH!

Yes, here is another of the amazing, breathtaking OPPOSITES of your Bible from the commonly accepted and assumed teachings of the world. The ideas of men do not fit—even with the "Sermon on the Mount!"

The Kingdom OF Heaven is a kingdom RULED by Heaven, which is to come down OUT of Heaven—to this earth! Just as the house OF John is not in John, so is the Kingdom OF Heaven NOT to be IN, but FROM Heaven!

"Blessed Are They That Mourn"
"For they shall be comforted"
(Matt. 5:4).

Surely you would believe there is no conflict HERE. Surely all professing "Christians" believe this scripture?

I suppose hundreds of thousands do believe these words of Christ—but how many really discern their meaning?

Jesus said, "... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Christ wants us to have life brimful and running over with JOY! One of the FIRST attributes of God's Holy Spirit, the very mind and nature of God, is joy! (Gal. 5:22). But Solomon writes, "For in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (Ecc. 1:18).

Christ was called a "... man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief..." (Isa. 53:3). But why? Because of the EVIL of man! Because of SIN!

When all mankind went the wrong way after God had revealed the RIGHT way to him, God "... saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented [mattered sorry] the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and He grieved Him at His heart" (Gen. 6:5-6).

Yes, the One who became Christ was made MOURNFUL and SORRY, when He saw the wretchedness, the sickness, poverty, squalor, war and death man was bringing on himself! And so it is with a TRUE Christian! Even though Christ wants us to have more abundant life, He also inspired Solomon to write, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven, ... a time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance..." (Ecc. 3:1-4).

Yes, BLESSED are they who MOURN NOW! For they SHALL be comforted! They will experience GREAT JOY, happiness defying description in the Kingdom of God! Many mourn because of persecution! But do MOST modern Christians receive any persecution whatsoever for accepting the "modern" POPULAR concepts of "Christianity"? Certainly not! But Jesus said, "... In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world!" (John 16:33).

No, rather than suffering persecution, being given cause to MOURN, most professing Christians today have come to believe the exact opposite! They feel, instead, that "belonging to a Church" or "having some faith" will give them better standing in the community, result in better business relations, make them an accepted, integrated part of com-

munity life! This, too, is a direct OPPOSITE from the Bible teachings!

"Blessed Are the Meek..."

There is a difference between being meek, and being weak! Jesus was MEEK but not weak! Even though He was weakened physically when suffering the terrible beatings and lashings prior to His crucifixion (Paul said, "For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God..." (III Cor. 13:4)), Jesus was physically strong and healthy throughout His earthly life.

Remember Christ never sinned! He obeyed perfectly the physical laws of God which regulate health and strength, as well as the spiritual laws!

What does it mean to be really meek? Look for examples in modern Christianity. Where do you find very much gentleness, kindness, yieldedness? To be meek means to yield rather than cause an argument or trouble. It means to be HUMBLE, to be LOWLY in spirit and attitude. A truly MEEK person will be CHRISTLIKE in character.

Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart..." (Matt. 11:29). Paul was inspired to write, "I therefore... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love..." (Eph. 4:1-2).

A truly meek person will not try to justify the self, to feel the self is "better" than others, to "get even" with others. Rather, a meek person will be imitating Christ.

It's SHOCKING but TRUE! MOST professing "Christians" today are not really PRACTICING Christianity! Instead, hundreds of thousands are believing and practicing the same old pagan customs which Christ and the Apostles vigorously condemned—and all the while calling it "Christianity!"

Your Bible said this present generation would be almost totally DECEIVED! Christ said, "Take heed that no man deceive you, for MANY shall come in my name [coming as if they were the servants of Christ] SAYING I am Christ, and shall deceive MANY!" (Matt. 24:4-5).

to really begin to UNDERSTAND our Bible better, to really see it made gripping, INTERESTING, then write for the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. It's free of tuition—no charge whatever. You can have it FREE, if you really hunger for it!

Yes—here is another great opposite! Instead of hungering and thirsting for God's word, most professing Christians hunger and thirst for physical things, for satisfaction of the physical senses. Instead of understanding the truth about God's law—that His perfect law is the WAY to righteousness, most believe His Holy law has been done away. Instead of believing the straightforward statement of Christ that He DID NOT come to destroy the law, most believe the exact opposite, that HE DID come to destroy it!

How utterly DIFFERENT is the real truth of your Bible!

"Blessed Are the Merciful..."

Surely you know what it means to be merciful. But WHEN do you ever really SHOW MERCY? It's one thing to agree tacitly with scripture, and another thing to put it into practice!

James said, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (Jas. 1:22). He also wrote, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all!" (Jas. 2:10).

God says His mercies endure forever! But when do YOU ever have an opportunity to show mercy?

It is merciful to give instead of get! It is merciful to say nothing at all about someone, if you can't say something good about them. It is merciful to forgive a debt or obligation, rather than take a brother into court over it. It is merciful to treat all others as you want them to treat you!

Are most Christians merciful today? Is it showing MERCY to an enemy to send a bullet plunging into his vitals? Is it showing MERCY to envy, to hate, to kill?

Christ meant what He said! "BLESSED are the merciful, for they shall OBTAIN mercy" (Matt. 5:7). He shows further what He means when He gives an outline for prayer in the "Lord's prayer." "And forgive us our debts AS [AND

ONLY AS—IN THE SAME MEASURE] we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12).

"Blessed Are the Pure in Heart..."

But there aren't many of those around today! Paul writes, "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:15).

Nowhere, it seems, is there MORE debate, envy, ridicule, argument, deceit, hypocrisy and disagreement than among some who make profession of religion. More wars have been fought in the name of RELIGION than for any other reason. More people have been BUTCHERED, hanged, burned, wantonly slaughtered in the name of religion than for any other reason.

Jeremiah reveals that "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). An individual with the natural, physical, carnal mind has a defiled mind. He sees EVIL motives rather than good ones, he sees wrong implications behind every action, he sees suggestive or shabby meanings behind others' words. Paul said, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). The carnal mind is a resentful, defiant mind—a mind which is hostile to God and His perfect laws, and a mind with defiled conscience!

It's about time we began to WAKE UP and quit "kidding" ourselves we're converted when many who sincerely BELIEVE they're "Christians" have never even BEGUN the road to real Christianity!

Paul writes, "Charity... doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is NOT EASILY PROVOKED, THINKETH NO EVIL..." (I Cor. 13:4-5). Yet it seems there are no more easily provoked people than those in various religious fields. A paradox? Or another exact opposite between the plain teachings of your Lord and Saviour and the common practices and habits of most professing "Christians" today?

"Blessed Are the Peacemakers..."

Western fans are familiar with the famous six-shooter produced by Colt in

the "wild West" days, called the "peacemaker." Presumably, the name was taken from the Bible.

And herein is the philosophy of a "Christian" world. The way to peace, it believes, is through WAR! If you go to WAR, you will have PEACE!

But THINK for a moment. The world has always known war. The world recently fought "the War to END all wars." But is WAR ENDED? Has man's way been PRACTICAL? Has man's way WORKED? ARE ALL WARS OVER?

Think! Man has inevitably marched, step-by-step, along the route he has chosen to stand on the brink of COSMIC WAR! Man now stands, in his superior, "enlightened" state, on the verge of WORDSUCIDE!

Answer honestly! Has man been able to solve his problems through WAR?

Jokingly, some westerners in the United States began to call a gun the "peacemaker." BUT HAVE GUNS BROUGHT PEACE?

Jesus said, "LOVE your enemies, bless them that curse you, DO GOOD to them that hate you, and PRAY for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you!" (Matt. 5:44).

Do most "Christian" people BELIEVE this scripture? CERTAINLY!

BUT DO THEY PRACTICE IT?

Isn't it about time we quit "kidding" ourselves? YOU KNOW the professing "Christians" of today do not practice these things! When a REAL Christian gives this teaching of Christ as a REASON for His belief that he should not kill, others who are CHURCH MEMBERS will RIDICULE him. It seems RIDICULOUS to most "Christians" today to really FOLLOW the teachings of Christ. And yet, they still appropriate His name!

"What Is a Real Christian?"

During World War II, German mothers and fathers flocked to their churches and cathedrals to pray for their boys at the front. In England, France, or here in the United States, other parents went to their churches to pray for their boys at the same front.

In many cases the boys at the front, though of different races and speaking different languages, were of the SAME RELIGION! If in the same community—

they would have gone to the SAME CHURCH! "Christians" everywhere use the same book. They use, preach from, write about, and read—occasionally—the Bible! And regardless of in which land you find it, or in which language, the Bible says the same thing! Jesus said, LOVE your enemies! How many "Christians" BELIEVE THEY SHOULD LOVE THEIR ENEMIES? Let's stop "kidding" ourselves! You don't show LOVE to someone by sending a bullet ripping, tearing, gouging its way through his vitals, leaving him to die retching out his life's blood! You don't show "love" to your enemy by VAPORIZING him!

Yes, Jesus said, "BLESSED are the PEACEMAKERS! And he DIDN'T mean blessed are those who take up GUNS and then DECIDE themselves they're making PEACE!

Listen! If GUNS MAKE PEACE—WHERE, YES WHERE, OH WHERE ON THE FACE OF THIS EARTH TODAY'S THE PEACE THEY HAVE BROUGHT US?

Yes—we call ourselves "Christians" but it would EMBARRASS TO TEARS TO PROFESS OPENLY TO REALLY FOLLOW, TO LIVE BY, THE WORDS OF THE ONE WHOSE NAME WE APPROPRIATE!

Yes, BLESSED are the real PEACEMAKERS, for they shall be called the children of God! God is producing CHILDREN! John wrote, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the WORLD [the society, the age, the people around us] knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear [NOT immediately at our death] we shall be LIKE HIM for we shall see Him as He is!" (1 John 3:1-2.)

To be BORN of God is to become LIKE God, to become a member of the GOD-FAMILY!

Paul wrote, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be COMPARED with the GLORY which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). Jesus is called the FIRST-BORN of MANY BROTHERS! (1 Cor. 15:20, 23; Col. 1:15, 18; Rom. 8:29.)

Those who make peace are promised inheritance of the very family of God! Are YOU Being Persecuted?

Jesus said, "Blessed are they which are persecuted FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 5:10).

Remember He said, "In the world, ye SHALL have tribulation . . ." and also prayed to His Father, saying, "I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are NOT OF the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14). Christ told His disciples to SEPARATE themselves from the society around them—to come out of the world, and to do, believe and practice DIFFERENT things!

Notice the strong language about this in God's word!

"You adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God!" (James 4:4.)

John commands TRUE Christians, "Love NOT the world, neither the things that are IN the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that DOETH THE WILL OF GOD [which will is expressed in HIS WORD] abideth for ever!" (1 John 2:15-17.)

Do most "Christians" today really COME OUT of the world, separating themselves from its customs, its habits and ways? Do most really become so strikingly DIFFERENT that their former business associates, their relatives, neighbors and friends are actually STARTLED by the great CHANGE in their lives?

Paul says, "I beseech you . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice . . . and BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

God thunders His warning through John, "COME OUT OF HER my people, that ye be NOT partakers of her sins,

and that ye receive NOT of her PLAGUES" (Rev. 18:4).

If you really come out of the world—you will suffer PERSECUTION!

Jesus SAID so!

Notice it! "Think NOT that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be those of his own household" (Mat. 10:34-36).

If you really begin to CHANGE—if you really SURRENDER your life to God!—if you really begin to DO AS CHRIST DID, to LIVE AS HE LIVED—you will be persecuted!

And if YOU'RE NOT BEING PERSECUTED, the chances are, YOU ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN!

"BLESSED Are Ye"

Jesus goes on to describe how really converted ones will REJOICE when they receive this persecution that comes from living righteously, godly, in this present evil world.

He says, "GREAT is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you!"

Yes GREAT, and INCOMPREHENSIBLE is the reward of God's true Saints, reserved for them in heaven, which is to come down OUT of heaven, to this earth!

Jesus tells us to PRAY, "THY KINGDOM COME [not that we'll go to it], THY WILL BE DONE, IN EARTH as it is in heaven!" (Mat. 6:10.)

How PLAIN are the true teachings of Christ!

And HOW DIFFERENT from what you've grown up believing and assuming!

Yes, right here in the BEATITUDES, the "Sermon on the Mount" you can see clearly the majority of professing Christians just DO NOT BELIEVE OR PRACTICE what Christ SAID!

Do you see how DIFFERENT the REAL Christianity of the BIBLE is from today's PROFESSING brands? May God help you to really see, and CHANGE before it's too late!