



# NEW LIFE

## BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

44 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6NN

Charity No. 1060655

Tel: 020 7328 0869 (Manse)

Email: [newlifeplondon@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:newlifeplondon@yahoo.co.uk)

Website: [www.newlifebpc.org.uk](http://www.newlifebpc.org.uk)

Preacher & Church Administrator: Mok Chee Cheong 07921 929515

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*"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)*

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*From the PREACHER'S HEART*

## SO CLOSE AND YET SO FAR (2)

### Introduction

Two weeks ago I highlighted in my 1<sup>st</sup> article the danger of those who profess to be a Christian, who are religious in their Christian practice, and, "yet, but almost a Christian". Someone recently said to me, "many want to go to heaven but are not willing to die", but I would say, "Many want to go to heaven but are not willing to die to self nor take up the cross and follow Jesus". Our Lord says in John 12:24-25, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."*

To many, becoming a Christian is so easy, simply confess your sins and you are on the way to heaven. They either live by the slogan, "just believe and you will be saved," or they will flippantly quote the Calvinistic catchphrase, "once saved, forever saved," but their lives show no proper motive as well as proper conduct of a true believer as demonstrated in scripture.

### How far a man may go in becoming "almost a Christian"

In this 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the article, we will consider how far a man may go in trying to reach heaven, or how far a man may go in becoming a Christian, and yet may not be quite there. I would like to summarise some of the steps Matthew Mead highlighted in his discourse to show how far one may go to becoming a Christian.

1. He may have full of knowledge and understanding, "may know much of God and His will, much of Christ and His ways, and yet be but almost a Christian."

"What lack I yet?" the young man asked Jesus in Matthew 19:20.

The answer is, not all knowledge of God will lead to life everlasting. The devils "have more knowledge of God than all men in the world, yet why do the devils perish and be cast into the lake of fire? Knowledge is not good enough if it only fills the head and not moves the heart. "There is, you must know, a twofold knowledge: the one is common, but not saving; the other is not common, but saving."

*Continued on Page 2...*

So knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ is of no use “if it is not saving knowledge, knowledge joined with affection and application, he is but almost a Christian.”

2. He may have great and eminent spiritual gifts, and yet be but almost a Christian.

“What lack he yet?”

The answer is, “it is not gifts, but grace, which makes a Christian,” for gifts is the common work of the Spirit, it is for the use and good of others and “gifts may decay and perish.” But grace is the excellent way to heaven. “Gifts may make us rich towards man.” Our gifts profit others, but it is grace that makes us rich towards God.

It takes grace that goes beyond the power of the greatest gifts to change the heart of sinful men. “Gifts may make a man a scholar, but grace makes a man a believer. Now, if gifts cannot change the heart, then a man may have the greatest gifts and yet be but almost a Christian.”

3. He may have a high profession of faith in Christ, and be much in external duties of godliness, and yet be but almost a Christian.

“What lack he then?”

The answer is; these are what the scripture called professors of Christianity but not practitioner of their faith. They are what Paul described as *“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof”* (2 Timothy 3:5). “They deny the power; that is, they do not live in the practice of those graces to which they pretend in their duties. He who pretends to godliness by a specious profession, and yet does not practice godliness by a holy conversation, has a form, but denies the power.”

So the opposite of profession is true confession, which is “a rooted love to the person of Christ. To profess Christ is to own Him when none deny Him; to confess Christ is to plead for Him and suffer for Him when others oppose Him.” Are you willing to that?

4. He may oppose sin and yet be but almost a Christian.

“What lack he then?”

The answer is; there is a great gulf between opposing sin and true confession of sin. There are many in the bible who mourned for their sins like Saul and Esau and yet they perish. Why? Because confession can be made merely “out of custom and not out of conscience.” They readily confess that “they are great sinners who yet cannot confess their sins.” If they do confess their sins, it is only in general terms and not their particular sins, and their confession is usually done “under extremity; that is not free and voluntary”, for fear of punishment rather than the realization that they have sinned against a holy God.

So opposing sin and confession of sin only in general or only under extremity; or “if he may confess sin without any intent to forsake sin; then surely, a man may confess sin and yet be but almost a Christian.”

*Continued on Page 3...*

5. He may be a member of the church of Christ, he may join himself to the people of God, partake with them in all ordinances, and share of all church privileges and yet be but almost a Christian.

“What lack he yet”

The answer is; to best look at the account of the five foolish virgins who joined themselves to the wise and walked together with them. But in the end they were shut out from the bridegroom. They are the “mixed multitudes who came up with the church of Israel out of Egypt. They joined themselves to the Israelites, owned their God, left their own country, and yet were in heart Egyptians, notwithstanding. All are not Israel that are of Israel?”

Who then are true members of the church of Jesus Christ? “It is the “church of the first-born.” The true church of Christ has “no hypocrites, no rotten, unsound professors, none but the “spirits of just men made perfect.” In the church of Christ, “the chaff is separated to unquenchable fire.”

“But in the church on earth, the wheat and the chaff lie in the same heap together. The Samaritans will be near kin to the Jews when they are in prosperity. So, while the church of God flourishes in the world, many will join it. They will seem Jews, though they are Samaritans, and seem saints, though they are no better than almost Christians.”

### **Conclusion**

We do well to examine our hearts before God in light of Scripture to see whether we are but almost a Christian. Let us not fool ourselves into thinking that just because I am brought up in a Christian family therefore I am a believer. Let us not be fooled by the deceptive words of Satan, “yea, hath God said” and be led into the belief that just because I am found in church every Sunday and have been actively involve in serving God therefore I am on my way to heaven.

Oh that we may all come before our Lord Jesus, who “*is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*” (Hebrews 4:12), that we may bear our hearts and souls before Him and truly repent before it is too late when we shall meet Him who will then says to us, “*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*” (Matthew 7:23).

*Yours warmly in Christ  
Preacher Mok*

(\*) Note: All quotations excluding Bible verses are taken from Matthew Mead’s discourse on “The Almost Christian Discovered”

# WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

## CHURCH THEME: WALK IN THE NEWNESS OF LIFE (Romans 6:4)

Our **worship services** begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm**.

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
<b>Morning</b>	<i>Today: 19/08/2007</i>	<i>Next Week: 26/08/2007</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We specially welcome Eram to our morning worship service last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	Lord, What Wilt Thou Have Me to Do?	Are you equipped for Service in Christ's Kingdom	
<i>Text:</i>	Acts 9:6	1 Corinthians 12:4-11	
<i>Organist:</i>	Yanning	Anthony	
<b>Evening</b>			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	John Poh	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	Can I Offer My Service?	Who is In Charge	
<i>Text:</i>	1 Corinthians 12:28	1 Corinthians 12:28	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Yanning	Yanning	
Other Duties			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
	<i>Today: 19/08/2007</i>	<i>Next Week: 26/08/2007</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Family Worship:</b> Those who are interested to open up their homes in August, September and October, please inform Pr Mok.</li> <li>• <b>Memory Verse for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter:</b> Those who would like to carry out the memory verse review, please see Pr Mok.</li> <li>• <b>Sabbath School:</b> The Sunday School is catered for children of ages 6-12. This will be held at the Library after the morning worship service. Children are encouraged to sit with their parents during morning service.</li> <li>• <b>Church Website:</b> Please take note that the new church website is <a href="http://www.newlifebpc.org.uk">www.newlifebpc.org.uk</a></li> </ul>
<i>Ushers</i>	Wah Soon/Yetta	Daniel/Sharon	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Carol	Joyce	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Constance	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	BBK	BBK	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 24 Aug	<b>Young Adults Fellowship:</b> No Meeting		
Sat 25 Aug	4.00 pm	<b>Prayer Meeting &amp; Bible Study:</b> Spkr: Pr Mok	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
<b>Offering:</b> £369.61		<b>Lunch:</b> £23.70	
Memory Verse			<p><i>We have only once to live; therefore, let us live to some purpose. The day that dawned this morning will never dawn again. The opportunities which it brought with it will never come again; and if we fail to fill it with the service it requires of us, there will be no possibility of returning into it to repair the mischief. The wheels of Time's chariot have ratchets on them, and they move only forward.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">— William M. Taylor</p>
<p><i>Previous Week (August 07 Wk 2): <b>Mark 13:32-33</b></i></p> <p>But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.</p>			
<p><i>This Week (August 07 Wk 3): <b>Romans 8:28</b></i></p> <p>And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.</p>			