

MAKING A CHANGE

It is natural for all of us to resist change. It is not easy for us to lay aside old practices and adopt new ones. This is especially true regarding religion. On occasion, as we have talked with people about what the Bible teaches and about undenominational New Testament Christianity, they have replied like this: "What you say seems true; but I just don't believe in changing churches." Some insist on loyalty to their parents' religion. Others may fear disapproval of friends. One person admitted: "I know I should, but I just don't want to change."

Certainly we should be cautious in making changes which will have a major effect in our lives. In religious matters, we must be sure that we are turning in the right direction. But as we learn of changes and improvements that are necessary, we ought not to resist them.

There is a host of Bible characters who are remembered for their willingness to change. Ruth turned from the gods her parents worshipped to the true and living God. Matthew, the tax collector, left his work in order to follow Jesus. Zacchaeus, another publican, was looking for Jesus and when he met the Saviour, his life was changed for the better. The prodigal son changed from a life of license and misery to go back to his father's house. Saul of Tarsus gave up his position as a leader among the Pharisees to become a servant of Jesus. Men such as the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius were religious men, but their religion was wrong, therefore, they changed to the true one. In Acts, chapter 19, we read of men who were baptized disciples, but when they learned that their baptism was unacceptable, they were baptized again. All of these examples are of men and women who were challenged to make revolutionary changes.

It is important, however, that we understand the reason for such changes. We may, like the prodigal, reflect that there is a better life than the one we are living. Many are living in sin who know that there is a better way. In spite of the looseness of their conduct, they have never been able to escape the knowledge that they could do better. These know they should change.

Self examination may reveal this need. Long ago, the Psalmist wrote: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." {Psalms 119:59-60} Self examination is a commendable practice; but it avails little if we are not willing to correct the faults we uncover.

Another way in which we may be challenged to change is by having new evidence brought to our attention. One may have been satisfied that he was right until he learned some truth which he never knew before. This was the thing that caused men such as Saul of Tarsus and Cornelius to change. They learned what they had not known before. Some people resist teaching for fear of learning that they need to change; but one who sincerely wants to please God will be glad to learn even if it means his whole way of life would have to be corrected.