



BEACON

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850.455.7595

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BEACON

Vol. I / No. 1

January 4, 2021

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Bill Busch

Minister: Michael Hatcher

Deacons: Henry Born, Elward Brantley

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Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

One Way!

Michael Hatcher

We live in an age of pluralism and relativism. Pluralism deals with the idea that there are many different ways and that each of those ways are of equal value. One defined it as, “The theory that there are more than one or more than two kinds of ultimate reality and/or truth; and that therefore more than one religion can be said to have the truth (way to God, salvation, etcetera)—even if their essential doctrines are mutually exclusive.” Relativism is the idea that right or wrong is relative, that it differs for each person or group. Thus, what is right to one might be wrong to another and that both positions are equally acceptable.

As one studies the Bible, he sees that it is opposed to both pluralism and relativism. The Scriptures teach that there is an objective truth (right and wrong), and that truth is not dependent upon what anyone might think

about it, what situation one might be in, or what time-frame one might live in. The Bible also presents that it is the only way, not simply one of many ways.

God created man in His own image (Gen. 1-2). As such man is responsible to God. This is evidenced in that man will stand before God and our actions will be judged by Him (Rom. 2:16; 14:12; 1 Pet. 1:17). The standard of judgment will be the Word of God as revealed by Christ Jesus (John 12:48-50). He is the revealer of Truth (1:17; 8:31-32; 18:37), thus, He can state “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (14:6). If we desire to be pleasing to our Creator (God), we must follow the Truth as revealed by Jesus. He is the way, not a way. Muhammad, Confucius, the millions of deities of the Hindus, the Buddha’s, the Pope of the Apostate (Catholic) Church,

Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, the Armstrong's (Herbert W. or Garner Ted), Ellen White, nor anyone else can be followed and be acceptable to God.

It is the Truth as found in the Bible that is our way to the Father. The Truth sanctifies us, as Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (17:17). God's grace and Truth cannot be separated (even though many try). "For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (1:17). God's grace teaches us how we are to live:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Tit. 2:11-12).

It is the Gospel (Truth) which saves man. Peter states that we have purified our souls in obeying the truth (1 Pet. 1:22). Paul informs us that the Gospel saves: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one

that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). James states,

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls (Jam. 1:21).

However, when truth is mixed with error, then there is no salvation. The ingredients of rat poison are mainly good, but the small portion of poison kills the rat. Many religions have some or even mostly truth, but then it is laced with the doctrines of men and ends up having no power to save.

Only by obeying the Truth and then living according to Truth will we be able to stand before God in judgment. Yet, world religions think they can stand by following someone other than Christ; Denominations think they can stand when they mix error with Truth; many think they can stand by simply living what they consider to be a moral life. We urge you to study the Bible with us and accept only the Truth and nothing other than Truth knowing that Truth will save us eternally in heaven.

Pensacola, FL

"Endeavoring to Keep the Unity of the Spirit and the Bond of Peace"

Tim Smith

The words selected for our title come from the fourth chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, verse three. What do they mean? How do they apply to the congregation with whom you serve the Lord? Let us

take a few minutes to investigate that very question.

First, the word "endeavoring" means (basically) "to make haste to acquire speedily the prescribed attribute." The phrase "to keep

the unity of” indicates a “togetherness” or “sameness” of purpose. The “Spirit” is, of course the Holy Spirit. The phrase “in the bond of peace” means “to be held together in peace.” So much for definitions. What is the application?

This passage enjoins upon each faithful child of God the duty of exerting immediate and long-term effort to bring about peace in the Lord’s Church by standing for the “sameness” delivered by the Spirit to the Church (that “sameness” that was delivered is the New Testament). We should know in the beginning that sometimes “unity” is not the result of standing for the Truth, at least not in the sense in which we usually think of “unity.” If one is “for” the truth and another is “against” the truth, the one standing “for” it may well find conflict and strife as a result of his/her stand. But know this: the only way that true peace is either given by or required from God is when that peace is founded upon the truth. If strife grows out of our efforts to do exactly what is required in

exactly the right way, then that strife between brethren is required to avoid strife between God and His people.

God does not require of us “peace” at any cost, or that we endeavor thereunto. He requires that we seek peace maintaining the “unity of the Spirit.” What is the difference? I have known many instances wherein “peace” (as the world defines the word) could be had if only the faithful would compromise. The “peace” that would ensue would be “between brethren,” but would it be the “peace” of Paul’s context? No. For to establish peace on terms that violate God’s Word is to create strife and friction (indeed, division) between God and His people.

The “peace,” therefore unto which we strive and for which we endeavor is a peace based upon and growing from faithful obedience to the Word of God. Sometimes when you advocate the Truth you may well be accused of “stirring up trouble” in the church. If one element wishes to do that which violates His Word and you oppose them someone might come to you and whisper something like this? “Just let them alone in doing what is wrong, they will be lost (should they die in unrepentant condition), and if you go along with them you will be lost (should you die in an unrepentant condition). This kind of “peace” is no peace at all!

Strive for peace, but do it properly. Do only what He says, all of what He says, all of the time. This may make for trouble today, but it will make for peace in the after-a-while.

Deceased

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Remember in your prayers:

Bill Busch Nancy Travis
Tim Busch Carla Burleson
Karen Diamond

Please Remember

January 10

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

January 17

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

January 17

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

January 31

Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.



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BEACON

Vol. L / No. 2

January 11, 2021

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Children of Light

Brad Green

Christians are referred to as “children of light” (1 The. 5:5). The apostle Paul presents several reasons for this designation.

One reason Paul gives for identifying Christians as children of light is because Christians are of the day, not of the night. Generally speaking, men do most of their work during the day and sleep at night. Christians must be workers. Jesus exhorts, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life” (John 6:27). Paul reminds, “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Heb. 4:11) as did those who died in the wilderness (cf. Deu. 1:34-39). Also, consider that the life of a Christian must be one that is not afraid of the light. Most evil and ungodly acts occur at night under the blan-

ket of darkness. Evil is exposed by the light. Jesus says:

this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be re-proved (John 3:19-20).

When people attempt to do business “behind closed doors,” it is likely because they do not want their deeds to be exposed by the light. “Sunshine laws” exist in our government at all levels (local, state, and federal) to ensure that public policy and law is debated “in the light” so citizens can observe what is being done relative to their governance. Sadly, Washington, D.C., has shut the doors more than a few times regarding legislation—casting a cloud of doubt over the

process and the possible result. Christians have been given a divine “sunshine law” when it comes to what we practice and teach. The apostle Peter records, “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). A child of light must never be ashamed or afraid to defend what he teaches and practices. As long as we are walking in the light of God’s Word, there is no need to hide from anything or anyone. If anyone is unwilling or unable to defend a position, but chooses to continue to hold said position anyway, it should immediately invoke a “red flag.” Any position not worth defending is a position not worth having.

Second, Christians are children of light because they are watchful and sober-minded. Being children of the day allows us to be awake and ready for what is ahead. Jesus urges, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.... Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing” (Mat. 24:42, 46). Paul equates being sober with being ready for battle—“putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 The. 5:8; Eph. 6:11-18). If we are not sober, or clear-minded, we will be unable to protect ourselves against the enemy. Peter states, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

Third, Christians are children of light because they comfort and edify one another.

Children of light look out for each other, whereas children of darkness look out only for themselves. Like their Father, children of light desire that all men “be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). Also, consider that if we do not comfort and build each other up in the Most Holy Faith (Jude 20), who will be there to comfort and edify us when we are in need?

We should all seek to be children of light. To do so, one must be a faithful follower of Jesus—the light of the world (John 8:12). One must continue to walk in the light (1 John 1:7), being watchful and ready for battle, and seeking good for one another. To the faithful child of light is an appointment with “salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 The. 5:9).

Lenoir City, TN

Sermon Outlines

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A House or a Home?

Ken Chumbley

In the June 2008 issue of the *Reader's Digest*, in the section entitled "Off Base, Humor In Uniform" is an item that, although indeed humorous, has a serious side to it. It tells the story of an Air Force family that was transferred to a new base. A local TV station was doing a human-interest story. The interviewer asked the five-year-old daughter how she felt about settling into a new home. Her calm reply was, "Oh, we carry our home with us—we just have to find a house to put it in."

Clearly that young lady knew something that even a lot of adults do not know. She knew there was a distinction between a house and a home. A *house* is defined as "a building that serves as living quarters for one or a few families" and a *home* is defined as "one's residence" also is given the additional definition: "the social unit formed by a family living together" (See *Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary*). A house always refers to the structure in which people live whether it is a fancy brick house or a mud hut. Whereas *home* more specifically refers to those who reside together and make up a family. It is amazing that realtors sometimes get it wrong when they advertise "homes for sale" when they really mean "houses for sale." The structure can be sold but the social unit that composes the family cannot be sold for monetary value. Sadly, there are those that do sell the home—for other things especially as a result of divorce when the family unit is divided and often for reasons far different to the one reason for divorce and remarriage

that is approved by God's Word—fornication (Mat. 19:9).

One passage of Scripture that clearly draws the distinction between a house and a home is Luke 9:61 where we read concerning one who was called to follow Jesus but made excuse when he said: "And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house." He wanted first to go home to his family that lived in his house.

We may not always be able to choose the ideal house in which to live simply because the costs of purchasing that house might be prohibitive. Sadly, in recent years some have, with the aid of lending institutions allowing them mortgage loans that they could not afford to repay, are finding themselves in a situation whereby they might lose their house. However, the home is what we make it by the way that we live our lives. Sometimes we might have to change out houses but should not have to change homes. We might not always be able to upgrade the house to make it more comfortable to live in. However, we can always work at upgrading our home to make it more like the kind of home the Lord would have us to maintain.

Whether we are parents or children we can all do our part to make our home the best that it can be. The best home is one that is dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ and to serving Him through His church.

Deceased

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Karen Diamond

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Nancy Loy in the death of her sister-in-law, Brenda Loy, on January 8. Please keep Nancy and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

January 17

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

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“Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother”

Guy N. Woods

The fifth of the commandments emanating from Sinai said: “Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee” (Exo. 20:12).

An analysis of the commandment

(1) Children are required to reverence and respect their earthly parents and manifest piety toward them. “But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God” (1 Tim. 5:4). *Piety* is from the Latin *pietus*, a word the ancient Romans used to indicate the respect children owe to their parents. The father stands in somewhat the same relationship to his children that God does to His, and impiety has come, therefore, to be associated with disrespect either for God our heavenly Father, or our earthly par-

ents: While it is wicked to disobey any commandments or precept of Jehovah, disobedience in the relationship of children to a father, whether God or our fleshly parents, is, in addition, *impious*. (2) Children are required to be obedient to their parents, and (3) to *requite them*—i.e., care for them in their old age, if necessary. This is, as Paul suggests, the first commandment *with promise* (Eph. 6: 3), the promise being that “it may be well with thee,” and “that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee” (Exo. 20:12).

Parents, in turn, are required to love their children, train them in the fear of Jehovah, care for them physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually in their impressionable years, and instruct them in all matters pertaining to religion and morality.

A demonstration of the commandment

The word which came unto Jeremiah from Jehovah in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of Jehovah, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink. Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites; and I brought them into the house of Jehovah, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan the son of Igdaliah, the man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the threshold. And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said unto them, Drink ye wine. **But they said, We will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons, for ever:...**And we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters;...The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; and **unto this day they drink none, for they obey their father's commandment:** ...Forasmuch as the sons of Jonadab the

son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father which he commanded them, but this people hath not hearkened unto me; therefore thus saith Jehovah, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them; because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered. And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: **Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he commanded you; therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever** (Jer. 35:1-19).

The promise of the commandment
historically confirmed

Geikie, in his *Hours with the Bible*, cites the testimony of a traveler who, in 1862, found a tribe of the Rechabites living and flourishing near the Dead Sea, a living demonstration of the accuracy of Jeremiah's prophecy and the truthfulness of God's promise to bless those who walk in obedience to His commandments.

Deceased

Instilling Values

Helps for parents on instilling Christian values in our children:

- Begin regular spiritual training in their

first year of life and continue consistently through all their developing years (Eph. 6:4).

- Demonstrate to them at all times that God is the most important thing in your life.
- Let their earliest memories include daily readings of Bible stories and frequent discussions of the Word of God.
- Give them their own Bible even before they can read. Have them begin a life-time habit of regular memorization and review of important Bible verses.
- Teach them to pray.
- Have regular “family devotional” times as a family and speak often to your children of the joys of serving God.
- Spend the necessary time to be the main spiritual teacher of your children—more so than the preacher or Bible class teacher, et al. Remember, you have the primary responsibility of teaching your children the ways of the Lord.
- Teach them that lying is one of the worst things they could ever do.
- Train them early in principles of modesty.
- Keep their speech pure by not allowing yourself or them to ever use profanity.
- Help keep their minds pure by monitoring their reading and viewing materials and their personal friendships closely in their early years (1 Cor. 15:33).
- Be responsible enough to bring up the subject of sex and morality with your children. They will either learn about it from you or from the world.
- Instill in your children a strong desire to save themselves for the one who will someday be their mate.
- Reinforce your moral teaching by setting specific guidelines for dating.
- Train your children to date only those who are morally upright and urge them to plan on marrying a Christian.
- Teach them the virtue of work by giving them regular jobs and responsibilities around the home.
- Train them to never get too busy with secular pursuits to do something for the Lord’s cause.
- Encourage them often to plan the future of their lives to include a *career* for Christ (Bible class teacher, song leader, preacher, deacon, elder, elder’s wife, deacon’s wife, etc.).
- Build a family life in such a way that *home* is a happy place.
- Be the kind of child your heavenly Father would have you to be. You will not only be pleasing God but will be the kind of parent who will be able to place within the hearts of your children the principles and values of Scripture.

If we want our children to grow into faithful, active Christian, we must begin with our examples, reinforcing them with our teaching and encouragement, and then continue, prayerfully, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

Author Unknown

Sermon Outlines

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Karen Diamond

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Dot Dodd in the death of her brother, Don Little, on January 14. Please keep Dot and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

January 31

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February 7

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February 14

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BEACON

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January 25, 2021

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Religious Sinners

C. D. Plum

There are many religious sinners in the world today. These religious sinners greatly outnumber the true children of God. Many of these religious sinners are honest and sincere in what they are doing, but honesty and sincerity will not make wrong right.

There are two ways in which people may be religious sinners. Worshiping the wrong god will make one a religious sinner and worshiping the true God in the wrong way will make one a religious sinner.

Worshiping the Wrong God

Idol gods are wrong gods. “Keep yourselves from idols” is a command of the New Testament (1 John 5:21). Idolatry was also wrong in the Old Testament. Then God said: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exo. 20:3). Baal, of the Old Testament, and Diana, of the New Testament, were both wrong gods—idol gods. Those who wor-

shipped them were religious, but they were religious sinners (1 Kin. 18:21-40; Acts 19:24-35). The people of Athens were also religious sinners. Paul said of them: “Ye are too superstitious” (17:22). That meant they were too religious. They were religious sinners for two reasons: first, they were worshiping wrong gods; second, they worshiped the **unknown God**, or the **true God**, in the wrong way. They did it ignorantly (17:23).

Worshiping the True God in the Wrong Way

Old Testament Examples

1. Cain worshiped the true God in the wrong way. God told Cain and Abel to offer him a lamb. Abel obeyed by offering a lamb. Abel’s was a **faith** offering (Heb. 11:4). Abel’s faith came by “hearing the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Cain offered vegetables. Cain wor-

shipped. He was religious. But because Cain did not offer a lamb as God called for, God said to him: "Sin lieth at the door" (Gen. 4:7). So, Cain became a religious sinner by worshiping the true God in the wrong way. Religious people today should take warning. Millions are following Cain. Read and ponder this Scripture: "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain" (Jude 11). God calls for singing in church worship today (Heb 2:12; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). To offer God mechanical instrumental music in church worship is like Cain's offering of vegetables. God calls for a burial in baptism (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). To offer God sprinkling and pouring is like Cain offering vegetables.

2. Nadab and Abihu worshiped the true God in the wrong way (Lev. 10:1-2). It was fatal for them.

New Testament Examples

1. The eunuch had been to Jerusalem for worship (Acts 8:27). He was worship-

ing the true God in the wrong way, and was, therefore, a religious sinner. He was worshiping according to the Old Testament Scriptures. He did not know that Christ had come, and that we must abide by New Testament teaching. When he found out his mistake, he believed, repented, confessed, and was baptized. He **rejoiced after baptism**, not before (8:26-39).

2. Ananias and Sapphira worshiped the true God in the wrong way; and were religious sinners. **They lied about how much they were able to give.** This proved fatal for them (5:1-11).
3. The Galatians had been Christians. They were worshipers of the true God. But they were religious sinners because they wanted to turn to the law of Moses and the teaching of David. Paul told these Galatian Christians that they had **fallen from grace** (Gal. 5:1-4).

God help all to see these truths and come to that which is right.

Deceased

Bible Classes

It has been said by some of the *moderns* that Bible school is for old women and small children. God planned Bible study for the adult, the man or woman in the prime of life.

Sermon Outlines

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons.html>

Had you thought of the importance of setting the right kind of example? Now, more than ever, the parent needs the guidance of the Scriptures in "Bringing up the children in the way they should go" so when they are grown "they will not depart from it."

The great commission was not given for children, but for adults. God's commands for Christian work and worship is directed to

adults. When the elders are commanded to feed the flock—that is their obligation to teach, lead, and encourage adults.

Notice further that:

- More than 50% of the people in the nation are adults.
- Psychologists prove that adults can learn more easily than children.
- The destination of pupils in every other department of the Bible school is the adult department.
- Adults have the highest capacity and the deepest need for righteousness.
- The greatest challenge to the Bible school today is adult constituency.

- Most adults not enrolled in Bible school are usually inactive in all other areas of the work of the church.
- Adults not attending classes, seldom do any serious Bible reading and/or study.
- Our children will usually be like their parents, more often finding and magnifying their parents' faults.
- When we get the parents in Bible class, the children will attend also.
- No church will be what it should without its members' faithfulness.

Author Unknown

“One Thing Thou Lackest”

Jack Hardcastle

“One thing thou lackest.” Such was the verdict expressed by Jesus as He looked upon and within the rich young ruler. He had just heard the young man's statement of assurance that he had kept all the commandments from his youth. He had seen the young man's zeal and humility as he came running and kneeling before Jesus. But still there was one thing lacking, and the thing lacking prevented all his good traits from showing themselves in good works and deeds of mercy; and when the test came, the one thing lacking kept him from following Jesus.

He rejected Jesus to hold on to his weakness.

Will this story of the rich young ruler be also the story of some of us? Will the Lord tell us to depart because of a lack of love for

one another, a lack of faithfulness in attendance, a lack of knowledge because of failure to study, or a lack of faith manifested by failure to make a generous contribution? Will we be rejected because we have subjugated ourselves to our appetites and have become enslaved to filthy habits which bring reproach on the church and on the name, we wear?

“One thing thou lackest.” So near and yet so far! Turned away from heaven because of a weakness that we refused to overcome!

Again, I ask the question: Must all eternity be filled with regret? Why not rather examine ourselves and see ourselves as God sees us and make the necessary alteration in ourselves before it is too late?

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Aleacia Godwin

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Terri Myrick in the death of her mother, Anita Warr, on January 18. Please keep Terri and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

February 7

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

February 14

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

February 21

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

February 21

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The Calamity of Subjectivism

Charles Pogue

The doctrine that truth is determined by the individual based on one's opinions and feelings is rampant in religious error. Many people today who claim to be religious do not accept the fact that truth is absolute. Truth does not change, and religious truth comes to man from God via the Bible, not through man's subjective feelings.

Those who accept a subjective attitude toward truth assert a theory that limits knowledge to one's experience. To them, what is both good and right is derived from the experience of each individual person. This idea is held to the extent that if one person's experience (truth) directly contradicts that of another person, then both have discovered the truth. What is truth to one is not true to the other, but both are right.

Subjectivism is nothing new. In Judges 17:6 and again in 21:25, the Bible says, "In

those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but* every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes." Doing what is right in one's own eyes is the denominations false view of truth. Even if one denominational body holds to a doctrine that is the exact opposite and contradictory to the doctrine of another denomination, both are considered to be right. This is a human philosophy that is as false as the devil claiming to Eve, "Thou shalt not surely die."

Isaiah 8:20 describes the condition of the subjective individual. "To the law and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this word, *It is* because *there is* no light in them." One who speaks differently than the Word of God is full of darkness.

Among the many things God instructed His prophet Jeremiah to say to the people were these words:

But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth (Jer. 7:28).

Those today who hold truth is a subjective thing have it cut off from both their hearts and their mouths. Truth is the Word of God, the Bible.

Paul warned the church at Ephesus not to walk in the subjectivism of those around them in Ephesians 4:17-21.

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus

Be assured when Paul stated the truth is in Jesus, it puts to naught the idea that truth is in each individual. When Paul wrote the

truth is in Jesus, he meant it is the words Jesus spoke personally and those He gave to the inspired writers of the New Testament through the Holy Spirit. The apostle wrote as much to the church in Corinth.

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37).

If someone says Jesus told me one church is good as another, where is it written? If someone says, one is saved by faith only, where is it written? These things contradict what is written, therefore they are not of Jesus, they are of man.

The apostle Paul also wrote to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 5:21: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” Anyone who affirms that truth is what truth is to you and what it is to me, and we are both right even if we disagree—prove it! It cannot be done, for it is a lie and no lie is of the truth (1 John 2:21). The calamity of subjectivism is not only that it is not true, but it also keeps men from the truth.

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Closed Eyes

Bobby Duncan

Some people choose not to see the obvious. It was these people to whom Jesus referred when He spoke of those whose “eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their eyes*” (Mat. 13:15).

It becomes more and more alarming that many in the church who should be well

informed have chosen to close their eyes to the Truth with reference to a movement among us which denies the distinctive nature of the church and spreads an umbrella of fellowship over those in the denominational world. I refer here, not to those who have forsaken the Truth with reference to

Bible doctrine, but to those who know the Truth, yet who are not at all hesitant to announce, promote, and attend meetings featuring those who have forsaken the Truth.

Do you believe, for example, that the prayer of the Lord in John 17 proves that we are to include in our fellowship all of those in denominational churches who just believe in Jesus? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit provides direct leadership to the Christian, separate and apart from the Bible? Do you believe the denominational bodies are filled with faithful Christians? If brethren do not believe these things, then why do they invite men who are on record as teaching these things to be featured speakers on various programs? If brethren do not believe these things, then why do their church bulletins carry announcements about programs featuring those who teach such? Why do they announce such from their pulpits or urge their people to attend?

The answer, in many cases would be, “We just do not believe these preachers stand for these things.” In other words, “Their eyes they have closed.” It is not that evidence of their positions on various things is not available, or that they have kept their positions secret. They have declared their positions very publicly, and faithful brethren have called attention to the dangerous errors they

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“I not only use all the brains that I have, but all that I can borrow” (Woodrow Wilson). While there is much to be said for self-sufficiency and independence, there is absolutely nothing wrong with helping and being helped. Do what you can and have the expertise to do but ask for help when you need it. Also, offer help when others need it. Be part of your community. Be a Christian. Bless others as God has blessed you!

Tim Smith
Deceased

espouse. Recordings of their speeches have been made available, but some choose not to see. In many cases, those who are courageous enough to speak out against these false teachers are accused of bitterness, or even jealousy. Some become intimidated by such accusations and decide to remain silent.

We have no intention of closing our eyes to the things taking place in the church. We would urge others to “Be sober, be vigilant” (1 Pet. 5:8). *Sober*, according to Thayer, means, “of **sound mind, sane**, in one’s senses.” It is insane to try to promote the cause of Truth by promoting and encouraging those who make them any less false teachers. Neither does it set one at liberty to promote and encourage false teachers as if they were teaching the Truth. Those who promote and encourage false teachers become guilty of teaching false doctrine themselves (see 2 John 9-11).

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Loneliness

Jimmie Z. Gribble

Loneliness places a great burden on people. Most of us are people that like to have people around us. Christians especially like to have faithful Christians around them for support and encouragement. However, there are times that we *feel* that we have none to lean upon or call upon for support.

Two individuals that had these thoughts are Elijah and Jeremiah. After the great battle that Elijah had with the prophets of Baal, Elijah should have felt very good. However, Jezebel sought for his life, so he hid in a cave. It was in the cave that his feelings were made known. A “voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?” (1 Kin. 19:13). To which, Elijah responded, “And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even*

I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away” (19:14). Elijah thought he was alone, but he was not.

Another individual had these same thoughts. The prophet Jeremiah had prophesied against Jerusalem. The people did not like what he had to say. The text says:

Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded *him* to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die. Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord. When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king’s house unto the house of the Lord,

and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the Lord's *house*. Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man *is* worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears (Jer. 26:8-11).

Though it seemed all wanted him dead and that that would be accomplished, there was one that was with him. It is written:

Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death (26:24).

Beloved, whether 7000 or one, we need to be faithful, and realize that there are those

striving, just as we are, even though we may not know them. Even if there were none, if we are striving to be faithful, we are not alone.

The Hebrews writer penned:

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me (Heb. 14:5-6).

Amen!

Beloved, listen to all of God's Word, God will do thee good!

Portsmouth, VA

"The Hijacking of a Good Word"

Ken Chumbley

When I was growing up, there was a perfectly good word that was used regularly. It was used in songs, in plays, and indeed everyday conversation. However, that perfectly good word has been hijacked by those who would engage in an immoral lifestyle. Now, just about every time that the word is used it is used by those engaged in this immoral lifestyle or those *politically correct* individuals who support and promote that lifestyle. Sadly, at times, because of the fact that it has become *accepted* in many areas, even Christians resort to using that word when describing that immoral lifestyle. That hijacked word is *gay*. It has been in the news again recently following the announcement that the Episcopal Church was *politically correct* and those

involved in that lifestyle want to portray the situation. They do not want to call it what it really is.

When one looks to the dictionary to see the primary meaning of the word, it has reference to being merry or bright in appearance and brilliant in color. A third meaning of the word is given as being given to social pleasures or indulgence, hence loose or licentious. However, even with that third meaning it did not have reference to the homosexual lifestyle.

When I was young, a song having the words, "I'm glad God made me gay" would not have caused a stir as people would have understood that the singer was referring to himself as a merry individual. However, I

remember a few years ago hearing this same song being played on the radio and the disc jockey feeling compelled to say that this song was written at a time when the word had a different meaning.

I May Never See Tomorrow

I may never see tomorrow, there's no
guarantee,
And things that happened yesterday
belong in history.
I can't predict the future, I can't change
the past,
I have just the present memories to
treat as my last.
I must use this moment wisely, for
soon it will pass away,
And be lost forever as a part of yester-
day.
I must exercise compassion, help the
fallen to their feet,
Be a friend unto the friendless, make
their life complete.
The unkind things I do today, may
never be undone,
And friendships that I fail to win, may
never more be won.
I may not have another chance on
bended knees to pray,
And I think God with humble heart for
giving me this day!

Author Unknown

How much this good word has been hijacked and made to mean something that it had never meant is clearly seen in what happened at a Christian camp a few years ago. I was teaching a class of teenagers on the topic of morals and morality. I told the class that I was *gay*. You should have seen the looks on their faces! To them, because of the way the word has been hijacked, it meant only one thing, thus their shock. However, when I told them to consider my age and that the word's real meaning was something else, then they were able to see that I was referring to myself as a merry individual, but they had been conditioned by society to thinking that the word had reference to one thing, and one thing only.

I refuse to go along with the *politically correct* meaning of the word. I do not believe as Christians we should give any credence to the idea that the homosexual lifestyle is *gay*. Homosexuality is an abomination before God (Lev. 18:22; 20:13). Furthermore, when one considers the physical consequences of this lifestyle, then it is anything but *gay*. Indeed, although it has now spread into the heterosexual community as a result of those who would practice both heterosexual and homosexual sex, AIDS, was spread by the homosexual community.

As Christians, may we always be willing to speak out against this abominable lifestyle and call it what it is, **sinful** and not in any sense *gay*.

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Tim Busch	Michael Hatcher
Karen Diamond	Aleacia Godwin
Cathy Beck	Henry Born

Congratulations

Our congratulations is extended to Bill and Peggy Crowe in the birth of their grand-daughter, Alysandra Enid Cary, on February 4. She weighed 6 pounds 6 ounces.

Please Remember

February 14

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February 21

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BEACON

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How to Be a Christian Only

Foy L. Smith

There is no greater plea in the world today than that one which invites people to be “Christians only.” The name *Christian* includes all that is needed, or should be desired, for spiritual appellation. Indeed, a real genuine “follower of Christ” should be content in worshipping God as a “Christian only.” Anything less than a Christian is far too short, and anything that goes beyond, transgresses heaven’s testimony for humankind. But the important question is “How may one be a Christian and nothing else?”

Obey the Doctrine of Christ and No More

To obey the Gospel as revealed in the New Testament means:

- Believe in Jesus Christ as the crucified, buried, and risen Lord (John 8:28; Rom. 10:10).
- Repent of past or alien sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30).

- Confess your faith in Christ (Mat. 10:32; Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37).
- Be baptized (immersed) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15; Rom. 6:4; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).

Upon such obedience, we have the assurance that God will add us to “the church” (Acts 2:47). We further know that such *disciples* were called “Christians first in Antioch” (11:26).

Wear the Name of Christ and No Other

The fact that God promised a “new name” (Isa. 62:2), and that He gave it “first at Antioch,” should be ample evidence of the all-sufficiency of that name. To add to it, to put a handle on it, to weaken it by adding some human name, is but to mar its beauty, dishonor the head of the church, discredit Him who died for us and whose name we are to wear (Acts 4:12).

It is, then, possible to wear the name of Christ and no other. The Holy Spirit even condemned the wearing of names of inspired men in New Testament times. How could it benefit us to wear names of men who are not inspired, or names given by men who are without heaven's authority to give them (1 Cor. 1:10-13)?

Accept and Abide By the Creed of the New Testament and No Other

This must necessitate a repudiation of all manmade creeds that have become binding upon so many people. It must do away with human doctrines for governing worship. It takes the New Testament to make a Christian; it takes something more than the New Testament to make a person more than a Christian. It is possible to make the claim "let us follow the Bible only," yet in actual practice, preaching, and worship, accept along with it the "doctrines the commandments of men" (Mat. 15:9). Creeds must be revised each year, but the Word of God never has to be revised. Accept it and nothing else.

Be a Member of the Church of Our Lord and Nothing Else

It is possible to obey the Gospel, genuinely become a child of God, and then go off and "join something" unheard of in the Bible, join an institution not founded by Christ, not wearing His name, nor worship-

ing according to His divine guidance. To do this is not to be a "Christian **only**." God's book, the Bible, is sufficient. The Lord's church, the church of Christ, is enough. It is said: "It makes no difference what church one is a member of." The Bible says that the church is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). Paul says there is only one body; the conclusion is there is only one church.

Have a "Thus Saith the Lord" for All That We Do

If followed, this sacred principle would make it impossible for us to have in the public worship anything that is not authorized by our heavenly Father. There is something wrong with the man who is not satisfied to take just what the Bible has said. Our worship is to be one of faith (2 Cor. 5:7). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Faith comes by hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17). If we practice anything that we did not get from hearing and studying God's Word, it is not of faith. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). When sin is finished, it brings forth death (Jam. 1:15).

A Final Thought

From these Scriptures we see that to be pleasing to our Father, we must have a "thus saith the Lord" for all that we do. Let us have no doctrine but that which is of Christ, no name but the name Christian, no creed but the New Testament, be a member of no church but that which belongs to Christ, and have a "thus saith the Lord" for all that we do and say religiously. In this way, all men are privileged to be Christians only!

Deceased

Sermon Outlines

[http://www.bellviewcoc.com/
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The Gospel's Power to Save

R. L. Whiteside

There must be some connection made between power and the thing to be moved. There is great power in a locomotive, but it cannot move the train of cars till proper connection is made with power. There is sufficient power in the Gospel to move every sinner out of sin into the blessings of salvation, but that power moves no one until proper connections are made. Preaching is the means of establishing that connection. It is God's way of bringing the sinner under the influence of His saving power. For that reason, Paul was not ashamed to preach it (Rom. 1:16).

The Gospel exerts no power over the heathen who has never heard it, or over the infidel who will not hear it, and it exerts but little power over him who looks for the power to

come some other way. It exerts a power over us for good to the extent that we place ourselves under the influence of its teaching. The cyclone has no power over the man who is safely hidden away in his storm cellar, but it would be foolish for him to come out after the storm and confidently affirm that there was no power in the cyclone, but no more foolish than for a man who will not heed God's Word to affirm that there is no converting power in it.

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I Will

I will start anew this morning,
 With a higher, fairer creed;
I will cease to stand complaining,
 Of my ruthless neighbor's greed.
I will cease to sit repining,
 While my duty's call is clear;
I will waste no moment whining,
 And my heart shall know no fear.
I will look sometimes about me,
 For the things that merit praise,
I will search for hidden beauties,
 That elude the grumbler's gaze,
I will try to find contentment,

In the paths that I must tread;
I will ease to have resentment,
 When another moves ahead.
I will not be swayed by envy,
 When my rival's strength is shown,
I will not deny his merit,
 But shall strive to prove my own;
I will strive to see the beauty,
 Spread before me rain or shine;
I will cease to preach your duty,
 And be more concerned with mine.

Author Unknown

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Henry Born Cathy Beck
Randall Johnson

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God's Plan of Salvation

HearRomans 10:17
Believe Mark 16:16
Repent..... Luke 13:3, 5
Confess..... Romans 10:9-10
Baptism Acts 2:38
Be Faithful..... 1 Corinthians 15:58

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On Our Habits

Lee Moses

Agatha Christie wrote, “Curious things, habits. People never knew they had them.” Many deny that they have habits, yet each of us has them. People generally think of habits as negative—they think of such things as smoking, drinking, drugs, and other such things. Habits can consume one’s life to the point where that person is no longer in control over whether or not he does those things. A famous educator made the statement, “Habit is a cable; we weave a thread of it every day, and at last we can not break it.” The Word of God warns against such dominion over one’s life: “all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Cor. 6:12). But when each of us has habits, how can we avoid being “brought under the power of any”?

Daniel urged Nebuchadnezzar, “break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor” (Dan. 4:27). Nebuchadnezzar’s habits had been “sins” and “iniquities,” but he was to replace those habits with the regular practice of righteousness and mercy. These were to become his new habits. If any of us have habits we need to overcome, the best way is by replacing them with healthy, wholesome, and holy habits. As Thomas à Kempis noted, “Habit is overcome by habit.”

And there are habits which need to be part and parcel of our everyday life, regardless of whether or not we have others we need to break. Prayer needs to be a habitual practice, for we are to “Pray without ceasing” (1 The. 5:17). Regular Bible reading, study, and meditation need to be daily habits (Psa. 1:1-3; Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 2:15).

Attendance at every meeting of the local congregation, as well as at Gospel meetings and lectureships of other faithful congregations when possible, needs to be habitual (Psa. 122:1; Heb. 10:25). When such things as these are our habits, it makes it much more difficult for disturbing and distracting habits to enter into our lives.

Do we have these above-mentioned favorable practices as regular habits in our lives? Do we have habits in our lives that we need to remove? Let us habitually ask ourselves, “What are our habits?” Let us make it our habit to make our habits the correct habits.

Union City, TN

Sin or “Disease”?

Troy M. Cummings

One of the master strokes of deceit which Satan has been able to put over on millions of people—including many Christians—is the clever whitewashing of the sin of drunkenness, dressing it up, twisting it around, and palming it off as the *disease* of “alcoholism”!

If Satan can just deceive sinners into thinking that they are not sinners, but merely unfortunate victims of a *disease* who deserve sympathy, treatment, and acceptance—what more could Satan want? No sinner will be led to repent of his sin so long as he and others call it mere “sickness.”

We all know and agree that habitual drunkenness causes various kinds of bad or diseased conditions in the body. In fact, a large number of sins have an obviously bad effect upon the body and the brain.

Now ordinarily intelligent people can easily distinguish between a sin or crime and the various kinds of bad results of that sin or crime, but the amazing thing is that in recent years Satan has successfully brainwashed the public and many Christians so

that they confuse the sin itself with the bad physical and mental results!

I have in my files much documentary proof that many people are flatly denying that drunkenness (“alcoholism”—repeated drunkenness) is a sin or moral problem at all. They claim it is solely a medical, psychological, or psychiatric problem—a sickness or disease, and that is all! And the shame is that some of *our* leading preachers and college professors have taught this.

God in His Word is absolutely authoritative and infinitely wise, and He has made it perfectly plain to all those not blinded by the “foolishness” of man’s wisdom, that drunkenness is a sin, a “work of the flesh,” that will keep one from eternal salvation, if he/she does not truly repent of it—and that means to stop it!

If you will study the following statements from God, and believe and exalt them to the place of supreme authority over all of man’s notions, there is not a doubt as to what conclusion you must draw. Please study every one of these verses: Luke 21:34-36, Romans

13:12-14, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, and 1 Peter 4:3-5.

These passages clearly teach that drunkenness is a sin (not one word mentioned about any *disease*) that will keep one out of heaven, and furthermore, that a drunkard (who does not repent) is to be disciplined by the church, to be “put away” from the fellowship, by congregational action, for the purpose, as Paul wrote, “the destruction of the flesh” (lust of the flesh), “that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5).

Paul writes that he had commanded the brethren “to have no company” with fornicators, idolaters, coveters, revilers, extortioners, or drunkards—not even to eat with such. “Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?... Purge the evil person from among yourselves” (5:12-13).

Brethren, the test is before us: are we going to honor and obey God in the plain teaching of His divine Word, or are we going to disobey God and not go along with the Bible—contradicting modern psychology and psychiatry?

Deceased

Thoughts to Ponder

“They huddled inside the storm door, two children in ragged outgrown coats. ‘Any old papers, lady?’ I was busy. I wanted to say no until I looked down at their feet. Their little sandals slopped with sleet. ‘Come in and I’ll make you a cup of hot cocoa,’ I said. There was no conversation. Their soggy sandals left marks upon the hearthstone. Cocoa and toast, with jam to fortify against the chill outside. I went back to the kitchen and started again on my household budget. The silence in the front room struck through to me. I

looked in. The girl held her empty cup in her hands, looking at it. The boy asked in a flat voice: ‘Lady, are you rich?’ ‘Am I rich? No!’ I looked at my shabby slipcovers. The girl put her cup back in its saucer carefully. ‘Your cups match your saucers,’ she said. Her voice was old, with a hunger that was not of the stomach. They left then, holding their bundles of papers against the wind. They hadn’t said thank you. They didn’t need to. They had said more than that. Plain blue pottery cups and saucers. But they matched. I tested the potatoes and stirred the gravy. Potatoes and brown gravy, a roof over our heads, my man with a steady job—these things matched, too. I moved the chairs back from the fire and tidied the living room. The muddy prints of small sandals were still wet on my hearth. I let them be. I want them in case I ever forget how rich I am.”

Author Unknown

God’s Plan of Salvation

Hear	Romans 10:17
Believe	Mark 16:16
Repent	Luke 13:3, 5
Confess	Romans 10:9-10
Baptism	Acts 2:38
Be Faithful	1 Corinthians 15:58

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Bill Busch Nancy Travis
Tim Busch Henry Born
Randall Johnson Aleacia Godwin

Baptized and Placed Membership

John Hastie was baptized into Christ on February 14. Please keep John in your prayers. His address and telephone number will be posted on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Please Remember

March 7

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

March 14

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

Sermon Outlines

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BEACON

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But I Obtained Mercy

Brad Green

The Bible teaches that God's mercy and love are in overabundance (Psa. 25:6). When the apostle Paul recalls how God's plan of salvation was offered to him despite his past, he states, "the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love" (1 Tim. 1:14). God's grace is "exceeding abundant" and is offered to all men just as it was to Paul. The inspired John writes that Jesus is "the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*" (1 John 2:2). Many times, people look back into their pasts and conclude that they are not "good enough" to be called a child of God. What must be realized is that "Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15), not people who are already "good enough." Jesus says, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners

to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32). Paul considered his past and concluded that he was the chief of all sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). However, because Paul obeyed the Gospel plan of salvation, culminating with his baptism, he had his past sins "washed away" (Acts 22:16). No wonder Paul was so thankful to the Lord, "for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy" (1 Tim. 1:12-13). If the grace of God can forgive the sins of blasphemy, persecution, and murder (Acts 8:1), so too, can you and I obtain mercy. Obtaining, or acquiring God's mercy, is an individual responsibility. God has offered mercy. We must do what is necessary to attain it. By following the same plan of salvation as did Paul, one can become a Christian—a child of God—"For ye are all the children of God by

faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27). No matter what one has done in his past, by turning away from those things never to return (i.e., repentance), he can be forgiven. Paul states:

this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phi. 3:13-14).

There is, however, a way that one can be “unforgivable”—by totally rejecting God’s offer of grace and mercy. Though Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, we must appropriate that grace by obeying His Word (Heb. 5:8-9; John 12:48). Paul “obtained mercy” and was forgiven because he obeyed. For us to obtain the same mercy and be forgiven, we, too, must obey. Let us put the things which are behind us to rest and “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Lenoir City, TN

On Giving

Robertson L. Whiteside

I want to know something about a Christian’s duty in the matter of giving for the support of the church. It is a little strange to me that so many, including myself, know so little about this part of the Christian worship. Is there any definite scriptural instruction on this important part of our duties and work?

The Bible does not tell us the exact number of dollars we must give; neither does it tell us what percent of our income we must give. It does not deal much in amounts and percentages. It does not tell us how much time we must devote to Bible study at home or at meetings; it does not tell us how many songs we must sing at meetings; nor how many prayers we shall have; nor how long the sermon should be. Yet, we regard the Bible as sufficiently plain on these matters and do not worry about it. And there is much teaching on giving.

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come” (1 Cor. 16:1-2). This is a general rule on the subject of giving. Here we have the **when**, the **who**, and the **how much**.

When—“Upon the first day of the week.” This does not confine our giving to that day. Emergency cases may come up any day during the week. “So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith” (Gal. 6:10). If a man is in need, help him, no matter what day of the week. But the first day of the week is the time for the regular contributions.

Who—“Each one of you.” That is plain enough. However, in the churches, there are

hitchhikers who are trying to ride to heaven on somebody else's expense, but it cannot be done.

How Much—"As he may prosper." And the Christian must work so he will prosper enough to have something to give (Eph. 4:28). We are not told what percent of our prosperity we are to give, for the reason, perhaps, that some should give a greater percentage of their income than others. He who gives a small percent and then says he gives the widow's mite is fooling himself. The widow gave all she had. That was the reason Jesus said she gave more than they all. You see, the Lord measures the size of the gift by what is left after the gift is made. The man who does not give all he has does not give the widow's mite. Read carefully the eighth and ninth chapters of 1 Corinthians. Read also of the liberality of the church at Jerusalem. When a need arose in that church, they met it, even if they had to sell property to do so.

We must give freely and bountifully—and willingly. But let us not hide our stinginess behind that idea of giving willingly. A man gives willingly when he gives of his own accord, even if it goes against the grain to do so. In the matter of giving, we must crucify the flesh, just as we do in other things. Someone has said that we should give till it hurts. That would not be but a nickel for some people. The better plan is to give until it hurts and then give until it does not hurt.

None of us are going to give too much, but we should remember that he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully; the sparing giver will be the sparing reaper. Jesus

said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." If people really believed this, the giving problem would be settled.

Deceased

Self-Denying Love

He might have reared a palace at a
word,
He who sometimes had not where to
lay his head;
Time was when he who nourished
crowds with bread
Would not one meal unto himself
afford.
Twelve legions girded with angelic
sword
Were at his beck, the scorned and
buffeted;
He healed another's scratch, his own
side bled—
Side, feet, and hands with cruel pierc-
ings gored.
Oh, wonderful the wonders left un-
done!
And scarce less wonderful than those
he wrought;
Oh, self-restraint, passing all human
thought,
To have all power, and be as having
none!
Oh, self-denying love, which felt alone
For needs of others, never for its own!

Author Unknown

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Tim Busch Karen Diamond
Randall Johnson Henry Born

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March 7

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

March 14

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

March 21

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

March 21

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

March 31

Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

How Was / and Is the Church of the New Testament to Be Organized?

Dub Mowery

What type of governing body did it have in Biblical times? It is essential for us to learn how the first-century church was set-up since many churches today have different types of government. For example, the Roman Catholic Church has a man referred to as a Pope who is head of that church. Still, other churches have conventions with representatives from the individual congregations who make laws and decide what kinds of activity their denomination will be involved in. Still, others, especially cults, have a one-man rule that makes **all** the decisions for that religious group, including laws they will abide by.

Almost all churches have a headquarters here upon the earth or a central figure (person) to which they submit. However, the

church of Christ has **neither!** We look to Jesus Christ, who is in heaven for authority in religious matters and our moral standard. Even though He is in heaven, Christ does not have a vicar to represent Him here on earth. In this sense, a vicar would be someone here upon earth to be head of the church and serve as our Lord's representative. However, the Bible nowhere even suggests that anyone other than Jesus Christ should reign over His church. Even after He was resurrected from the dead and ascended into heaven, the Scripture declared that our Lord and Savior is the head of the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). The New Testament is the will of Jesus Christ, and, therefore, it is to govern the church rather than the creeds of men (Heb. 9:16-17; 10:9-10; Mat. 15:9).

The New Testament church has no governing body here upon earth outside the local congregation. Each local church is to be autonomous, meaning self-ruled, independent. Even in the individual congregation, no one has the right or the authority to make laws in matters of faith. Matters of faith have to do with those areas in which the Lord has given commandments and instructions (Rom. 10:17).

Within each congregation, when two or more of the men meet the elders' qualifications, the membership should select two or more of these men to serve as their shepherds (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9; Acts 14:23). Those ordained in a local church are the spiritual overseers but do not have the authority to make laws in matters of faith for those they oversee, nor do they have the authority to oversee other congregations.

Deceased

Diotrephes

Franklin Camp

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church (3 John 9-10).

There is much that we do not know about Diotrephes. There is enough said about Him for us to learn some things to avoid. It is highly improbable that Diotrephes was opposing and casting some out of the church because of error. He may have made himself believe that this was true, but this evidently was not the case as John would have joined with him in opposing error.

The Desire for Recognition

Just what it was that Diotrephes was offended about, we are not told, but it is not difficult to offend a man who has an undue sense of his own importance. The person that

is in love with himself is always easily offended. The desire for recognition that is not deserved is always a dangerous thing. Some of the apostles were at one time affected by this same spirit. They were wanting to be first, have the preeminence, but Christ showed them that service when given wholeheartedly and without desire for recognition, will bring exaltation.

Creates Competition Instead of Cooperation

The desire for preeminence creates competition rather than cooperation. Members of the body of Christ are not in competition with one another, but are to function together as the members of the human body. The church does not grow and prosper by competition, but by working together.

This principle is true not only of members of the local church but also of congregations. In all too many instances where there are several congregations in a community, they act

as if they are in competition with one another. It is possible for a congregation to have the spirit of Diotrephes. The church grows in the community where congregations work together and not against one another.

Smoke Screen

The spirit of Diotrephes will cause one to use some *trumped up* charge against another. It is evident that Diotrephes was doing this, for how could he have succeeded in “casting some out of the church” unless he was able to convince others to go along with him. Too often personal differences—matters of opinion—are used as a smoke screen to create factions. The spirit of Diotrephes makes a person color-blind so he cannot distinguish between his opinion and matters of faith. A person that is in love with himself thinks his word, opinion, is law. This is the ultimate end to which one comes that seeks preeminence. Christ is to have preeminence and His Word is our law. But if some man seeks preeminence, he usurps the authority that belongs to Christ and the result is that he feels that his word is bound on everyone.

Better to Rule in a Small Church than Serve in a large One

The motto of Diotrephes is “it is better to reign in a small church than to serve in a large one.” When matters of faith are involved, it is better to reduce the size of the congregation and have it Scriptural than to have the “biggest church in town” that is unscriptural. This was not the case with Diotrephes. It was the matter of controlling the church that reduced its size as far as Diotrephes was concerned. This is what always happens where

a Diotrephes is found. The church shrinks instead of growing.

Power Not Usefulness

The spirit of Diotrephes causes one to seek power, not usefulness. The supreme desire of Diotrephes was to stand first, not do the most. This is a false aim and can only lead to ruin. The church at Corinth was cursed by this attitude and Paul said, “seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church” (1 Cor. 14:12). The spirit of a Christian is to build up the church, not himself. We need more of this seeking rather than the seeking for preeminence.

Will Abuse Power

The spirit of Diotrephes, with its lust for power, is sure to abuse any power one may have. This very desire for power is evidence of a lack of any power given to him. Diotrephes’ casting people out of the church was an abuse of power. The desire to serve is the only safeguard against the abuse of power.

Wanted His Way Not the Best Way

Diotrephes wanted his own way, not the best way, not the way that would be beneficial to others. If he could not have his way by fair means, he would attempt to get his way by foul means. The most prevalent way of *foul means* is “prating against us with malicious words.”

Let us follow Demetrius and Gaius rather than Diotrephes.

“Old Truths In New Robes,” Vol. II. Birmingham. AL: Roberts & Sons. 9-21.

Deceased

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Karen Diamond

Randall Johnson

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Peggy Crowe in the death of her brother, John David Carter, on March 4, 2021. Please keep Peggy and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

March 14

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

March 21

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

March 21

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

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BEACON

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On Calling Names from the Pulpit

Tim Smith

Have you ever gone to *try out* for a preaching *job* and had some brother or sister call you aside and say something like, “Our last preacher was a good fellow, but he liked to call names from the pulpit, and that just won’t work here”? Now, by calling names they do not mean calling vulgar or disrespectful names, we would (indeed, we must) all agree that such would be not only improper but also sinful. What they mean is that they do not like it when the preacher, preaching about Baptist errors, uses the words “Baptist Church” somewhere in his lesson. Let us spend a few minutes looking at calling names from the pulpit.

Did Jesus and the apostles call names? Indeed, they often did. Have we not all read of Jesus singling out the Sadducees and the Pharisees in His sermons? Was He wrong? No, He was not wrong. Did not John call

Diotrephes by name? What about the closing verses of many of Paul’s works—did he not call the names of both those to be commended and those to be condemned. There are numerous examples from both Testaments wherein inspired men preached about the doctrines or deeds of errorists and called them by name. The examples alone would justify our following suit.

Must we call names? No, I suppose we could avoid it if we wanted to, but why would we want to? Is it not counter-productive for us to work so diligently to expose and refute errors and then avoid telling the audience who it is who teaches those errors? It has never made much sense to delineate each error and misdeed while meticulously avoiding any mention of the man or church who is guilty thereof!

Why do some members not like it when we call names? Now, as the old bard wrote, “There’s the rub.” Why, indeed? Could it be that they are afraid their friends and neighbors will criticize *us* for preaching against *their* church? Notice this very carefully: there is only one church that exists with the approval of God. Only the faithful members of that one church will be saved. All persons who are not faithful members of that one church will be consigned to eternal damnation. The Baptist church is not that one true church. The Methodist church is not that one true church. The liberal congregations who have sold out to the devil and compromised with the world are not part of that one church any longer. When I preach about once-saved-always-saved, I do the audience a service by telling them who teaches that doctrine. When I preach about fellowshipping false teachers, it is good to tell the listeners who is guilty of that offense. How can I mark a false teacher without calling his name? How can I warn a person about the evils of Pentecostalism without even once mentioning the Pentecostal Church?

I am not in favor of being rude in the pulpit. I do not wish to advocate being

unnecessarily harsh. I do not enjoy singling out people or churches just to see their followers or members *squirm* in their seats. It is not about what I enjoy or do not enjoy; it is about the end of the matter. Why am I preaching about this error or this false church? Is it to warn others about it? Call it by name. Is it to condemn their evil deeds? Call them by name. Point the queasy church member to Matthew 23 or a similar passage wherein an inspired man (in this case, Jesus) not only called names but under many different forms indicated their eternal end and their distastefulness to God! Teach them the importance of being clear in our preaching. Do what you think you must to help them along, but do not let them dissuade you from being specific and forthright in your preaching. If it is the Baptist Church you are talking about, say so. Do no tip-toe around, fearfully avoiding the mention of the name of the subjects of your sermon. Do not be rude but be clear. Be brave enough, mark, and avoid. God bless you as you follow the biblical example in this regard.

Deceased

What Prayer Is Not

James D. Bales

Prayer is a wonderful privilege, and there is power in a Scriptural prayer. However, many have failed to pray correctly, and thus they have endeavored to make prayer a substitute for some things that God has not

ordained. People today often try to make it take the place of certain other functions. Let us briefly notice some of these things.

First, prayer is not a button to push for a *bellhop*. Some people have a *bellhop* concep-

tion of God. When they are in danger of discomfort, when their body is threatened, they want to press the button of prayer and ask God to hurry up and remove all danger and discomfort. They never say, “thank you,” and they seldom think of God except when they are in trouble. If all that we want with God is to summon Him to get us out of trouble now and then, we have a misconception of God and prayer. It is right to pray in times of trouble, but it is not right to regard prayer as a means of calling God when we are in danger, and that only.

Second, prayer is not a substitute for obedience to the Gospel. Some sinners try to pray through to salvation. When a Gospel preacher finds a sinner praying, he tells him to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). If one fails to do that, he can keep praying until doomsday, and he will not pray through, and it will be his doomsday. Prayer is not a substitute for baptism. It is right to approach baptism in the spirit of prayer but not to try to make prayer take the place of obedience to the Gospel.

Third, prayer is not a substitute for the study of the Bible. It is right to study the Bible in the atmosphere of prayer, but one could pray for a million years concerning the Lord’s will on baptism. Still, unless he studies the Bible or listens to Gospel preaching, he will not discover that teaching. Is it not mockery to pray for divine guidance and yet to let the dust collect on our Bibles? Folded hands of prayer on a Bible cannot take the place of hands that open the Bible, eyes that read it, and a mind that understands it.

Fourth, prayer is not a substitute for proving those who claim to be prophets of God. A Roman Catholic priest was not inclined to study the Bible with me, but he did tell me to pray every day for a month, to say, “lead kindly light,” and that in a month, I would see things differently. I told him to study the Catholic Church through the eyes of the Bible, instead of the Bible through the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church, and that he would see things differently in a month. I have prayed, but I am not a Roman Catholic as a result of prayer. The *Book of Mormon* (Moroni 10:4) tells the reader to pray concerning that book’s truth. Like most sectarians, the Mormons want a person to close his eyes and pray through. The Bible tells us to prove all things, try those who profess to be prophets and apostles, and not try them just through prayer. We must examine their credentials and test their doctrines by the Bible. Prayer is not a substitute for investigation, although one may investigate in an atmosphere of prayer.

Fifth, prayer is not a substitute for holiness of life, although it is indispensable for holiness of life. Some people seem to think that it does not make any difference in how they endeavor to live so they pray for forgiveness now and then. We need to pray for forgiveness, but it cannot substitute for walking in the light (1 John 1:7).

Do not try to do through prayer what God has ordained prayer for; if you try it, you will fail.

Deceased

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Defender and Beacon

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4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

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Internet Website: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

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We Have to Deal with Tragedy Every Day Yet the Most Tragic Thing to Face Is Eternal

Johnny Oxendine

We live in a world that is constantly informed of tragedy. Not only do we hear the daily reports of our soldiers dying in foreign lands, but also recently, we had a horrendous tragedy on a college campus in Virginia. As tragic as such events are, there are yet sadder and more tragic considerations in the larger scheme of life. We want to look at what the Bible says about a tragedy of the utmost importance.

In Matthew 7:23, Jesus says to those who failed to honor His Lordship, “I never knew you: depart from me.” How tragic will such words be for those expecting to be with Jesus in eternity when they will, in fact, not be with Him. Here are those who supposed they were righteous, but they were not. They failed to adequately “prove all things” and “test the

spirits” and ended up being deceived and, as a result of their error: Eternally lost! That is tragic!

In Matthew 25:41, the Scripture records similar words. Jesus speaks to some who failed to serve Him appropriately. His words: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.” When Jesus’ words are so readily available for us to follow, how sad that such will be said to those who failed to live according to His standards! Tragic!

There is yet a more tragic situation. Consider Peter’s words in 2 Peter 2:20: “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last

state becomes worse with them than the first.” Here is one who knew the truth, who lived according to it for a period of time, who served the Lord and knew of the blessings He provided (Heb. 6:4-6) yet chose to abandon these things and return to worldliness. Their last state will be worse than their first. If there is one thing more tragic than being lost, it has been lost, saved, and returning to being lost yet again. How tragic is that?

Friends, such things do not have to be! Spiritual tragedy can be averted. We can do something to prevent such from happening. Sinners must accept the Lord’s terms of pardon. How? Through hearing the Gospel

(Rom. 10:17), believing it (Heb. 11:6), repenting of sins (Acts 17:30), confessing Christ (1 Tim. 6:12), and being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21). The erring Christians must repent, pray to God, and ask others to pray for him (Acts 8:22-24). The faithful Christian must take the Word of God to others (8:4) and let them know of their hope (1 Pet. 3:15).

We may not avoid a tragic ending in this life, but we **can** prevent a tragic eternity in the next. Let us do what we must to be right with God so we might live with Him forever.

San Mateo, CA

Christian Unity: Its Scriptural Basis

Frank Winters

When we come to consider the matter of eliminating divisions among believers in Christ, the first great essential is a basis which would be acceptable to God and practical for man, upon which these bodies with widely divergent doctrines might unite. The Savior Himself expressed the perfect basis of unity for all believers in Him as long as time shall last. It is the Word of God, written by the apostles on the pages of the New Testament Scriptures. Hear the Master speaking to the apostles: “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me” (Luke 10:16). In the words of the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:18: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The apostles spent their lives in compliance with this commission.

Perhaps there is some truth and some error in every creed in the whole world written by men. Truth, of course, is always uncontradictory, and whatever of truth any creed contains was first in the Word of God. The various conventions called for the union of different sects have attempted to form a human platform upon which to unite; consequently, their efforts have failed. They might establish a union of a sort by this procedure. Still, no union of opinions and doctrines of men could ever meet the approval of Him who declared, “All power is given unto me,” and who then committed unto the holy apostles the task of preaching and writ-

ing His will. They wrote as Inspiration guided them and gave us the great body of New Testament Scriptures, whose teaching is clear, and there is no error.

The great central and underlying truth of the Christian religion is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Old Testament prophecies pointed forward to Christ, and the apostles' writings point back to him. Our acknowledgment of His Messiahship is a full confession of the Christian faith. This

confession implies an acceptance of His Word's authority as our only rule of faith and practice in religion. The church of Christ had its beginning upon this fundamental truth. Today, if every authority except the Holy Bible were rejected and our preconceived ideas laid aside, believers everywhere, with nothing but the Word of God in hand, might be joined in a unity—righteous, enduring, and approved of God.

Deceased

“Don't Do That!”

Young people often complain that their preacher and their parents are always saying, “Don't do that!” We realize there is much truth in this complaint.

I want to tell you why we say “Don't” so much, and why you hear from us, with almost annoying repetition, “Please be careful.”

I want to tell you why we want to know where you are going, with whom, what you will do, when you will be home, etc.!

It is not because we do not have any confidence in you. It is not because we think you do not know anything or completely lack judgment. Contrary to what you must often think, it is not because we do not want you to have a good time.

We are concerned about you because we know from experience (and even our own sinful mistakes!) the danger that surrounds you. We are more sensitive to danger than you are and the real strength of temptation that will come your way.

Young lady, when your mother says: “Be good,” she is not saying: “I don't trust you.”

She is saying: “I love you; I trust you. I know what temptation is. May God always be close enough to help you overcome it.”

Young man, when your father says: “Please be careful,” he is not saying: “You don't have sense enough to take care of yourself.” He is saying: “I love you. I don't want anything to happen to you.”

Teenagers, let me say a word for mothers and dads. We love you. You are the most precious possessions we have. All our hopes and aspirations for the future are wrapped up in you. We would rather die than lose you—physically, morally, and spiritually!

We only ask that young people weigh the advice of their parents carefully. We are trying sincerely to help. We know we should be as positive as possible in making decisions about our lives and more significantly in our recreational activities, but there are times when we must say, “Don't do that!”

Author Unknown

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The Roman Catholic Church and Successionism

Lee Moses

Some religious denominations defend their existence by rights of inheritance. This defense is known as *successionism*. *Successionism* effectively states that the authentic church today is determined by continuous succession—there must be a traceable succession of a group or an office from the first century to the present for that group or office to be legitimate. One can clearly see the theory of successionism at work in the Roman Catholic Church's defense of its existence. They reason something like this: Peter was the human head of the church and the first bishop of Rome. Every bishop of Rome since Peter takes his place as the human head of the church. As such, the church is obligated to submit to the bishop of Rome—the “pope,” as he is more commonly called.

The flaws in this reasoning are too numerous and extreme to refute in detail in this

short article but consider: (1) Neither Peter nor any other man than Jesus Christ was ever authorized to serve as “head of the church.” Even to suggest such robs from the preeminence of Christ (Col. 1:18). (2) The Biblical evidence is against Peter's ever having been to Rome, much less having lived there for such a long time as to be “the bishop of Rome.” He was east of the Mediterranean in such places as Jerusalem and Antioch around AD 50 (Acts 15:7; Gal. 2:11). He was known as conducting a “wandering ministry” in the mid-50s (1 Cor. 9:5) (Bauer)¹. He was clearly not in Rome when Paul addressed the church there in the late AD 50s (Rom. 16:2-15). He wrote 1 Peter from Babylon in the mid-60s (5:13), likely only a couple of years before his death. (3) There never was any such authorized office as **the** bishop of Rome. The New Testament authorizes a plu-

rality of elders (bishops) of equal standing in every church (Acts 14:23; Phi. 1:1; Tit. 1:5).

Thus, it is evidently clear that Peter was **not** the first “bishop of Rome” **or** human head of the church. But even if Peter **were** the first bishop of Rome and human head of the church, where is the Biblical authority for other men to receive that same power? Jesus Christ Himself selected His apostles (Luke 6:13). It is true that a replacement was selected for Judas Iscariot, but that was because he fell from his office “**by transgression**” (Acts 1:25). When the faithful apostle James the son of Zebedee was killed (12:1-2), there was no human conference to select a successor to him. And there is no authority to select successors to **any** of the apostles, as (1) there is no Biblical precedent for such (cf. Col. 3:17); (2) apostles had to be eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22); (3) they had to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, an event that was not to happen again by the time Paul wrote Ephesians 4:5, in which he noted that there was only “one **baptism**” —

Christian water baptism, not the Holy Spirit baptism which enabled the apostles to fulfill their responsibilities; and (4) they were to remain in their exalted position as apostles throughout the Christian age—which would extend past their deaths until Jesus comes again (Mat. 19:28).

The Roman Catholic Church may claim to be “the true Church” (“The Church”), but they certainly are not going to prove it by what they believe is their strongest defense—successionism.

Endnote

¹The word for “lead about” carries the idea of “traveling about in various directions.”

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Union City, TN

The Great Reward

Bob Wear

There are blessings, abundant blessings, attending the Christian’s daily life, but the great reward is the final reward received at the end of a faithful life.

The admonition to the Christians at Corinth holds before them the reward.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know

that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

Christian friends, our labor will be rewarded. Let us not be discouraged.

The crown of life is at the end of the way. “Fear none of those things... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). James writes:

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive

the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him (Jam. 1:12).

Paul, the Christian, expected the crown of righteousness. He said:

I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand....there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4 6-8).

The great reward is described as the resurrection of life.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life (John 5:28-29).

The disposition of the nations at the judgment is the setting for the following: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Mat. 25:46): life eternal—the great reward.

We must not lose sight of the following facts: Our labors are not in vain; if faithful unto death, we receive the crown of life; the crown of righteousness is laid up for those who live as God directed; those who die in the Lord are raised to the resurrection of life, and at the judgment, the righteous go into eternal life.

Deceased

The Carpenter

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house-building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife, enjoying his extended family. He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. They could get by.

The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished the work, the employer came to inspect the house. He handed the front door key to the carpenter. “This is your house,” he said, “my gift to you.” The carpenter was shocked! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his

own house, he would have done it all so differently.

So, it is with us. We build our lives a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. With a shock, we realize we must live in the house we have built. If we could do it over, we might do it much differently, but we cannot go back.

You are the carpenter. Each day you drive a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. “Life is a do-it-yourself project,” someone has said. Your attitudes and the choices you make today build the *house* you will live in tomorrow. Build wisely!

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Gal. 6:7-8).

Author Unknown

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The Folly of Directing One's Own Steps

Charles Pogue

Some people no doubt believe that life would be a lot easier if they could make up their own rules as they go along. It is the case that a lot of people do that very thing. It does not make any difference to them that Bible has ruled upon a thing to be false doctrine or morally evil, if they would rather believe a lie, and rebel against the holiness described in the Bible, that is exactly what they do.

Unfortunately for them, the Bible teaches that man cannot conduct his life that way and be pleasing to God. Jeremiah wrote, "Oh, Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). The wise man Solomon, makes a similar statement when he writes that there is a way that seems right to a man, but it ends in death (Pro. 14:12).

The propensity of man to try to direct his own steps is not a new thing. In the days of

the judges, every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Jud. 17:6). Since that was the case, there is no surprise that Israel found itself being overwhelmed during that period by this nation and that nation. What was right in their own eyes was against the law of God and they paid the consequences.

One should learn from the example of the judges that trying to direct one's own steps and thereby ending up living a life that is displeasing to God, has its own disastrous consequences. As the wise man wrote in the Proverbs again, "Good understanding giveth favour, But the way of transgressors is hard" (Pro. 13:15). Just ask the person who has destroyed his physical body through use of alcohol. But, barring future obedience to God, his worst affliction is yet to come when God destroys both his body and soul in hell (Mat. 10:28).

In these days (and there are those in the church who are just as guilty as those outside of it) many try to decide for themselves what is right and wrong when the Bible has clearly already ruled on the matter. Yet, if one tries to impress such individuals with the truth, all he meets with is resistance and the assertion, "you are not my judge!" What drives such an individual? Where does their attitude come from? In many cases, it most surely comes from a genuine lack of concern for spiritual things in their lives. Secular things is what matters to them, and they will have their way regardless of what God says about it.

A man may proceed to direct his own steps. One may do what is right in his own

eyes. A person may believe the way he is going is right. There are many who have their minds set on doing their own thing, and God is not allowed to get a word in edgewise. Whether such persons suffer physical consequences for their sin in this life or not, they will suffer an eternal punishment in the fires of hell. If one were to ask them now, is doing what you want to do bringing you happiness? The answer no doubt would be, yes. However, in the flames of hell, they will open their eyes through a flood of tears and despair for just a finger dipped in water and touched to their tongues. Then, the answer would, and will be, an entirely different one.

Deceased

Paul in Corinth

Guy N. Woods

But little short of two millennia ago, a lonely, discouraged, and virtually impoverished man came to Corinth from Athens where only moderate success had attended his labors to bring the good news of redemption to that famed cosmopolitan capital of commerce of the ancient middle-eastern world. He came alone and without previous announcement. No official escort waited at the gates to accompany him in triumph into the city; no eloquent and impassioned orators were poised to speak before admiring thousands to celebrate his coming; no herald ran excitedly through the streets to inform an eager populace of the arrival of a distinguished visitor. The sensual and worldly citizens of that corrupt and wicked community

were wholly without interest in him or in the message which he brought.

Urgent though his mission was, it could be carried out only if he were to survive; stark necessity for the body's basic needs faced him and it was imperative that he immediately find the means by which to sustain himself; consequently, Paul

found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla.... And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers (Acts 18:2-3).

The incongruity of the greatest man of his age toiling for daily bread is only apparent; there was in this humble endeavor a mar-

velous demonstration of the fact that working with one's hands at an honorable trade is not inconsistent with deep spirituality and profound conviction; and the independence this provided him was to serve as a convincing factor in establishing in the minds of those he was later to teach the purity of his motives, the sincerity of his aims, and the unselfishness which motivated his actions.

From this exceedingly humble and unpretentious base, Paul's labors in Corinth began. But for the nature of the message he brought, his work there and his ultimate departure would have gone as unnoticed as his arrival. It was this which was to make him the most distinguished visitor ever to stand in the shadow of the Parthenon or to speak on the famed Acropolis. Greece's golden age produced some of the world's wisest philoso-

phers, most astute mathematicians, eloquent orators, and perceptive historians, but the greatest of these pales into insignificance in the wake of this remarkable man. The philosophy of Aristotle, the orations of Demosthenes, the political treatises of Xenophon and the plays of Sophocles, great though they were, seem shallow and insipid alongside the incomparable works of the great apostle; and it is well within the realm of truth to say that Greece's contribution to the well-being of humanity is not in her orators, her philosophers and her historians but in the work which Paul did in her midst and by means of the language which she nurtured and preserved through which the Holy Spirit's revelation was made known to the world.

The sceptre has long since been wrested from her hands and passed to others; her famed and richly garnished temples are now but piles of misshapen stones; her proud navies live only in history and her influence as a world power has long since departed. Travelers to her lands now gaze with but casual interest on the relics of her former glory and a lone shepherd lad idly swings his crook at a stalk of grass struggling upward between fallen stones where once the busiest travelled roads of the ancient world met, but the great influence and the magnificent message of him whose initial entrance into their city was unheralded still lives-ever fresh in immortal vigor-untouched by death or decay, as eternal as the truth he preached or the Being he so dearly loved and so faithfully served.

“With the past, I have nothing to do; nor with the future. I live now” (Ralph Waldo Emerson). Why worry about what cannot be changed from yesterday? Why worry about what may never come to pass tomorrow? Why worry about the obstacle now before you? Will worrying change it? No—to worry is to waste time, and time is far too precious to waste. Use it wisely and worry has no foothold to gain. God bless.

*Tim Smith
Deceased*

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The Christian Life

H. M. Phillips

The life of a Christian is to be one of purity. His thoughts, words, and deeds are all to be pure. When the people who claim to be Christians learn this, then there will be a significant change in many lives, if indeed it is that they are not just pretending. The Christian's life is so well patterned after that of the Savior that all who watch will see the likeness. A Christian life will significantly help the world to believe that God sent His Son to save the world. Nothing is more attractive and beautiful than to see the life of the Lord lived out in human life. This life is indeed adorning the doctrine of our God.

Paul advised Timothy to keep himself pure (1 Tim. 5:22). James tells of pure and undefiled religion before God, the Father (Jam. 1:27). And Titus 1:15 states that unto the pure, all things are pure. This would not

mean that just anything a pure person would do would be pure, but that the pure part of life is seen in all things, rather than thinking and bringing the impure words and thoughts about such. Some I have known seem never to see anything pure but always make some remark suggestive of impurity. If your ears are not well stopped now, you will hear mostly the impure as most people speak. We are in an age in which it is considered wise to use vile language, and the Christian must be on the watch to keep free of all such. To listen with interest to it, or talk it, to be with the crowd, is right.

Every Word of God is pure (Pro. 30:5). So, if I want to have pure thoughts and think about the purest things, just read God's Word, and nothing will surpass that. I need not hunt for the place in the Word for purity, for the wise man says every Word of God is

pure. So, if any man speaks as the oracles of God, he will be speaking pure words, which is why the world has gone so far in impurity. The Word is out of the system of education, and impurities prevail. When will we hark back to the purest of the pure?

People's homes are not kept pure in conversation today, and even children speak that which grownups used not to dare say. Some young folks now know more of the vulgar side of life than Methuselah ever heard of in his long life. Little ten or twelve-year-olds now could fill grandpa and grandma with such talk that it would astonish their imagination and shock their modesty, causing them to wonder how they got that much in so short a time. The shows are fine instructors in this line, and the schools are ignoring the Word of God; so, life consists of the fast, lustful appeals of the flesh. The only hope is to get back to the young, get a total supply of God's Word taught to them, and let the coming generation grow out of what they are in now. But that is a real job; for about the time you get the little fellows taught the Word of God, they begin to go to school, get it taught out, see the shows, and get it thrown out. So, all I know is to cry aloud and spare

not. Keep your soul free from the blood of all men.

After all, it is a matter of purifying self; and the Word says those who have the hope are purifying themselves, even as he is pure (1 John 3:3). I need your help, and you need mine in this; but, after all, it is a matter of my doing the job of purifying myself. To be sure, I would not know how to do this at all if I did not go to the Word, which gives full instructions on how to purify myself. Let me study that every day and faithfully meditate on it, and practice what it teaches. Then I may have the hope of being pure. The Lord is our standard, and the Word is our guide to follow: No one needs to put off doing this right away, but since we are already behind now, let us get busy and redeem the time.

Sure, I grant you that some are pure, and it is a source of joy and comfort to be with them and draw closer to the Lord. Pure people delight in associating with pure people and trying to get the impure to be purer but hold your footing as you pull up, lest you slip in the impure. Keep your heart, bridle your tongue, and buffet your body, and maybe you will be what you ought to be for God.

Deceased

Go Teach All

Jack Hardcastle

Jesus had finished His work on the earth, and He was ready for the story to be told. In Matthew 28:18-20, He revealed Himself as the one with all authority, and gave to His disciples his world-wide plan for enlisting

men and women of all nations under His banner.

The plan is very simple. People are to be taught. It is the mind of man to which Jesus appeals, and it is the mind that must be brought

into subjection to Christ. Therefore, the Lord's plan is to teach all nations the facts, requirements, and promises of the Gospel and give all an opportunity to accept or reject Christ.

"But," one asks, "how can we reach the people in Africa and India to teach them?"

Those who ask such questions are usually victims of a spiritual hyperopia. They are blind to the condition of the man across the street, but they long to save the man across

the sea. I am not indifferent to foreign missionary work, but I realize that it is impossible for most members of the church to go into foreign fields. For those who have difficulty deciding just where and with whom to begin, may I suggest the woman across the backyard fence or the man who rides to work with you. Why not study ways and means of getting the Gospel to them?

Deceased

Live to Serve

Bob Wear

Christ said, concerning Himself and His mission: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mat 20:28). We must be guided and inspired by this example. There is no way to remove the idea of service from the Christian way of thought and action. We who wear the name *Christian* must live to serve. We must render service to God and each other (not only to the brotherhood but to all men).

Our service must be properly motivated. The divine admonition is:

Let all that ye do be done in love (1 Cor. 16:14).

For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only *use* not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another (Gal. 5:13).

Our service must be motivated by love.

Service is the measure of true greatness.

We read:

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles

lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you [the apostles]: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister [servant]; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant [bondservant] (Mat. 20:25-27).

God requires us to do the best we can with what we have. This principle is clearly expressed in the following: The multitude was casting money into the treasury. The rich cast in much and a poor widow came with a very small amount. Jesus said that she gave more than the rich because she gave all she had, even all her living, while the rich gave of their superfluity (Mark 12:41-44).

In this life of service, we serve Christ through serving one another (Mat. 25:31-46).

It is through a life of service as Christians that we lay up treasures in heaven.

Deceased

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April 18

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Unity in Jesus

J. Noel Meredith

There is a lot of talk these days about “unity.” The Bible teaches that there is unity in Christ for those who are obedient believers. Jesus prayed for the unity of believers in the shadow of the cross. Those who walk in the light have fellowship with Christ and one another. The Lord’s church is vastly different from the ecumenical movements of men. Men’s movements can and will fall apart and fail—many long for fellowship. However sincere, the desire for fellowship cannot erase the doctrinal differences that exist in the world. Only a sincere return to the authority of the Bible and obedience to the Gospel of Christ can bring about Biblical unity.

A loose gathering of denominations is but a gathering of differences. There is no real unity this way. Unity in diversity is not the one Lord, one faith, one baptism of the New Testament. As long as men have false and

distorted concepts of the Gospel, we cannot have the unity for which Jesus prayed.

Some misguided men claim the churches of Christ are now *sectarian*. They think we left our moorings years ago and are now *sectarian* because we preach the one Lord, one faith, one baptism. They say they have repented of being this way and give a call to arms to challenge the church’s present stance. Such men repudiate their parents, their Bible teachers, and their own preaching of the past. But above all, they run counter to the Bible. The ecumenical jargon of some of our own who gloss over any concern for doctrine is disappointing.

We do not hesitate to affirm that there is one church in the Bible and that Jesus Christ is its only head. People who are taught the wrong doctrine cannot be baptized right. We are to carry out the Great Commission to

the best of our ability. In doing that, we are to preach the Gospel to a lost world. If we do not believe we are right, why preach to the lost? We are not to preach doubts; we are to preach the Gospel of Christ.

The authority in religion, of course is the Bible. We get our authority from the Bible.

There are brilliant minds in all the denominations. They do not see the Bible alike for many reasons. Some question the authority of God and wish to impose their own. Others love the praise of men more than the praise of God. Let us not be like them.

Deceased

The Voice of Conscience Is Not the Voice of God

Gayle Oler

It is not so that the “voice of conscience is the voice of God.” Conscience is often wrong, but God never is. This statement has so often been made that it has found itself in quotation marks in modern writings and has probably come to be considered as Scripture by some.

The plain fact is that the voice of conscience is frequently the voice of the devil. When men follow (only) their consciences, they differ as widely as the poles. Trying to go to Heaven a hundred different ways and under every kind of name, they all declare that they follow the guidance of conscience. But there is only one way to Heaven, “And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

• Conscience says, “One way is as good as another,” but God says, “Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:16). Conscience is wrong, but the Bible is right.

• Conscience says, “Join the church of your choice.” God says, “Yea, they have

chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations: I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them” (Isa. 66:3-4).

• Conscience will agree that it is all right to wear names, choose churches and doctrines, and different kinds of worship and life, and that one’s choice is about all to be considered. God says, “they did that which was evil in mine eyes, and chose that wherein I delighted not” (66:4).

• Conscience subordinates the will and way of God and consults only the mind and preference of man. God never intended that man should use his conscience as a criterion in religion. Jesus Christ is our guide. “Unto him shall ye hearken” (Acts 3:22).

No inspired writer ever condoned this “church of your choice” idea or ever voiced one slight approval of the doctrine that one church is as safe as another. The doctrines of “many ways to Heaven,” “nothing in a name,” and that everyone ought to join the church of his choice is a far cry from the voice of God. It is the plain voice of the devil.

Any conscience that will approve of wearing a name God has not given, in a church

He has not planted, and of worshipping in a way He has not commanded leads a man to do that wherein God delights not.

There was a time when Paul thought the voice of conscience was the voice of God and admitted that he had lived before God in all good conscience (23:1). After he learned better, he confessed that he was the chief of sinners **while faithfully following the dictates of his conscience** (1 Tim. 1:15).

Everybody is doing it, so I guess it is all right, is the voice of conscience. A big crowd in religion cannot be wrong to such a mind. *I know I am saved because I feel perfectly sat-*

isfied is the way the conscience talks that has completely ignored the Word of God.

That kind of conscience approves the use of instrumental music in the worship and infant sprinkling in practice. It approves the use of an unscriptural name and church. It is the very instrument that got the Israelites in trouble with God. “They hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in *their own* counsels *and* in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward” (Jer. 7:24). It is wiser to follow the Word of the living God than the fallible dictates of conscience. Which do you follow?

Deceased

Who Will Know?

A Christian boy away at college was confronted with temptation. He continued to push away from it. Some of his fellow-students pressed him to yield. One of them, in exasperation, said, “Come on and do it! Who will know the difference?”

He answered, “I will know, God will know, my Christian friends will know, and when Christ comes, everyone will know. Sorry fellows, but you will have to count me out.”

Good answer! Who will know?

I Will Know. This is sufficient reason to shun evil even if it is certain no one else will ever know. So, I need to conduct myself in such a way that I can lay down at night with a clear conscience and look myself in the mirror in the morning without shame.

God Will Know. Job said, “If I sin, then thou markest me” (10:14). Joseph looked

temptation square in the face and refused to yield. He said, “how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9). I cannot do anything that He does not see.

My Christian Friends Will Know. They may not know of my particular sin, but they will be aware of my loss of influence. The church is one body, and no member can sin without harming the whole body. When I sin, I weaken the church.

When Christ Comes Everyone Will Know. He “will bring to light the hidden things of darkness” (1 Cor. 4:5). If I sin today, I must suffer for it tomorrow.

Wise is the person who determines to live a righteous life and, regardless of pressure, “holds to his way.”

Author Unknown

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May 9

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Condensed Facts About the Kingdom, or Church

C. D. Plum

The kingdom and church used synonymously (Mat. 16:18-19):

1. The Lord's table was to be in His kingdom (Luke 22:30).
2. The church at Corinth had the Lord's table (1 Cor. 10:21).

Prophecies concerning the kingdom:

1. "It shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
2. Kingdom belongs to Christ. All people should serve Him (Dan. 7:13-14).
3. It should be established at Jerusalem (Isa. 2:1-3).

The kingdom was near when Jesus was on earth:

1. John the Baptist preached it was "at hand" (Mat. 3:2).
2. Jesus preached the kingdom was "at hand" (4:17).
3. The twelve apostles preached it was "at hand" (10:7).

4. The seventy preached the kingdom was "nigh" (Luke 10:9).

The Lord was to establish this kingdom, or church (Psa. 127:1).

The Lord said He would build it (Mat. 16:18).

The Lord did build it (Heb. 8:2; Acts 2:47).

A group of Scriptures that prove the Lord established this kingdom, or church, at Jerusalem, on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection, in AD 33:

Isa. 2:1-3; Luke 24:49; Mark 9:1; Mat. 16:28; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 36.

A group of facts to show the kingdom, or church, was in existence in the days of the apostles:

1. John, the apostle, was in this kingdom in AD 96 (Rev. 1:9).
2. Timothy was a part of the house of God in AD 65 (1 Tim. 3:15).

3. People were being translated into this kingdom in AD 64 (Col. 1:13).
4. Christians were eating at the Lord's table, in His kingdom, in ad 59 (Luke 22:30; 1 Cor. 10:21).
5. The church was active in ad 45 (Acts 13:1; 14:27).
6. Great persecution was against the church in AD 34 (Acts 8:1).
7. Great fear was upon the church in AD 33 (Acts 5:11).

8. People were being added to the church in AD 33 (Acts 2:37-47).

A falling away predicted:

1. Some would depart from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-3).
2. The man of sin was thereby revealed (2 The. 2:1-10).
3. The pope and Vatican in prophesy—he shall come to an end (Dan. 11:45).

After the Dark Ages comes a revival of Christianity:

1. The pure seed, the Word of God, was resown (Luke 8:11).
2. This seed was received in honest and good hearts, obeyed, and pure Christianity began on this earth again (Luke 8:15). Those foremost in this reformation were Stone and the Campbells.

Deceased

God's Plan of Salvation

Hear	Romans 10:17
Believe	Mark 16:16
Repent	Luke 13:3, 5
Confess.....	Romans 10:9-10
Baptism	Acts 2:38
Be Faithful.....	1 Corinthians 15:58

What Religion Are You?

Dub Mowery

Probably at one time or another, we have all been asked: "What is your religion?" Well, how would you answer the question? In 1956, while in the military Boot Camp of the Coast Guard at Cape May, New Jersey, I was asked by a Petty Officer if I was Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish? I stated, "None of them, I am a Christian, in the church of Christ." He said I had to be one of them, and I again stated I was not any of them. For example, to be a Protestant indicates I am with a group that broke off from the Roman Catholic Church. The church of Christ is older than the Roman Catholic Church.

However, there is a sense in which I am all three—the term *catholic* means universal, the church of Christ is the universal church in which Jesus promised to build (Mat. 16:18). We are protestants in a sense we speak out against religious doctrinal error, immorality, and sin. We are Jewish in a spiritual sense, not requiring us to be physical Jews (Rom. 2:28-29). The church of our Lord is spiritual Israel (9:6-8). They still put "Protestant" on my identification metal tag that those in the military must wear on a chain around their neck. Those tags are called "dog tags."

In reality, there is only one true religion. All others which claim to be a religion are false religions. False religions include denominations that profess Christ as the Son of God. The term *religion* means “ligion” to bind, and the prefix “re” means again. Their use in reference to God and man means to bind man back to God. Our God does not need to be brought back unto man, but lost humanity needs to be brought back unto Him. It is to be reconciled, to be brought back into harmony with God (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

Other than the church of Christ, all other *Churches* which profess Christianity are

denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church. A denomination is a sect! In the first century, those ignorant of true Christianity referred to the Lord’s church as a sect, which is the same as a heresy (Acts 24:5; 28:22; 24:14). A sect or heresy is a group split off from a larger established group. The church of Christ did not break off from any other church which professes Christianity. Neither was it a sect of the Jewish religion, as were the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Our Lord’s church is complete within itself, not a part of the redeemed—it is the redeemed.

Deceased

Sincerity Rocks!

Is sincerity all that matters?

Flight Attendant: “I’m sorry, but you are on the wrong plane. You want to go to Atlanta, but this plane is going to Chicago.”

Passenger: “Don’t bother me with such matters. I sincerely believed I was getting on the Atlanta flight, so what difference does it make? If a person is sincere in what he believes, that’s all that matters.”

Doctor: “I’m sorry to tell you, but we couldn’t save your husband. Those pills he took were toxic when combined with other medications he was taking.”

Wife: “But he can’t be dead. He was sincere in thinking he could take the sleeping pills, so he can’t be dead. Besides, one pill is as good as another.”

Dermatologist: “Sir, that growth on your arm is malignant, and unless it’s removed it will kill you.”

Patient: “Are you trying to alarm me, doc? I believe it’s just a minor blemish. None of my folks every had a mole removed. I feel fine.”

Gospel Preacher: “Friend, the way you are traveling is not the way of Truth revealed in the Bible. I implore you to obey the Gospel and become a Christian before it’s too late.”

Millions of People: “Don’t be so narrow-minded and judgmental. My folks were saved by saying the sinner’s prayer and were members of the _____ church, so it’s good enough for me. What difference does it make, as long as you’re sincere? One church is as good as another. As long as a person feels his religion is right, that’s what matters. Don’t bother me. I’m satisfied.”

Author Unknown

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Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Paulette Born in the death of her sister, Geraldine Powell, on April 24. Please keep Paulette and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

May 2

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May 9

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Godly Mothers

Brad Green

Every child should be so blessed as to be raised by a godly mother. Though many in the world desire to have the government raise their children via the public school system, and many in the religious world expect the leadership of the *church* they attend to train them, a godly mother knows that it is within the home that a child should be nurtured. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.... And, ye fathers...bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:1, 4). The psalmist states that the godly mother is a “joyful mother” who takes pride in her home and takes care of her children (Psa. 113:9). A godly mother will also teach her children the way of the Lord (Pro. 1:8; 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:5). Though there is nothing wrong with playing sports or being athletic, many par-

ents misplace far too much of their priorities on training their children to be *superstars* and far too little emphasis on training them to be faithful children of God. Some parents get caught up in worldly popularity and lead their children down the same wayward path. A godly mother will set her “affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2). A godly mother will have no greater joy than to know that her children are obedient to God.

The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: And he that begetteth a wise *child* shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, And she that bare thee shall rejoice (Pro. 23:24-25).

We are most thankful for our godly mothers and appreciate their work in the Kingdom of Christ. Happy Mother’s Day.

Lenoir City, TN

Does the Use of *Psallo* Command the Use of Mechanical Instruments of Music in Worship?

Ken Chumbley

There are those who would seek to justify the use of instrumental music in worship by insisting that the Greek word *Psallo* demands the use of the instrument. In other words, it is commanded and thus to please God we must do all that God implies by the use of the word, just as we must do all that is commanded in the word translated *baptism*. This argument is erroneous linguistically, textually, and rationally. The following is a quotation from a book written by M. C. Kurfees in reviewing a book by O. E. Payne, under the title, "Psallo." This quote shows that it is absurd that God would require the use of the instrument and thus the argument is not rational.

Moreover, this position on *psallo* is not only contrary to the word of God, but it is contrary to every dictate of both reason and righteousness. As clearly revealed in the Scriptures, our Heavenly Father not only has the inset, sympathetic consideration for the humblest and poorest of his children, but it is distinctly declared that "righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne" (Ps. 97:2); and hence it is a matter for the profoundest gratitude that the humblest band of his children, no matter how poor, may still provide the loaf and fruit of the vine, pray, exhort and sing his praises acceptably without the expense of an organ, piano, lyre, violin, or some such instrument; and yet the book here under

review says and displays it on its title page with repeated emphasis in the body of the book, that "it is impossible" for them to do it! I meet this unjust reflection upon the Author of the worship, which is for the poor as well as the rich, by saying that to stipulate such a condition in a system of worship which is designed for all classes, all places, all circumstances, and all conditions of the people universally, is contrary to every principle of justice, reason, and righteousness the ancient children of God (regardless of poverty conditions and other circumstances, had been required to duplicate in different places and under all circumstances) after the manner of New Testament local churches, the ponderous system of the Jewish tabernacle and temple worship with the latter's instruments of music, it would not only have been wholly impractical, but a serious reflection upon the justice and wisdom of its Author; but the tabernacle was portable and the temple worship was restricted to one place, and the expenses in both cases were borne by the whole nation. But the law regulating worship under the Christian system requires Christians, in any and all localities wherever they may live, to assemble themselves together for the worship of God; and yet the book here under review conspicuously proclaims on its title page and repeatedly emphasizes the doctrine in the body of the volume that "it is impossible" for a band of Christian to con-

duct this worship acceptably, so far as the command in *psallo* is concerned, until the procure an organ, piano, lyre, violin, or some such instrument of worship! The position is utterly preposterous and ab-

surd in the extreme, and if all circumstances regardless of poverty conditions would be strong presumptive evidence that the passage never came from God.

Deceased

Good Housekeeping

The prophet Isaiah addressed the following statement to King Hezekiah of Judah: “Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live” (Isa. 38:1).

Death plays no favorites; his sickle cuts down the king on the throne and the slave working in a field. It claims the elderly on the bed of pain and suffering, but it also takes a tragic toll on young people as well, for the young die, too. In the “democracy of death” all men are equal. The rich man is divested of his wealth, Lazarus leaves behind his rags (Luke 16:19-31), and every person gives account of himself to Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). Surely, every sensible, and intelligent person

needs to give consideration to this challenging command: “Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.”

Ironically, those who are best prepared to die are also most fit to live. Millions spend their lives in pursuit of sinful pleasures, without ever giving a thought to “setting their houses in order.” Jesus once described a certain man who said to himself, “take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee” (Luke 12:19-20). Such fools have always been plentiful. One may say, “*There is no God*” (Psa. 14:1), while another says, “God is dead.” All such continue to “make a mock at sin” (Pro. 14:9). The way of every fool is right in his own eyes (12:15). The drunkard tries to justify his drunkenness, the adulterer his infidelity, the thief his dishonesty, and the liar his falsehoods.

Isaiah gave a remedy for such sinners: Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts: And let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon (Isa. 55:7).

Let each one of us set our houses in order by obeying the Gospel (2 The. 1:7-9), and keep them in order (1 Cor. 15:58).

Author Unknown

The Time You Own

The clock is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop,
At late or early hour.

Now is the only time you own.
Live, love, toil with a will;
Place no faith in tomorrow, for
The clock may then be still.

Author Unknown

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Some New Things of Christianity

Don Tarbet

People of all ages enjoy getting new things. In religion, some are constantly seeking something new or different. Things that originate with men (religions, movements, ideas, or doctrines) are vain (Mat. 15:9). The only **true** and valid new things are those that began on Pentecost some 2000 years ago. They are still in effect and will remain new until the end of the world. These “new things” should thrill our souls to serve God.

First, there is a **new covenant**. A new covenant was foretold in the old covenant (Jer. 31:31). The old covenant was broken by Israel (31:32). God brought the old covenant to an official end at the cross when Jesus died (Col. 2:14). The new covenant went into effect after Christ’s death—providing a new way to God (Heb. 9:15-17; 10:9f, 15-20).

Second, there is a **new church**. The old church consisted of the Israelites in the

wilderness during the Mosaical age (Acts 7:38, KJV). The old covenant governed the old church. Moses was its mediator and lawgiver (Gal. 3:19; John 1:17). The new church consists of all the saved in the world (Mat. 16:18; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 40-41, 47). The new covenant governs the new church. Christ is its mediator and lawgiver (John 1:17; 1 Tim. 2:5).

Third, there is a **new birth**. The old church was entered by a fleshly birth (Heb. 8:10-11). The Israelites were born into a covenant relationship with God. They had to be taught to *know* their God **after** they were already in the family of Israel. The new church is entered by the spiritual birth (John 3:1-7). In the new birth, one learns of God **before** becoming a child of God (6:45). The Word of truth produces the new birth (1 Pet. 1:22-23).

Fourth, there is a **new life**. The old life **before** conversion is sinful (Eph. 2:1; Col. 3:9-10). The new life begins at the new birth when one enters the new church by obeying the new covenant (Rom. 6:3-6; 8:10-14; 2 Cor. 5:17). The new man has new thoughts and motives (Mat. 5:8; Phi. 4:8). The new man has new ways, new habits, and new friends.

Fifth, there is a **new name**. Under the old covenant, God was honored in the name “Israel,” with the *el* at the end referring to God. Now, we have a “new name” that gives honor to Christ our Savior, in the name *Christian*, which includes the name *Christ* (Isa. 62:2; Acts 11:18, 26; 1 Pet. 4:16). Sadly, most religious people in the world that *claim* Jesus is their savior prefer to wear another (denominational) name **above** and before

the name Christian. This does **not** honor Christ (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10).

Sixth, there is a **new residence**. The Jews of old dwelt in the physical land of Canaan, with Jerusalem as its center. Christians are but pilgrims here, with real citizenship in heaven, with spiritual Jerusalem as its eternal city (Heb. 11:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:11; Phi. 3:20—cf. ASV); Rev. 21:1).

Conclusion

These “new things” are **not** something **we** have made new but are those things **God** has made new that began in the first century and will always be new for the Gospel age. God wants everyone to be a part of it and to enjoy His blessings. These new things are truly exciting for honest hearts.

Denison, TX

One Gospel—One Church

The institution that our Lord loved to the uttermost; that He died for and shed His precious blood to purchase, exists today. It is known by no proper name, but it is identified by a Scriptural term—church of Christ. This term is inspired and fully describes the beautiful relationship between the two (Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16; Acts 2:47; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:13).

As some would have us believe, it is not sectarian to emphasize that Jesus Christ will save only those who are faithful members of the church of Christ. The truth of the matter is that Jesus has never promised to save anyone in heaven unless first they gain forgiveness of past sins and live faithful lives in

His church (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23, 27; Col. 1:18, 24). Hence, the Gospel of Christ, God’s saving power, can produce nothing but the church of Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 1:16).

When accountable people come to know and thereby believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God through the infallible evidence revealed by God’s inerrant Word, they must then turn from their sins in penitence (Luke 8:11; Heb. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:16; 4:2; Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 15:1-7; Acts 2:38; 17:30). Having thus acted, they are to confess Christ as Savior and be buried with Christ in the watery grave of baptism to obtain forgiveness of sins, and in doing so, be added by the

Lord to His church (Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:10; 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 2:41, 47). All who refuse to obey Jesus in the manner mentioned above are not Christians and remain outside of the church of Christ—the realm of the saved.

While there are more identifying marks of the church of Christ than a Scriptural designation and the Lord’s plan of salvation, no religious group can be the Lord’s church that does not teach and practice the truth just presented (2 John 9-11).

Human churches do not teach the Gospel of Christ, and therefore they are not the church of Christ. When a person is baptized and immediately involves himself in a false religion, that person is an erring child of God. He needs to repent, come out of the sin and worship and work with faithful children of God. That is not hard to understand, although some attempt to make it so.

In a recent visit with a young man in a business matter, I was asked if I knew two men. Both were members of the church, one a preacher, the other a song leader. The young man was quite complimentary of both and informed me that the song leader had baptized him. The sad part about the whole con-

versation was that the young man had earlier told me that he was a member of a denomination (Faith Fellowship or something like that). He still was thrilled about his baptism and seemingly held the preacher and song leader in high esteem. Our conversation was interrupted, and I never got a chance to ask him why he had chosen to become a part of a denomination. Assuming from the conversation that he was sincere, why was he now in a denomination, happy with his baptism and still *high* on the song leader and the preacher? Realizing that there could be many reasons as to why he had left the faith, one thing is certain; he did not understand baptism, the Lord’s church, or their relationship.

Let it be emphasized again that there could be several reasons why the young man had united with a human church. But one possibility is that he was never taught correctly relative to the Gospel, the church, and their relationship.

We can expect the denominations to be mean and belittle the Gospel and the church. That has always been. But when members become ashamed of the distinctive New Testament teaching on “one baptism” and “one church” or, for that matter, any other Biblical doctrine, apostasy has begun!

Brethren, we can bring ourselves to these errors as mentioned earlier or teach and defend the truth as it is revealed in the Bible (Jude 3; Phi. 1:17; Gal. 2:15, 11; Acts 15:1-2). The love of God requires no more and expects no less (1 John 2:3-6; Rev. 2:10).

Author Unknown

God’s Plan of Salvation

Hear	Romans 10:17
Believe	Mark 16:16
Repent	Luke 13:3, 5
Confess.....	Romans 10:9-10
Baptism	Acts 2:38
Be Faithful.....	1 Corinthians 15:58

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Bill Busch Nancy Travis
Tim Busch Karen Diamond

Please Remember

May 16

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

May 16

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

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Internet Website: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

E-mail: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

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Together in Unity

Tim Smith

Psalm 133:1 “Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* For brethren to dwell together in unity.”

The picture of the first century church is indeed a beautiful one, despite the backdrop of bloodshed and persecution against which it is cast. The brethren were fully devoted to the Lord, and as a result of that devotion, they were also fully committed to each other in the kingdom. The words of our text describe the “ideal” situation for us as Christians, a dwelling together, an abiding, a walking in harmony with each other and the Lord. Let us consider a few of the areas wherein the first followers of the King in His Kingdom enjoyed unity.

They Were United with

Respect to Their Possessions

In Acts 4:32 we read, “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and

of one soul: neither said any of *them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.”

In a time of great persecution, with the hatred of the Jews raging against her, the church of the Lord treated properly the *things* of this world. We love not this world (cf. 1 John 2:15-17), and yet still we live in the world and have need of the provisions thereof. This being so, when the brethren were destitute of those necessities of life, those provisions without which life is impossible, their better supplied brothers and sisters came to their aid. It has, from the beginning, been a steadfast rule of the Lord that we look out for one another: “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). When James commanded that we practice pure religion,

he indicated that pure religion visits (cares for the needs of) the widows and orphans (cf., Jam. 1:27). There was no spirit of *better* versus *worse* due to financial standing then, they were united in the area of possessions. Could the same be said of us?

They Were United with Respect to Their Thoughts

We are often so commanded, and this is a command which was designed to not only tell us what to do, but to reflect what we naturally do as men and women who respect the authority of the Will of God. Paul told the Romans to “*Be* of the same mind one toward another” (Rom. 12:16). In this command is the idea of a common source for our thoughts, a common well from which we all draw. We will think alike only to the extent that we respect alike a common “thought-source,” and that source is the Word of God. The thoughts of the Philippian brethren were very important to Paul, who wrote to them: “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind” (Phi. 2:2). He was thankful for their “one mind,” would he be the same upon considering our mind?

They Were United with Respect to Their Actions

What we do matters before the Lord, and there is a right way and a wrong way of doing all things. We seek unity, we seek peace, we seek to please the Lord, but to realize these things we must act in harmony with His Will, knowing that “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof *are* the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12). Paul commanded

the Roman brethren concerning unity of action, writing: “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Rom. 14:19). We act in unison when we “follow after” a common desire, a common way of life. The command is clear to the Corinthians: “Be perfect [complete, mature], be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11). Using *conversation* to mean “manner of life,” Paul told the Philippians:

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (Phi. 1:27).

How did they accomplish this unity of action? Consider: “let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (3:16-17). Are we so walking?

They Were United with Respect to Their Teachings and Beliefs

It matters what we teach and believe! The idea that *doctrine* is unimportant is simply not Biblical, it is wrong. Hear Paul’s impassioned plea in his first letter to Corinth:

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).

We cannot be “of the same mind and judg-

ment” if we do not think, believe, and teach alike. Since all that we do is to be done by the authority of the Lord (cf. Col. 3:17), and since “God is not *the author* of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33), when we act by His authority we will of necessity teach and believe alike. We are to ever endeavor “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). So long as men respect the authority of other men over and above that of the Lord, religious division will exist, and the beautiful prayer of the Lord will not be realized: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21). Do we believe and teach alike?

They Were United with Respect to Their Purposes, or Motives

Their sole reason for existing was to please the Lord and glorify Him through His

Son: “Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3:21). What higher or more noble motivation is there? Paul told the Romans:

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:5-6).

They were not out to advance themselves, and they did not attend worship services to see or be seen of men; they were sincere and devout, they had their hearts in the right places and therefore their actions followed suit. Could the same be said of us?

“Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous” (1 Pet. 3:8). Let us endeavor to be united in the Lord!

Deceased

What Can We Do to Prevent Apostasy?

B. C. Carr

1. We need to appoint and support faithful elders who will properly oversee the flock (Acts 20:28-32).
2. We need to be busy now training other leaders to take their place. Consider Joshua’s training and the influence he wielded (Jos. 24:31).
3. We need to learn again proper respect for the Word of God (Psa. 119:9-16). We must teach this to our children (Deu. 6:4-9).
4. We must vaccinate against the errors of our day by exposing all false teacher—even if this means being negative (Acts 20:29-32; 2 Tim. 4:1-5).
5. We must indoctrinate each generation. It is right to teach doctrine (1 Tim. 4:16; 2 John 9-11).
6. We need to pray fervently for elders and preachers (Jam. 5:16).
7. We must be set for the defense of the Gospel (Phi. 1:17).

Deceased

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill Busch Nancy Travis
Tim Busch Karen Diamond
Freda Smith (hospital)
Linda Ness (Pam Busch's sister)
Shane Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
nephew)

Placed Membership

Karl Vance placed membership with the Bellview congregation on May 16. An update to the Members' Directory will be available soon.

Please Remember

June 6

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

June 13

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

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Some Things Not Found in the Church of Christ

G. E. Woods

Many things are done in the name of religion, the authority for which is not found in the New Testament. The church of Christ proposes to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as the authority in all religious matters; hence, some things are done in the name of religion in which we simply cannot engage. For this, we are accused by other religious bodies as narrow-minded and uncooperative. Even at the risk of such charges being true, we must obey God rather than man. While it is pleasant to be in full fellowship with those with whom we come in contact, it is yet far better to be on favorable terms with the heavenly Father, and this we cannot do without submitting to His will in all things. So, we humbly try to do Bible things in Bible ways, for the Word of God in the manner of the mind of God making itself known to the mind of men.

While some religious bodies try for pomp and splendor in their services, in the churches of Christ, some practices are conspicuous by their absence. One could not attend a service without being impressed with the simplicity of the same. We have no desire or intention of making a bid for the world's support or praise by getting away from the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. We believe the church of Christ commends itself to the world for consideration not only for the things it stands for but also because of the things it refrains from engaging in. We note some things not found in the church of Christ:

There are no mechanical instruments of music. A visitor familiar with the usual practice of accompaniment in the singing of most religious services would immediately notice the absence of such in the Gospel singing at a service of the church of Christ. The Lord

has commanded singing—not playing—in New Testament worship. “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). Christ never mentioned mechanical instruments of music; no apostle ever sanctioned their use; no New Testament writer ever commanded their use; no apostolic church ever used mechanical instruments in its singing. These seem good and sufficient reasons to exclude them from our services today.

There are no humanly organized missionary societies. While our Lord was upon the earth, He charged His followers to “preach the gospel to every creature.” The church is to be “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). It then is to uphold the truth. No other institution is charged with the responsibility for preaching the Gospel to the world. Any organization smaller or larger than the congregation cannot exist with the Lord’s approval to preach the Gospel. The church of Jesus Christ is obligated to evangelize the world to fulfill its God-given mission. Which is heaven’s order, and we cannot improve upon it. To attempt to do so is fatal. The church is the Lord’s great missionary institution for converting the world to Christ. To organize an institution, separate and apart from the church, is to go beyond what is written. The safe course is to do things the Lord’s way.

There are no shows, no sales, no suppers for the purpose of raising money to finance the work of the church. The divine plan of Christian giving is clearly set forth: “Upon

the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor. 16:2). When we contribute our means on the first day of the week as the Lord commands, the church will have sufficient funds to carry on its work on the earth. When men resort to unscriptural practices to raise money, they bring reproach upon the church and themselves the Lord’s displeasure. There is no better way of doing anything than the Lord’s way. In the churches of Christ, no collections are made except at the regular services on the Lord’s day. The church is not in the begging business. It depends upon its members and solicits no funds from outsiders.

Preachers are not called “Reverend,” “Rabbi,” or “Father.” We have no God-given right to honor men by calling them “Reverend.” The word occurs only once in the Scriptures, and then it refers to God. The Bible states, “Be ye not called Rabbi,” and “Call no man father upon the earth.” When one wears such titles, he does so in the face of Scriptural prohibition. Among the churches of Christ,

When Joseph became the ruler of Egypt, his high office did not spoil him. There were certain standards of official dignity that he had to comply with, but he did not allow his high honor to destroy his love and respect for his people. He was not ashamed to present them before the king.

R. L. Whiteside, Deceased

the practice is simply to call preachers “brother,” for we are all brethren as we fulfill our relationship to each other in the body of Christ. The very essence of Christian conduct is humility, and the desire for high-sounding titles, so we may receive the honor of men is foreign and unknown to the principles of Christ. No apostle of Christ was ever called *reverend*, and theirs was an infallibly safe course to follow.

Our plea in matters of religion is for a return to primitive New Testament Christianity, and to this course, we are committed. When the creeds of men are cast aside, and men humbly submit to divine authority, they will gladly reject the practices without sanc-

tion in Holy Writ. But, as long as they hold to the theory that it is not important to be guided solely by the Bible’s teachings, then there can be little wonder at the things they will do in the name of religion. We are persuaded that many honest souls have grown tired of the mockery of many present-day religious practices and in their hearts long for the simplicity of the way originated by the Son of God, proclaimed by His apostles, and practiced by the apostolic church. We gladly invite all thus-minded to cast their lot with us as we work and labor for a return in matters of religion to the Lord and His way.

Deceased

Law and Lawgiver

Allen E. Johnson

David said long ago, “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament showeth his handiwork” (Psa. 19:1). The heavens declare the power of God. Think for a moment of the giant planets, suns, and stars riding in space. What holds them there? Why, the “law of gravity,” someone says. But can you talk about the law of gravity and ignore the Lawmaker behind the law? The heavens declare the wisdom of God. When we look at a charted map of the heavens and see the millions of heavenly bodies with their myriads of orbits, some of them so vast that the human brain is staggered in contemplating them. Yet, there is no clashing of these bodies. Every one of them stays in its orbit. We are overwhelmed with the wisdom of it.

Only intelligent wisdom could perform such a feat.

The heavens declare the glory of God in their relationship to the law. We think it wonderful that men can work out schedules for vast networks of railroads. When a man does it, he errs sometimes, and trains have wrecks or are late. But when you consider the heavenly bodies and their far-flung orbits, not a one has had a *wreck*, nor have they been *late*. We can even tell time by their movements to the barest fraction of a second. Astronomers can also tell, to the dot, when a planet or comet will appear, even years in advance. Do you say they are governed by law? There must be a supreme Lawgiver behind the law.

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill Busch Nancy Travis
Tim Busch Karen Diamond
Bill Crowe
Freda Smith (hospital)
Linda Ness (Pam Busch's sister)
Shane Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
nephew)
Billy Tom Muldoon (Sheila Myrick
and Pam Busch's cousin)

Please Remember

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be handed out by Bill Crowe.

June 13

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room 1.



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Internet Website: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

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Old Law and New Law

Batsell Barrett Baxter

More than a hundred years ago, in West Virginia and adjoining states, a man named Alexander Campbell was preaching what seemed to some of the folks—in fact, to most of the preachers—to be a new and strange doctrine. “Why they say, he is preaching that God had a law which has been abolished and that He has put a new law in its stead. Why you know that cannot be so; God has never had but one law.”

Put to the Test

So, the preachers of that locality arranged to hear the “new doctrine.” Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and other denominations were represented among the preachers. They gathered to listen to this “strange new doctrine.” Alexander Campbell preached his now-famous sermon on “The Law.” He told about the old covenant and the new covenant. He preached, so the record says, two

hours and thirty-five minutes. So new and strange was this doctrine that to most of the preachers present, it seemed only a few minutes.

Reaction Among the Preachers

Many of the preachers were surprised. They thought the sermon had been very short. They consulted the watches of those present who had watches. They were also astonished at the doctrine. “Never heard of such a thing,” said one. “Strange new doctrine,” said others. “Where did he get such a doctrine?” said others. “Well, I took down the Scriptures he quoted, and I am going home and see if he quoted them right,” said another.

Obscured by Colored Glasses

The trouble with most of those sectarian preachers was that they had not studied their Bible enough. They had studied much, but

they had studied the wrong things. They had studied creeds, and philosophies of religion, and many other books about the Bible, but they had not made a systematic and intensified study of the Bible itself. The study of the book they had made had been through glasses colored by doctrines and opinions of men. Their theological seminaries are pursuing the same method today.

Not Strange or New

The doctrine that Campbell preached that day was neither strange nor new. It was strange to those men, but it was not new, and it was not strange to Paul and Peter and John and the rest of the inspired teachers of New Testament times. Paul showed conclusively in the letter to the Galatians that the old Mosaic covenant was gone, and the Christian lives under a new covenant given by Christ. Paul told them plainly that they who would go back to the old law were fallen from grace. Paul wrote to the Colossians that Jesus “blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross” (Col. 2:14).

Ordinances Mentioned

Some of the ordinances of the Mosaic law are mentioned. The others are included in principle. “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ’s” (2:16-17). The writer states plainly here that Moses’ old covenant is gone; he also states that the body (church) is Christ’s. Ephesians 1:23 states plainly that the

church is His (Christ’s) body. So, the church belongs to Christ; Christ gave it its laws.

Hebrews Has the Same Lesson

The book of Hebrews was written to teach the same lesson. This lesson is emphasized time and again in Hebrews: there was an old covenant under Moses which was taken away, and that there is a new covenant under Christ. This old covenant was taken away to make way for the new and perfect covenant which Christ died to give us. Read carefully chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10. How can anyone read this book and not see that Moses’s law is gone and that there is a new covenant given through Christ? Only by reading through creed-colored glasses.

The First Teacher of the New Law

Back of every Epistle in the New Testament—before even one of them had been written—the first teacher that the old covenant should be abolished and a new covenant should take its place was Jeremiah, the prophet (Jer. 31:31). The writer of Hebrews quotes him in chapter 8, beginning with verse 8. How could any student of this great prophet read this and fail to see that a new covenant was to take the place of the law of Moses? Only by reading through colored glasses—colored by creeds of men.

Greatest of the Teachers

Another teacher—greater than any who came before and greater than any that should come after him—this greatest of all teachers taught the same thing. This great teacher was Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. Jews had criticized His disciples for failing to fast in accordance with traditions of the

law. Jesus first told them that His disciples had no occasion to fast or mourn while the bridegroom was present. John's disciples were fasting (Baptists, take notice that John was not the bridegroom—John 3:29). So, of course, the bride would not wear John's name.

Lesson from Jesus

No man rendeth a piece from a new garment and putteth it upon an old garment; else he will rend the new, and also the piece from the new will not avgree with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the new wine will burst the skins, and itself will be spilled, and the skins will perish. Bvut new wine must be put into fresh wine-skins (Luke 5:36-38).

Jesus spoke this to answer those who were trying to bind the old Mosaic law upon His disciples. The old law must go; the new law would guide His disciples.

Plainer Lesson Nowhere

In no place in all the New Testament teachings is there a plainer lesson than that the old law—the law of Moses—passed away to make place for the new law covenant—under Christ. But many theologians have not seen this plain lesson. Their strange predicament emphasizes the lesson that in studying the law of the Lord, the law itself is better than any book any man has written about theology. Works and sermons of men are sometimes good in explaining or emphasizing Bible truth, but they must never take its place.

Deceased

Does Jesus Live at Your House?

The continued knock brought the mother to the door. A man stood there with a Bible in his hand. Without a word of introduction, he asked, "Does Jesus live here?"

Although she was a member of the church, the woman was so upset by the unexpected questions that she did not answer. She did not even remember that he slowly walked away. All day long, the man's question kept going through her mind. That evening when her husband came home, she told him about it.

He laughed and said, "Why didn't you show him the church directory with our names in it? You could have told him that

we nearly always send the children to Sunday school and sometimes attend ourselves several times. Why didn't you tell him that we give a little to the church and look upon ourselves as a respected Christian family?"

"Yes," she said, "all that you said is true, and I could have told him all that, but I am still troubled because he didn't ask me if our name was on the church roll; he did not ask me if we sent our children to Sunday school, or if we were respected Christians. That wasn't his question. He asked me, 'Does Jesus live here?' and all day long, I have been wondering if He does."

Author Unknown

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill Busch Nancy Travis

Tim Busch Bill Crowe

Karen Diamond

Freda Smith

Linda Ness (Pam Busch's sister)

Shane Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
nephew)

Billy Tom Muldoon (Sheila Myrick
and Pam Busch's cousin)

Elaine Brooks (Louise Billiot's
sister)

Sympathy

Deepest sympathies are extended
to Karen Diamond in the death of
Dallas on May 27. Please keep
Karen and her family in your
prayers.

Please Remember

June 6

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out.

June 13

Deacons' meeting will be held
prior to the afternoon service, in
room 1.



YouTube Channel

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BEACON

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The Bible School Teacher

Paul Vaughn

One of the most significant responsibilities that a Christian could ever take is teaching God's Word. The Bible is not just any book; it is the Book of books! The Bible is God's message of salvation to those lost in sin. It is the history of man from the creation of the world. It tells of God's love of righteousness and His hatred of sin. It is a perfect, complete standard in a world of subjectivity. It is the **truth!** "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

The Bible is not an amulet or charm that will accomplish its purpose without diligent study. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

Any mishandling of the Word God carries severe punishment. God has given warn-

ing throughout the Bible, cautioning against the abuse of His Word.

You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you (Deu. 4:2)

Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar (Pro. 30:6).

There can be no additions to God's Word.

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book (Rev. 22:18).

There can be no subtractions to God's Word.

And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life,

from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book (22:19).

Bible teaching is fundamental to the imparting of knowledge of God and His Word. The Bible school teacher is one of the essential works on earth. It is through teaching that people learn about God. Therefore, there is always the need for

faithful men and women to teach the Scriptures. The rewards of teaching in a Bible class are tremendous, but the punishment for teaching error is equally tremendous. One day the faithful Bible teacher will hear “well done” from the Master Teacher.

Hopkinsville, KY

Who Are Ambassadors?

Hoyt H. Houchen

An impression has been spread widely in the minds of many brethren that Christians today are ambassadors. Some preachers will quote and take to themselves: “We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20). Brethren are sometimes heard to say in prayers: “We thank thee that we are ambassadors.” It shall be my purpose to show that in the above Scripture, Paul rightly applied *ambassadors* to himself and his fellow apostles, while he applied the other terms in the verse, *you* and *ye*, to the Corinthians.

Use of the Word

Ambassador” appears twice in the New Testament—2 Corinthians 5:20 and Ephesians 6:20. In each case, Paul uses the term either concerning himself or other apostles. An ambassador is a special minister of the highest rank, sent by one prince or government to another to manage the affairs of state. Since the word describes the work, the ques-

tion is whether Gospel preachers or any other Christian can qualify for the title.

Primary Authority

To properly understand the relationship sustained by the apostles compared to Christians living now is to be determined by the use God has made of authority. *Authority* means: “The right to command and enforce obedience” (*New Standard Dictionary*). There are two kinds of authority—primary and delegated. Those who have the former have the right to command; those who hold the latter have the right to command and enforce obedience given by the one holding the former. Primary authority in Christianity resides solely in God (2 Cor. 5:18). He has rarely seen fit to govern His creatures by personal and primary authority but has delegated that authority to others.

Delegated Authority

In the New Testament, we see that God delegated His authority to Christ (Heb. 1:1-2; Mat. 17:5; 28:18). In turn, Christ delegated His authority to His apostles. It was not the design of Christ to leave this world without

selecting suitable persons to represent His cause and carry out His purpose. These persons were His twelve apostles whom He had trained to know His way and His will. Having beheld His glorious works, His miracles, and His body following His triumphant resurrection from the dead, they became witnesses. Before ascending to His Father, Jesus told His apostles: “and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of

the earth” (Acts 1:8). The qualification that makes these men witnesses is set forth in Acts 1:21-22.

To more fully qualify the apostles for the work assigned them, they received the Holy Spirit to teach them all things. By their being brought under the influence of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, three thousand enemies were made friends, and these betrayers and murderers were the first to be reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

No Ambassadors Now

We have seen the definition of *ambassador*. An ambassador is backed by all the authority of the government that sends him—he represents the government in an official capacity. Such were the apostles of Christ. Men today do not have the capacity they had. Macknight translates 2 Corinthians 5:20: “In Christ’s *stead* [Italics—HHH], therefore, who is God’s chief ambassador, we execute the office of subordinate ambassadors.”

God’s last revelation was made through inspired men who wrote the New Testament. Our obedience is to the Word of God, which was given to the apostles. Since we have the written Word, we have the Word of the apostles. It was with them that authority ceased. When the last apostle died, so died the last ambassador and the last witness. The crowned Prince has never revoked the message He sent by them or superseded their embassy. It is the “word of faith” to the unbelieving, exhibiting all the great facts of the Gospel, its commands, and promises.

A Good Rule

Bill Jackson

Everybody needs rules to work by, and here is a good one: The whole church, and the furtherance of Truth, is more important than one man, or a few, and more important than one congregation or a few. The Word is to be preached (2 Tim. 4:2), and **all of it** (Acts 20:27), and in a spirit of love of Truth (2 The. 2:10) and hatred for all false ways (Psa. 119:104, 128). To “let error pass” is to declare that one cares nothing for Truth, cares nothing for the souls of men, and cares not if souls are lost. No man calling himself a Gospel preacher can afford to be in that position. He cannot allow himself to be compromised in spirit and heart that some man or some men stand between himself and the Truth! Our speaking and writing brethren around the world need to take this lesson most seriously!

Deceased

Deceased



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Godly Fathers

Brad Green

On June 20, 2021, our nation will celebrate Father's Day. It is indeed appropriate and needful for our country to give honor to the God-ordained establishment of the home. God defined marriage in the very beginning as being an honorable institution consisting of one man and one woman for life. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Sadly, today many are attacking the home as God devised and authorized. In San Francisco, the homosexual movement continues its attempts to destroy the home as defined by God. "Barring a stay of a historic California Supreme Court ruling, same-sex couples will be able to wed in the state beginning June 17 [2008], according to a state directive issued Wednesday" (www.foxnews.com). In New York, "the governor's legal counsel told

state agencies in a May 14 [2008] memo to revise policies and regulations to recognize same-sex marriages performed in California and Massachusetts as well as Canada and other countries that allow gays and lesbians to marry, said Erin Duggan, the governor's spokeswoman" (www.cnn.com). Still others are berating God's decision to make the man the head of his house (Eph. 5:23-24). Thus, we should take advantage of any and every opportunity to honor those who follow God's pattern and commands regarding the home and the family.

A godly father will "train up a child in the way he should go" (Pro. 22:6) and "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). A godly father will teach his son, by word and by example, how to be a good husband. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and

gave himself for it...So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself” (5:25, 28). A godly father will provide physical and financial protection to those in his house (1 Tim. 5:8) and love his family as God, the Heavenly Father, loves His family (1 John 4:9-10; Mat. 10:29-30).

We are very thankful for our godly fathers and mothers. Training children to be faithful servants of God is the most noble of all parental duties and is extremely important for the future strength, in regards to Spiritual maturity, of the Church for which Christ died.

Lenoir City, TN

On Preaching

Bonds Stocks

There are three kinds of preaching: (1) “soft preaching,” (2) “tough preaching,” and (3) sound Gospel preaching.

“Soft preaching” is wishy-washy, jelly-fishy, namby-pamby. It is timid, hesitating, halting, undecided. It talks much of *love*, *kindness*, and *tolerance*, but it has a warped conception of these virtues. It coos, woos, and fawns, but it knows not how to wed a starving soul to the satisfying Bridegroom of the church. It is sickening. It is disgusting. It is revolting. It is lukewarm preaching, and God spews it out of His mouth. It attempts to sugar-coat the truth and serve the Gospel with the soothing syrup of compromise, adulteration, and perversion. Sometimes it lacks courage, but more often, it is devoid of understanding. It is a cake not turned—one-sided, half-baked. It fails to perceive that the terror of the Lord parallels the love of God. It does not strike out in bold condemnation of the error of denominationalism. It seeks to appease, and in so doing, loses the respect of both Christian and sectarian. It is afraid and reluctant. Its exponents are faithful mimics of Caspar Milquetoast. “Soft preach-

ing” cannot convert sinners because it is anemic and barren of the Gospel’s dynamics.

“Tough preaching” is offensive, insulting, ruthless, egotistic, and vain. It is boasting, flashy, and sensational. It plays to the grandstands. It is mean, vile, and contemptible. The “skin-’em-alive-and-scatter-their-hides” philosophy characterizes it. It takes great delight in ripping denominationalism to tatters, not primarily because it loves the truth, but because of the sheer joy of “showing off” its cleverness and “showing up” the stupidity of others. It gives verbal allegiance to love, but it has no deeper conception of God’s love than a pigmy has of the science of the soul. It is more ignorant than wise because it rarely grows beyond the “first principle.” It is more cowardly than courageous because, while it lashes out fanatically at the sects, it often does not have the moral stamina to condemn church members’ sins. It has not the faintest idea of what Paul meant by preaching the “truth in love.” It has no depth, no height, no breadth.

Sound Gospel preaching is preaching as the apostles preached. It is a bold, firm, straight-

from-the-shoulder, unswerving, unwavering proclamation of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

It preaches the truth, to the alien sinner and church member alike, without fear or favor. It has neither the nauseating timidity of *soft preaching* nor the revolting arrogance of *tough preaching*. Its very essence is love for God and a passion for the souls of men. It is merciless in exposing denominational error, not because it feasts like a lusty vulture on the mistakes of others, but because it is consumed with the unquenchable fire of devotion to truth and the flaming zeal to lead men out of the appalling and devastating pitch darkness or error into the light of the truth of the eternal day.

Sound Gospel preaching never pulls its punches. It calls names and marks false

teachers. Yet it is ever kind and tender with that firm kindness and sound tenderness that characterize its author. It brands modern Pharisaical traditionalism for just exactly what it is, but it does so because it is dominated by the Spirit of the Christ who loves men and wants them saved but who is loyal to the truth at all costs.

Sound Gospel preaching is the only kind of teaching that is worthy of the name *preaching*. A large majority of the preachers in the church of Christ are sound Gospel preachers. May the day soon come when both softness and toughness will have gone by the boards, and the truth will everywhere be preached in love.

Deceased

Abstruse or Absurd

William T. Ellis

Some waters—and speeches—seem deep when they are only muddy. All of us have heard sermons that the preacher's thoughts were abstruse when they were merely absurd. Profound orations are usually clear. The Scotch woman complained that her preacher was “invisible all the week and incomprehensible on Sunday” touched upon two of the gravest ministerial failures. Beecher said that when hearers slept in church, it was time to wake up the preacher.

We know of one man who went to sleep under Paul's preaching—even Peter said that Paul sometimes used language hard to understand—but nobody ever went to sleep while Jesus talked. His words were simple

and straightforward, and full of pictures. He dwelt so near to the life of the average man that He understood his life and needs.

I wonder how much of my talk about religion, and yours, is wrapped up in the grave-clothes of dead theological phraseology? How is it that friends understand me when I talk about politics or automobiles or gardening but often fail to catch my meaning when I dwell upon dearer, deeper themes?

Even while we rejoice that Christ is the Lord of everyday folks, His words ringing sweet and clear even in childhood's ears, we lament that our poor tongues are not better able to make Him attractive to plain people.

Deceased

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill Busch

Nancy Travis

Tim Busch

Bill Crowe

Karen Diamond

Elaine Brooks (Louise Billiot's
sister)

Please Remember

June 20

Visitation cards for Group 2 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

June 20

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.

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BEACON

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Who Is to Blame?

Jimmie Z. Gribble

Who is to blame? Many accusations were being hurled at different individuals because of the lack of planning and execution after hurricane Katrina. If one were desirous of doing it, one could find a great many people to blame. The people that did not evacuate when the storm was still far enough away to evacuate could be one. Another could be those that planned and built below sea level. Still, another could be the builders of the levees that did not hold. The government could be another, whether local, county, state, or federal. Who is to blame?

There used to be a phrase that was very popular that addressed blame. The blame assigned was not new to us but has been with humanity since the beginning. That phrase, “The Devil made me do it.” Moses wrote, “And the Lord God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the

woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat” (Gen. 3:13). Even before this, Adam tried to play the blame game by assigning the blame to God and then to Eve. Ever since this time, man has tried to assign blame for his actions on someone else.

One example that we will notice concerns a man that knew that his actions could only be assigned to him. And, this is certainly a great example for us to follow. Again Moses wrote, of Joseph, saying, “*There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*” (39:9). Who is to blame? Joseph said he was accountable for his actions, not Potiphar’s wife, not Potiphar, and neither is the devil—but he and he alone.

Beloved, who is to blame? There may be fingers that can be pointed about the actions

taken concerning Katrina, but when it comes to our actions, all four fingers point back to us. Yes, we are accountable.

The Word of God says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done*

in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

Beloved, who is to blame?

Beloved, listen to all of God’s Word. God will do thee good!

Portsmouth, VA

One Cannot Over Do it!

Charles Pogue

It has long been a problem for many people to view spiritual matters as only one of the numerous activities which, when combined with things of this world, make up the total of their lives. If anyone has ever told you about your focus on matters relating to God, righteous living, and the importance of the soul, “you overdo it,” you know such an attitude commonly exists.

An excellent response to such a charge would be Psalm 119:97, where David wrote, “O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.” David, according to many people, overdid it. In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul instructed Timothy to give attention to reading, exhortation, and doctrine until he came to the young preacher. Then in verse 15, the apostle further taught him, “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.” If Timothy followed Paul’s admonition, many would assert Paul was telling Timothy to overdo it.

There are houses, even within the homes of members of the church of Christ, in which the television is turned on when one or more occupants first arise in the morning, and it stays on until they go back to bed that night.

They have no idea they are overdoing it but talk to them about the Lord for what is too long a time in their minds, and they may very well make the accusation you are concentrating on spiritual matters to the point of overdoing it.

After the apostles were beaten and commanded to speak no more in the name of Christ (Acts 5:40), what did they do? They left the council rejoicing they were counted worthy to suffer for His name (5:41). Then Luke records in verse 42, “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” Didn’t the apostles overdo it?

In Acts 20, when, from the Isle of Miletus, Paul called the Ephesian elders to him, one of the things he reminded them of was: “Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (20:31). Now, Paul, you overdid it that time, he would be told today.

Why would anyone, especially a member of the church, accuse another of overdoing it regarding the time given and attention paid to spiritual concerns? The only answer we

can come up with is that they spend far too little time and give way too little attention to the fact that one day, every one of us will stand before the Lord in judgment and receive an eternal sentence. Let us remember the rich man in the account of him and the beggar Lazarus and how we are told he lifted his eyes being in torment in the flames of Hades. At the end of time, he and every other person unprepared to meet the Lord in judgment

will be punished with everlasting destruction (2 The. 1:9). How is it possible when this life is so short while eternity is forever, for one not to say you are overdoing it on things of this life but to say they are when it comes to matters of eternity?

When it comes to the things of the Lord, one cannot overdo it!

Deceased

Helping One Another

Bob Wear

The life of a Christian is a life of serving others. "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith" (Gal. 6:10). This writing has to do with our service to one another as members of the family of God. We are commanded: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (6:2). If we please the Christ we profess to serve, we must be interested in the welfare of each other.

Our behavior toward each other must be controlled by the following:

In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another...communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality... Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep (Rom. 12:10-15).

We may be able to help each other in many ways. It may be in ministering to physical needs or spiritual needs. It may be a word of

cheer, a word or deed of kindness; it may be a tear shed in sympathy, or words of encouragement in the hours of failure.

Our service to one another is service to our Master. In the judgment, Jesus will say to the righteous:

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.... Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me (Mat. 25:34-40).

We cannot serve God acceptably and be blind to the needs of our fellow men, especially our brethren.

We must be alert to the needs of each other, and always do our best to supply them. God's blessings must be shared.

Deceased

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill Busch Nancy Travis
Tim Busch Bill Crowe
Karen Diamond Henry Born
Elaine Brooks (Louise Billiot's
sister)

Baptized

River McLeod was baptized into Christ on June 20. He is the grandson of Paul and Phyllis Brantley. Please keep River in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Please Remember

July 4

Bill Crowe will hand out visitation cards for Group 1.

July 11

Deacons' meeting will be held before the afternoon service, in room 1.



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E-mail: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

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The Temple and the Church

Hoyt Bailey

There are so many points of likeness between the temple and the church that the church is called the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17). We note that the temple was built by Solomon, David's son (1 Kin. 5:5); but the church was built by Christ, God's Son (Mat. 16:16-18). Adversaries had to be conquered before the temple was built.

And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the Lord his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet. But now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every side, *so that there is* neither adversary nor evil occurrent. And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God (1 Kin. 5:2-5).

Jesus conquered the devil's power over death before He built the church (Mat. 16:20; Heb. 2:14). Solomon was on his throne when he built the temple, and Christ was on His throne when He built the church.

Timbers and stones had to be prepared for the temple. John the Baptist, Jesus, the twelve, and the seventy prepared material for the church. Material for the temple was brought out of another kingdom, Tyre (1 Kin. 5:8-9). Children of God, material for the church, have been delivered from the power of darkness, and they have been translated into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13). Material for the temple was paid for while in another kingdom (1 Kin. 5:11). "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Thus, Jesus Christ purchased the material for His church while the material was yet in the devil's kingdom.

Solomon's servants went into Tyre and prepared material for the temple (1 Kin. 5:6). Christians are to go into all the world and make disciples. In the kingdom of Tyre, the stones and other essentials were cut to fit.

And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe *nor* any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building (5:18; 6:7).

If people are prepared for the church according to the Word of God, divisions and factions will not be heard in the church (1 Cor. 1:10).

The prepared material had to be brought across the water to enter the temple (1 Kin. 5:9). The sinner who has been prepared in the heart must be brought across the waters of baptism before he can enter the church, the spiritual temple (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47). The temple was holy and beautiful (Isa. 64:11), but the church (individuals) are to be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27).

Stones and other materials in the temple were lifeless, but we are "lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5).

Deceased

The Way That Seemeth Right

Roy Burgess

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof *are* the ways of death" (Pro. 14:12).

The sayings of Solomon in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes furnish starting points for many sermons. They are rich in thought-provoking meditations. We hear many statements from men—ways that men have devised. Among them, we know of:

The Honor-with-Lips Way

Of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me" (Mat. 15:8). Lip service is not, never has been, and never will be acceptable to God. It is easy to say to those who need our aid, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled," and not give them the

things they need. It takes a little sacrifice to do it "unto one of the least" of Jesus' disciples, as He stated in Matthew 25:45.

Zeal-Without-Knowledge Way

It is a difficult thing to keep our zeal in line with our knowledge. Most church members have knowledge, some more than others, but no zeal to push them forward to use that knowledge. Zeal without knowledge is dangerous. Look at Paul and his terrible persecution (Acts 9). Having zeal with knowledge is a great blessing. It carried Paul triumphant to the end. Looking back to the time before he had knowledge, Paul said: "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Then he stated: "Going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves

unto the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:1-3). The Jews had tried to get Jesus to fit into their preplanned program. According to them, He was supposed to set up an earthly kingdom and rule it as David of old. When Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world,” it was beyond their understanding. They could not conceive of a spiritual kingdom. Then, too, according to the ideas of the Pharisees, they were “good enough,” were “children of Abraham,” and did not need to be born again. We know just what Jesus said to one like this (John 3:3-5) Zealous? Yes, but without proper knowledge of God’s righteousness. Hence, they went about to “establish their own.” Our religious neighbors put us to shame with their zeal sometimes. They

are in a hurry to get their false theories to everyone. We must not sit idly by “at ease in Zion” and wait for a more convenient season. When I find tracts and leaflets in public places, put out by our brethren. I rejoice and thank God because someone has both zeal and knowledge to work.

Other ways followed by men which are “ways of death” are “Love-praise-of-men” way (John 12:43), “Seek-first-wealth” way (Mat. 6:33; 1 Tim. 6:9-10), “Any-church” way (Mat. 16:18; Eph. 4:1-4), “Saved-without-baptism” way (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21), “Occasional-attender” way (Heb. 10:25), and “Sow-wild-oats” way (Gal. 6:7).

Deceased

Do You Love the Lord?

Oliver C. Cunningham

Jesus said: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

All members of the church have believed, repented, and been baptized for the remission of sins; but in Matthew 25, the King said to the sheep on His right hand:

1. “I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat.”
2. “I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.”
3. “I was a stranger, and ye took me in.”
4. “Naked, and ye clothed me.”
5. “I was sick, and ye visited me.”
6. “I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”

Are you among the sheep, the saved? If so, you are doing these commands of Jesus.

To those on the left—the goats, the lost, the condemned—the King said:

1. “I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat.”
2. “I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.”
3. “I was a stranger, and ye took me not in.”
4. “Naked, and ye clothed me not.”
5. “Sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.”

These so-called Christians will “go away into everlasting punishment.”

Christians shall be known by their deeds, for He Himself said: “By their fruits ye shall know them” (7:16).

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Bill Crowe will hand out
visitation cards for Group 1.

July 11

Deacons' meeting will be held
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I Asked a Simple Question and Only Got a Cursory Response: Flatline

Johnny Oxendine

One of the things we have noticed in recent years (in the brotherhood anyway) is that if you ask a question that people do not want to answer and do not answer (this is especially true in matters of fellowship/doctrine/associations), you pretty much have your answer right there in front of you. It is not that they do not have or know the answer but acknowledging that it (the answer) is either without Biblical/Scriptural authority—and be assured that they know that, or one that clearly shows acceptance or condoning of sin.

I received an email that announced an upcoming meeting with a brother who has made some comments that are odd regarding the Christian Church and has been doing workshops with institutions that promote

false doctrines on divorce and remarriage. When I asked for clarification (“was this, in fact, the same person?”), the response was (to paraphrase), “well, our preacher went to that school, so I guess it could be.” What kind of answer is that? I then explained why I asked the question (that we certainly could not recommend this meeting to our members) since the person I knew with that name had been in fellowship with Sunset. **Flatline!**

By **flatline**, I mean that I never heard another word on the subject—it died. Other emails came from the sender, but nary a word in response to the question. Why? Well, here is where we are in the brotherhood with some brethren. They will not answer simple questions if they are at all asking for accountability. If it involves fellowship, it is now off-

limits, which is a tidal shift from years ago. Brethren who would not have been *caught dead* hobnobbing with certain false ideologies (**on marriage—not just the original MDR stuff, but now also “intent,” on fellowship with denominations, on re-election/re-affirmation of elders, with direct operations of the Holy Spirit doctrine, certifiable false teachers**) are now content to sit in the company of such people without so much as a yawn. It is disgusting.

There seems to be an unspoken bond now that prevents anyone of these brethren from exposing any false teaching lest they be hypocritical (which they would be). Imagine the fallout if someone now were to say another brother had been teaching a false doctrine on “you fill in the blanks.” We have to wonder if these brethren are willing to stand up for the truth at all. No, sorry, I misspoke!

So, I do not expect to hear from the brother anytime soon, and neither should you if you ask a simple question about anything other than “where did you guys get

those nice flowers” after worship service. This same person told me some five years ago that he was unwilling to consider accusations of false teaching by a certain brother because of his friendship. I would only conclude that friendship has absolutely nothing to do with the love of a person’s soul. If we love people, we have to make whatever attempts can point out the “way of the Lord more correctly” as happened with Apollos. Someone loved his soul.

To not be willing to discuss matters of importance means that we should no longer consult the Scriptures to “prove all things” or “make certain that the things spoken are so.” We are no longer to expose the works of darkness (Eph. 5:11); instead, we are to pretend that all is well in Oz—which is the mindset of the “non-responders.” Imagine how much of the New Testament would have to be removed to make these brethren happy about themselves!

San Mateo, CA

No Church, No Christians

Gayle Oler

You have often heard that the church does not make any difference—that a man can be a Christian entirely apart from the church. To make sure that there is nothing to that idea and prove that there is no acceptable religion apart from the church, let us give you some actual proof from the Bible.

(1) Jesus paid His blood for the New Testament church. “Take heed unto yourselves,

...to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). It is clearly seen that the church of Christ is blood-bought. No other church is. Since the blood of Christ redeems us, it must follow that the church and redemption from sin amount to the same thing. If you can be saved without being redeemed from your sins, you can be saved outside the church. Human-

founded churches are not blood-bought. There is, therefore, no redemption in them.

(2) Jesus built the church. "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18). An outstanding error in the typical attitude is that all churches are founded by man. While this is true of all others, it is not true of churches of Christ. Since He built the church, all churches with human founders compete against the Lord instead of fellowship with Him.

(3) Jesus gave Himself up for the church. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it" (Eph. 5:25). It is His divine purpose one day to "present the church...not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (5:7). To do this, He cleanses the church with the washing of water with the Word, and all those who do not submit to this act of baptism will not meet the Lord's expectation on judgment day.

(4) The Lord uses the church as the container of all the saved. "The Lord added to them day by day those that were saved" (Acts 2:47). Since the Lord puts all the saved into His church and none of the saved into any other church, can you conceive of an acceptable religion apart from the New Testament institution? Can you not see that it makes a lot of difference whether you are in the true church?

(5) Jesus said that all other churches would be destroyed. "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up" (Mat. 15:13). This is precisely why churches of Christ urge men and women to make sure about the church they enter.

(6) There is only one way to enter the New Testament church. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God!" (John 3:5).

Deceased

"As Though He Heard Them Not"

W. C. Anderson

We talk often about the faults of others, but seldom about our own. When a person tells you about another's faults, do you act interested? Do you add your vain thoughts to the conversation? Would it not be better to refrain from discussing the faults of people present or not present? Not many will discuss another's faults if he is present. If we let the gossip gossiper gossiper by himself, he will soon quit.

Observe the action of Jesus toward some men who told Him of a woman's sin: "He stooped down and wrote on the ground." The Authorized Version interprets the Lord's action in italicized words: "Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*" (John 8:6).

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Karen Diamond Dot Dodd

Congratulations

Our congratulations are extended to Bill and Pam Busch. Their great-granddaughter, Paisley Mae Busch, was born on July 5. She weighed 7 pounds 8 ounces.

Please Remember

July 11

Deacons' meeting will be held before the afternoon service, in room 1.

July 18

Bill Crowe will hand out visitation cards for Group 2.

July 18

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An Order of Sequence

Gordon Teel

The apostle Paul said: “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). The writer of Ecclesiastes said: “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Ecc. 8:11).

Men are slowly learning that moral laws and physical laws cannot be broken with impunity. Because moral transgression punishment is not always connected with the act, some think that no ill effects will follow. Here we find another instance of man’s complete failure to read the evidence aright. What to man is a manifestation of God’s approbation, or, at least, of his not caring for such transgression, is only the long-suffering of God waiting for such men to repent. It is not approbation of their sin but long-suffering toward the sinner. When God bore with the

children of Israel and their sins for so long, it was not that He cared nothing for their breaking of His holy laws, but only that He was hoping that His goodness and failure to punish them as they deserved would turn them back to Him.

Mankind has made great strides in learning the laws by which our physical world is governed. The tragedy of our world is that we have learned so little of the laws of life. We grant that the physical world must remain obedient to nature’s so-called laws to function, but we seemingly think men can make their laws or live without any and still be successful.

Many present-day writers call for a philosophy in which people of all nations may walk and live in peace. It goes without saying, we certainly need to have such guidance. However, when we who believe in God and

the Bible as the Word of God venture to suggest that what the world needs is not a new philosophy or a synthesis of several old philosophies, but a return to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and complete obedience to His holy law given through His Son, Jesus Christ, we are looked upon with not a little pity, if not contempt.

However, until the world's intellectuals can show us a better system, we will remain here and contend earnestly for this way of life. If obedience to the laws given in the Bible brings happiness to individuals and nations, and it certainly does, and the transgression of these laws brings unhappiness to individuals and nations, even the pragmatic philosopher should be forced to grant the truthfulness and utility of the Christian religion.

Suppose the atheist says that this religion is pure superstition. In that case, we must ask: "If there be no God, and the belief of this so-called superstition makes men better, kinder, more gentle, more useful, easier to live with, and, at the same time, frees them from bitterness, cynicism, pessimism, and,

in general, makes life more beautiful and deathless dreadful, then why not believe this superstition?" If there is no God, who is to say what is truth and what is superstition? Is not the pragmatic approach the only one left? If we use that measuring stick, it goes without saying that the Christian religion proves itself useful indeed.

A few years ago, it was easy to get men to talk about religion, and it was not difficult to find defenders of most any religious system. Now we see that multitudes are not interested in discussions about certain religious bodies' scripturalness or unscripturalness, but they are not interested in any church. They, many of them are questioning even the moral law. The future religious fight is here if I am an observer of conditions. We must show in no uncertain terms that the world cannot break God's laws and live. We must show that while the punishment of transgression may not be immediate, yet the punishment is as sure as the existence of God. "The wages of sin is death."

Deceased

The Elders

Franklin Camp

There is a growing disregard for elders. This disregard is symptomatic of our day, where human wisdom is substituted for divine revelation. I want to say something on the other side.

I **appreciate elders** because this is God's plan (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9). The one that does not respect elders fails to respect God's

Word and God's way. I cannot be faithful to the Bible and disregard elders.

I **appreciate elders** because of the responsibility they accept. No men on earth have a graver responsibility than elders. The President of the United States, with all our problems, does not bear the responsibility of elders. Elders are responsible for carrying the

Gospel to every creature (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). But that is not the end of the elder's responsibilities. They must watch after souls. They will have to give an account of the souls that are under their oversight. I appreciate the man that is willing to accept the responsibility of an elder.

Submission

*H. L. Gradowith
(Tim Smith)*

A tag on your toe
And it's off you go
To a much better or far worse Land;
Your chance then has gone,
It's then what you've done
On which you forever fall or stand!

Why wander about
Filled with sin and doubt
In this Land where Christ died on the
Cross?
His Blood will cleanse you
So, mind what you do
Lest you suffer the ultimate loss!!!

If you will today
His Blest Word obey
Then He will gladly welcome you
Home;
So, bow at His feet...
Sweet pardon there meet
In a Land whence we'll nevermore
roam!

Deceased

I **appreciate elders** because of the time they give to the Lord's work. While others are free to use their time in various ways, elders must use much of their time in fulfilling their duties. There are meetings where time must be given in planning the work, dealing with problems, and many other things. A great deal of time is required. I appreciate the man who is willing to take the time necessary to do the work of an elder.

I **appreciate elders** because they work with the least encouragement of any people I know. I have often wondered how long I would continue to preach if I received criticism as elders do with so little encouragement. Few people in any congregation think about a word to encourage the elders. I appreciate men that will give years to helping the church grow, struggle with its problems, accept criticism, receive little or no encouragement, and continue to do its work.

I **appreciate elders** because of their families. First, they have done an excellent job in training their children and in building a stable marriage. My hat is off to the man with a family that makes it possible for him to serve as an elder. I appreciate elders because of the sacrifices they make so that they can serve. The time that might be spent with his family is often used in doing the work of the Lord. I appreciate families that are willing to allow the husband and father to spend the time needed to deal with the problems, plan the work of the church, and be concerned about the welfare of people under their oversight.

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Karen Diamond
Ann Millsap (Karen Hatcher's aunt)

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“Like all the Nations”

Ken Chumbley

In 1 Samuel 8, we read where the nation of Israel, God’s chosen people under the Old Covenant, rejected the form of government that God had given them. There, we read, “Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations” (8:5). Samuel was upset by their desire to change God’s plan. God made it clear to Samuel that this was not a rejection of Samuel but a rejection of God Himself. God then had Samuel warn the people concerning the consequences of such action and the difficulties that would arise due to their having a king. However, we read concerning the response of the people:

Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that

our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles (8:19-20).

They refused to take on board the warnings Samuel gave because they desired to be like all the other nations.

Today, there are those in the Lord’s church who are not satisfied with how God set up His church. They are, in effect, after the same thing that the Israelites of old were saying. They want to have a *king*. They look around at the various denominational groups and desire to be like them. They are no longer satisfied with a “Thus saith the Lord.” They are no longer willing to be satisfied with the authority of Scripture (Col. 3:17). Some have established “Community” churches that they say are “loosely affiliated with the Church of Christ.” Others have continued with congregations of the Lord’s people and have sought to bring in changes over the

objection of other members of the congregation. Hence, one might visit a congregation with a sign outside the building that states that it is a church of Christ but find that the work and worship of that congregation are not in harmony with the New Testament teaching.

What are some of the changes that are being made? Some would no longer contend that baptism is essential for one to get into Christ to be saved. Some claim that instrumental music in worship is not a “salvation issue” and thus is not unauthorized. Some have gone so far as to introduce instruments of music into their worship services. There is the use of “praise teams” of men and women leading the congregation singing, like a choir, and turn the worship into a form of entertainment for the *audience* to please them with “contemporary worship.” Then there is the desire to place women into leadership positions within the congregation contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Some, not going that far, have introduced a different kind of leadership than that found in the Bible, whereby they maintain that elders have no authority except the authority of their example. There is also the desire to de-emphasize the doctrine of Christ, preferring

to speak only of the love, mercy, and grace of God rather than preach the “whole counsel of God” that would include the justice of God. There is a greater emphasis on *self*, whereby one’s feelings and emotions are more important than the inspired Word. These things are occurring because of the “market-driven” nature of their work. That is, giving to those who attend what they want, what they are seeking, rather than what they need, the solid teaching of the Word of God. Catering to “felt needs” rather than preaching the “whole counsel of God” that might upset the people and drive them away.

One only has to look at the world of denominationalism to see that those who desire to bring such changes to the Lord’s people are simply seeking to be like the denominations around them.

Brethren, let us ever be “on guard” to ensure that such do not take control of the congregation and move it from being the Lord’s church to being like the denominations that are found around us. May we ever seek to be the Lord’s church, teaching the Lord’s will, preaching the Gospel of Christ, that power, and the only power that can save.

Deceased

Lord, Teach Us to Pray

“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee,

as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand

doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen

do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Mat. 6:1-13).

His Own Benefit

The drawn expressions of shock were still upon the faces of the neighbors and friends who were gathering to offer sympathy to his widow. Like most of us, these knew the inevitability of death, but his was not expected yet. His widow met the three of us as we entered the room.

Her husband had died suddenly during the evening worship assembly. One minute he was singing praise, and the next, he was slumping forward as his soul left his body. He had prepared, but he was not ready. That is, he had prepared for changing worlds someday by obeying the Gospel and growing for many years into a mature soul, but he was not expecting that this would be the day of death. We offered our condolences as his wife recounted the already precious memories of the hours spent with him that day.

I was glancing around the room, noticing the usual touches of comfortable housekeep-

ing. Next to his favorite chair were books and commentaries, arranged at hand on a table as if they had been left in the midst of use to go to the evening meeting. On that table was a well-worn Bible with a sheet of paper marking a place in it. She saw my eyes lingering on this place of study, and she explained that while she had ironed clothes during the afternoon, he had sat there and studied. One of them asked, “Was he preparing to teach a class?” “No,” she replied, “he was just reading the Bible for his benefit.”

Here is the key to spiritual growth and maturity. The rich benefits of the Bible are available to those who read it with proper motives. It is commendable to read and study the Bible to share its truths with others, but this is good only if we constantly read the Scriptures **for our own benefit**.

Author Unknown

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Nancy Travis Karen Diamond
Bill & Peggy Crowe Dot Dodd
Phyllis Brantley
Ann Millsap (Karen Hatcher's aunt)
Nancy Schleppe (Joyce Johnson's
friend)

Please Remember

August 1

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visitation cards for Group 1.

August 8

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before the afternoon service, in
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The Campbell Myth

Jim Miller

Those who charge that Alexander Campbell was the founder of the church of Christ do so for one of the following reasons: (1) they do not know any better and are ignorant of the Truth, (2) they do so to ridicule and to reflect upon the Lord's church in a bad way, or (3) they are afraid to admit that the church of Christ is the church of the New Testament (Mat. 16:18; Acts 2:47).

The Lord promised to build His church (Mat. 16:18). We later read where the Lord began to add people to His church (Acts 2:47). Earlier in Acts 2, we learn that the apostles preached the Gospel in Jerusalem on Pentecost. Those who believed in Jesus were instructed to repent of their sins and be baptized to be forgiven of their sins (2:37-38). About 3,000 of them obeyed those commands, were saved, and were added to the

church (2:41, 47). The other apostles were the ones who stood up with Peter as he preached this first Gospel sermon. There is no mention of a man by the name of Alexander Campbell in Acts 2.

Campbell was born in Northern Ireland in 1786 and came to this country on September 29, 1809. He was at one time a member of Presbyterian and later, Baptist churches. Upon finding that neither of these churches followed the teachings of Christ, he could no longer remain in them. Taking the New Testament, he read his way to an understanding of Truth.

Here are some facts for consideration: (1) Christ established His church in AD 33 (Acts 2). Campbell was not born until 1,753 years later. (2) Christ purchased the church with His blood (20:28). Campbell never died to purchase any church. (3) Paul stated in

approximately the year AD 64 that the Colossians had been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13). These were added to the kingdom/church of Christ over seventeen centuries before Campbell was born.

Campbell did not originate a single doctrine or practice in the church of Christ. Every doctrine and practice of true churches of Christ dates back to the first-century AD and is recorded in the New Testament (Rom. 16:16). Along with several others, Campbell did determine to leave man-made churches and return to the New Testament. We commend him for returning to the New Testament. We also urge all people who are concerned about their souls to do the same today.

Those who read these words should now understand that Mr. Campbell had nothing whatsoever to do with establishing the church of Christ. There is only one church mentioned in the New Testament, and every person is urged to obey the Gospel of Christ, at which point the Lord will add him to His church (Acts 2:47). Churches of men offer no hope beyond the grave, for they all shall be rooted up (Mat. 15:13). Christ will deliver up His church to the Father following the Day of Judgment (1 Cor. 15:23-24; Eph. 5:27).

I plead with all to obey the Gospel of Christ, become a member of His church, and worship and serve Him faithfully while you have the opportunity, for there is salvation in none other (Acts 4:12).

Gray, ME

The New Testament Book of Proverbs

The book of James could accurately be called “the New Testament book of Proverbs” because of the wisdom it exhibits. It does not have one theme but a variety of subjects and may be compared to a string of beads with moral truths strung. It is the most Jewish book of the New Testament, yet James makes 23 allusions to Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Yet, it is the most practical book in the New Testament; emphasis is on action rather than talking.

The Author

The book refers only to “James, a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1). In the New Testament, James, the son of

Alphaeus, was one of the twelve (Mat. 10:3). Nothing is known of this James, and there is no connection with the book of James. James, the brother of John, the son of Zebedee, was also one of the twelve. He was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I in AD 44. Thus, he was not the author of this book. This leaves James, the Lord’s brother, as the author (Mark 6:3). He was not in sympathy with the Lord’s work during His lifetime (Mat. 12:46-50; John 7:5), but he was changed by the resurrection appearance of the Savior (1 Cor. 15:7). He was with the apostles and Mary at Pentecost (Acts 1:14) and later became a leader in the church of Jerusalem

(12:17; 15). He was a “pillar in the church” (Gal. 1:19; 2:9). He was the author of this great book.

The Outline

When we see that James wanted his reader to become the perfect man, we see a plan in his book. With this in mind, look at the topics he pursues:

1. In his attitude toward trials and temptations (1:2-4, 12).
2. In his reception of the Word (1:21-25).
3. In his impartiality toward others (2:1-13).

4. In his credentials of faith (2:14-26).
5. In his use of the tongue (3:1-12).
6. In his attitude toward true wisdom (3:13-18).
7. In his amiableness and humility (4:6-10).
8. In his consideration of his fellow man (5:1-3).
9. In his patience and enduring of affliction (5:7).
10. In his effort on behalf of the erring brother (5:19-20).

Author Unknown

No-Cost Religion

Al Brown

After God had told David to build an altar and worship God on the threshing floor of Araunah, this Jebusite offered the king the threshing floor and everything necessary to worship God. David refused the offer with these words:

Nay; but I will verily buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto Jehovah my God which cost me nothing (2 Sam. 24:24).

Would that all Christians had the attitude of David. Instead, they often show the very opposite disposition. David realized that an offering that cost him nothing was worth exactly that to him—nothing. God has always demanded the best that each person has—not what somebody else has (Lev. 22:21).

All we have has been given to us by God to use for His glory and in His service. We

are but stewards of these things (1 Pet. 4:10). The Lord expects us to be good stewards, but giving what comes without cost to us is not practicing faithful stewardship.

The measure of our devotion, reverence, and love for God is in direct proportion to how much we are willing to commit to the service of God or how much we are willing to sacrifice (John 12:3ff). Those who take the easiest, cheapest way to serve God are, in reality, servants of self, not God.

There is to be nothing cheap about our religion. It is to be the best we have—the same attitude that characterized David. “I will...[not] offer...unto Jehovah my God [that] which cost me nothing.”

Deceased

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Ann Millsap (Karen Hatcher's aunt)
Nancy Schleppe (Joyce Johnson's
friend)
David Jackson (Carla Burleson's
cousin)
Tony Dodd (Dot Dodd's son)

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August 8

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Abusing the Lord's Supper

Bill Jackson

In looking into 1 Corinthians 11, we have these words from the apostle to help us see Corinth's condition as regards to worship:

- (1) Coming together for the worse (11:17).
- (2) Coming together in a divided state (11:18).
- (3) Coming together with an allegiance to men (11:19).
- (4) Coming together with no thought as to the significance of the Supper (11:20).
- (5) Coming together in mixing their common meal items in with worship (11:21-22).
- (6) Coming together with no discernment of the body of the Lord, and thus their participation was in an unworthy manner (11:27-29).

The apostle indicates a great spiritual sickness in their midst, with some actually “in death” (11:30). The wonderful privilege of worship was being abused, perverted, and mishandled. We must continually examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5) in this and in every way, that we ensure that our worship will be in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

We want to speak of the abuse of the Lord's Supper in our own time and some particular ways wherein we should now stop and examine ourselves with a determination to improve. We make mention of these points regarding the abuse just noted:

We abuse the Lord's Supper when there is no anticipation of worship. The Christian is a worshipper, and worship is a significant and continual part of his life. Yes, “exhort one another” (Heb. 10:25). The Supper is mentioned as a rallying cause of the saints on the

first day of the week (Acts 20:7). If the Supper is meaningless to us as we think of it, and as we approach the observance of it, it will be meaningless as we partake as well.

Things I Wish I Had Known Before I Was Twenty-One

- That my health after thirty depended in a large degree on what I put into my stomach before I was twenty-one.
- How to take care of money.
- That a man's habits are mighty hard to change after he is twenty-one.
- That a harvest depends upon the seeds sown.
- That things worthwhile require time, patience, and work.
- That you cannot get something for nothing.
- The value of absolute truthfulness in everything.
- The folly of not taking older people's advice.
- That what my mother wanted me to do was right.
- That "dad" wasn't an old fogey after all.
- More of the helpful and inspiring message of the Bible.
- The greatness of the opportunity and joy of serving a fellow man.
- That Jesus Christ wants to be my Savior and friend.

Author Unknown

We abuse the Supper if we have the view that "this is all that matters." There are five avenues of worship, and if five are necessary, then all five are essential. There has been too much of an attitude that says, "Just so I get the Lord's Supper!" For all its importance, it is not **all-important!** It is fruitless to be half-hearted in all other worship and try to be of a spiritual mind when it is time to observe the Supper.

We abuse the Supper if we think that observance somehow makes up for the time misspent in sin, indifference, and carelessness. Not one word is said in the New Testament about the Lord's Supper affecting "cleansing" for the disobedient child of God! If he is unfaithful to God, he is in no better position to partake of the Lord's Supper than to sing or pray. Without proper correction in life, he only adds sin to sin in going through the motions of the Lord's Supper observance.

We abuse the Supper if we so spend the week or weekend in fun and games, perhaps on vacation, and just barely squeeze in time to attend a service, arriving late and nearly to the point of exhaustion, and we do manage to "get the Supper." Body and mind in such shape for worship are needed to worship "in spirit"—with spirit and understanding (1 Cor. 14:15). It is an abuse of all worship, not just the Supper when I can barely find an hour to give to God!

Finally, one of the most flagrant abuses is on the part of those who willfully absent themselves on Sunday mornings and then will rise to partake on Sunday evenings as

if some matter beyond their control blocked them that morning. We know that sicknesses and emergencies arise, but we are thinking of the **willful absence** and then the Sunday evening partaking as if God would subsidize the negligence. This willful absence is an abuse of the purpose and intent of the

Lord's Supper—a memorial with significance for Spiritual people!

May we examine ourselves in this avenue of worship, and in all others, that we will truly worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), and that our coming together be for The Better! (1 Cor. 11:17).

Deceased

10 Reasons to Study the Bible

1. The Bible yields sweet fruits to him that reads. Its depths are unfathomable, and its riches are unlimited (Rom. 11:33).
2. Knowledge of the Gospel truth is necessary before being made free from sin (John 8:32).
3. We cannot make clear to unsaved people what is not clear to ourselves. "The disciple is not above his teacher." The blind must not lead the blind (Luke 6:39; Rom. 2:19; 2 Pet. 1:9).
4. The possession of a working knowledge of the Bible arms one for the warfare of life. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17).
5. A working knowledge of the Bible "furnishes the man of God to every good work." There is a Bible message to cover every condition and problem of every human being. It can be used in every emergency from the cradle to the grave (2 Tim. 3:13-17).
6. The knowledge of the Bible enables one to be comforted and offers help to discouraged and distressed brethren, "comfort one another with these words" (1 The. 4:18).
7. Only by a knowledge of the Word of God can you feed your soul. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mat. 4:4).
8. A lack of Bible knowledge will make you a workman that needeth to be ashamed because you do not know how to handle aright the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15).
9. A knowledge of the Bible is the only safeguard against fatal error. "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?" (Mark 12:24).
10. We cannot be the parents we ought to be without nurturing our children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).
"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, That I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119:11).

Author Unknown

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Remember in your prayers:

Nancy Travis Karen Diamond
Bill & Peggy Crowe Dot Dodd
Ann Millsap (Karen Hatcher's aunt)
David Jackson (Carla Burleson's
cousin)

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathies are extended to Dot Dodd in the death of her son, Tony Dodd, on July 31. Please keep Dot and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

August 8

Deacons' meeting will be held before the afternoon service, in room 1.

August 15

Bill Crowe will hand out visitation cards for Group 2.

August 15

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.



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Of Such Is the Kingdom of Heaven

Brad Green

Jesus said, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 19:14). The word translated *suffer* means to send forth, to permit or to allow, and not to hinder (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). After hearing of the healing power of Jesus and the blessings that He bestowed, many parents and guardians began bringing children to Jesus. Some of the children were infants (Luke 18:15), and the disciples began to rebuke “those that brought” the children (Mark 10:13). The reason for rebuke is not given, but Jesus reveals that the disciples’ rebuke is unwarranted and wrong. Jesus tells His disciples to bring the children to Him because “of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus’ response is very telling. First, the statement verifies that those who will be saved must share a similar disposition and specific characteristics exhib-

ited by children. Second, it proves that the idea that babies are born in sin, as is taught by many denominations, is a damnable false doctrine. If babies and little children were full of sin, why would Jesus compel them to come to Him and then state, “of such is the kingdom of heaven?” Jesus was not saying that the kingdom of heaven is composed of a group of little sinners. He was, however, stating that the composition of the saved would share qualities that children display.

One Christ-like characteristic shared by the saved and by children is innocence. Children are innocent from the guilt of sin (Eze. 18:20). Just as little children cannot walk until their muscles have time to grow and develop, they cannot know and understand the Law of Christ until they have had time to grow and develop their mental faculties. “Sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John

3:4), and since a small child's mind is unable to comprehend and discern the meaning of the law, he is not found guilty of that law. In like manner, a Christian can be seen as innocent from sin by obeying the Gospel of Christ, which culminates in water baptism (Acts 2:38) whereby one can have all his past sins washed away (22:16). Children are also innocent to the ways of the world. The practice of worldliness only rears itself after a child has been taught and trained, by word or by deed, the paths of sin. A Christian is to be innocent of the ways of the world as well.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. 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).

Second, children exhibit a humble attitude. While the adults were interested in who

would be the greatest in the kingdom, Jesus replied, "Whosoever therefore shall **humble himself as this little child**, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 18:4). Last, since children are humble, they have no problems forgiving one another. Children can be red-faced and full of anger one second and then laughing and playing again the next. Christians must have this same forgiving spirit towards those who will repent. Peter asked:

Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (18:21-22).

Jesus desires that His followers be willing to forgive as often as the erring brother is willing to truly repent and ask for that forgiveness.

Let us continue to put into practice the child-like qualities of innocence, humility, and forgiveness, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Lenoir City, TN

When in Doubt

James D. Bales

We often say concerning our conduct as a Christian: "When in doubt, don't." That is, when we think that a thing may be wrong, we ought not to do that thing. Unless we are sure that it is the Christian thing to do, we state in this phrase that we should not do it. One may well apply this to his conduct. However, can one thereby draw up a law, which all others must follow, that "when I am in

doubt, others shouldn't"? That is when I am not sure that a thing is right; not only will I refuse to do it, but I shall refuse to let anyone else do it—even though he does not have my doubt and may be confident that it is correct. Is there not a difference between drawing a line, on the above basis, for your conduct and making a law for the behavior of all others? Must not every man be assured in his con-

science? Or is my conscience, when in doubt, to be the supreme court that governs all other consciences? Or should I simply present the basis for my doubt to the other conscience without making it a law for that other conscience? After all, if I doubt that it is correct, but am not sure that it is wrong, then I have

no right to make a law based on my doubt that it is assuredly false. Can I be so positive where I doubt?

Deceased

Great Soldiers

G. K. Wallace

We constantly talk about the men who have fought great battles on the front line. We overlook the great men and women who have served in a more humble position. The preacher is essential in the congregation, and so is the janitor. The place one occupies is not as important as the faithful service rendered. There was a law in Israel that said, “but as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike” (1 Sam. 30:24). This was a just law. He who stayed at home and served had a right to share in the booty of war. The preacher and the janitor who serve to the best of their ability will be recompensed alike. If we have served to the best of our talents, we shall all be crowned alike. We praise the great preachers of today and yesterday and overlook the great mothers who gave us their sons and trained them so well. “Brighten the corner where you are.”

Deceased

Too Late

W. M. Taylor

There are no more melancholy words in the language than these. *Too late!* I have heard them uttered by a brother as he hurried home to see a dying father. He arrived only to be told that he had breathed his last, and not soon shall I forget the agony they then expressed. *Too late!* I have known them uttered by a skillful surgeon when he was summoned to the bedside of a dying man, and I have marked the sadness to which they have given birth. *Too late!* I have heard them uttered by an anxious crowd as they stood gazing on a burning building and sadly saw the failure of those who sought to save the inmates from destruction. *Too late!* I have known them uttered by the noble crew of the lifeboat when, as they put out to the sinking ship, they beheld her go down before their eyes, and “the freighted souls within her.” But, oh! None of these circumstances are half so heartrending as those in which the sinner who has despised his day must find himself when the terrible discovery is made that he is too late to enter heaven.

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David Jackson (Carla Burleson's
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Dovie Morris (Aleacia Godwin's
aunt)

Chip Crowe (Bill & Peggy Crowe's
son)

Donna Tumbler (Aleacia
Godwin's cousin)

Paulette Owens (Sheila Myrick's
cousin)

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Thought for Today

Jimmie Z. Gribble

For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come (1 The. 1:8-10).

We are not a people that like to wait. We jokingly request patience, and we want patience now. One of the old phrases used in the Army was, “Hurry up and wait.” One exit that I use just about every day demonstrates that people do not like to wait. At approximately 4:00 p.m. and later, a line forms to exit I-64, reaching even to cars remaining in one lane on I-64. Several people

do not like to wait, so they go as far as possible and then cut in, even honking at those already in line for not letting them in.

The apostle Paul wrote of the Thessalonians that they *wait* for Jesus to come from heaven. *Wait* means “to wait for one (German: *erharren*, or rather *heranharren*—i.e., to await one whose coming is known or foreseen), with the added notion of patience and trust” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). And “to remain, wait. To wait for, await, expect” (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*).

The coming of Jesus is known. Jesus taught His disciples about His coming. Jesus said:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare

a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

When Jesus ascended into heaven, the apostles were told of His coming again. Luke recorded the words of the two men wearing white apparel, “Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

We know that Jesus is coming again. The apostle Paul wrote of His coming. One particular place Paul wrote:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 The. 4:14-18).

We, too, are to wait for Jesus. But, one might ask, “How long do we have to wait?” While here on earth, our Lord said, “But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Mat. 24:36). We know He is coming; we do not know when He is coming. Therefore, we wait until He comes, and we patiently wait for His coming. James wrote, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:7-8).

Beloved, although we do not like to wait for a lot of things, one thing we must wait for, and wait for patiently, is the coming of the Lord. Beloved, wait for the Lord. Beloved, listen to all of God’s Word. God will do thee good!

Portsmouth, VA

Volunteers

Once when five volunteers were needed to undertake a dangerous mission, a general lined up his men and asked for all those willing to volunteer to take one step forward. During the process he turned his back. When he refaced his men, the line was intact. As he expressed his disappointment that not one single man was brave enough to volun-

teer for the task, a corporal interrupted him, saying, “We all stepped forward, sir.”

Think what it would mean to the church if this was the attitude of all Christians. In spite of all the good that is being done in congregations throughout the brotherhood, we know that it is being done by a very small percentage of those who are members. Too

many people choose just to be counted as members of the church but do not want to be counted as workers for the church. But suppose all Christians should step forward, volunteer, at once. The story would be much different.

Think what it would mean here. _____ is looking for teachers; wouldn't it be different if people would not have to be forced to teach but that they would volunteer to teach? _____ tries to get people to lead singing,

what if they volunteered? People are needed to lead in prayer, serve on the Lord's Table, make announcements, visit the sick, visit wayward members, set up Bible studies, invite people to worship, and a thousand and one other things. What if people would volunteer to do these things instead of being conscripted into service? Let us all begin volunteering for the activities before us.

Author Unknown

There Is No God?

Jim Bishop

There is no God. All of the wonders around us are accidental. No Almighty hand made a thousand-million stars. They made themselves. No power keeps them on their steady course. The earth spins itself to keep the oceans from falling off toward the sun. Infants teach themselves to cry when they are hungry or hurt. A small flower invented itself so that we could extract digitalis for sick hearts.

The earth gave itself day and night, tilted itself so that we get seasons. Without the magnetic poles, man would be unable to navigate the trackless oceans of water and air, but they just grew there. Why does snow sit on mountaintops waiting for the warm spring sun to melt it at just the right time for the young crops in farms below to drink? A very lovely accident.

The human heart will beat for seventy to eighty years without faltering. How does it get sufficient rest between beats? A kidney

will filter poison from the blood and leave good things alone. How does it know one from the other? How about the sugar thermostat in the pancreas? It maintains a level of sugar in the blood sufficient for energy. Without it, all of us would fall into a coma and die.

Who gave the human tongue flexibility, form words, and a brain to understand them but denied it to the animal kingdom? Who showed a womb how to take the love of two persons and keep splitting a tiny ovum until, in time, a baby would have the correct number of fingers, eyes, ears, and hair in the right places, and come into the world when it is strong enough to sustain life?

There Is No God?

[This "tongue-in-cheek" piece was written by American newspaper columnist and historian Jim Bishop!]

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“Book Review”

Tim Smith

Brotherhood papers sometimes run pieces which they call “Book Review.” They take various books, review their contents, summarize the author’s life, and thus entice the paper’s readers to read the book. I have found a book that is reviewed very little, if ever, by most of the advocates of “modern preaching.” I would like to review it here and commend it to your reading.

The author of this book has been around forever, and a lot of his ideas on religion are commonly looked upon as outdated and old-fashioned. He holds some really *tough* views on many “doctrinal issues” we presently face. Among these are:

1. **His conception of the New Testament church:** He teaches that there is only one right church and that it is right because it adheres to the Bible only in all matters of faith and prac-

tices. He denies that we should extend fellowship to the denominational world “upon their acceptance of Jesus as the Christ.” He denies that there are many “knowledgeable Christians scattered among the denominations.” It is His view that unless one obeys the commands of the New Testament, he is lost!

2. **His view on the Mechanical Instrument of Music in Worship:** He holds that to add mechanical instruments is to do that which there is no authority. Not one time from beginning to the end of His book do we read of His giving approval to this practice in the New Testament church. With Him, singing is all that is allowed, not singing and playing, or singing and humming.

3. **His view on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage:** The author of this book believes that for a man (any man) to marry and divorce for any reason other than fornication, and remarry, places him in the sinful state of adultery. It is further His position that the only way for him to have forgiveness for this sin is for him to repent (turn away from, break off the adulterous union).
4. **His View of False Teachers:** He teaches that if a man is teaching error and will not repent, he needs to be “marked” and fellowship withheld from him (Rom. 16:17-18).

These are just a few of His oddities that seem to have lost their place in our system, but still, this book is a good one.

The book under consideration was written over a period of at least 1600 years. It mentions many of the men known by its author, their failures and successes, their doctrinal stances, and their dealings with the author.

It contains poetry, history, and biography. It tells of love, hate, war, peace, friends, and

enemies. It is so popular that it has been printed in many languages and dialects.

At one time in history, only high-ranking churchmen were allowed to possess it. It was revered as the greatest book ever written. All mankind desired to own a copy, but most were denied this privilege. All religious men once heeded it as the high standard of judgment, and its words once filled our land with zeal. However, I have recently noticed its decline in popularity. We no longer hear it used in the pulpit as it once was. People have become so *image-minded* that they feel the use of this book might scar the church’s image—people desire to hear “smooth things” and not the contents of this book.

You have guessed by now, the author’s name is **Jehovah**, and the name of His book is **The Bible**. The honor that was once paid has been turned to scorn in some places. But this writer still loves the Book and its Author. We need to spend our time reviewing the contents of God’s Book and preaching His Word.

Deceased

“A Fit Subject”

Cled E. Wallace

“One must be born into the Kingdom, and then he is a fit subject to be baptized into the church” (*Baptist Scribe*).

Then “he is a fit subject” of the kingdom of God **out** of Christ. “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). “Wherefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature: the old things

are passed away; behold, they are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). A man is a new creature only in Christ. He is baptized into Christ, yet, according to this wild Baptist, he is a full-fledged citizen of the kingdom **before he gets into Christ**. “For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all

made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). The “one body” is the church. “And he is the head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:18). “Gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body” (Eph. 1:22-23). We are baptized into Christ, into the body, into the church. “Christ also is the head of the church, *being* himself the saviour of the body” (5:23). How does one get into the kingdom? The same way, of course, for the church is His kingdom. “Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). It is equivalent to “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). A citizen of the kingdom is not “a fit subject to be baptized into the church” because he has already been baptized and is already in the church. The Baptists are wrong, or else I have the wrong Book.

“The Place to Stick”

“If our teachers and preachers will stick to the New Testament doctrines, as indicated and formulated by our Lord and explained and taught by Paul, we will continue to have just as staunch Baptists as were extant fifty years ago and three hundred years ago” (*Baptist Scribe*).

Well, beloved, the New Testament is a mighty good place to *stick*, but if you stick too close to it, it will rip you loose from the Baptist Church where you seem to be mainly sticking at present. I am not particularly interested in Baptists “staunch” or otherwise “fifty years ago” or even “three hundred years ago.” The proposition to “stick to the New Testament” does interest me immensely. If there were any “staunch Baptists” back there,

they must have been *extant*, for the New Testament says nothing about them. It does not even mention the Baptist Church. According to the best information I can get from unbiased sources, I can “stick to the New Testament doctrines, as indicated and formulated by our Lord and explained and taught by Paul” by simply being a Christian like Paul was before there were any Baptists. According to all the information I have and freely admitted even by Baptists, a man can be saved and reach heaven and never be a Baptist at all. Being a Baptist is one of the great non-essentials in religion. I propose to be a *staunch* Christian and “stick to” fundamentals.

Deceased

He Was a Christian

He was a Christian, and he prayed. He asked for strength to do greater things, but he was given infirmity that he might do better things.

He asked for riches that he might be happy; he was given poverty that he might be wise.

He asked for power that he might have the praise of men; he was given weakness that he might feel the need of God.

He had received nothing that he asked for, all that he hoped for. His prayer seems unanswered, but he is most blessed.

Author Unknown

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Bible Classes on Isaiah

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Today's Church Must Be the Church of the First Century

Charles Pogue

Sometimes people scoff at the idea of the New Testament pattern for the church. They will say it is neither possible nor desirable for today's church to be the same as the one begun in Jerusalem in AD 33. On the contrary, the church of today must be the church of the first century.

Today's church must be the church of the first century because the church was and is the design of God. The church was in God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:9-11). The Old Testament prophets, including Isaiah (Isa. 2:1-3), Daniel (Dan. 2:26-44), and Micah (Mic. 4:1-2), prophesied concerning it. Among the things Daniel stated about that church, or kingdom, was that it would stand forever. Today's church must be the church of the first century because the things taught concerning

it from the very beginning were to be taught in the future. Paul sent Timothy to Corinth to bring to their remembrance the same things he taught everywhere in every church (1 Cor. 4:17). Writing to Timothy, Paul told him to teach the things Paul had taught him so they could teach it to others (2 Tim. 2:2). Peter declared that God had given us all things that pertain to life and godliness. The church is one of those things that pertain to life and godliness in as much as God adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47). Paul affirms that Christ is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23). Where is there any recall of any of the instructions taught by the apostle in the New Testament? There is not! And where is there authority on the part of man to change the church? Again, there is none.

Today's church must be the church of the first century because the miraculous gifts of the Spirit ended when that which was perfect (the completed Word) was come (1 Cor. 13: 1-13). If the Word of God is perfect, and that Word describes the message, the worship, the organization, and the work of the church, which it does, then the church must remain the same as it was in the first century.

Today's church must be the church of the first century because Jesus Christ built the church (Mat. 16:18), He purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28), and He is the head over all things to it (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18). If a man changes the church in any regard, then he has usurped the headship of Christ. Man cannot usurp the authority of God, or he will pay for that in the judgment.

Today's church must be the church of the first century because anyone who takes away from the Word of God will have his name taken away from the book of life. Anyone who adds to it will have added unto him, the plagues written in the book (Rev. 22:18-19). One cannot change the church of the first century without removing something that was a God-given attribute of it or that was not commanded of God. In other words, any change made by man is either an addition or a subtraction, and such will result in him losing his soul.

When man changes the church Jesus built, it is no longer the church Jesus built, and there is no salvation in any institution of man. We must not, for our souls' sakes, change the church of the first century.

Deceased

God's Law of Exclusion

Ed Johnson

Although the Bible does not explicitly teach it in so many words, God's **law of exclusion** is taught in principle. Many times, when we, as Bible teachers, point out that a particular practice cannot be included in worship, we are told, "But it doesn't say **not** to."

It is as important to respect the **silence of the Scriptures** as it is to respect what is spoken. We must "speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." That principle is taught time after time in the Scriptures.

God told Noah to make the ark of gopher wood (Gen. 6:14). God did not need to tell Noah not to use oak, ash, or any other kind of wood. Noah knew that God's instructions to

use gopher wood **excluded** all other kinds of wood because God did not authorize them. The Bible says that Noah did "according to all that God commanded him" (6:22). Noah was a great builder because he respected God's **law of exclusion**.

In Leviticus 10:1-2, we conclude that God had given Nadab and Abihu instructions (commanded) what He wanted or would accept in worship to Him. This command would exclude anything other than what God said He wanted. These two sons of Aaron offered something different, something that was not **included** and thus **excluded**. They offered up "strange fire" before Jehovah and

lost their lives as a result. This was a strange fire which, “Jehovah, . . . had not commanded.” The fire they offered was excluded under God’s **law of exclusion**.

Elisha instructed Naaman that his leprosy would leave him if he would wash seven times in the Jordan River (2 Kin. 5:10). Naaman’s feelings were that the rivers Abana and Pharpar in Damascus were “better than all the waters of Israel” (5:12). Whether or not Naaman’s evaluation of the rivers was correct, the point was that Elisha’s instructions to wash in the Jordan **excluded** all other rivers. Naaman washed in the Jordan, and God cleansed his leprosy. Naaman was cleansed because he respected God’s law of inclusion (the Jordan River) and God’s **law of exclusion** (all other rivers).

In our worship of God, what the New Testament authorizes automatically excludes

what men may want—that which “Jehovah . . . had not commanded” (Lev. 10:1). The observance of the Lord’s Supper is to be on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). By identifying that day and not authorizing any other day, God automatically **excluded** any other day on which we may observe the Lord’s Supper. The fact that man may prefer another day for the sake of convenience makes no difference. Any day other than Sunday, the first day of the week, is **excluded**.

Likewise, in our worship in song, we are given a directive. We are to “[speak] one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Without belaboring the subject, a careful and accurate analysis of these two verses makes two points: (1) Vocal music is the kind **authorized**. This **excludes** the only other kind of music—instrumental. (2) These verses describe the action being taken—singing—as “speaking to yourselves” and “admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs.” This indicates a reciprocal action, making the singing mutual. These verses **exclude** any other kind of music, such as instrumental. They also **exclude** any other form of delivery such as solos, duets, quartets, or choirs. This would undoubtedly exclude singing those “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”—a form of worship—as entertainment. Nowhere in God’s Word is worship authorized as entertainment. A saving faith must be based on hearing God’s Word (Rom. 10:17) and respecting that Word’s **law of exclusion**.

Things to Remember

The value to time;
The value of perseverance;
The pleasure of working;
The dignity of simplicity;
The worth of character;
The power of kindness;
The influence of example;
The obligation of duty;
The wisdom of economy;
The virtue of patience;
The improvement of talent;
The joy of originating.

Author Unknown

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The Church and Change

Ken Chumbley

Today, we hear a lot about change and the need to change, particularly as it applies to the political realm. From time to time, we also hear calls for change in the church. There is nothing wrong with change, in and of itself. Further, there is nothing wrong with having changes in the church, provided that such changes do not violate the authority of God's Word. Sadly, because of ignorance of the Truth, some would seek to introduce things into the church that violate the authority of God's Word. Changes of this kind will only weaken the church of the Lord and cause it to lose its distinctiveness.

Years ago, a fire destroyed a church building in south Texas. The preacher's library was saved because of the actions of members of the congregation. Among the last books to be brought out was a book titled, *Set the Church Afire*, written by Wayne Dehoney, a

former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. In that book, he made some observations regarding the Lord's church that are interesting:

A closer look at the churches of Christ would hardly reveal that their brand of religion is on the downgrade! This fast-growing group is one of the most potent missionary and evangelistic forces in the country. Their congregations are flourishing, and new churches are continually being established. A profile of faith and practice contradicts practically every "solid conclusion" by the authorities of the main-line denominational establishments about the renewal the church must experience to "survive." The churches of Christ are anti-ecumenical in their relationships; conservative in their theology; autonomous and democratic in their congregational practice without any semblance of a denomina-

tional super-structure; they make rigid moral and ethical demands on their members in such matters as social drinking; they are not “social-action” oriented; they have a “messianic complex” of being true people of God and the true church! All of these factors combine to give them a high motivation, an unquenchable zeal, and an inescapable compulsion to win the world to an acceptance of their convictions and beliefs. And they are growing rapidly!

These words were written in 1971 when the Lord’s church was still growing rapidly.

When we look at what he has written, we see why the church was growing. Sadly, many of the things that he notes as distinguishing the church from other religious groups have changed. Has that change been good? When we realize that such changes have taken away the distinctiveness of the church, those changes are not pleasing to God. Further, the church has not continued to grow. We need to think carefully about bringing about changes in the church to ensure that any changes we make do not violate the Lord’s will.

Deceased

The Gospel for Today

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

“If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:9). The ever-increasing demand for things new requires emphasis on things old. The varied products and commodities of the commercial world are continually changing. Hardly has one been marketed until a later, improved model is announced. So, the “new model” is the salesman’s stock argument, and the only one needed.

This sentiment, sad but true, is growing in religion, and popular religion today is but little more than “keeping up with the times.” The people have become victimized by attractions and the world is deluged with many gospels. But there is only one attraction which can draw men to Christ. It is the cross of Christ. “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me” (John

12:32). And there is only one Gospel that saves—the Gospel of Christ. All others are perversions. “Which is not another [gospel]; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:7).

A perverted gospel may have in it all the elements of the true Gospel. There are doctrines about God, Christ, Holy Spirit, faith, repentance, baptism, etc.; but if these are perversions of the true, they have no saving power.

The Gospel of Christ is the “power of God unto salvation,” and it is the truth that makes men free. “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). The old but ever-new Gospel of Christ is the only Gospel that has power to save.

Deceased

Gospel Meeting

with

Tim Cozad

October 3 – 7, 2021

Sunday: 9:00 A.M., 10:00 A.M., & 1:00 P.M.

Monday – Thursday Evenings: 7:00 P.M.

“Living a Godly Life in An Ungodly World”

Sunday Bible Class — Ungodliness and Its Effects

Sunday Morning Worship — Godliness

Sunday Afternoon Worship — Rewards of Godliness

Monday Evening — The Christians' Armor

Tuesday Evening — One Nation Under God?

Wednesday Evening — Can the Church Remain Pure?

Thursday Evening — Remaining Stedfast and Unmoveable

The lessons will be available for viewing
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A covered-dish meal will be provided on Sunday
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A covered-dish meal will also be provided on
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Visitation Group 1 will provide the meal—Tuesday & Thursday

Visitation Group 2 will provide the meal—Monday & Wednesday

Visitors are invited to every meal.

Come and enjoy Christian fellowship and Gospel preaching.

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Phillip Warr and family (Terri
Myrick's brother)

Andrea Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe and
Charlotte Grant's sister)

Kinsley Worley (Orville & Linda
Worley's great-granddaughter)

Kimberly McKenzie (Orville &
Linda Worley's granddaughter)

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September 12

Deacons' meeting will be held
before the afternoon service, in
room 1.

September 19

Bill Crowe will hand out
visitation cards for Group 2.

September 19

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.

September 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium.

October 3 - 7

Gospel Meeting with Tim
Cozad.



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Worship

Brad Green

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

“In Spirit”

God is not physical; He is Spiritual and therefore requires that worship to Him be Spiritual. Though worship to God consists of physical acts (because humans are and live in the physical realm), those acts (i.e., singing, teaching, praying, partaking of the Lord’s supper, and giving) must be accompanied by mental engagement. Though the acts themselves are essential, for they are commanded and authorized by God, Himself, God does not desire that man simply “go through the motions.” Jesus says, “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength” (Mark 12:30). God wants man to love and worship Him with all

of one’s might. A man can do the right things and be wrong because his actions are void of *spirit* (i.e., the proper disposition of the heart and mind). Consider the actions of Ananias and Sapphira, who sold a possession to give the proceeds to aid the apostles in preaching the Gospel (Acts 5:1). Such an act is worthy of commendation. However, the Bible informs us that with this action, they had conceived in their hearts to deceive the apostles, their fellow man, and God (5:3-4). The physical act was noble, but it was disgraced by an evil heart (*spirit*).

It is important to note that “in spirit” is not referring to the Holy Spirit but instead to the cognizant, thinking, and reasoning. “In spirit” defines the proper attitude and mind-frame required by man to worship God acceptably. “In spirit” is an obligation of man towards God and not vice versa. The

phrase “in spirit” (John 4:24) is not comparable to “in the Spirit” (Rev. 1:10) as recorded by the apostle John. The Holy Spirit miraculously led John to reveal the revelation of Jesus Christ (1:1). Understanding that miracles have ceased (1 Cor. 13:10) and that today we are led by the Holy Spirit only by and through the written Word of God (2 The. 2:14; Psa. 119:105), it is easy to see the difference between the two phrases.

“In Truth”

The sum of God’s Word, revealed by the Holy Spirit and recorded by inspired men of God, is referred to as Truth (Psa. 119:160; John 8:31-32; 17:17). God commanded Saul to

smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass (1 Sam. 15:3).

Instead,

Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly (15:9).

After being rebuked by Samuel, Saul states: the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal (15:21).

We are not told whether this statement made by Saul is true. It seems more likely, due to the rebellious nature of the act, that Saul and the people kept the best of the spoil for themselves. However, Saul thought that his disobedience to God would be over-

looked if said disobedience was for the noble purpose of sacrificing to the Lord. Here, Samuel responds:

Hath the Lord *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *And* to hearken than the fat of rams (15:22).

Many have perverted this passage to teach that God is not all that interested in acts (or works) of worship and sacrifice. The truth presented in this text, however, is that God requires complete obedience to His Word. Even if Saul intended to sacrifice the spoils, as he said, God would not accept that worship because God had commanded Saul to “utterly destroy them.” Making a sacrifice to God is commendable, but only if it is done according to God’s Will and is done with the proper desire and motive.

Let us always love God enough to simply obey and worship God as He commands—with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength and do all in accordance with God’s commands (cf. Col. 3:17).

Lenoir City, TN

Wanted: Great Hearts

The Word is solemn, therefore don’t trifle;

The task is difficult, therefore don’t relax;

The opportunity is brief, therefore don’t delay;

The path is narrow, therefore don’t wander;

The prize is glorious, therefore don’t faint.

Author Unknown

Gospel Meeting

with

Tim Cozad

October 3 – 7, 2021

Sunday: 9:00 A.M., 10:00 A.M., & 1:00 P.M.

Monday – Thursday Evenings: 7:00 P.M.

“Living a Godly Life in An Ungodly World”

Sunday Bible Class — Ungodliness and Its Effects

Sunday Morning Worship — Godliness

Sunday Afternoon Worship — Rewards of Godliness

Monday Evening — The Christians' Armor

Tuesday Evening — One Nation Under God?

Wednesday Evening — Can the Church Remain Pure?

Thursday Evening — Remaining Stedfast and Unmoveable

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<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

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Visitation Group 1 will provide the meal—Tuesday & Thursday

Visitation Group 2 will provide the meal—Monday & Wednesday

Visitors are invited to every meal.

Come and enjoy Christian fellowship and Gospel preaching.

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Nancy Travis Karen Diamond

Bill & Peggy Crowe Dot Dodd

Phillip Warr and family (Terri
Myrick's brother)

Andrea Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe and
Charlotte Grant's sister)

Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis
Brantley's daughter)

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathies are extended to Aleacia Godwin in the death of her cousin, Donna Tumbler, on September 3. Please keep Aleacia and the family in your prayers.

Please Remember

September 19

Bill Crowe will hand out
visitation cards for Group 2.

September 19

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.

September 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium.



YouTube Channel

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BEACON

Vol. L / No. 38

September 20, 2021

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

We Have a Question to Consider: Do Our Friends Really Care for Our Souls?

Johnny Oxendine

There is no question that God has given us quite a lot to think about regarding the Christian life and our commitment to Him. In Psalms 142:4, we find the Psalmist making a statement of his present condition where he felt that “no man cared for my soul.” The context of that statement has a somewhat different reference point. However, it is still something that we must consider: do the people we spend time with (those relatives, best friends, Facebook buddies, co-workers, and next-door neighbors) really care whether we get to heaven or not? **If we do not care whether they care, then perhaps we do not really care!**

This subject often comes up when we are placing emphasis on our youth making proper decisions, but we should not limit this

important advice to young people: all of us need to consider this.

What does the verse in 2 Corinthians 6:14 (“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”) mean to us in terms of our Christian walk? Can we just ignore it (some would like to)? Tear it out of our Bibles (some probably already have)?

Many in the Catholic Church feel this way about their religion. In one *New York Times* article a few years ago, some comments by and about members of that religion were made that begs the question of whether some (actual) Christians might think the same way (but never admit to it):

...the Vatican's teachings on a number of subjects, including contraception, the ordination of women and homosexuality, are out of step with the beliefs and lifestyles of most American Catholics. **But the Americans mostly find a way to stay in their faith by adhering to values most important to them and quietly ignoring those they disagree with.**

Teaching the Children

Many persons, some of whom have wandered far from the religious beliefs of their parents, have given testimony to the value of the instruction they received from God-fearing parents—usually mothers. In many so-called “old-fashioned homes,” Bible teaching was not reduced to pleasing little platitudes about loving the flowers and being kind to animals. One learned that God exists, God loves even little children, God hates and punishes iniquity, and that Christ died on the cross to save us.

One of the painful things we notice now is the fear of giving that which is clear, strong, and essential to little people. Our experts in religious pedagogy seem to have forgotten that a child will probably accept and grasp more truth about God and His Son than adults. Of course, the truth must be put in a suitable form, but it is unnecessary to lose the truth in giving a pleasing form.

Author Unknown

In other words, they feel that they can ignore *doctrine* and remain *faithful*. Another quote: what “Catholicism embraces permits people to identify themselves as Catholic while disagreeing with doctrine, said Luis E. Lugo, director of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, based in Washington.”

This is the silly kind of thinking that goes contrary to what Scripture warns us to remember; that the influence of the world is a *creeper*. It attaches itself to Christians like a barnacle, but it looks harmless. It comes in the form of family, friends, jobs, and other-worldly concerns. Not admitting to this danger is what some brethren try to do, but the end is *death*. Do those people care for our souls? Why don't we ask them?

This is a challenge for each one of us. No one is excluded. The next time that a non-Christian (or even unfaithful) family member, friend, employer, or whoever asks us to do something that would take us away from worship or a church-related activity (let us miss Bible class to have a holiday dinner or a birthday party)—**the very next time**—ask that person if they care whether you go to heaven. Look them in the eye and ask them if they care whether the activity in question will prevent you from (or even preparing for) worship, fellowship, or Bible study. “Do you care whether I go to heaven or not?”

What do you think their response will be? If we cannot ask that question, it is because we already know the answer and may not really care much about our souls ourselves.

San Mateo, CA

Gospel Meeting

with

Tim Cozad

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Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis
Brantley's daughter)

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathies are extended to Aleacia Godwin in the death of her cousin, Billy Morris, on September 16. Please keep Aleacia and the Morris family in your prayers.

Please Remember

September 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

October 3 - 7

Gospel Meeting with Tim Cozad.

October 3

Bill Crowe will hand out visitation cards for Group 1.

October 10

Deacons' meeting will be held before the afternoon service, in room 1.



YouTube Channel

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BEACON

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Unity

Ken Chumbley

It never ceases to amaze me that many who claim to be *Christians*, who decry the disunity that exists among those who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ, do not call for the unity for which Christ prayed—“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21). They will propose some sort of *union* whereby they call people to come together regardless of doctrinal differences. Can such be true unity? Can such be the oneness for which Christ prayed? One can tie a dog and a cat together, and you would have a union but **not** unity! Jesus prayed that His disciples would be *one* as He and the Father are one. Can you imagine the Father and the Son being divided on matters of doctrine? Yet, such is what is proposed.

Let us give one illustration, the matter of baptism. Some teach that baptism is immersion, others that sprinkling is also baptism. Some teach that babies are to be baptized, others that it is for those who are of age to respond in obedient faith to the teaching of Christ. Can there be unity when such differences exist? Can you imagine the Father teaching that baptism is the immersion of those who are of age to respond in obedient faith to the teaching of Christ and is for the remission of sins? In contrast, the Son would teach that it is acceptable, as baptism, to sprinkle babies who are not old enough to respond in faith and who are destined to hell if they are not sprinkled because of “original sin”? Such is simply ludicrous! Yet, this is what many want to claim can be done by joining together while still having such differences.

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with

Tim Cozad

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Those who advocate such are quick to point out that the world sees disunity and the enemy, Satan, wins when “Christians are warring against each other.” However, the truth is that when Satan sees these pseudo efforts at unity whereby all can keep their differing and opposing doctrines and *claim* to have unity, he wins, for such false efforts seek to turn people away from the true unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17. The world sees through this “pseudo unity,” and Christ is not glorified.

We would urge all who claim to follow Christ to seek the true unity or oneness for which Christ prayed by turning away from their “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” that make worship vain (Mat. 15:9) to the faith that was once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Sadly, some have become so blind that they cannot see that efforts at union without coming to the unity of the faith (Eph. 13) are doomed to failure and are contrary to the doctrine of Christ.

Deceased

God’s Precious Promises:

When I am tempted...

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*” (1 Cor. 10:13).

When I have sinned...

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

When I am lonely...

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door,

I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).

When I am afraid...

“Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: Be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isa. 41:10).

When I need guidance...

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he shall direct thy paths” (Pro. 3:6).

When I need wisdom...

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jam. 1:5).

When I fear death...

“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:25-26).

Author Unknown

His consecration was complete,
Except his pocketbook.
He’d put a nickel in the plate,
And then with might and main
He’d sing, “When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain.”

Author Unknown

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Brantley's daughter)

Please Remember

September 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium.

October 3

Bill Crowe will hand out
visitation cards for Group 1.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Jason and
Elaine DuLaney in the birth of
their grandson, Maverick Cruz, on
September 10, 2021.

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathies are ex-
tended to Jason and Elaine
DuLaney in the death of their
daughter-in-law, Rebecca Hancock,
on September 22, 2021. Please keep
their family in your prayers.

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathies are
extended to Linda Parks in the
death of her nephew, David
Dawson. Please keep Linda and her
family in your prayers.



BEACON

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October 4, 2021

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Five Christian Duties

Luther W. Martin

Many words are stated, and many pages written upon subjects dealing with alien sinners and God's requirements concerning their salvation. However, in this instance, we wish to discuss five duties binding upon Christians as listed by the apostle Paul in chapter 16 of his first letter to the church in Corinth.

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity (1 Cor. 16:13-14).

1. **“Watch ye.”** The question might now be asked: “For what should we watch?” Also: “Why should we watch?” For an answer, let us read from 1 Peter 5:8-9:

Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions

are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

So, then, the answers to the questions are very apparent. We, as Christians, are to beware, take warning, be vigilant about the many sinful things of the world. Moreover, Satan is constantly on the offensive. He is the one who makes the attack. For this reason, the Christian should be prepared to meet, defend himself, and ward off such an attack.

2. **“Stand fast in the faith.”** When one stands fast, we know that he moves neither from one side to the other, and, further, he does not retreat and thus subtract from the faith, nor does he move forward and therefore go beyond the faith in which he is steadfast.

This question might arise: “In what faith or which faith are we to remain steadfast?”

Let us again refer to the Scriptures to learn the truth unquestionably:

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that *ye* should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

In this faith—the faith that Jesus Christ delivered to the apostles—that we are to remain steadfast. For this reason, when any individual or group adds to or takes from the New Testament, they are not remaining steadfast in the faith.

3. **“Quit you like men.”** Although the meaning for *quit*, as used in this passage, is obsolete as far as modern English is concerned, it is by no means obsolete in living a Christian life. It means to **“acquit”** or **“behave”** like men. Give an account of your conduct as befitting man, made in the image of God. “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). Such is the command given to the Christians at Corinth. Then, by harmonizing these two Scriptures, we have a standard for Christian conduct in the worship service and everyday life.

4. **“Be strong.”** Strength is precisely the opposite of weakness. A church member who is not strong cannot, and does not, accomplish much good in the vineyard of the Lord. Of course, some have initially obeyed the Gospel, and for this reason, are growing in spiritual strength. However, all too many of us seem to believe that we have reached a point where we *need* no longer to grow. The Bible cannot authorize such an idea. In being strong, we should exercise all

the various functions connected with living a Christian life. For example, we should exercise our ability to pray. We should exercise our ability to teach the story of the cross of Christ, whether it be in private or in public. We should exercise our ability to give of our resources to the work of the Lord. There are many ways in which a Christian should exercise to become strong and remain strong.

5. **“Let all your things be done with charity.”** The definition of *charity* being love, it then becomes the duty of Christians to do all things in love—to exercise an attitude of love toward all, including our enemies. This attitude of love that a Christian should possess does not include the idea of *soft-soaping* the Gospel. If your nearest neighbor’s house were on fire, I am sure that you would not lose any time informing him of the fact. Further, your neighbor would not resent such a warning. If, however, you were to warn your neighbor of his danger, would you clothe that warning in soft and easy words such as are used by most denominational preachers in talking about hell with its eternal fire? Of course not! You would tell him the truth boldly because you love him as a fellow human being and do not want to see him perish.

Then, will you not, friend reader, accept such a warning from some Christian if your life is such that you are in danger of the judgment? After all, your soul is at stake. So,

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

Deceased

Microwave Religion

Today's world has many *conveniences*: cell phones, instant pudding, remote controls, drive-through restaurants, and microwave ovens. There is nothing inherently evil about conveniences, but living in such a world can lead us to develop unhealthy spiritual attitudes, for example:

Salvation without sacrifice: Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). You cannot have salvation without sacrifice. Jesus asks for our sacrifice, not occasionally, but *daily*!

Remission without repentance: Repentance is perhaps God's most challenging command. Repentance is more than saying you are sorry (2 Cor. 7:10). It requires us to change our mind and our behavior (Mat. 3:8). [It also requires restoration as much as possible—editor.] Repentance is a requirement! "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3; cf. Acts 17:30). "God...commandeth all men every where to repent" (17:30).

Righteousness without obedience: Many people excuse themselves from obeying God. However, the Bible says, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3). Claiming to know God without keeping His commands makes one a liar (2:4)! Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation" to all who obey Him (Heb. 5:9) and His commands are not *burdensome* (1 John 5:3—NKJV).

Morality without self-denial: We live in a society without self-denial. It is impossible to live a moral life without self-denial (Tit.

2:11-12). Paul said he had to *discipline* his "body, and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. 9:27). Are we greater than the humble apostle?

Growth without diligence: Unfortunately, most Christians remain spiritual *babies* (Heb. 5:12-14). Peter said we must "give all diligence" to add certain things to our faith (2 Pet. 1:5-7). One who fails to do so is "blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (1:9). Are you growing or forgetting?

Knowledge without study: The amount of Bible knowledge possessed by most Christians is truly pitiful. Evidently they do not realize God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6). We need to be diligent students of God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15). How are your Bible study habits?

Truth without controversy: By its very nature, the Truth is controversial. In our "politically correct" world, few are willing to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). Does the Truth make you squeamish?

What about your religion? Is it the religion taught by Jesus and the apostles? Is it sacrificial, obedient, and self-denying-or, a religion of convenience, a *microwave religion*?

Author Unknown

Gospel Meeting Lessons with
Tim Cozad on the Internet
[http://www.bellviewcoc.com/
meeting.html](http://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html)

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room 1.

October 17

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Defender and Beacon

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The Crown of Thorns

Paul Vaughn

The Scriptures proclaim the dignity and the position of Jesus as King. Paul said that Jesus is the King. “*He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords*” (1 Tim. 6:15). Jesus is reigning today as the King. It is written, “For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet” (1 Cor. 15:25). Every king has a crown, and some of them are extremely valuable, constructed of gold, silver, diamonds, and rubies. Crowns were and are symbols of honor and authority, yet, the only crown Jesus wore in His lifetime on the earth was a crown of thorns. It was a crown designed as a symbol of ridicule and mockery. The crown of thorns was placed on the head of the Lord by Roman soldiers. “So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged *Him*. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put *it* on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe”

(John 19:1-2). What can we learn from the “crown of thorns?”

The crown of thorns teaches the long-suffering and the patience of the Lord Jesus. He patiently endured the contempt and mockery of the soldiers to accomplish His mission of salvation. The soldiers were using Jesus as a means of sport to entertain themselves as He suffered. But Jesus endured adversity to save mankind from the penalty of sin. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

The crown of thorns teaches the cruelty of man. Those who would place a crown of thorns on someone’s head have no love for fellow man. If it is suitable to call them humans, they were the most despicable type of humans because they acted more like animals. They were bloodthirsty men hating

the Lord Jesus. “The bloodthirsty hate the blameless” (Pro. 29:10).

Jesus came to be the King, and they crowned Him with thorns. He has all power over nature, can walk on water, and calmed the storms, and they crowned Him with thorns. Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead, and they crowned Him with thorns.

Why did He allow such treatment from those wicked men? Without the suffering and death of Jesus, we would have no hope or salvation. Jesus endured the crown of thorns so we can be saved. Therefore, I gladly make Him my King and Lord by obeying His Word. Is He yours?

Hopkinsville, KY

Don't Set Standards for Others!

Foster Ramsey

Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand (Rom. 14:4).

Christians are servants of God and Christ. They are expected to live up to the standards that have been set in the New Testament. They are not expected to live up to the standards set up by men, whether those men are in or out of the church.

The member of the church who embarks on a program of standard-setting for other members of the church is usurping the place of divinity. He has no right to judge the other members of the church by the standards that he has made. The one who sets standards of conduct for other people is highly critical of others who do not measure up to the standards he has set. Such members who are standard setters find it very easy to dislike those who do not do as they think other members should do.

Elders are often criticized by others who have set up standards that are unknown in

the New Testament. Such critics know little of what the Elders are doing; hence, they do not appreciate the Elders' work.

Preachers and teachers are criticized by those who have never preached a sermon, never taught a class, and have never done the work of preaching and teaching. Those critics would not attempt to do the very things they expect the preachers and teachers to do.

Do not criticize others because they have not done as you think they should do; after all, they are not your servants! No one has the right to demand special, preferential treatment above that which is given to others.

Do not criticize others because developing a critical attitude contributes to the failure to appreciate what God and others have done for us. And remember—**No one ever did everything that others expected them to do!!** Jesus did not do as the Pharisees and the Scribes expected Him to **do!!**

Deceased

Test Your Love

God is the maker of “the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is.” He is the source of our life, our energy, our very existence; we are His offspring. We live in His world and feast on His bounty. Upon us, He has bestowed infinite compassion. Unto Him, we must answer in judgment. If we are loyal and loving unto the end, we shall live with Him forever.

We should, therefore, love Him. With an undivided heart, we should love Him. He will allow no rival with Him in our affection. Though He loves a broken heart, a divided heart He hates.

In our solitary moments, as we ponder life’s supreme objective, we often ask ourselves: “Do we love the Lord? Do we give Him the devotion that is due?” Here are rules by which our love for the Lord may be measured:

We seek the presence of the person we sincerely love. Do we desire to be where God is? Do we seek His fellowship? (Psa. 122:1).

We present gifts to the person we love. Do we present gifts unto our God? (Mal. 3:8; Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:7).

We often speak with the person we love—we talk to him, we listen when he talks. Do we speak with our heavenly Father? Do we talk to Him? (Luke 18:1). Do we listen when He talks? (Psa. 1:1-2).

It affords us a great measure of joy to eat and drink with the person we dearly love. Very earnestly do we seek opportunity to do so? Do we always avail ourselves of the opportunity of communing with the Lord? (Luke 22:29-30).

When we love a person, we always love those who are near and dear to him. Do we love God’s children? (1 John 4:11, 20-21).

In all things, we endeavor to please the person we love. Are we doing our best to please God? (John 14:14). In our daily lives, are we trying to live as He wants us to live? (Jam. 1:27; Tit. 2:11-14).

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love Him. We ought to love Him supremely. We ought to love Him constantly. God’s love is reaching down to us. Is our love reaching upward to Him? It is when love needs love, when love answers to love, that we can be happy. The best thing in any man’s heart is his love. For this, God is asking, seeking, and striving. He knows that if He has a man’s love, He has the man. How much do you love God?

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A “Simple” Question Which Evolutionists Cannot Answer: Which Was First on Earth— A Woman or a Human Baby?

Thomas B. Warren

When confronted with the theory of evolution, many brethren allow themselves to become *trapped* into allowing the main battle to be pitched on such complex scientific matters as geology, paleontology, chemistry, and biology. (The question of the ultimate origin of man is not a scientific question, although the knowledge gained from science may be utilized, but is instead a philosophical and/or revelational problem.) But God has made His existence and the ultimate origin of human beings so obvious that even people who have little formal education can come to know the true answers to these questions. There are, in fact, obvious things that make clear that the

theory of evolution (that all human beings now living on earth owe their ultimate origin to evolution by non-living, non-intelligent, non-purposive forces of nature—from non-human things) is simply false! One of these things is that the evidence demands the conclusion that a woman (miraculously brought into existence by God) was on earth before the first human baby.

Both evolutionists and creationists agree that human beings presently exist and live on the earth. They also agree that human beings have not always existed. These points of agreement imply another point of agreement: human beings had a beginning point in time.

However, evolutionists and creationists are not in agreement as to the answer to the question: “To what (or whom) do human beings owe their ultimate origin?” Evolutionists answer: “Human beings owe their ultimate origin to evolution from some lower (non-human) form of life.” Creationists answer: “Man was brought into being by the miraculous creative power of God.”

Since the two sides agree that human beings had a beginning point in time, a burning question becomes, “Just how did it happen that presently human beings live on the earth whereas at one time there were no human beings?” Or, more specifically, “What was first on earth: a woman or a human baby?” Even though it seems to be a straightforward one, this question is devastating to the evolutionists’ view.

The creationist has no problem with the question. He gives the Bible answer: a woman, Eve, was on earth before any human baby was (Gen. 1:1; 4:1).

How did the woman (and her husband) come into existence? By the miraculous creative power of God (1:26-28; 2:7, 18-27)! By His infinite knowledge, wisdom, and power, God created man and woman (adult male and adult female), giving their bodies the power to reproduce themselves.

By contrast, the question forces the evolutionist to face a dilemma, both *horns* of which are *answers* with which he cannot live. The evolutionist is in trouble regardless of the answer he gives.

If the evolutionist says that a human baby was on earth first, then he faces another question about whether there was once a baby that did not have a human mother. Was it the case that the baby had no mother at all? (In which case we ask, how then did it come to be? Did it just “pop out,” say, of a hollow log? Was some non-human—perhaps an ape—its mother?) To answer “yes” to any of these questions is so patently absurd as to be incredible.

On the other hand, if the evolutionist answers that a woman was on earth before any human baby was, then he faces problems of equal intensity, for we further ask, was this woman—who, in your view, was never a baby—born full-grown of some animal (perhaps an ape)? Would it not require a miracle for a full-grown woman to come into existence suddenly? If we, would it not follow that the creationist view (God miraculously created the first man and the first woman and that their sexual union resulted in the first human baby) is true?

Is it not clear that the *simple* questions posed above show that the theory of evo-

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lution is just that—a mere theory—and that it is a false theory?

The Bible is right. The Bible is right not only on the question of the origin of man but on every other question with which it deals. God's Word is truth (John 17:17), and that Word teaches that God created the first man and the first woman (1 Tim. 2:13-14). The theory of evolution is false.v

We must stand ready to lovingly and kindly defend in honorable public discussion the proposition that all human beings now living on earth owe their ultimate origin to the miraculous work of God—not to evolution (by non-living, non-intelligent, non-purposive forces of physical nature) from non-human things (6:12; Jude 3).

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We Have Borrowed Too Much

H. M. Phillips

There was a time when the church of Christ could be easily distinguished from the denominational world around about on more points than the Lord's Supper, baptism, and mechanical music, and it is true in most places today. Still, I fear that there are too many things we have borrowed from the denominational world. We are using them almost in total to lessen the difference between us. It looks like we are a little too stiff and not humble enough and having so much form in some places that we hardly see the genuine heart service. Then, too, we are about to go wild on the entertaining of the young people, and while we do not have the organizations as the denominations do, we are going about as close as is possible not to fall over in the ring. Too many now think that they must have all kinds of outings, parties, trips, and so on, till it is hard to see that the spiritual is well kept in mind. We have some who plan to take the young people out sightseeing, and that on the Lord's Day, and to make it appear a little like the church, they

take the Supper along and stop long enough to have that. Then we have some girls read pieces and speak before the group assembled, having all the service but the Supper and contribution, mixed audiences of men and women.

Then we have an assistant minister for the young people instead of a young people's *pastor*. We put on high pressure in the meetings and scare some of the little children into being baptized.

Then we let the older members live as they desire and do nothing about it.

We are having vacation Bible schools, in which the little children are almost pulled into the act of baptism.

Yes, we have borrowed too many things; and I, for one, would be glad to see them paid back and quit borrowing from the denominational world and go to feasting on the Word of God and obeying what it commands, and being free from the world and denominations.

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What Should the Men Be Called Who Give Their Life to Preaching the Gospel of Christ?

Dub Mowery

They do not have a formal title. The terms that are used in the New Testament about those men who proclaim the Gospel depict their work in the spiritual kingdom of our Lord. To illustrate: for one to serve in the church is to minister. **Every** faithful child of God is a minister of the Lord (Mat. 20:25-28). The one who preach for a local congregation is not Minister Jones (or whatever his name is), but a fellow minister (servant) along with all his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. The term *minister* is not an exclusive designation for those who preach. Anyone in the church who faithfully performs a service in the kingdom of our Lord is a faithful minister. Therefore, the one who preaches is not **the** minister! Nor should he be referred to as “our Minister,” since every faithful child

of God is to minister. We are to be a “minister of God” (1 The. 3:2), “a good minister of Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 4:6), and “ministers of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:15). Of a certainty, one who preaches has the ministry of proclaiming the Gospel, but he is not exclusively the minister of a congregation.

What does he do in carrying out his ministry? He preaches the Gospel of Christ; therefore, he is a preacher (1 Tim. 2:7). Also, he is an evangelist because he heralds or proclaims the truth (2 Tim. 4:5). Still, these are not formal titles but reveal his work in the kingdom of Christ. Similarly, we speak of a person like an electrician, baker, farmer, etc., to describe that person’s trade or occupation in the secular world. Thus, the terms preacher, evangelist, and minister of the

Gospel are not titles but reveals the work of those who preach.

There are many unscriptural terminologies used in the denominational world for those who preach for them. Several denominations call their local preacher their *pastor*. The preacher, as such, is not a pastor. The terms *elders* (or presbyter), *bishops* (or overseers), and *pastors* (or shepherds) refer to the same group of men who oversee a local congregation (Phi. 1:1; Acts 20:17). Elders are the pastors (shepherds) of the flock (the local church—1 Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 20:28). A local congregation cannot Scripturally have

one pastor (elder) but are to select two or more men (not women—1 Tim. 2:12) to oversee their congregation (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5). These men must be married and have believing children (those who are Christians—1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-11).

Other terms in the form of titles without Biblical authority include “Father” (as a religious title, Mat. 23:5-11), “Rabbi,” “Reverend,” “Monsignor,” “Archbishop,” “Cardinal,” and “Pope.”

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Obedience

Curtis L. E. Graves

But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels *and* in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day

that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them*: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. But thou shalt say unto them, *This is* a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth (Jer. 7:23-28).

As in Jeremiah's day, people would rather hear false “good news” than the truth. The

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false teacher labels truth as “bad news.” False teachers cry, “Peace, peace; when *there is* no peace” (6:14).

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein* (6:16).

This command is just as relevant today as in Jeremiah’s day. The point is simple: “Stand in the old paths.” “*Speak* as the oracles of

God” (1 Pet. 4:11). Keep His commandments (John 14:15). “Contend for the faith” (Jude 3). Obedience is essential (1 Sam. 15:22). God has always desired that we obey Him, and if we are not obedient to Him, we will have no excuse on the day of judgment (2 The. 1:7-9). In Jeremiah’s time, the people said no and were punished. Learn from their mistake and be obedient to all the truth today.

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Suppose

Just suppose that when you were growing up, your brothers hated you, sold you into slavery, lied about you, and cast you into prison. Suppose you had to languish in that cell for months on end. Would you still have your faith in God? Joseph did.

Just suppose that God called you to preach a very unpopular message, God’s wrath. Suppose the people got up in arms and vented their anger against you. What if they lied about you and tried to make an end to your life? Would you still have faith in God? Jeremiah did.

Just suppose that you were called to marry a harlot. To this union, both a daughter and a son were born. Suppose that once again she became an adulteress and that you had to buy her back for the price of a common slave. Would you still have faith in God? Hosea did.

Just suppose you were called upon to stand before a king and rebuke him for his sin. Suppose that in obedience to the will of

God, you performed your task only to learn that your head would be chopped off. Would you still have faith in God? John did.

Just suppose that you learned very suddenly that your religious convictions were wrong. Suppose that you found you were cut off from your brethren because of making religious changes. Suppose you gave up everything and then discovered that you were persecuted, whipped, beaten, stoned, and cast into prison for your beliefs. Would you still have faith in God? Paul did.

Just suppose that you lived a perfect life, loved all men, always did God’s will but were nailed to a cross. Would you still have faith in God? Jesus did.

Just suppose the church is not friendly, that people do not appreciate you, that some snub you, nobody came to visit you, some loved ones die, your health is terrible. Would you still have faith in God?

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Guard Yourself from Evil

Charles Pogue

Everyone who calls himself a Christian must commit to the Lord and himself that he will not be influenced by evil. The best way to do that is to stay away from evil as much as possible. Evil is all around because the overwhelming majority of people outside of Christ engage in it all of the time. We cannot stay completely away from all evil, but we can keep evil away from us when it is under our control. There are many verses, including those that follow here, that give us ways to keep ourselves away from much of the evil in the world.

Psalm 101:3: “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it* shall not cleave to me.” It seems almost incredible to us today that thousands of years ago, David would be concerned about not setting anything wicked before his eyes. Why make such a statement?

Because the wicked things David could have set before his eyes pale in comparison to the staggering number of evil things that people today have to be on guard about. Considering television, movies, and the Internet, not to mention the world of literature, it is shocking the expressions of evil that we have to guard ourselves against in this modern world.

1 Corinthians 15:33: “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.” The word *communications* in this verse refer to companionships. It is far easier to pull a thing down from a lofty height than to raise it up to the higher plane. That is true with people. If the people we surround ourselves with are evil, it is more likely that they will drag us down to their level than we will bring them up to ours. That is a fact whether one wants to admit it or not. If you do not

wish to be pulled down into sin, one thing you can do to guard against it is to choose your companions wisely.

1 Thessalonians 5:22: “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” The American Standard Version renders this verse “abstain from every form of evil.” When Paul listed the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21, he included the phrase, “and such like.” There are evil things that are not explicitly listed in Scripture, but they have the same traits as those that are, therefore are just as bad, and it is just as important to stay away from those as those that are listed by name. That thinking gives support to the adage, “if it even looks or smells like evil, I am staying away from it.”

Ephesians 5:12: “For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.” As much as this statement follows

the charge to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, we would consider three important things to avoid doing. First, be very careful not to speak of something evil in any way whatsoever that would tend to make you believe there is some justification for it. Second, keep those matters out of our daily conversation, especially from the earshot of our children. Third, never joke about evil things that you have witnessed or heard. One who can make light of something evil may find himself only a half-step from participating in it.

To avoid evil, we must fill our lives with good works and think about good things. If we stay away from evil and engage in regular Bible study and prayer, we will be able to guard ourselves against the evil prevalent in today’s world.

Deceased

Accepting Responsibility

F. F. Conley

Responsibility and Christianity go hand in hand. When one becomes a Christian, he becomes responsible to God to accept the duties and obligations that fall to him. God has always held men responsible. Adam and Eve were placed under responsibility to God to meet His demands. God made Noah responsible for building the ark, and God demanded that Moses lead Israel from Egypt. In the New Testament, the same principle is true and is taught in the parable of the talents, the parable of the virgins, and the parable of the sheep and goats. Jesus

placed responsibility on His followers, “If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mat. 16:24).

The Lord had clearly stated my responsibility. I am a branch in the vine. I am a stone in a building. I am a candlestick and must shine. I have been given a talent. In the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, the Lord made a personal, individual distribution of His goods to His servants. The five-talent man went out and individually traded and gained five other talents. The two-talent man

went and individually traded and gained five other talents. The two-talent man went and individually traded and gained two other talents. The one talent man went and individually hid his Lord's money. When the Master returned, each was held individually responsible for the talents entrusted to them.

There is not a parable or a reference in all the Bible that teaches collective responsibility. At the judgment, it will not be asked of me, "What did the church do of which you were a member?" The question will be, "What did you do as an individual in the service of the Lord?"

Christianity is a religion of the individual. He often preached to one individual. His illustrations often emphasized the one. The Good Shepherd seeks the one sheep. Angels

rejoice over the one sinner that repents. One soul is worth more than all the world.

I must perform the service that I promise if it is within my power to do so. I must keep my appointments to preach. If I accept the responsibility of leading the song service or prayer service, or if I agree to serve the communion, I must measure up to the responsibility.

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Bible Preaching

Franklin Camp

An important root of the [19th-century—editor] restoration of the church was Bible-founded and Bible-centered preaching. The men that set about to call men back to the Bible **knew the Bible** and **preached the Bible**. The Bible was their textbook. This root is fast drying up. **There is too much preaching today that has everything in it but the Bible.** I may not know whether a man is quoting from Norman Vincent Peale [a prominent 20th-century denominational preacher—editor] or not, but I know enough about the Bible to know when a man is quoting from it. It is a tragedy for a man to get up in the pulpit with a Bible and never use it.

Some preachers should more appropriately leave their Bibles at home and get into the pulpit with a stack of magazines and Dale Carnegie's books [e.g., *How to Win Friends and Influence People*—editor] so the man in the pew would know what was taking place. It is high time we put the preacher back in the study with his Bible and let him know we expect him to "get with it and preach it." Some sermons I have heard recently would not have been tolerated in the country church where I grew up. He might have preached one, but that would have been the limit. They wanted the Bible, and a man either preached that or he did not preach.

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Unclean Spirit and Empty House

Batsell Barrett Baxter

Jesus told us about the unclean spirit cast out of a man and was very discontented about his fate. This unclean spirit wandered about for a while in unfruitful situations, seeking rest and finding none. Then he thought about going back to the man from whom he was cast out. He found the house empty, swept, and garnished. In he went! He was contented again. He went to work on his victim.

Emptiness and Blessings

Emptiness does not bring blessings to us. An empty house declines rapidly. Various kinds of breaks and deteriorations appear. The neighborhood boys generally take care of the windowpanes, and unthoughtful people carry off much that is of value. So, with the empty life. It has been said that an idle brain is the devil's workshop, Idle hands

are the devil's tools, and idle feet run swift to mischief.

Fullness and Blessings

The way to keep evil out of the heart is to fill it so full of good that there is no room for evil. Prospective tenants do not generally look with favor upon rooming in a house that is already crowded. The evil spirit entered again into the heart of the man because he found room there. The heart was empty; the heart was receptive—swept and garnished. The welcome sign was hanging out, and everything was attractive for him. There were no other tenants. He was free in that heart to work his will.

Love of Company

It seems that the devil is a very sociable fellow. This demon shared his quarters with seven others worse than himself. They were companionable; ideals were similar, were

engaged in the same work, saw the value of cooperation, and realized that there is some strength and encouragement in kindred spirits getting together. What a pity some Christians fail to recognize the help of kindred spirits! No Christian is effective “running in a gang by himself.”

Last State Worse

The last state of the man from whom the demon had been cast was worse than the first. The “dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Pet. 2:22). His heart was more corrupt than before. Why? Because he had not filled it with something good. Many a parent has had the discouraging experience of seeing a boy washed and in clean clothes out getting acquainted with a mud puddle. Getting cleaned up will be of no avail unless we cooperate in trying to stay clean. The best way for the little boy to keep out of the mud is to play in a dry place.

Food for the Heart

It is impossible to keep evil sights from meeting our eyes. Evil sights are everywhere. Someone has said it is impossible to keep birds from lighting on our shoulders, but if we are active enough, they will avoid us, and they certainly will not build nests in our hair. The Scriptures give a prescription for preventing evil thoughts: Fill up the heart with good thoughts. People whose hearts are busy planning and doing good things are not generally getting into evil.

The Prescription

Let us quote the Bible prescription:
Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable,

whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (Phi. 4: 8).

What helps such thinking will bring into our lives! How much better it will make our associates appear! And how much church trouble it will prevent!

Example and Contrast

If we keep ourselves as busy doing good as Satan is doing evil, how much good could we accomplish! If we would love righteousness as much as Satan loves sin, what good people we would be! If we would love people as much as Satan hates them, how our hearts would be enlarged! If we worked as hard to build up the kingdom of God as Satan works to tear it down, how the kingdom would be enlarged! If we worked as hard to save souls as Satan works to damn souls, how much the number of the saved would be increased!

Deceased

Every body of people has the right to protect itself from being destroyed or injured by its own members. When a member is destroying fellowship by creating strife and division, it is the duty of the church to rid itself of him, and it sins against the Lord and His cause if it refuses or neglects to do so.

*R. L. Whiteside
Deceased*

Comments on the Anti-Christ

Guy N. Woods

For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh (2 John 7).

In the text here, as in the passages in which the term *anti-christ* is used, it will be seen that the apostle sometimes refers to many anti-christs, and again to but one. The great anti-christ was the symbol, the representative of the class whose spirit, disposition, design the others adopted. The anti-christ is the head of the apostate church—the church of Rome—and all who teach false doctrine, however much they may differ in detail in their teaching, or oppose one another in their actions, are one in their opposition to the Lord and the cause for

which he died. Of what consequence is it that men array themselves against each other in minor details when together they form a solid phalanx against the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord? How quickly do men resolve their differences of a denominational nature when they are confronted with a genuine representative of the truth? The denominational world has ever recognized the church of the Lord as a common enemy, and where it is active, they have disregarded their own distinctive interests to form a common front against the truth. The spirit of the anti-christ is the motivating factor in every false teacher.

Deceased

One Plan of Salvation for All

E. M. Borden

The Jew, who does not accept Christ as the Son of God, will naturally depend on Moses's law, which is no longer in force. The law of Moses offered nothing to the Gentiles, but the Gospel of Christ includes all nations. There is no salvation now under the law of Moses, for it is no more. Why should a Gentile go to the law of Moses for salvation? The Jew, even though he is trying to keep the law of Moses, cannot be saved except through the Gospel of Christ. Since the middle wall has been broken down, there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the one plan of salvation is to all, Jews and Gentiles alike. There is no one plan for the Jews and

one for the Gentiles. It is sad to see the Jews turn down their only chance of salvation. The old law was a schoolmaster to bring the Jews to Christ. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God to both Jews and Gentiles. The Jew, whether in the land of Canaan or the United States, must obey the Gospel to be saved. Israel failed to keep the covenant and lost that land of promise. Christ is now the mediator of a better covenant established upon better promises (Heb. 8:6). "They continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord" (8:9).

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Some Rules for Troubled Times Or, How We Ought to Behave When Opposing an Erring Brother

Tim Smith

Brethren, it is troubling to me to see (on either side) issues brushed aside, and characters attacked in the place of error demonstrated. We need to focus on what a man or woman teaches or does that violates Scripture and not fall into a mudslinging gossip session. As directly as possible under the specific circumstances, I have tried to address the individual and their error or failure to deal with my arguments, whatever the controversy. I have tried to demonstrate, with Scriptural and straightforward argumentation, wherein my opponent has erred to show them their error and warn any others who may be privy to the discussion. This is one of the few principle duties a controversialist assumes when they enter the fray. For exam-

ple, if we are discussing the sin involved in fellowshipping Dave Miller and those who fellowship him, what place has the fact that the person we are discussing this committed some other sin as well as this one? The issue at hand is what we must deal with, nothing more. There will need to come a time for discussion of other sinful activities, as we seek the salvation of the lost each time we enter a controversy, but while we are dealing with this one issue, we must stay with this one issue for several reasons. Chiefly, it simplifies the issue. It allows the person we are studying with to stay on topic without running rabbits all over the field of controversy. Additionally, it will enable the reader or listener to understand the issues and the arguments simply

I Heard a Baby Cry

As I sat among the faithful
On a Sunday in July.
My attention was diverted
As I heard a baby cry.
Not a wail, that would disturb you,
Just a whimper, like a sigh.
But it caused my mind to ponder,
Of the child's life, by and by.
I thought about how blessed it was,
That its young Mother cared,
How she nurtured and caressed it,
And all her love had shared.
I know that its direction is a part
Of Mother's plan,
To teach, and correct it by the rules,
God made for man.
And so, she's starting early in its life,
Of so few days,
To assemble with the saints of God
That "IT" might learn His ways.
It almost went unnoticed
Amid the preacher's words,
Just a tiny little whimper,
But I'm sure the Savior heard.
To hear a baby cry in church
Is music to my ears.
For it can learn to please its God,
Because somebody cares.

Author Unknown

and clearly on each side. Stay on topic and be Scriptural in your approach.

Avoid smearing the name and character of your opponent. Let your arguments speak to the man's name and character. If he is dishonest or dishonorable, point that out—but know this: if you are incorrect in your assessment of his dishonesty or dishonorableness, he and all who watch or read will know that, and it will undercut your credibility. I have been the object of smear campaigns, and it hurts. It is unfair. It adds nothing to the issue at hand. It makes it so that even if the person you are studying with does come around to the Truth in the future, you may have so damaged their name by the smear campaign that they will never be able to clear their name. When Jesus took on the Pharisees, He dealt with their sins. He did not make up charges and lie about them. He did not suggest that they may be immoral. He stuck to the facts, and so should we. If the man is in error on one point, that one point is enough to condemn him. We need not invent other points to make sure people see their error. Stay on topic and never be guilty of engaging in a smear campaign.

or,

Always remember that the object of your efforts is (a) to speak the Truth (preach the Word), (b) to defeat error, (c) to convert the lost (in no order, as they are co-equal in importance). It is not a shouting match that is won or lost by the volume of the speaker. It is not an exercise in phraseology. Verbosity is wholly unimportant. What is said is what matters, not how it is said. True, if you can

state your case eloquently, that is great, but I have known many an errorist who spoke and wrote well but was still wrong. Speak to the lost to convert them and all who are involved in their error. Controversies are about heaven and hell, not about making a name for oneself. Sometimes it becomes necessary to deal harshly with an opponent, but let it be the last resort. Always give them a chance to repent. Do not make it about personalities; it will be more difficult for them to leave their position and repent. When or if they leave the discussion prematurely, you may have to turn your attention from their salvation to that of the onlookers, but again, let that be the last resort. We want to bring

salvation to the one with whom we discuss any given issue and all who agree with them.

There are many other points we could consider, and I am sure that many who read these lines could have done a better job on the article than I have, but here it is from my keyboard to your eyes, and I hope that I have written something that will prove beneficial. The overwhelming digression around us demands that we enter controversy. We must disagree with those in error. However, as we do so, let us be careful to do it in the right way and for the right reasons. God speed to the faithful.

Deceased

Is It Thanksgiving?

Someone has said thanksgiving is an art: the art of thanksgiving. It is gratitude in action. It is applying Albert Schweitzer's philosophy; "In gratitude for your own fortune you must render in return some sacrifice of your life."

What is thanksgiving?

It is thanking God for the gift of life by living it triumphantly.

It is thanking God for your talents and abilities by accepting them as obligations to be invested for the common good.

It is thanking God for all that men and women have done for you by doing things for others.

It is thanking God for opportunities by accepting them as a challenge to achievement.

It is thanking God for happiness by striving to make others happy.

It is thanking God for beauty by helping to make the world more beautiful.

It is thanking God for inspiration by trying to be an inspiration to others.

It is thanking God for health and strength by the care and reverence you show your body.

It is thanking God for creative ideas that enrich life by adding your own creative contributions to human progress.

It is thanking God for each new day by living it to the fullest.

It is thanking God by using your hands, arms, legs, and voice to manifest your thankful spirit.

This is **Thanksgiving!**

Author Unknown

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November 21

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If Thy Brother Trespasses Against Thee

Charles Pogue

Have you ever seen possible signs a person or persons have ostracized you, and yet those who have separated you from their company are silent as a tomb, never telling you why you are now persona non-grata? Has it ever appeared you have been banished from the company of others for the misdeeds of someone else, and again no one ever talks to you about it?

Sometimes the offended party is silent because they know the offense brought against them was justified. They have sinned. However, that is a different situation than the one under consideration in this brief article.

One cannot be fairly disfellowshipped without being told about it, can he? Jesus said if your brother trespasses against you, go and tell him about his fault between you and him alone (Mat. 18:15). One can offend another individual and not realize it. Whether the

guilty one realizes it or not, Jesus said if your brother trespasses against you, tell him. If you or I am the offended one, we must try to resolve the problem.

Preachers must deliver a sermon to reprove, rebuke, and exhort (2 Tim. 4:2). Why? Because if someone listening has sinned, they can have the sin identified and brought to their attention that they might repent of it and obtain God's pardon. If there is a problem between two individuals, the one who has done wrong still needs to be called upon it by the one who was wronged.

The fourth chapter of Leviticus makes it very plain that under the law of Moses, a sin that is done through ignorance must be dealt with. The principle remains as evidenced by the fact that a person who does not know the Gospel plan of salvation requires baptism; he is still amenable to it and lost if

someone does not tell him. If someone has offended you or me, let us not in every case assume the offense was committed intentionally and with the knowledge of the offender.

It is a height of conceit if someone sins against me or you for us to clam up and not go to them as Jesus instructed and do all we can to make things right between us.

Deceased

Eight Mysteries

The mystery of the empty pew! The freedom to worship is interpreted as freedom **from** worship.

The mystery of the disappearing church member! Some move and they disappear without a trace. No one knows where they live.

The mystery of the unaccompanied child! Many children are sent along with other children and dropped off by a parent who does not attend Bible classes or worship services.

The mystery of the closed Bible! In many “Christian” homes, the Bible is left on the table or shelf to gather dust. It is not allowed to speak to the family, which needs its message daily.

The mystery of the buried talents! Many church members can serve, yet they hide their talents, neglecting or refusing to use them in the Lord’s service.

The mystery of the uncommitted dollar! How does the person who professes faith in Christ get everything converted except his pocketbook, billfold, purse, wallet, etc.?

The mystery of the grumbling saint! How can an honest Christian develop a griping, complaining, nit-picking attitude with so much going for him?

The mystery of the misused day! Some Christians use a beautiful Lord’s Day for everything except studying His Word and Worship to Him.

Author Unknown

If the Shoe Fits...

We often hear or say, “If the shoe fits, wear it!” We sometimes say, “I’d hate to be in his shoes.” I think everyone one of us will fit into one of these shoe styles, but which?

- **Loafers:** The indifferent, lazy saint. “*Thou* wicked and slothful servant” (Mat. 25:26). “In diligence [be] not slothful” (Rom. 12:11—ASV).
- **High heels:** This fits the haughty, proud individual. One is not “to think

of himself more highly than he ought to think” (12:3).

- **Overshoes:** His religion is only superficial and outward. He honors God with his lips, but not with his heart (Mat. 15:8).
- **House shoes:** This person wants things easy, comfortable, and convenient. Half a dozen rain drops, or a slight headache will keep him at home when

the church meets. “Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion” (Amos 6:1).

- **Sandals:** This fellow is just a skeleton of a Christian who has not grown and matured in knowledge and service. He has not grown “in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).
- **Sunday shoes:** The once-a-week Christian. He has not learned to be “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the

work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

- **Work shoes:** The active Christian who is always on the job for the Lord. “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). “Son, go work to day in my vineyard” (Mat. 21:28).

Now may each of us ask, “What kind of shoe best fits me?”

Author Unknown

The Bible—There It Stands

A. Z. Conrad

Century follows century—there it stands.

Empires rise and fall and are forgotten—there it stands.

Dynasty succeeds dynasty—there it stands.

Kings are crowned and uncrowned—there it stands.

Despised and torn to pieces—there it stands.

Storms of hate swirl about it—there it stands.

Atheists rail against it—there it stands.

Agnostics smile cynically—there it stands.

Profane, prayerless punsters caricature it—there it stands.

Higher critics deny its claim to inspiration—there it stands.

An anvil that has broken a million hammers—there it stands.

The flames are kindled about it—there it stands.

The arrows of hate are discharged against it—there it stands.

Radicalism rants and raves against it—there it stands.

Fogs of sophistry conceal it temporarily—there it stands.

The tooth of time gnaws but makes no dent in it—there it stands.

Infidels predict its abandonment—there it stands.

Modernism tries to explain it away—there it stands.

[“The Bible—There It Stands” tells us how that the Bible always *stands* regardless of what happens in this world, for it is God’s Word.]

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Cleansing the Temple

Brad Green

Early in Jesus' public ministry, He went to Jerusalem to observe Passover "And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting" (John 2:14). The area of the temple here referred to is not the actual place of worship or sacrifice. It is most likely a "large area known as the Court of the Gentiles" (Wycliffe) which was the outer-most court built by Herod when he rebuilt the temple to appease the Jewish hierarchy. In this area, those not in a covenant relationship with God could assemble and do business. Only Jews could go any further towards the area of the temple proper. These courts were not a part of God's pattern for the temple; their blueprint originated in the minds of men. As Jesus arrives to worship and obey the Law of Moses, He discovers a common marketplace polluting the way. A veritable zoo-like

atmosphere complete with every possible animal needed for Jewish sacrifice and *bankers* willing to cash and exchange any currencies (for a small fee no doubt) for the half-shekel required as an "offering of the LORD" (Exo. 30:13). The temple of the Lord was now no longer the focal point of the Passover. Men had turned the courts outside into a money-making place of trade.

Rather than coming to Jerusalem prepared to offer the appropriate sacrifice, people were now trading and trafficking sacrificial animals at the very gates of the entrance. One could only surmise that those profiting from the sale of these animals took great and deliberate care to ensure that these animals would be acceptable and authorized by God (cf. 12:5). Perhaps these animals came with a money-back guarantee—"100% acceptable to God or your money back." No

doubt those selling animals, changing Roman currency into Jewish, and the Jewish leaders who permitted these acts to occur before the temple, were enjoying the earnings (or “filthy lucre,” compare 1 Pet. 5:1-2) of this business venture. Therefore, Jesus “made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise” (John 2:15-16). It is understood here that these people were not trying to help and simply provide a service for those coming to worship. They were there to make money. It can also be understood that those

coming to this market to buy were not preparing to worship God; instead, they were simply trying to fulfill what had become nothing more than another annual task or chore. It is sad to note that about three years later, as Jesus’ earthly ministry was coming to a close, He would have to purge the temple again. Jesus’ rebuke—“My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Mat. 21:13).

Many today regard Sundays and Wednesdays as just another task or chore that must be fulfilled during the week. They “go through the motions” but do not come close to God with what they claim to be worship and praise. Too many “television preachers” have made merchandise of the souls of many.

The Midnight Hour

That time when feeble eyes cannot penetrate the darkness when the oil of our Christian lamp is low, or maybe life has almost snuffed it out—Midnight—when we find ourselves chained, bound, and beaten. When even death itself would be a welcomed visitor, the lasting beauty of Christianity is not witnessed in the lives of people who have been sheltered from the storms or untouched by the world. The real worth of Christianity is not captured in a Sunday morning worship service with every man in his pew singing “Amazing Grace.” The lasting weight of Christianity is not felt when all is well. If we could comprehend the real weight and worth and beauty of Christianity, we must view it at the midnight hour when tragedy strikes, and triumph is fled; when darkness hangs about us like a burial shroud and the silence of grief is deafening. When oceans of tears have been shed, and all of our hopes lie buried in a lonely grave in a garden of memories. When life has dashed our most cherished dreams to the ground, it is now 11:59 p.m., and midnight approaches for some of us.

Author Unknown

They offer spiritual help and healings to those who send in their contributions, profiting a perverted gospel designed and intended to line pockets and save no one. Once-faithful works of the church have succumbed to the love of money, which “is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:10). In search of what is touted as much needed funds (but is a desire to spend above and beyond their means), preachers (and their pet projects) have pandered to liberals and have compromised

their past convictions to the truth. We need only to look to our government to see how easy it is for people to spend money that is not theirs.

Let us prepare our hearts and minds to worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Follow the example of Jesus and purge out sinful attitudes and desires that pollute the House of God. Let us train our minds on pleasing God and not self, set our “affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2), and seek “first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Mat. 6:33).

Lenoir City, TN

Can a Church Be Disfellowshipped?

Gus Nichols

A denominational or ecclesiastical organization does not tie Churches of Christ together, but each church is free under Christ, the great head of the church, to run its own business as though there was not another like it on earth. Yet, there is fellowship among the churches. One church is not to treat all the others as though they were Mormon churches. Peter said, “Love the brotherhood” (1 Pet. 2:17). The brotherhood is larger than a local congregation. Hence, we are interested in each other’s welfare everywhere. There is to be unity among all Christians, and not only in a local congregation (John 17:20-22). We are to be so united that we should be glad to announce each other’s meetings, attend them, and help in the singing, prayers, etc. We may lend chairs to each other and fellowship each other as

churches in a general sort of way, so long as the autonomy of each church is not violated.

No congregation should try to build itself up by tearing down another. Hence, there should be no proselyting of members from one church to another, as has been done in a few cities. All of this proves that there is a certain amount of fellowship between “churches of Christ.” Now, suppose a congregation should depart from the truth so far as to cease to be a church of the Lord. In that case, no other congregation should fellowship it any further, any more than it would a denominational congregation. True churches should not be against each other. Remember that even Satan is not divided against himself (Mat. 12:25-26).

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Well, “You’re Either a Christian, or You’re a _____ (Fill in the Blank)”

Johnny Oxendine

“You’re either a Christian, or you’re a _____.” That statement (comment, actually) was made at some point during a conversation that was relayed to me in which one member was hoping to explain to another member that our first priority in life is to God and the Gospel. It was not a unique moment because that is a conversation that goes on every week regarding some matter that we ought to know and understand (according to the Scriptures) better than we do. To the person I was speaking with, it was as simple as basic math (the $1+1=2$ kind) to grasp that this world’s things, events, and issues must be measured against (compared with) the Bible—the Word of God. If we do not use the Scriptures as a standard, we have no standard, except that which is constantly

in a state of flux being determined by the secular world.

How difficult was it for the other brother to see this simple point? Our judgment is often clouded by what we have allowed ourselves to become assimilated into, whether our jobs, families, best friends, neighborhoods, etc. This rises to the boiling point on many of the day’s issues and finds the Christian often allowing race, politics, and patriotism to transcend the teaching of Scripture. We have, at times, given these things of the world the prerogative to define us and often pledge more of an allegiance to them than to the Lord. When Jesus asked Peter if he (Peter) loved Him (Jesus) more than that which he was doing, Peter struggled with a proper response. Why? Because he was still

drawn to the world just enough not to comprehend what the Lord was asking.

This is often apparent when certain things interfere with our desires. One may want to go to a baseball game, play, movie, or visit a relative. Sometimes there are birthday parties elsewhere, and we just cannot see how it is such a big deal to anyone else (in the local congregation) that we decide to forsake the (local) assembly to engage in/attend one of those activities. It appears harmless to one, but to the congregation at large, it could be viewed differently. This also pops up when we are in discussions of controversial subjects.

No one likes to be *wrong* on any issue, but in the conversation as mentioned earlier, one had formed an opinion without serious consideration of the Scriptures on the matter. It was incomprehensible that a Christian could support any cause in direct opposition to God's Word. Still, we are a funny lot when it comes to such matters—so logic and Biblical compatibility are likely to be ignored.

Most disturbing from the conversation was how one could (unknowingly?) completely expect the Scriptures to contradict themselves. This illogical delusion is not unique, as we want things in the Bible to agree with what we want in this life, regardless of the sheer impossibility that it be viable scripturally. Yet, we know that there are people in this world who might render “believe and be baptized” as some secondary action that has no relationship to salvation without any conceptualization of how the Lord intended for us to translate “he that believeth and is baptized” into a real-life experience.

However, what was refreshing was the firm conviction this person had looking at it from a Biblical perspective (on this particular issue). One brother saw the Lord's commands very clearly, while, on the other hand, another brother could only understand his agenda and how he wanted it to play out in today's world.

San Mateo, CA

These Endure Forever

Bob Wear

It is most comforting to be assured that some things endure forever. If this were not true, life would be empty and without meaning.

Most of the things we hold dear endure only for a time, a brief time. Our life on earth is soon spent, and we die. Our loved ones and friends are soon gone. Our material possessions perish with use. Our place of promi-

nence among men falls away, as does the flower of the grass. These less-enduring things will mean more to us if we give due consideration and service to the things that endure forever.

Let us now consider these things which endure throughout time and eternity. “But the LORD shall endure for ever: He hath prepared his throne for judgment” (Psa. 9:7).

“Praise ye the LORD . O give thanks unto the LORD ; for *he is* good: For his mercy *endureth* for ever” (106:1).

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Mat. 6:20). These heavenly treasures are the only treasures that endure forever.

Christ said: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (24:35). We read again:

For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever (1 Pet. 1:24-25).

Since the Word of the Lord endures forever, we should learn it and obey it.

An inheritance to be desired:

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you (1:3-4).

To share in this inheritance, we must live as God would have us to.

These and other related things endure forever. In life, we must first seek these things.

Deceased

Ten Reasons Why You Should Be a Member of the Church of Christ

1. Because you can read about it in the Bible (Rom. 16:16).
2. It has no creed but the Bible, binds no name on the members but that of Christ (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16).
3. It speaks where the Bible speaks, and is silent where the Bible is silent (1 Pet. 4:11).
4. It exalts Christ as the only head of the church (Col. 1:18).
5. Because the acts of worship are patterned after the New Testament (John 4:24).
6. It teaches that Scriptural unity can be obtained in all disputed doctrinal questions (1 Cor. 1:10).
7. The church of Christ pleads for unity of all believers in Christ (John 17:20-21).
8. It is not a denomination, nor group of denominations, but the body of Christ (Col. 1:18). It was founded by Christ Himself (Mat. 16:18).
9. The aim of the church—to save lost souls by preaching the Gospel; teaching godly living, and helping those in need (1 Cor. 15:1, 4).
10. The future of the church—eternal glory with Christ (1 The. 4:17).

Author Unknown

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Please Remember

December 12

Deacons' meeting will be held
before the afternoon service, in
room 1.

December 19

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.

December 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium.

Gospel Meeting
with Tim Cozad

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Internet Website: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

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Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Give, and God Will Bless You

Ken Chumbley

On the Aiken-Augusta highway, there is a church building with a big sign out front: “Holy St. John Temple” underneath it states, “Help and God will bless.” This time of year, we are confronted with the folk outside of stores with their bells and red buckets seeking to get shoppers to put money in the bucket. During the summer months, we often find young people outside of businesses seeking to raise funds for various projects, either selling items or offering car washes. Some of these are community projects, but many are religious organizations and churches seeking to raise funds. With youth groups from churches, it is often a car wash, with inappropriately dressed young ladies, to raise funds for their activities or “mission trips.” Whether these religious groups and churches make a specific state-

ment like the one mentioned above, they strongly imply that contribution to their religious cause that “God will bless.”

But is that so? Can we, as Christians, contribute to such causes and have God bless us? The answer of Scripture is “**No**” for at least two reasons.

First, we are taught not to have fellowship with the “unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). When we give to religious groups and churches, we have fellowship with them by sharing the bounty that God blessed us. Do these religious groups and churches (and those with the bells and red buckets) raise funds for the Salvation Army’s work (which is a church—a visit to their web site—www.salvationarmy.org—will quickly confirm that they are) teach the truth? A study of the beliefs and

practices of such groups will confirm that they are not. That being so, they are indeed “unfruitful works of darkness” in the eyes of the Lord as they are false teachers giving false hope. Thus, rather than having fellowship with the purveyors of error, we should “reprove them.”

But someone might ask, what if those seeking to raise funds in this manner proclaim that they represent a church of Christ? Can we then support such work with God’s blessing? Indeed, some congregations have practiced such activities to raise funds for the work of the church—car washes, sales from the trunks of cars, etc. However, such is a violation of Scripture. The Lord’s people are taught to give voluntarily of their means, as they have been prospered on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7). There

is no authority in the Scriptures for the Lord’s people to go to the world to raise funds for the church’s work. Thus, to support such would again place a faithful Christian in violation of Ephesians 5:11.

What about non-religious groups that conduct such fundraisers such as band boosters, football boosters, and a host of other causes might be asked. If we desire to help such causes, there is no sin involved and might help a good cause in the community.

However, when it comes to God blessing our giving, it will only come as we give cheerfully as we have prospered to the work of the Lord (2 Cor. 9:7) through our contribution on the first day of the week.

May we indeed give in such a way that God will bless us.

Deceased

We Would Like for Every Member to Answer the Following:

1. How many people in this church have I helped lead to Christ? ____
2. How many people do I **now** have my heart set on to win to Christ? ____
3. To what extent have I gone to try to win these people? ____
4. Approximately how many hours (or minutes) per week do I average talking to people about the Lord? ____
5. Have I tried to teach a lost soul **today**? ____
6. How many times have I felt it **was not my place** to help convert lost souls? ____ In other words, how many
7. How often do I pray for certain individuals to obey the Lord or be restored to faithful Christian duty? ____
8. If each Christian would win as many souls to Christ for one year as I have, how many additions would a church the size of this one have? ____
9. Do I ever pray **fervently** that I might become a better soul winner? ____
10. Do I **sincerely try** to help that prayer be answered? ____
11. Am I generally embarrassed to con-

- verse with people about Christ? _____
12. Do I know enough Scripture to help one become a Christian? _____
 13. Do I honestly feel that I am my brother's keeper and that his salvation may depend **largely** upon me? _____
 14. Have I offered the excuse, "**I don't know how,**" for not doing personal work? _____
 15. Do I think I can ever really learn how until I try? _____
 16. When do I plan to begin? _____
 17. Has it ever occurred to me that many will die and go to God unprepared

- while I am wasting time thinking I do not know how? _____
18. Do I feel that a person **must be paid** for this kind of work? _____
 19. Am I interested enough in heaven, and does it mean enough to me that I earnestly desire others to go with me? _____
 20. Do I believe what God says? _____

Remember: God knows what I really can and **cannot** do!

Now file this in your Bible where it can be seen!

Author Unknown

A Noble Utterance

Benjamin Franklin

We intend to keep the kingdom of God in view, in all its parts, as the Lord gave it, and maintain it, *in every particular*, accepting nothing narrower, more limited or circumscribed. The kingdom of God, the body of Christ, or the church is the institution, and the only one of divine authority. To be a citizen in the kingdom, or a member of the body, and do our part there, is our chief delight. To labor to introduce citizens; to build up and extend the kingdom of God; to keep out and drive away all things that offend, scatter, or waste the kingdom, shall be one of our aims the coming year.

The teaching of the Scriptures, the whole Scriptures, and nothing but the Scriptures, in their true intent and application, shall be another of our aims. In all integrity we shall maintain the Gospel, without anything

added or taken away, without any perversion from man or angel. The teaching of Christ and the apostles, in all things, shall be maintained. We want Bible things and nothing else. For these we can find Bible names. There is not a reason why we should not have Bible things and Bible names for them, if we still have in us the love of Bible things and Bible names. We shall constantly strive for this in the love of truth and of Christ. We shall strive to have the good of the people at heart, and in all meekness, simplicity, and humility labor to teach them "the right way of the Lord." We shall do this with such plainness, point, and force that they will understand us. We shall try to be right in the first place, and then speak with sufficient clearness.

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BEACON

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How to Convince the World That We Are the People of God

Franklin Camp

Since the dawn of the Restoration, we have been trying to get the world to recognize us as the people of God. We have reminded them that “We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent.” This is a good slogan and true to the Scriptures.

But what does the Bible say about convincing people that we are disciples of Christ? Let Christ answer:

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (Luke 13:34-35).

Could this be the main reason that we have not been able to convince the world that we are the people of God?

Look at the situation in John 13. Christ is standing in the shadow of the cross. The disciples are angry and full of resentment toward one another. They are fighting and quarreling about which one will wash feet. Such action might be expected from people of the world but surely not the Lord’s disciples. Christ knew that the difference in temperament and the jealousies which he had witnessed would alienate them from one another unless some powerful, cohesive force were found to hold those in check.

This mutual love would be the badge of discipleship and a foundation for unity. **The disciples were ready to fight for a throne**

but not for a towel. A lack of love for one another has caused too many of us to fight for places rather than a towel.

John 13 shows that purity of faith by itself will not bring unity. The men to whom Christ gave this example and command would be infallible in their teaching. They would be guided by the Holy Spirit and would not be subject to erring in teaching. Christ realized that infallible men in teaching while lacking in love, would not save or convince the world that they were His disciples. If infallible men needed love for

one another to ensure unity, how much more do we, that are fallible, need it? Furthermore, infallibility did not do away with all matters of judgment. Some things were left up to judgment even of the apostles, not in their teaching, but other matters. For example, the question that arose between Paul and Barnabas about whether to take Mark was a matter of judgment (Acts 15:36-41). Thus, even the apostles needed love to hold them together in matters of judgment.

Deceased

The Christian's Hope

Adron Doran

The hope, which a Christian possesses, is far greater in substance than mere wishful thinking. The writer of the Hebrews letter said, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, who had been "called to be saints":

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it* (Rom. 8:24-25).

That is why Christians base their hope on the substance of faith and their faith on evidence.

Hope compares with such words as desire, expect, anticipate, wait, and look for. My hope is weak if these aspects of my hope are weak. The apostle Paul wrote, "But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly:

wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16).

Again,

According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death (Phi. 1:20).

Further:

For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come (1 The. 1:9-10).

Finally, Peter wrote:

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such

things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace (2 Pet. 3:13-14).

Hope and similar terms are used in the Bible to contrast it with despair. The apostle Paul wrote that the Ephesians were at one time “without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12; cf. 1 The. 4:13). But he adds, “now in Christ Jesus ye...are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13). That is why the apostle was able to write to the Colossian brethren and say:

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27).

The apostle Paul continues to admonish the Galatians, “let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9). He is saying to them, in farm language, that in preparing the soil for the sowing of the seed and spending the growing season in watering and cultivating the crop, they should not become weary and faint because their hope will be realized in the fall at the time of gathering and harvesting the produce.

The Christian’s hope becomes “an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast” (Heb.

6:19). When Robert Owen, the atheist, visited Alexander Campbell at his farm in Bethany, Virginia, Campbell took him out in the pasture to show him his prized cattle. Owen pointed out one of the cakes and said to Campbell, “I am just like that animal; neither of us has any fear of death.” “Yes,” replied Campbell, “but neither of you has hope.”

N. B. Hardeman would describe Hell to his Bible classes at Freed-Hardeman College as “a place where hope is a stranger and mercy has never been found.” The Christian’s hope is built upon our desire and expectation that God can and will keep His promise (Tit. 1:2). The apostle Paul wrote that love “believeth all things, hopeth all things” (1 Cor. 13:7). The apostle Peter encourages us to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). It is surely true that our hope is deepened when it is challenged, and we can defend our hope against all questions.

Deceased

A Rule of Three

Three things to govern—temper, tongue, and conduct;

Three things to cultivate—courage, affection, and gentleness;

Three things to commend—thrift, industry, and promptness;

Three things to despise—cruelty, arrogance, and ingratitude;

Three things to wish for—health, friends, and contentment;

Three things to admire—dignity, gracefulness, and intellectual power;

Three things to give—alms to the needy, comfort to the sad, and appreciation to the worthy.

Author Unknown

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Carla Burluson Linda Worley
Bill & Peggy Crowe

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathies are extended to Nelda King in the death of her sister, Thelma Richards, on December 15. Please keep Nelda and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

December 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

Directory Update

John Hastie's new address is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Gospel Meeting with Tim Cozad

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BEACON

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If Each Church Member Were Just Like Me

Hoyt Bailey

If each member reached the service at the same time as me, what time would that be?

If each one attended Sunday morning Bible study like me, how many would there be?

If each one studied the lesson like me, how much study would there be?

If each one was as reverent as me, how much reverence would there be?

If each one developed his talent like me, how much development would there be?

If each one read the Bible like me, how much reading the Bible would there be?

If each one prayed like me, how often would the praying be?

If each one would sing like me, what kind of singing would there be?

If each member worshiped like me, what kind of worship would it be?

If each member gave like me, how much giving would there be?

If each member sacrificed like me, how much sacrifice would there be?

If each one visited the sick like me, how many sick visited would there be?

If each one ministered to orphans like me, how much ministering to orphans would there be?

If each member invited others like me, how many guests would there be?

If each member stayed at home with company like me, how many at worship would there be?

If each member converted others like me, how many conversions would there be?

If each member loved the lost like me, how many of the lost saved could there be?

If each member were as businesslike in the church as me, what kind of religious business would there be?

If each member complained like me, how much complaining would there be?

If each member were as contrary as me, how contrary would the congregation be?

If each one loved peace like me, how perfect would that peace be?

If each one loved work like me, how much work in the congregation would there be?

If each one loved good attendance on Sunday and Wednesday nights like me, how great would the attendance be?

If each one hated gossip like me, how little gossip would there be?

If each one wanted to see God's righteousness prosper like me, how great would righteous prosperity be?

If each one wanted the Gospel given to sinners on the printed page like me, how much passing of tracts and papers would there be?

If each one wanted to see the congregation grow like me, how much work, study, attendance, praying, and inviting others would there be?

If each one in the church were self-willed, like me, where would the harmony be?

If each one loved sleeping and riding on Sunday evening like me, how many would there be at the Sunday night worship service?

If each one had Sunday morning headaches like me, how many would miss the worship and yet at Monday's work be?

If each one makes excuses like me, where would the faithful workers and worshipers be?

Should I or Should I Not???

Should I do it or not? Is it right or wrong? Perhaps the following test will help us.

- Scriptural Test: Does the Word of God endorse it or not?
- Personal Test: Will doing this make me better or worse?
- Character Test: How will it influence me morally and spiritually?
- Family Test: Will it dishonor, discredit, or embarrass my family?
- Social Test: Will doing it influence others for better or worse?
- Practical Test: Will the results of doing it be desirable?
- Universal Test: If everyone did this would society be better?
- Stewardship Test: Will it be a waste of God-given talent?
- Publicity Test: Would I be willing for others to know about it?
- Common Sense Test: Does plain common sense approve it?
- Fairness Test: Is it honestly practicing the Golden Rule?
- Enslavement Test: Can I become a slave to it?

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil”
(1 The. 5:21-22).

Author Unknown

If each one used all the week for earthly gain and missed the worship like me, what would the destiny of our souls be? (See Luke 12, 16).

If each one wanted a successful meeting this year and would drop secular affairs, postpone vacations, and begin earnest work

for the meeting like me, how successful would the meeting be?

Inasmuch as each one at the judgment is to receive for what he has done, whether good or bad, what will my reward be? (2 Cor. 5:10).

Deceased

Wait on the Lord

H. M. Phillips

This principle in the Old Testament stood as a command (Psa. 27:14). There were reasons given for such promising strength (Isa. 40:31): inheriting the earth (Psa. 37:9), the Lord is good to them and waits for Him (Lam. 3:25). The apostles were told to wait for the promise of the Lord (Acts 1:4). This is a needed lesson today, and well, might we with care consider it.

Abraham and his wife got into serious trouble by not waiting for the Lord when they planned for the handmaid to bear a son. At the Red Sea, the people were restless, and the command was to stand still. In this age, people are in too big a hurry to get through with the assembly's services and go to things of their own pleasure. No ball game, boxing match, show, or race lasting, but twenty or thirty minutes would be well received by the ones present. But a sermon longer than thirty minutes becomes tiresome to many who claim to love the Lord and His Word. Our work and plans for a day of pleasing us often

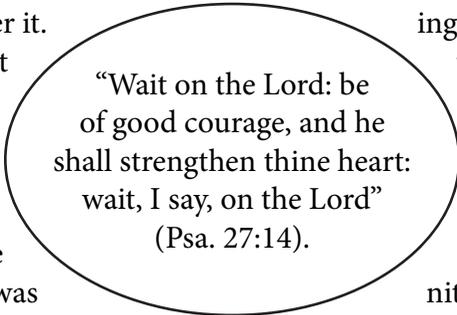
set aside the Lord's plan or rush through so that it is not well in mind. Our own business is so much better than the Lord's that we can set His aside and feel that we will be fine just carrying on ours!

People often run ahead in religious matters, not waiting to see what the Lord says in His Word to do, but going by their feelings

or what they think, and then expecting the Lord to save, regardless of whether they have done what was commanded or not. Some day such will be sadly disappointed, and that for eternity. But most people are too

busy to give much time to the study of the Bible to see what the Lord desires to be done and talk as though a bit of sincerity will make up for all that is needed. Wait on the Lord would mean to let Him direct the way, and His directions are found in His Word now. To that, we must go and learn what that is and obey it to be saved. Will we do this?

Deceased



“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord” (Psa. 27:14).

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Please Remember

December 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium.

January 2, 2022

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out.

January 9, 2022

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room 1.



**Gospel Meeting
with Tim Cozad**

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meeting.html](http://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html)

Facebook Page

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YouTube Channel

[https://www.youtube.com/c/
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Sermon Outlines

[http://www.bellviewcoc.com/
sermons.html](http://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons.html)