



BEACON

Vol. LV / No. 31

August 3, 2026

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

"Accepting Christ"

G. K. Wallace

Words are signs of ideas. It is important that we ask, "What is the idea conveyed by the words that are being used?" We constantly hear such expressions as "accepting Christ," "total commitment," "a full surrender," and "receiving Christ as your personal Saviour." What do men mean by these terms?

I have been listening to denominational preachers for 40 or 50 years and I think I know what they are saying. There was a time when sectarian preachers were constantly making fun of what Jesus said in Mark 16:16 and what Peter said in Acts 2:38. They would refer to my brethren as "water ducks" and "mossbacks." They would laugh at John 3:5 and say, "only three things are born of water. They are mosquitoes, tadpoles, and Campbellites." Of course, Jesus did not say be born of water. He said be born of "water and the Spirit." I am neither a mosquito, tadpole, nor a Campbellite, and I was not born of water. I was born of "water and the Spirit."

In generations past and present, denominational preachers have used special terms to deny that a person is to be born of water and the Spirit and that baptism is for the remission of sins. Their approach to this is by saying you must "accept Christ." By this, they mean you are to skip baptism because they say baptism "is not part of the grace of God."

When they talk about "preaching Christ," they mean you are to disregard "the words of Christ."

When they talk about a "total commitment," they skip the commandments of Jesus Christ and "let your conscience be your guide." When sectarian preachers talk about "surrendering to Christ," they mean "avoid" obedience to the Gospel of Christ. When sectarian preachers talk about receiving a "personal Saviour," they mean, "Christ comes into the life of the alien sinner separate and apart from obeying the Gospel of Christ."

When the evangelist Philip preached Christ, the eunuch asked to be baptized (Acts 8:35-36). How can one preach Christ and not tell a man to be baptized? How can one accept Christ and, at the same time, refuse to be baptized? Accepting Christ has always meant accepting what Christ taught. When Peter concluded his great sermon on Pentecost, the record says, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized" (2:41). The people on Pentecost received Christ by receiving His Word. All who rejected Peter's words rejected Christ.

Only those who accepted the teachings of Christ while He was here in person accepted Christ. Likewise, all who come to Christ today must do so by the teachings and instructions given by Him. Christ draws all men through teaching (John 6:44-45). When the apostles went out to preach the great commission, they were thereby preaching Christ. This was the burden of all their discourses. The prophet said, "thy children *shall be* taught of the LORD" (Isa. 54:13).

Therefore, all who have been properly taught, through the living oracles concerning Jesus of Nazareth and have obeyed those words, have come to Him.

Christianity has never changed. Its laws and ordinances are still the same as they were in the first century. It is ridiculous, absurd, and sectarian to talk to people about coming to Christ and leave the impression that they can do so without doing what Jesus taught. To deny that baptism is a part of the grace of God is to deny the Bible. If baptism does not belong to the grace of God, it belongs to the *grace* of the devil. If you have been baptized, your baptism is either of the grace of God or the grace of the devil.

Suppose you are sick and nigh unto death. Your beloved doctor calls to see you, diagnoses your case, and tells you that he is positive he can be of assistance and effect a cure. You rejoice at hearing his words and then he picks up his pen and begins to write. You turn to him and ask, "What is that you're doing, doctor?" The physician replies, "I'm writing a prescription suited to your case which you should carefully take according to my instructions."

Then suppose you say, "Doctor, I can have nothing to do with your pills and powders. I believe in you! I want you personally, but your

pills and powders can have no place in my life and cannot be a part nor a means of healing. My confidence is in you. The physician would likely reply, "He that rejects my remedy, rejects me, and he that has no confidence in what I prescribe as a means of healing, has no confidence in me" (cf. John 12:48).

Acts was written to illustrate the laws of the kingdom of God and particularly those that relate to primary obedience. Such examples as the conversion of Saul and the eunuch (Acts 22:16; 8:35-37) make the way of obedience so plain that only the most prejudiced can fail to understand what to do to be saved. It should be our custom today to preach with the same vigour and force that was characteristic of pioneer preachers of previous generations. Human nature has not changed, and it will ever remain the same. The needs of man are the same and the answer to those needs were revealed in the Word of God 2,000 years ago.

As it did for the eunuch and Paul, the blood of Christ still cleanses men today who believe in Christ (John 8:24), repent of their sins (Luke 13:3), confess that faith (Mat. 10:32; Rom. 10:10), and are baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

Deceased

We're Part of The Family

Mike Demory

God is our Father. We are His children. That makes us brethren. That makes us family. But **we are not family in name alone**. There is a body of work that accompanies this body of believers, a responsibility to be borne by all. And we need every part doing its part. Jesus teaches in Matthew 25:31-46 that when we serve our brethren, we serve our Brother Himself. And even the smallest deeds of kindness, things like feeding the hungry and visiting the sick, are of first importance to our Father. Let us not wait too late to labor. **There is work we can all do right now**. And when we spend ourselves in His service, we can rest assured that **our names** are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Mexico, MO

God's Description of Those Who Have Fallen by the Wayside

A. G. Hobbs

Jesus came to seek and to save sinners (Luke 5:31-32; 19:10). He cannot save the self-righteous. Men must recognize their sinful condition and their need for salvation. The alien sinner must do so, and the erring child of God must also realize his lost condition and come back to his first love. In the Old Testament, God frequently referred to His erring children as “backsliding children” and pleaded with them thus: “Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God,... Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord” (Jer. 3:13-14). Let us now turn to the New Testament and God's description of the one who has ceased to serve Him faithfully.

He has left his first love. This is what the church at Ephesus had done (Rev. 2:4). They were admonished to repent and do the first works, lest their candlestick be removed (2:5). The first love of a Christian is characterized by joy, zeal, and faithfulness.

He is an unfruitful branch. This is taught in John 15:1-8. It is necessary that the followers of Christ abide in Him and bear fruit to stay saved, and to be saved eternally in heaven.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned (15:5-6).

He is a foolish virgin. He is not keeping his spiritual lamp trimmed and his light burning. The Lord may come any hour, and the backslider will surely be unprepared (Mat. 25:1-13).

He has erred from the truth. This may be in either doctrine, religious practice in worship, or in conduct in daily life, or all three. Only the truth can make one free and saved. When one has erred from the truth, he has erred from that by

which he must reach Christ and acceptance by Him (Jam. 5:19).

He is spiritually dead. To convert the brother who has erred from the truth means saving a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins (Jam. 5:20). This is spiritual death because all must die a physical death (Heb. 9:27-28). Again, we read, “But she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1 Tim. 5:6). Death means separation, not annihilation. Remember that this is God's description of the backslider.

The backslider is in a worse condition than he was before conversion. The Scriptures are plain, and this fact cannot be denied.

For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire (2 Pet. 2:21-22).

God's description of the true spiritual standing of the backslider is indeed startling. If this is your condition, we kindly urge you to resolve to do something about it now.

Deceased

“What we want is permanence. It is one beauty of the Christian revelation that it uses all the symbols of a home to give our hearts rest in the thought of departure; that is what we want, that has been dearest, after all, to judge and soldier, merchant and statesman, monarch and peasant—and home! Yes, no image of court or temple is so inspiring as this, my Father's house.”

W. M. Statham, Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

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

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

[https://www.youtube.com/c/
BellviewChurchOfChrist](https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist)

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Sheila Myrick, who passed away on August 2. Sheila was a faithful member of the Bellview congregation. She always had a smile and a cheerful word for everyone. Please keep Sheila's family in your prayers and provide any assistance they may need.

Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Linda Parks

Please Remember

August 16

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

Weekly Services

Sunday

Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

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

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley
Michael Hatcher

Minister: Bill Busch
Tim Cozad