

# The Gospel Preceptor

*Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Psa 119:104*

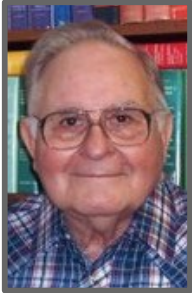
Volume 6, No. 10

Published Monthly At Elk City, Oklahoma

October, 2023

## What's Wrong With the Baptist Church?

**William E. Wallace**



The question implies criticism. People think of religious criticism as bigotry. Criticism is perfectly justifiable in the realm of politics, social philosophy and such like, but if one criticizes religious convictions or systems he immediately is classified as a bigot in the eyes of many. Such conception of bigotry is a misconception, and such charges constitute a misappropriation of the word and a false accusation. What is a bigot? Webster says, "One obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his own church, party, belief, or opinion." Those who are contending earnestly for the faith once delivered

are not guilty on that score. Preachers of the gospel, generally speaking, have always been more than willing to reason with advocates of denominational persuasion, ready to yield to truth in honest reasoning and argumentation—thus they are not guilty of obstinacy. God's people contend for the faith once delivered and combat false teaching as per the instruction of God's word. In so doing they are not contending for their own system of religious philosophy, but they are contending for God's scheme of redemption. The fact that they are always ready and willing to meet representatives of denominational schools of thought in private or public discussion, manifests their attitude and tolerance relative to seeking truth. So mere religious criticism is not bigotry. Folks ought not to shy away from controversy. A man is not a good man unless he engages in some controversy in life—he must fight evil within himself, and oppose evil without, which would corrupt him and his associates—and that involves controversy. Life **is** controversy, and people expect dispute in every realm of activity—but some shy away from it in the field of religion. While it is true that much religious controversy is of an ill-natured sort and seems to produce no good effects, the fact remains that anything which stands opposed to God's will, must be opposed by God's people, and it should be known that through honest clear-cut controversy truth can be ascertained. Bible examples are in order. Job engaged in controversy with the princes of Edom. Elijah, Amos and a host of other prophets of God debated with the evil forces of their day. John the Baptist and Jesus Christ were in controversy with the evil forces of their day. Paul and his companions in the gospel were constantly in dispute with elements within the church and with the world outside the church. All of this was in interest of God's will, not in interest of any personal whims or conceptions. Thus these men were not bigots, and neither are those who contend for God's will in this day and age, in any sense of the word.

Now when we talk about things wrong with the Baptist Church we are quite aware of the fact that there are things wrong in the church of Christ. But there is a great difference between the type of wrongs existing in the Baptist system and the kinds of wrongs seen in the Lord's church. In the Lord's church the wrongs lie with the people, not with the institution, not with its make-up, not with the founder and authority of the glorious ship of Zion. Certainly there are wrongs in the Baptist Church which come in the same classification of those things wrong in the church of Christ. The difference is, the church of Christ can clean up her errors and the people can get to heaven through the Christian system seen in the Lord's church. But though the Baptist Church can likewise correct moral and religious shortcomings in daily living, its system of religion is one

that does not constitute **the way** spoken of in the Bible and thus its people cannot get to heaven through it, and that is what is wrong with it.

While both the Baptist Church and the Lord's church have moral and religious problems to be corrected, one is a man made religious institution and the other is God's institution, the body of Christ. That is what makes the difference. So when we talk about what is wrong with the Baptist Church we are not trying to cast a mote out of its eyes when there are beams in our own—we are pointing out that the Baptist system of religion is one that does not exist by the authority of God, and that is what is wrong with it. While we exalt the Lord's church as the Lord's way of salvation, we are quite aware of the fact that we must continually warn against laxity in the membership, immorality in backsliding, growing indifference and doctrinal departures. We can clean up the wrongs in the church of Christ and get to heaven through the church, because it is God's institution of saved people. But no amount of house cleaning in the Baptist Church will change it into God's institution—it would have to disband and its people must be added to Christ's church, by God, in their obedience. People are in the Baptist Church by vote of man and by unscriptural baptism, people are in the Lord's church because **God** has put them there.

So our first point is, the Baptist Church and the New Testament Church constitute different systems of religion. They are different in name, organization, doctrine, worship, foundation and founder. Members of the church of Christ can sing “Onward Christian Soldiers” in confidence, without any human additions. Baptists, to be correct and consistent must sing “Onward Baptist Soldiers.” If they attach *Christian* to Baptist and sing “Onward Baptist Christian Soldiers” then they imply that there are kinds of Christians beside Baptist Christians and stand in opposition to Paul who said there is “one faith” (Eph. 4:6). If they sing “Onward Christian Soldiers” and leave out *Baptist* then they show that the idea in the word Christian does not include Baptist “Christians.” The Baptist Church is another faith, a second faith, an additional religious system. Paul said there was one, Christ prayed that his disciples be one, and in considering the fact that Baptist theology and makeup is a great contrast to what is seen in the church of Christ, we must conclude that they both cannot be the “one faith.”

The second thing wrong with the Baptist Church is, it has made a mockery of baptism in its contention on the one hand that it is not essential, yet on the other hand, they contend that it is necessary in order to get into the Baptist Church, the church **they say** is the Lord's church. Baptists fight for the truth regarding the nature of baptism—it is immersion. They stand opposed to infant baptism, and emphasize what they call believer's baptism. Yet after the smoke of controversy settles, when calmness follows their clashes with pedo-baptists, they **complacently assert that baptism is not essential to the salvation of the soul**. The irony of it!

I have a book before me—the great Graves-Ditzler debate of the 19th century. Graves was the Baptist scholar and Ditzler, the Methodist. This book contains 1200 pages and the greater part of it is given to the discussion of the “mode” of baptism, infant baptism and believer's baptism. Yet Baptists say baptism is **not essential** for salvation. They teach a man is saved without it. What is wrong with the Baptist Church? It makes a great fuss about something which it says is non-essential.

I also have before me the *Baptist Western Recorder*, a weekly publication in Kentucky. The editor, R.T. Skinner, is exposing with lament, the liberal stand taken by the First Baptist Church of Chicago, Illinois. The Chicago church changed its constitution to allow the acceptance of those in full membership who had been baptized in infancy without requiring them to be immersed. The Chicago church has surrendered the Baptist doctrine on baptism and is now allowing those sprinkled in infancy to become members in good and full standing without immersion. Note that it has a constitution to go by—that's their creed, and **their creed is not the Bible**. The editor is greatly disturbed over the matter. But why should he be? Baptism is non-essential to salvation you see. The Chicago church realizes that being non-essential to salvation there is no need of letting baptism stand between the church and new members. I dare say that there will be a great trend in years to come among Baptists to lower the standards of

church membership and people will come into the Baptist Church in droves when they learn they do not have to be immersed in water. The editor says “the compromise gate leads into the road of full collapse.” But if the thing they are compromising is non-essential to salvation why should they worry?

My next objection to the Baptist Church is, Baptists cast a shadow of reflection of the Lord's church in asserting that one is saved before he gets into it and can be saved without it. That makes the Lord's church unnecessary. No, it just **makes the Baptist Church** unnecessary. Millions of people are paying tithes, spending valuable time and a great number suffer unpleasant experiences in an institution that is absolutely unnecessary. We are told by Baptists that baptism puts you into the Baptist Church, yet it does not save you. Therefore it takes more to get into the Baptist Church than it does to get into heaven. I think more of the Lord's church than that. Christ died on the cross, shed his blood, purchased the church. I have always thought One was supposed to get equal value for the purchase price. And, I think Jesus was a good business man. Is the church equal in value to the purchase price, the blood of Christ, or did Christ get cheated? Is the blood of Christ essential for salvation, why not then the church which he purchased with that blood. I am speaking of the church now as a system. It is God's system, and it is necessary for salvation—Christ purchased it with his blood, and we come in contact with his blood in the act of baptism. The act of baptism puts one into the church (Rom. 6:1-7; Col. 2:12). Baptism saves us (1 Pet. 3:21) and God adds to the church those who are being saved (Acts 2:47). **God forbid** that anyone take the position **that God's church is not essential to salvation**. The church is spoken of as God's house, its members are God's children. We are heirs of God's promises because we are His children. We are His children because we are in His house.

Baptists have defeated the principle of peculiarity in the eyes of many people by teaching that once a man is saved he cannot be lost. This is my next objection to the Baptist Church. A Christian is to be peculiar, unspotted from the world. His morals must be high, his character should be blameless. Christians must strive for the high ideal of perfection. There are incentives set forth in the New Testament which lead the Christian on toward perfection. He must add to his faith, virtue, knowledge, self control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love (2 Pet. 1:5-7). If he does these things, said Peter, he shall not fall. On one hand the Christian has a hope of heaven, if he strives lawfully (1 Tim. 2:4). On the other hand there is the warning of falling from grace and the consequence—eternal damnation. Peter said “the last state is worse with them than the first” relative to those who turn back (2 Pet. 2:21). But Baptist doctrine teaches that once a man is saved he stays saved, he cannot be lost. He cannot sin so as to be eternally lost. Recently I listened to a series of radio programs in which a Baptist preacher asserted that most of the corruption, wars, immorality, and debauchery in Christendom today are results of the doctrine of “baptismal regeneration.” He asserted that when people are taught that their sins are washed away in baptism, especially in infant baptism, that they naturally become corrupt because they go through life thinking they are all right. The preponderance of sin in areas where infant baptism prevails, said he, is the result of the idea of baptismal regeneration. Well, I should mention here that the Bible does not teach baptismal regeneration. **It teaches regeneration through obedient faith** which of course includes baptism. But the pastor overlooked the fact that his doctrine of “once in grace always in grace” is by far a greater incentive to sin than that of baptismal regeneration in infancy. For if a man thinks he is saved, and cannot be lost, then he is more apt to indulge in vice and corruption than the man who was taught his original sin was washed away in baptism. You can see that Catholics teach that original sin was washed away in sin, but they teach that one must confess to the priest, purchase indulgences and such like for the welfare of one's soul. But the consequence of Baptist doctrine is perpetual laxity in morals. I realize of course that Baptists fight all phases of immorality—fornication, dancing, liquor, gambling, et cetera. Nevertheless a good Baptist who engages in any of those vices will not be lost, according to their doctrine. That is what is wrong with the Baptist Church.

The next thing I list as **What's Wrong With The Baptist Church** is their attitude toward obedience to God. They teach that the only obedience necessary is that of faith.

They reason that if a man is saved in his obedience then he would have to obey all commands, not just Baptism, and that if a man fails to obey every single command, then he would be lost—that is, if it is necessary to obey God in order to be saved. Thus they minimize God's commands. They make God's commands mere optional suggestions for man in this life. Paul said we must work out our salvation (Philp. 2:12), and Peter said we purify our souls in obedience (1 Pet. 1:21).

James taught that our faith is dead without works and the second chapter of James rises to haunt Baptist preachers every time they speak on salvation by faith only. They will argue of course that salvation is by grace and not of works and we agree. Salvation is not earned or merited by the works of man, but salvation is not granted or given until man has satisfactorily submitted to the commands, the works of God. We will be judged according to our works (Rom. 2:6; 1 Cor. 3:13). Baptists cannot see how that a man can be saved by grace if he must work out his salvation. They believe obedience nullifies grace. But if and when they ascertain how it is that man is saved by faith and repentance in obedience to God then they ought to see how that man is saved by faith, repentance and baptism in obedience to God. They have never learned that faith that saves, is faith that obeys, or that saving faith is obedient faith. What James said about faith apart from works being dead has never registered on Baptist preachers, and they will talk loud and long about faith including repentance, or repentance including faith, but will deny that faith includes any other kind of obedience.

There are countless other objections to be listed against the Baptist system of religion. I have listed four: Baptists make a mockery of baptism in their doctrine concerning it, they cast reflection on the Lord's church in their doctrine denying its essentiality, they defeat the principle of Christian peculiarity in their doctrine once in grace always in grace, and they have minimized the importance of obedience, making God's commands mere optional suggestions.

The Baptist system is a Protestant system of theology developed from confusion of the reformatory reactions of the 16th and 17th centuries. Baptist theology is based on heresy handed down through the centuries, some of which comes directly from the Roman Catholic Church itself. It cannot be the New Testament church because it is different in name, organization, doctrine, foundation, origin and worship than that institution we read about in God's New Testament.

When Baptist people learn and realize that we are not trying to exalt ourselves over them as individuals, when they learn that we are not trying to get them to join “our church,” when they do see that we are merely contending for the faith once delivered, they will come out of that religious denomination like a host of others have done down through the years.

We must emphasize that the **church of Christ is not “our denomination,”** we must point out that it is **not a denomination at all.** We must show by our action and our teaching and our lives that this system of religion we uphold and advocate is the faith once delivered, and that our hope is in Christ and his body, not in man and his denominations. In this we are not bigots, we are Christian soldiers.

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## Links to Bible Study Resources

**The Scripture Cache**

**Precept Upon Precept You Tube**

**Spiritual Perspectives – Gary Summers**

**Yukon, Okla. church of Christ**

**Berea church of Christ, Rives, TN**

**South Seminole church of Christ**

**The Gospel Banner**

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# The Lechner-Denham Discussion

## On the One Cup Issue, No. 2

**Third Email from Charles Lechner to Daniel Denham June 9, 2023**

June 9, 2023

Brother, if as you say I was sarcastic to you I apologize, that is never my intent. However, it is hard to write and ask questions of someone else and have them understand it in the manner it was meant to be received. For that I am sorry.

As for Brett Hickey, yes, I know him and consider him to be a dear friend and brother. I only mentioned him and his book so that you would know I got the source from someone else it was not my words or thought. I am not a bible (sic) scholar, an evangelist, a trained debater or a skilled writer. I am just a guy that has looked at this issue with an open heart and mind. I am not a paid church leader that would lose an income if I decided to move congregations. I know that would be hard for folks, but we are talking about our salvation and those we influence.

Your comments about; snuff glass or a Mason jar, meet in a building built and owned by the brethren, sit “but don’t recline” in pews, reclined on another’s “bosom,” many lights, the aid of a sound system, amplifier, microphone, and such like, etc. is just silly to me. You know as well as I do none of that has anything to do with our worship service.

Let us look at the real issue from **scripture**;

- THE CUP
- Matthew 26:27-30 27 Then He took **the** [singular, i-Gk] **cup** [singular], and gave thanks, and gave **it** [singular, i-Gk] to them, saying, “Drink from it [singular], all of you.” 28 For **this** [singular] **is** [singular] My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.” 30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (6 times)
- Mark 14:23-26 23 Then He took **the** [singular, i-Gk] **cup** [singular] and when He had given thanks He gave **it** [singular, i-Gk] to them, and they all drank from **it** [singular]. 24 And He said to them, “**This** [singular] **is** [singular] My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. 25 Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink **it** [singular] new in the kingdom of God.” 26 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (7 times)
- Luke 22:20 20 Likewise He also took **the** [singular] **cup** [singular] after supper, saying, “**This** [singular] **cup** [singular] **is** [singular, i-Gk] the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” (5 times)
- 1 Corinthians 10:16 16 **The** [singular] **cup** [singular] of blessing which we bless, **is** [singular] **it** [singular] not the communion of the blood of Christ? (4 times)
- 1 Corinthians 11:25 25 In the same manner He also took **the** [singular] **cup** [singular] after supper, saying, “**This** [singular] **cup** [singular] **is** [singular] the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink **it** [singular, i-Gk], in remembrance of Me.” (6 times)
- 1 Corinthians 11:26-29 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink **this** [singular, i-Gk] **cup** [singular], you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks **this** [singular] **cup** [singular] of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of **the** [singular] **cup** [singular]. 29 For he who eats and drinks 36 in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (6 times)



The use of a single cup is clearly expressed 34 times. How many times was a plurality even hinted at? Of course, the answer is zero. Yet, you have a plurality of cups so, again, here is my question in light of the article that was written, where is your authority to change singular to plural? It is extremely clear the scriptures are silent on a plurality of cups.

Now, we could do the same for the loaf but right now we are focusing on the cup. Looking at the scriptural example that was demonstrated and explained to the church at Corinth where is the “Mason jar” mentioned? Or the building? Or the chairs? Once again, the answer is zero, there is no need to bring stuff like that up in this discussion.

Is not “Drink from it all of you.” (Matt 26:27) a command? Is not “they all drank from it” (Mark 14:23) an example of them following the command? Is not Paul correcting the way the Corinthians were doing their communion in Chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians? Are we not to understand by Paul’s stern comments in V17 & 22 telling us today that there is a right way and a wrong way to conduct the communion that is pleasing to God? Paul told us he got the instruction for the communion from Jesus and then he passes it on again to the Corinthians. Are not the words “this do” a command to follow what Paul had just explained 1 Cor 11:25? These are actual statements clearly seen in the scriptures, should we not follow to them?

You say, because the scriptures are silent on what type of container to use, that means we can change what was said to a plurality of cups and not follow the commands that were given. Yet at the same time you condemn those that are starting to use musical instruments that make the same case. You are on a slippery slope my friend; you cannot have it both ways.

Ignatius lived from approximately 35-108 A.D. and is an individual who learned his faith directly from John, and I think he was ordained an elder at Antioch by Peter if I remember correctly. I could have that wrong but either way he wrote about the early church and the communion. In his letter to the Philadelphians, Ignatius writes; “Take ye heed, then, to have but one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, **and one cup** to [show forth] the unity of His blood.” Clearly at the time of this writing the early church only used one cup.

Now I have gone over all the verses pertaining to the cup in the communion service. We have seen it is always referenced as a singular cup. We have looked at the commands and read that the disciples followed that command. We have read where the early church clearly used only one cup. We know the scriptures are silent on the use of more than one. Yet, you have put aside the singularity of the scriptures for plurality, you have decided not to listen to the commands of Jesus and not follow the example the disciples gave to us. You condemn me for following the command to use one cup. But you also condemn others for using the same thought process as you do for musical instruments. You state silence is binding yet fail to follow your own statement. When asked for scripture for your practice you provide me with hyperbole about chairs, light, mason jars, etc. Again, where is your scriptural authority to use more than one cup?

In Him,

Charles Lechner

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### Third Email from Daniel Denham to Charles Lechner June 16, 2023

Dear brother Lechner,

(1) As noted in my brief email at the close of last week, you already admitted that the texts you are citing use the term “cup” as metonymy of the container stressing not the container but the contents. What do you not get in that? You gave up your position with that admission. I believe each one of the texts you cited. I, however, do not accept your spin on those texts. I also do not believe that you fully accept the implications of your own dogma relative to those texts, as shall be shown.

(2) Regarding the material from brother Hickey, as you cited him as an authority, he ought to know better than to cite a source and draw a conclusion in the same para-

graph so closely attached to the source's quote that the source did not himself draw. Given the way in which you set forth his statement, he makes it appear that Bullinger was the one drawing the conclusion at the end of the paragraph, when in fact Bullinger did not.

(3) As to your insistence on the one container, for your dogma to be true, you must liquify the container in order to drink **it!!!** Again, what escapes you on that point? You have been repeatedly answered and just keep harping on the same notion already defeated.

(4) Relative to the subject of pews, chairs, glasses, divans, lights, upper rooms, sound systems, microphones, and such like, the point is quite simple: **the very means by which you see all of these as mere expedients also justifies the use of multiple containers in the observance of the Lord's Supper.** If you want Bible texts, then supply one for each of these things which you have admitted is authorized. You will find communion cups in the same texts. What you practice in other areas you deny here on this subject! What do you not grasp on that point? When you go back to meeting in an upper room, not using a sound system, reclining on the bosoms of the brethren on divans rather than sitting on pews, and such like, then you have whereof to make some sort of case on the necessity of one container. At least, you would be practicing what you really are teaching – namely, that the incidental things involved, in an account of action in the Scriptures, constitute essentials. You do not grasp the difference between such incidentals and essentials! You are acting like the brethren who contend that water baptism must be in running water to be valid because John the Baptizer baptized in the Jordan River, which involved the use of running water. You can try to pass that off as “silly” (your first letter) or “hyperbole” (your second) but in the realm of logic, the principles of valid reasoning, an implication is just as true as whatever implies it. These things you allow and practice, but you then deny the very process by which you justify them from being applied to those things you reject in your one cup dogma. You do not like the fact that we refuse to dance to the tune you are piping on that subject.

(5) Furthermore, as to the 10,000 plus members of the Jerusalem church, mocking is not an answer. You have a real problem logistically, for which your dogma provides no remedy. According to your view, the brethren in Jerusalem had to have had an enormous cup or else they in some fashion, with the apostles' participation no less, sinned.

(6) If one of your men at the Lord's table should accidentally drop and break the snuff glass you say you can use as “the cup” about half-way through that portion of the Lord's Supper, what would you do? What do you believe the Bible authorizes you to do? And please give the proof of that from the Bible!

(7) By the way, do you have *the original cup* that the Lord used in instituting the Lord's Supper, as the texts you have made your case on particularly entailed *that specific* container? Paul even wrote, “**This** cup...” (1 Cor. 11:26) and that the Corinthians were to “drink of **that** (Gr. **tou**) cup” (v. 28; NKJV). The article (**tou**) is definite and has reflexive force referencing back to the cup previously identified. Are you ready to go on a quest for what denominationalists call “the Holy Grail”? Given your dogma, you must use *not just any cup or glass or jar* but **the one and only cup you say the Lord used that very night!** Also, as there was but one, according to you, then **you would have to share that same cup all around the world with each congregation** practicing your doctrine. Now, do you that? And do not try to fall back on the charge that such is just “silly,” because that implicates your doctrine as “silly”!

(8) Also, in 1 Corinthians 10:16 Paul, writing from Ephesus, asks, “The cup of blessing which we bless it not the communion of the blood of Christ? ...” Notice, Paul implies that each congregation was doing something that in some way involved “the cup of blessing.” How many total cups would that imply relative to their observance—at least, one for each congregation, would it not? One each for Ephesus and Corinth, at the very least! That's two separate cups. Yet, your dogma implies that only one cup—in fact, the very cup the Lord you say used on the night of His betrayal and arrest—can ever be used. I acknowledge you do not accept that consequence, but that is nonetheless your

dilemma! You must have every congregation in the world using the one and the only cup, which if your interpretation on the force and singularity of “the cup” as referencing that container as necessary. Otherwise, you do not really practice what you preach!

You have another problem in that the text in that it does not mention at all a plate, or saucer, or platter, or basket, or any such item as a container for the bread, but you put your bread on some container of that nature. Where do you get the authority for that? Please, give the book, chapter, and verse explicitly commanding this!

(9) Furthermore, if someone were to accidentally break more of the bread apart before it gets to the next person as sometimes occurs, what then do you do? Start over with a new “loaf”?

(10) Finally, if the two elements are the bread and the fruit of the vine representing respectively the body and blood of Christ, what do the physical containers each represent? Now, remember, you have implied two containers, at the very least, for each of the congregations existing in the whole world as obligatory! That is the force of your own implications, whether you like it or not, or whether you even know it or not. Denial does not make them just miraculously disappear.

Please, consider what I wrote previously about the sin of making laws God did not make as being sin just as setting aside ones He did make is sin (Rev. 22:18-19).

Yours for the Cause of the Gospel,

Daniel Denham

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## Does God Have a Dress Code, or Does He Allow Worshipers to Dress Like Freaks?

Jerry C. Brewer



Culture and Christianity have always been at odds. That includes the way people dress. Look at 100 people in public today, and chances are that about 99 of them will be clad in shorts—both women and men—with their legs prominently displayed for all to see. They seem to be laboring under the delusion that their ugly legs (usually decorated with tattoos) are pleasing to the rest of us. The grandchildren of the hippie generation now dress (or **undress**) in rags to the point of nudity.

Their “high-fashion jeans” have holes in the knees, thighs, and in other places where my mother would have promptly patched my jeans. She knew that her children's clothes reflected her competence as a mother. She would have been ashamed to send my brothers and me out in public looking like a hobo. But today people **go to worship** like the fellow who described Kris Kristofferson in *Sunday Morning Coming Down*: “...I **fumbled through my closet for my clothes and found my cleanest dirty shirt.**”

When I was a kid, a carnival was a big event—the rides, cotton candy and other goodies to tickle the palate, and then there were the ever-present “**Barkers**” urging carnival-goers to step right up and see the tattooed lady, the 14-fingered man, and the bearded lady. There were lots of sideshows where you could see all kinds of **freaks**, “only a dime—a tenth of a dollar!” **But now society has brought the freaks** to every city street, school, and church to see their performances for **FREE!**

The standard sloven dress today is not the mark of a child of God who goes to worship but a mark of a **freak** in a sideshow. In fact, that kind of dress is **not** the mark of a Christian in **any** place. Most people try to wear the most skimpiest clothes today and even **short-shorts** are seen in worship. There is no shame in people who go to worship before God in clothing designed to show as much as the law allows (or more). As Jeremiah said of Israel, “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush” (Jer. 8:12). **Why** would any decent **God-fearing father let his daughter dress in worship like a harlot?** Why would he allow his son to dress in shorts and a t-shirt, and his hair as long as



his mother's when he worships God?

Several years ago, Dub McClish was asked to speak in chapel at the Bear Valley Bible Institute (BVBI) when he was in a Gospel meeting in that area. What he saw during his visit did not impress him:

J.J. Turner invited me to speak and I spoke in chapel at BVBI approximately 5 years ago...I must tell you that I came away disappointed in what I saw...the sloppy appearance of many of the students unfavorably impressed me...I believe that one makes a statement by the way he dresses. I came away with the impression that the students were not being taught the seriousness of their studies and of the work for which they were preparing (Dub McClish, Letter to J. Michael Hite, BVBI).

The key word in brother McClish's letter is **sloppy**, which sums up today's dress. He also pointed out the crux of the matter: "...one makes a statement by the way he dresses." Keep in mind that those who "express themselves" do so by their clothing, and even preachers wear sloppy clothes today in the pulpit.

Most of our younger generations of today are not aware that "casual dress" in the services of worship to God, grew out of the rebellious days of the hippies and baby boomers of the 1960s. Respect for, and submission to, authority was dealt a severe blow by the "independent" thinking of that era. Like most other things that challenged the "establishment," the initial shock soon wore off and that which once was "unthinkable" became acceptable.

...It is a source of genuine distress to see the lack of respect for God displayed by so many in our worship services. Preachers are no exception; in fact they should be leaders in trying to keep the congregations aware of the Divine nature of God. God should be exalted to the ultimate degree of respect, adoration, reverence, and awe before whom His children should humble themselves. Slovenly dress, casual, unkempt foot-wear, carelessness in presentation all profess that we have no awareness of the greatness of the God we profess to serve. Those who see God's representatives in such common and presumptuous attire cannot have respect for the God they represent. It is no wonder that it is difficult to try to convince lost souls of their need to revere God, when it is apparent that He is not revered by those claiming to represent Him (Eddie Whitten, "Dress Code? Or, Respect for God?", *Beacon*, Bulletin of the Bellview church of Christ, Pensacola, Florida, May 26, 2003).

One example is the "Youth and Family Minister" for the Wilbarger Church of Christ in Vernon, Texas—by the way, if you can find a "Youth and Family Minister" in your New Testament, I will send you \$5,000. You can see him cavorting around the Wilbarger pulpit at <https://wilbargerstreetchurch.org/media>. He is usually dressed in an open-collared shirt, no tie, no suit, just unkempt jeans, and sneakers. He is what Dub McClish describes as "Laid Back, Hip—Irreverent," with an emphasis on **irreverent**!

Does God have a dress code? The answer is **Yes**! Now, I know that the hills are alive with the sound of protest saying, "**No**! God doesn't look on the outer man. He looks on the inner man." But the outer man always manifests the inner man.

God is more concerned with the inside, rather than merely with the outside, of men (1 Sam. 16:7). However, we may indicate what is inside by what we do with the "outside." The Lord said that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Mat. 12:34), and we may "talk" with our attire. Have we forgotten the simple, but important, principle of doing all things "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40) (written in the very context of behavior in a worship assembly, incidentally)? I am not suggesting that we turn our worship assemblies into fashion shows. I am rather urging that we, especially those who lead in worship, dress in such a way as to indicate how important they believe the worship of Almighty God and His Son is (Dub McClish, "Laid Back, Hip—Irreverent," *The Lighthouse*, weekly bulletin of Northpoint Church of Christ, Denton, TX, July 1, 2012).

### Scriptural Principles for a Dress Code

Consider the first scriptural principle—**the very best sacrifices** which God specified under the Law of Moses.

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats (Exo. 12:5).

*Ye shall offer* at your own will a male without blemish, of the beeves, of the sheep, or of the goats. *But* whatsoever hath a blemish, *that* shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you. And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish *his* vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein (Lev. 22:19-21).

Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God *any* bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, *or* any evilfavouredness: for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy God (Deut. 17:1).

Of Exodus 12:5, the Passover lamb Adam Clarke wrote, “**Without blemish** - Having no natural imperfection, no disease, no deficiency or redundancy of parts” (e-Sword).

Keil and Delitzsch wrote on the same verse,

...the characteristics were significant. Freedom from blemish and injury not only befitted the sacredness of the purpose to which they were devoted, but was a symbol of the moral integrity of the person represented by the sacrifice” (e-Sword).

On Leviticus 22:19-21, Clarke wrote,

Never was a wiser, a more rational, and a more expedient law enacted relative to sacred matters. The man who ministers in holy things, who professes to be the interpreter of the will of God, should have nothing in his person nor in his manner which cannot contribute to render him respectable in the eyes of those to whom he ministers. If, on the contrary, he has any personal defect, any thing that may render him contemptible or despicable, his usefulness will be greatly injured, if not entirely prevented (e-Sword).

And Keil and Delitzsch said,

Directions for the sons (descendants) of Aaron who were afflicted with bodily imperfections. As the spiritual nature of a man is reflected in his bodily form, only a faultless condition of body could correspond to the holiness of the priest...Consequently none of the descendants of Aaron, “according to their generations,” i.e., in all future generations, who had any blemish (bodily fault) were to approach the vail, i.e., enter the holy place, or draw near to the altar (in the court) to offer the food of Jehovah, viz., the sacrifices (e-Sword).

The second scriptural principle is found in **David's refusal to offer a cheap sacrifice** to God. Because he numbered Israel, David angered God and was given one of three choices for punishment.

And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three *things*; choose thee one of them, that I may *do it* unto thee. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man (2 Sam. 24:11-13).

The Lord sent three days of pestilence in which 70,000 men died from Dan to Beersheba (2 Sam. 24:15). When the angel came to Jerusalem, God stopped the pestilence and ordered David to build an altar of sacrifice at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. When David offered to buy the threshing floor, Araunah told David that he would **give** him the threshing floor, oxen for sacrifice, and the wood without charge.

And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver (2 Sam. 24:24).

The principles for us is in David's words: "...neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God **of that which doth cost me nothing**" and God's specifications of **His unblemished sacrifices** under the Law of Moses.

How many people come before God in worship wearing the cheapest, most common, everyday things they have? Clothing worn in worship does not have to be expensive or even new. But they should reflect reverence that ought to characterize the heart of the worshiper—a heart that says, "I will not offer...unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing."

**When We Worship, We Kneel Before God's Throne**

My grandparents were poor people who lost their farm in 1935 during the Great Depression and Dust Bowl years in Oklahoma. Grandpa had annual payment on his mortgage of \$700. In 1935, he made **one bale of cotton** and the bank foreclosed on his farm that he had worked for 18 years and where my mother was raised.

Grandpa was poor, but he was reverent in worship to God and his "Sunday-go-to-meetin" best consisted of starched and ironed striped overalls, a starched and ironed white shirt, a necktie, and straw fedora. That reflected his reverence for God in worship. In later years, he was able to afford a suit which he wore thereafter in worship. He would never have gone to worship in the overalls he wore in the cotton field.

When Moses approached the burning bush in Midian, God told him to "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exod. 3:5). The ground around that bush was not inherently holy but it was made so by the presence of God in His meeting with Moses. The church building is not inherently holy, but we are in God's presence when we kneel before His throne in worship. Should we not, therefore, present our physical selves in the most honorable and reverent manner possible? **Yes**, God has a dress code in worship.



**Editor's Traveling, Preaching, and Writing**

I preached at Yukon, Okla. Sept. 24. Requests for the book, *"The Thing That Hath Been...": The Cycle of Apostasy* in digital format keep coming in. In one day in Sept. three digital books were sent to Nigeria.

***The Gospel Preceptor***

**Published Monthly at Elk City, Oklahoma**

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# Heaven: Eternal Home of the Redeemed

John 14:1-6

**Kent Bailey**



In the presentation of the gospel of Christ we must present God's truth, the entire truth, and nothing but the truth. Such preaching must glorify God the Father and His only begotten Son the Lord Jesus Christ. In the proclamation and defense of the truth of God we must encourage individuals to accept and obey the gospel of Christ, to live faithful lives. To those who having obeyed the gospel, but who have gone astray, we must exhort them to repent and return to God. Such can be accomplished by recognition of the importance in preaching on the Biblical Doctrine of Heaven.

There is a tremendous interest in Heaven. Such is the case unless one is an atheist, or an agnostic. Even those who are Non-Christians have an interest in Heaven. Thousands upon thousands of sermons have been preached upon this important topic. Thousands of religious songs have been sung about it. It has been the topic of unnumbered conversations and the subject of countless discussions.

It does not take a great deal of observation to note that that the term *Heaven* has been engraved on thousands of tombstones and niched in the walls of hundreds of mausoleums, as well as other types of structures. There have been numerous articles written about this topic as well various books published concerning it. It has been on the lips of faithful people of God as they have exchanged time for eternity. We are thus giving consideration to a subject in which there is both universal and eternal interest.

## **The Essence of Heaven**

In consideration of our topic we certainly understand that it is both a condition and place. In our text introducing our subject we noted the words of Christ when he stated:

Let not your heart be troubled: 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; for I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

Because words speak with reference to that of adequate information we must conclude that Heaven is a very real place. We also take note of the reality that such is also conditioned by the presence of Christ. The scriptures make very clear of the greatness of the place and the beauty of such a condition (2 Cor. 5:1-8; Rev. 22:5).

## **What Will Not be in Heaven**

Heaven is a place where after making entrance there will be no more tears (Rev. 21:4a). Heaven is a place where there will be no more death (Rev. 21:4b). Heaven is a place where there will be no more sorrow, nor crying (Rev. 21:c). Heaven is a place where there will be no more pain because all of the former things of earthly existence will have passed away. Such indicates that eternal life in Heaven will be a totally different condition as to life on earth. We have become so condition to the temporal aspects of life that reality in eternity is difficult to grasp.

## **What Will be in Heaven**

In addition to various things not being in Heaven the word of God informs us as to what will be there. Christ informed us,

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon this earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust do not consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal; for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also (Matt. 6:19-21).

In this passage from the word of God, Christ was not stating nor implying that money nor that which currency may purchase is necessarily sinful. Christ was teaching about both the proper and improper attitudes toward that which we have materially in the present life. Let us remember that the greatest treasures of life are not material in na-



ture.

One of the greatest treasures one can lay up in Heaven is our faithfulness to Christ (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Another great treasure is our accomplishments for the cause of truth. All of God's faithful people who have fought the good fight and have kept the faith and have finished the course will join with the apostle Paul in awaiting the crown of righteousness, which is also the crown of life (Rev. 2:10). The joy of eternal and the opportunity to be in the presence of God for all of eternity will indeed be the treasure of all time. We will have no need of anything in eternal glory. God has made provision for everything that the faithful child of God will need for eternity. Think of the joy which is offered to be a participant within the glories of Heaven (Rev. 22:1-5).

### **Who Will not be in Heaven**

It is certainly not our prerogative to ascend to the judgment seat of God. God through His only begotten Son the Lord Jesus Christ is the final and righteous Judge of the totality of all of humanity. However, to be faithful to God we must accept what He has already so judged in the plenary and verbally inspired word. In 2 Thessalonians 1:4-12 we are informed that those who do not know God and obey not the gospel of Christ will be excluded from the glories of Heaven. These individuals will be punished with everlasting fire being the subjects of God's divine and holy wrath. Those who formerly knew God and had obeyed the gospel of Christ, but who after becoming Christians, walked away from divine truth, will also be the subjects of eternal punishment (2 Pet. 2:20-22). An adequate description of those who are lost are described in Revelation 21:8.

### **Who will be in Heaven**

We note in Revelation 21:3, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Regarding the inhabitants of glory: God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit will be there; the holy angels of God will be there; those who were never accountable and who have never been stained by sin will be there; the faithful Old Testament saints of God will be there; and those who comprise the faithful element of the bride of Christ, the New Testament church will be there as well (Rev. 21:2). The key word to commit to our memory is the term **preparation**. All accountable individuals must make adequate preparation to live with Deity and all of the faithful, who belong to Christ in eternity. Obey the saving gospel of Christ today. Remain faithful to God throughout your life. If you are unfaithful repent of your sins, return to Christ and be restored to his fellowship before it is too late.

## **Is Baptism Essential to Salvation?**

**B.C. Carr**

Our assignment is to show from the Bible that baptism is essential or necessary to salvation. By essential, we mean that it is so necessary that a responsible person cannot be saved without it. By salvation, we mean that one cannot be saved or pardoned from his past sins, hence, justified in the sight of God without baptism. This would also suggest that one would be eternally lost if he has not submitted to this commandment of the Lord.

We have been especially asked to contrast Baptist doctrine with Truth. In so doing, we shall try to be fair, yet unyielding so far as truth is concerned. We have many good friends in the Baptist church and do not wish to offend them, but God's Word must be true if it means every man is found to be a liar (Rom. 3:4).

### **Baptist Doctrine on Baptism**

Baptist doctrine teaches that Baptism is not essential to salvation. They affirm that one is saved before he is baptized. This is not to say they do not believe in baptism, for they do. They practice baptism. One cannot get into the Baptist church without being baptized. Baptist doctrine refutes sprinkling as practiced by Methodists and others. You see, the point of contention is not whether they believe in baptism, but do they think it



is something to be done as a condition of salvation. They do not believe it has anything to do with salvation, but something that those who are saved should do to get into the Baptist church. It is to be compared to the Lord's Supper, something one observes after being saved. From *McConnell's Manual for Baptist Churches*, I quote the following from the chapter on "Distinctive Baptist Beliefs."

There were two ordinances in New Testament churches. They are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptists observe them in their churches. They, like all the ordinances of the Old Testament, are symbolical and teach by the manner of their administration. They are declarative and not procurative. All the baptisms of all ages of the world could not blot out the least sin. 1

Ben Bogard was the greatest Baptist debater of the 20th century. In 1938, he debated N. B. Hardeman on the subject of "The Necessity of Baptism." 2 Over and over, Bogard denied that baptism was necessary for salvation. There is no doubt about what Baptist doctrine teaches. Baptists believe and teach that a man is saved at the point of faith (before he is baptized). Again, we quote from the Baptist manual on the subject of "Justification": "We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any work of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood." 3 This is simply saying one is saved by faith only.

### **Baptist Doctrine Versus Truth** ***Baptist Doctrine***

All the Baptisms of all ages could not blot out the least sin (Manual).

Baptism does not save anybody.

He that believes is saved without baptism and then should be baptized.

Man is saved by faith only.

Man is saved at the point of faith.

### ***Truth***

"arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16).

"baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21).

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (Jam. 2:24).

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (Jam. 2:19).

Again, Baptist debater Ben Bogard makes it clear as to what they believe as he debated Curtis Porter: "We teach that salvation is obtained at the point of faith, Acts 16:30-33," and, "Salvation is at the point of faith." 4

The above stated positions concerning what Baptists believe on baptism are consistent with my experiences in discussions with them over the last fifty years. Several years ago, I conducted a radio debate with a Baptist preacher on this subject. It lasted for several weeks and attracted many listeners. This man insisted that baptism had nothing to do with salvation. In fact, he said, "There is not one thing a man can do to save himself." One of our listeners, who was an invalid, listened every day. He was persuaded that he was lost since he had never been baptized. He asked his family to contact me to come to see him. He wanted to be baptized. Since members of his family belonged to the Baptist church, they called the Baptist preacher who was my opponent in the debate. When he arrived, he assured this man he was already saved since he was a believer, hence no need to be baptized. In a few days, this man died. It was then that I was told about this man's desire to talk with me and that he wanted to be baptized. His funeral was conducted from the Baptist church. I went to hear what my opponent would say. He related the story just as I had heard it. He said in his oration that he had assured this man he was saved, without baptism, and had caused him to die satisfied. What a pity. It is sad to know that many yet living are being deceived in a similar way.

Surely, our readers can see that there is a contrast in each of the above statements. They cannot both be right. Please take your pen and mark through the one that is fake. You will be your own judge as to who is teaching the truth.

### **Consequences of Baptist Doctrine on Baptism**

If one accepts the doctrine that baptism is not essential to salvation, he must be prepared to accept other things that are obviously false. Please note the following:

1. If baptism is not essential to salvation, neither is belief. In Mark 16:16, faith and baptism are joined together as conditions of salvation.
2. If baptism is not essential to forgiveness of sins, neither is repentance. They are joined by the conjunction “and” and are of equal force (Acts 2:38). They are both for the same purpose.
3. If one is saved by faith only, then devils will be saved (Jam. 2:19).
4. If people can be saved by faith only, some of the chief rulers were saved who refused to confess Jesus (John 12:42).
5. If one can be saved without being baptized, he can be saved without obeying the commandments of God. Baptism is commanded (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:48).
6. If one does not keep the commandments, he does not know God (1 John 2:3).
7. If one does not keep the Lord’s commandments, he cannot be a friend of God (John 15:14).
8. Only those who do the commandments can enter heaven (Rev. 22:14).
9. If one can be saved without baptism, he can be saved without the benefit of the death of Christ. We are baptized into his death (Rom. 6:4).
10. If one can be saved without being baptized, he can be saved outside of Christ. Baptism is the final act that puts us into Christ.

But, please note the consequences of not being in Christ:

1. Only those in Christ are new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17).
2. All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3).
3. Salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). Since one must be baptized to get into Christ (Gal. 3:27) and there is no other way to enter Him, those who have never been baptized cannot be new creatures. They are without one single spiritual blessing.
4. They are without salvation. We must therefore conclude that they are lost.

### **Endnotes**

1 *McConnell’s Manual for Baptist Churches*, F. M. McConnell, Judson Press, 1946, p. 48.

2 *Hardeman-Bogard Debate*, Gospel Advocate Co., 1938 p. 1 57.

3 *Manual*, p. 18.

4 *Porter-Bogard Debate*, Roy Cogdill Pub. Co., Lufkin, TX., 1948, pp. 54, 73.

## **Do We Really Have a Choice?**

### **Earl Fly**

It is frequently said by uninformed people that one should “join the church of his choice,” meaning that one should choose one of the several hundreds or more different churches in the United States as a “church home on earth.” It is also said that one has a right to the faith of his choice, the baptism of his choice, the name of his choice and to worship the way he pleases. These statements are based upon the belief that one is as good as another and that it makes no difference which one we choose. But is this true? Do we really have a choice, scripturally speaking?

It is true that our Constitution grants religious freedom to the citizens of America. We have the legal right to worship the one true God, a stone idol, a man, bird, snake or beast. We may legally offer a bloody animal sacrifice in worship, burn incense or dance. We may legally trust in Christ, Mohammed or Buddha as our savior. We have

the legal right to reject all and embrace atheism. We can legally call God a myth and Christ a fake according to the Constitution. We may pray in the name of the Devil, legally speaking. But we need to understand that one can be scripturally wrong, yet within his legal rights. Our Constitutional freedom of religion does not guarantee acceptance with God. We shall be judged by the Bible, not by the Constitution (John 12:48).

Man does not have a scriptural right to choose something contrary to God's revealed will in the Bible. When God reveals His choice in any matter, man only has the right to accept God's choice; he has no right to choose something different. God revealed His choice in the following matters as His Holy Spirit guided the apostle Paul to say: "There is **one** body, and **one** Spirit, even as ye are called in **one** hope of your calling; **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, **one** God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6). How many is **one**? Can we choose between **one**? Notice what Paul said:

1. "There is **one God**." Is one god as good as another god? Do we have a choice of gods?
2. "There is **one Lord**." Is one lord as good as another? Do we have a choice of lords (saviors)? Can one scripturally choose Mohammed or Buddha as his savior? Its legal, but is it scriptural? Can one be saved if he chooses a lord other than Christ Jesus?
3. "There is **one Spirit**." Do we have a right to follow the spirit of our choice? Is one spirit as good as another spirit? Would it be just as well to believe an evil spirit of the devil as God's Holy Spirit?
4. "There is **one hope**." Is one hope as good as another? Is the Jewish hope of heaven as good as the Christian's hope? Would you as soon have a hope based upon a rejection of Christ as Savior than a hope based upon acceptance of Christ?
5. "There is **one body**...which is the church." (Eph. 1:22-23.) Is one church as good as another? Do we have a choice of churches? Since God has chosen **one church** do we have the right to choose another?
6. "There is **one faith**." "Oh, it makes no difference what one believes so long as he is honest and sincere," many argue? Is this true? Do we really have a choice of faiths, such as Mohammedan, Methodist, Buddhist or Baptist? Is one faith as good as another? Is the Jewish faith which rejects Christ as good as the Christian faith? What about believing in Mohammed instead of Christ? **It does make a difference!** (See John 8:24; Mark 16:16; 2 John 9-11; 2 Thess. 2:10-12.)
7. "There is **one baptism**." Since there is one, do we have a choice? Is sprinkling and pouring as good as Bible baptism, which is a burial? (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12.)

Reader, be not deceived by good words and fair speeches of men (Rom. 16:18), who say "choose your way" in religion. Unless we choose **God's** way we shall be eternally lost. There is no choice of gods, saviors, spirits, hopes, churches, faiths or baptism for those who want to escape the horrors of hell, because there is only **one** of each accepted by the one true God.

The same Bible which says there is one God also says there is one church. Thus the Buddhist has as much right to choose an idol god as one does to choose a denominational church not built by God, such as Baptist, Methodist or Mormon. Again, the same Bible which says there is one Lord says there is one baptism. Hence one has as much right to choose Mohammed as savior as to choose sprinkling and pouring as a substitute for Bible baptism. Furthermore, the same Bible which says there is one Spirit also says there is one faith. If we have a right to the faith of our choice, then we have a right to the spirit of our choice!

The Mohammedans, Jews and Buddhists are just as safe in their choices and substitutes as are the Baptists, Methodists and all other denominations who have chosen substitutes. If one can be saved in the Methodist church, one can be saved in the Mohammedan church; if one can be saved in the Baptist church, one can be saved in the Buddhist church. They all have rejected God's choice in one or more points and substi-

tuted their own choice! They have all rejected Christ by teaching and practicing the doctrines of men, which makes their worship vain (Matt. 15:9).

Friend, if you want to live in heaven you **must leave the ways of men** and turn to God. To choose another god, another savior, another faith, another spirit, another baptism, another church is to choose eternal torment in a horrible hell. We kindly say that one can no more be saved in a human church than can the heathen who worships an idol god, for Jesus said: “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13). This includes Methodist, Mohammedan, Buddhist, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and all other churches not planted by God. This is the reason we earnestly plead with members of these churches to leave them before they are uprooted by God, and to become members of the one body, the church of God's choice which Christ built (Matt. 16:18), for which He died (Acts 20:28), over which He reigns as head with all power (Eph. 1:22, 23; Matt. 28:18), of which He is the savior (Eph. 5:23)—the church of Christ.

Your eternal destiny will be determined by the choices you make on earth. If you allow yourself to be deceived by the vain promises of men in religion, and fail to obey the gospel of Christ, you will pay the penalty in eternity (2 Thess. 1:7-9). We urge you to study your Bible and investigate for yourself. Test the claims of preachers for “many false prophets are gone out in the world” (1 John 4:1). There are many “wolves in sheep's clothing” who devour the unsuspecting (Matt. 7:15). They will tell you that you have a choice. But be not deceived: We must accept God's choice!

If you want to be saved you must believe in God (Heb. 11:6), in Christ (John 8:24), repent of all sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30) and be buried in baptism (Rom. 6:4) for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38). Then you can rise to walk in a new life (Rom. 6:4) as a new creature in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17), having been born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5), saved by God's grace (Eph. 2:5), washed in the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5). Hence if you will believe in the one God and the one Lord, listen to the voice of the one Spirit as He speaks from the pages of the Bible, believe and obey the one faith revealed therein, submit to the one baptism, God will add you to the one body (Acts 2:47) and you will have the one hope of heaven.

We urge you to consider the uncertainty and brevity of life, the certainty of death, the surety of the judgment, and the fact that all souls shall live in the ceaseless age of eternity either in hell or heaven, depending on the choice they make in this life on earth. We pray that you will choose God's way and obey—**now!**

## Upside Down

Lee Moses



As Paul had been preaching the Gospel in the city of Thessalonica, people began to respond to his preaching. However, a mob formed and dragged certain Christians before the city rulers, crying, “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also” (Acts 17:6). This was not intended as a fair portrayal of what Paul and his preaching companions had been doing—this was part of a smear campaign against them. But there could be no doubt that those three evangelists were turning the Thessalonians’ prior misconceptions on their heads, and turning people over from their beds of comfort.

It has been well said that the church has a duty to “comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable.” Consider what Paul wrote the Thessalonians: “And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted” (1 Thess. 5:14, ASV). What are some things we need to turn upside down?

**We need to turn the God-denying philosophies of the atheists, agnostics, and skeptics upside down.** The psalmist warned, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psm. 14:1a). Saying “there is no God” is a foolish affirmation, foremost because it is false. But believing it will utterly corrupt one’s thinking, in turn leading to godless, selfish, and wicked lives. As the psalmist proceeded to say of God-

deniers, “They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good” (verse 1b). Solomon offers the superior starting point for right thinking: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Prov. 1:7).

**We need to turn the deluded comfort of the denominationalists upside down.** Members of denominations generally believe that God created the universe, that Jesus died and rose again, and that Jesus is the way to salvation. They simply refuse to do what they must do to be saved, because they are misled into believing they already **are** saved (Rom. 10:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:10).

**We need to turn the apathy and worldliness of lukewarm members of the church upside down.** The book of Revelation portrays the Lord Jesus Christ as a watchful keeper of His churches (Rev. 1:12-13, 20). He is able to say of any church, “I know thy works” (2:2, 9, 13; et al.). When He observes faith, purity, and diligence, He is pleased. But what would He say of many of His professed churches today? Might it be what He said of the church at Laodicea?

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked (Rev. 3:14-17).

Might it be what He said of the church at Ephesus?

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent (Rev. 2:4-5).

There are many false notions that need to be turned upside down. There are many misled ways of living that need to be turned upside down. Just as it was with Paul, it is the bold preaching of the Gospel that will turn those false notions and misled ways of living upside down (Titus 1:9b; 2 Cor. 10:5).

## “What is the Church of Christ?”

**Jess Whitlock**



The church you can read about in the pages of your New Testament is known by various appellations: the church of the Firstborn (Heb. 12:23); the church (Acts 8:1); the church of the Lord (Acts 20:28); the church of God (1 Cor. 1:2); and the churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16). The “church of Christ” is not a denomination.

### **The Establishment of the Church of Christ**

Christ made a powerful promise in Matthew 16:18 when He stated, “Upon this rock, I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” Take note that the word *church* is singular, and the word *it* likewise is singular. Jesus also said, “There are here some of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power.” (Mark 9:1). Jesus Christ is the only one with the authority to establish the church which He had promised to build. Jesus indicated that men living at that time, would be alive to see the fulfillment of that promise to build His church.

In Luke 24 following the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:3-4), Jesus spoke to His apostles saying, “Behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on High.” (Luke 24:49). The promise of the Father involves the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those men, as prophesied in Joel 2:28-ff. The time is not specified, so they were to tarry in Jerusalem until that time would come. Let’s fast forward to the book of Acts and,



...being assembled together with them, He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which said He, ye heard from Me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence...ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:4-5, 8).

Acts 2 states:

And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4).

The apostles preached the first Gospel sermon to a crowd of thousands. Peter concluded that sermon saying,

Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? (Acts 2:36-37).

Here we see the **beginning** of the church on the earth for which Christ died. (Matt. 16:18).

“Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38). Notice what happens next in this context, “They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:41). The chapter concludes that the Lord added to the church that day those that were saved (Acts 2:47).

Are you a part of the church that Christ built? Continue reading about the church that you can find in the pages of your New Testament.

### **The Worship of the Church of Christ is Ordained by God**

It has been established that Jesus Christ built **one church** and it is **His** church. Jesus said,

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23-24).

You must consider the church where **you** worship. Does that church worship God? Does that church worship in spirit (with proper attitude), and does that church worship the Lord God in accordance with the Holy Bible’s teaching? We must worship Him on the first day of the week; i.e., Sunday, the Lord’s day. “And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them...” (Acts 20:7).

1. There will be the singing of praises, and the singing is “acapella” which means “in the manner of the church.” There are no mechanical instruments of music, no choirs, no quartets or solos. No authority can be found in the New Testament for organs, pianos, drums, guitars, etc. to be used in worship to God the Father. All Christians are commanded to sing! “Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.” (Eph. 5:19; cf. Col. 3:16).
2. There will be the offering up of prayers to God the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ. Paul tells Christians to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). Christ taught His disciples how to pray. “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven...” (Matt. 6:9). He did not pray to His mother, to the Holy

Spirit, or to Himself! Our prayers are to be addressed to the **Father** in heaven, and to **no other**.

3. The work of the church is financed by free-will offerings of the members. "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that no collections be made when I come." (1 Cor. 16:2; cf. 2 Cor. 9:7). In the Lord's church there will be no car washes, garage sales, the selling of pies and cakes, auctions, festivals, et al. to raise funds. There is **no Bible authority** for such in the pages of the New Testament.
4. The observance of the Lord's Supper is on the **first day of every week**. Not once a **month, three** or **four** times during the year, **or for weddings**, etc. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16). "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread..." (Acts 20:7; cf. Acts 2:42). The Lord Jesus instituted the Lord's supper Himself (1 Cor. 11:23-28).
5. The study, teaching, and preaching of God's Word. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42). Paul told Timothy to "preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." (2 Tim. 4:2). In the "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16) you will note these items of worship on the **"first day of the week."**

You will quickly discover that such is not the case in many churches that are established by **uninspired** men. How does the church where **you** attend measure up to the teaching of God's Word?

### **God's Plan of Salvation is Preached in the Church of Christ**

The church which Christ purchased with His own blood had its beginning in the city of Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the Lord's ascension. The date was circa A.D. 33. Christ is the head of His church (Eph. 5:22-25). Above we considered the five acts of worship commanded in God's Word. Does the church where **you attend** wear the name of Christ (Rom. 16:16)? Does it **worship like** the church of the first century (Acts 2:42)? Does it teach **God's plan of salvation**?

The Lord's church is made up of obedient believers. What is the Biblical plan of salvation as recorded in the pages of the New Testament? Let your fingers do the walkin' and let the Bible do the talkin'.

1. There must first and foremost be belief in Christ as God's only begotten Son! "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24).
2. There must be a willingness to repent of sin in your life. Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish." (Luke 13:3; cf. vs. 5). Paul preached, "The times of this ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent." (Acts 17:30). Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of life, actions, and turning from sin. The Lord desires that all men repent (2 Pet. 3:9).
3. There must be made of the beautiful confession of Christ as Lord.

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:9-10).

Notice please, Paul did not say "into" salvation, but "unto" salvation. Salvation is not yet attained. Jesus Christ said,

Every one therefore who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever

er shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in heaven (Matt. 10:32-33).

It is called the “good confession” (1 Tim. 6:12-13).

4. There must be baptism into the name of Jesus for, unto, in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins. When the church of Christ was established the first Gospel sermon was preached by Peter and the rest of the apostles.

Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37-38).

Herein we find the answer to the age-old question of **what a man must do in order to be saved from his sins**. Jesus said, and all the demons of hell cannot change it, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.” (Mark 16:16). Remember that “...they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him.” (Acts 8:38). The one baptism of the New Testament is an immersion, a burial, an inundation in water (Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-4). Baptism is the final act that saves us (1 Pet. 3:21).

5. Do not put a period where God has only placed a comma. One must be found faithful unto death. To the church at Ephesus, the Lord Jesus admonished, “...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.” (Rev. 2:10d).

By obedience to God’s plan of salvation you can be added to the church of the Bible today. “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16).

### “Which Church Shall I Join?”

We have considered the establishment, the worship, and the plan of salvation in the church of Christ. The only question that remains in the minds of many is the burning question:

All up and down this troubled land confusion reigns today,  
As honest folks on every hand in doubt are heard to say;

“I do not know which church to join, there are so very many.”

To whom we offer this advice, you never should join any!

You cannot join the church of Christ and no man can vote you in;  
The Lord Himself will add you, when He saves you from your sin.

Then take no chance, brother, this race but once you’ll run,  
A church you would join must be of men, and not the proper one!

Beware a church you cannot find within the sacred pages;  
Be safe, dear sinner, rest your soul upon the Rock of Ages.

Be added to His blood-bought church, and drink salvation’s cup;  
For every plant God planted not...it shall be rooted up.

No mourner’s bench on Pentecost the inspired Peter fitted,  
But said, “Repent and be baptized, that your sins may be remitted.”

The Lord Who saved and added those who did, that day, His will;  
Will do the same for you, dear friend, for He is adding still.

Let not false teachers lead you wrong, nor close your eyes in slumber.  
When Jesus said He would build His church. ‘twas not the plural number!

No choice of churches, neighbor, you will find beneath the sun,  
Though men may have ten thousand, our Lord and Savior built but one!

Let us invite you to investigate the “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16) this coming Lord’s Day. Compare the worship and the teaching with what you read in your own Bible. You have nothing to lose and you will gain the hope of eternal salvation on the other side of death’s door!

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## **"The Methodist Church And The Bible"**

**R. Ervin Driskill**

This article is in answer to a bulletin, which came into my hands and was written by a Mr. Robert E. Goodrich Sr., of Dallas, Texas. On the front page of the bulletin are the following statements: (1) "The doctrines of the Methodist Church are founded on the Bible and the Bible alone" and (2) "All religious beliefs must square with the Bible, otherwise they are wrong." May I say that it is refreshing to find a Methodist bold enough to defend his doctrines (even in tract form). I wonder if Mr. Goodrich would agree to defend them, either in a written debate or an oral one? May I have your answer, Mr. Goodrich, at your earliest convenience?

Your second statement above, is most certainly true and if it can be shown and doctrines of the Methodist Church do not square with the Bible, then the Methodist Church is wrong. Now to the task. Is the title, *Methodist Church* a "doctrine founded on the Bible and the Bible alone?" If so, where does it square? It certainly is not found in the Bible. The Methodist Church was begun in 1729, in England, by John and Charles Wesley and a few other Oxford students. According to the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*. Vol. 7, p. 354, the "doctrines of the Methodist Church" are based on "Wesley's Notes on the New Testament" and four volumes of his "sermons." If Methodists, Mr. Goodrich, have such profound respect for the Bible, why do they subscribe to the *Discipline* of 25 articles containing the doctrines of Wesley? I do not think you are conscious of it, but you do not believe the Bible; and your acceptance of the *Methodist Discipline* shows your lack of faith in the all sufficiency of the Bible.

Page 2 of the bulletin says, "Our church polity is scriptural." How could the Methodist Church be *Our Church* and be *Scriptural* too? The "Lord's Church Polity" is "Scriptural" but then, the *Lord's Church* could **not** be *Our Church*. It is this unscriptural concept of the Bible church that causes denominational folk to speak of the "Lord's Church" as "Our Church." Does *Our Church* square with the Bible? You say, "We have Bishops." Yes, and so does the Greek and Roman Catholic Church. Is their church polity scriptural just because they have bishops? Do Catholic Bishops "square with the Bible?" The references (1 Tim. 3:1-2; Titus 1:7) set forth the qualifications of bishops and Philp. 1:1 shows there were a plurality of bishops in the Philippian church. Acts 14:23 shows elders (plural) and so it was in every church.

Mr. Goodrich, you further say, "we have Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses and Stewards as office bearers in the Church." Here again the doctrines of the Methodist Church are not founded on the Bible, for you make a distinction where there is none in the Bible. Acts 20:17 Paul called the *elders* to him and in Acts 20:28 he calls these *elders*, *bishops*, (ASV) and *overseers* in the KSV. So, the elders (*presbyters*) were bishops (*overseers*) and not two distinct "office bearers in the church." Further, there is no basis on which one may prove there were Deaconesses as "office bearers" in the early church. The words *deacon*, *servant* and *minister* all come from the same Greek word, but that does not suggest each time the word is used it has reference to an "office bearer." Why did Paul not mention *deaconesses* in an "official sense" when he wrote the "bishops and deacons" in the church at Philippi? Answer: There were none. So, the doctrine of the Methodist Church again fails to "square with the Bible." The reference to "Stewards as an office bearer in the church" (Luke 12:42) is called *servant* in (Lk. 12:43). The parallel passage (Matt. 24:45) does not call him a *steward* at all. The reference in 1 Cor. 4:2 is certainly no reference to an "office bearer." The passage has reference to the apostles as *ministers* of Christ, and *stewards* of the mysteries of God. A steward is one entrusted with something not his own; and in this case it was the Gospel entrusted to the apostles. Verse 3 shows Paul was not concerned whether the Corinthians judged

him to be a “faithful steward” or that he (in his own judgment) was faithful, but that the Lord should count him faithful. No, the Methodist Church missed it again; this term *Steward* is not used as an “office bearer” in the church as used by our Methodist friends. Incidentally, Mr. Goodrich, where do you read of the *Presiding Elder* in the Bible? The bulletin further says, “In sending out our preachers we follow the Biblical way.” I wonder what church passed upon Paul, Peter, John etc. (and sent them out) before they could preach? Can you “square Methodist practice with the Bible” on this point?

Mr. Goodrich, you say, “Our doctrines are scriptural.” Each time this word is used in the **plural**, in the New Testament, it refers to “**doctrines** of demons or devils” or “**doctrines** of men” (1 Tim. 4:1; Matt. 15:9; Mark 7:7; Col. 2:22; Heb. 3:9). This is significant; Christ has **one** doctrine (1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:10; 2 John 9) while men have **many** doctrines.

You also say, “Infants belong to the Kingdom, therefore they have a right to the Sacraments of the Kingdom. Read Joel 2:16.” Those that “sucked the breast” Mr. Goodrich, were a part of that old kingdom, by virtue of a fleshly birth, but it takes a birth of water and the Spirit (John 3:5) to enter the Kingdom of Christ. Your passage was misused. You intimate by the use of Luke 18:15; Mark 10:13-14 (followed by the statement “Whole family baptisms” and preceded by the statement, “Infants belong to the Kingdom”) that these babes were inducted into the kingdom by Jesus through baptism (sprinkling or pouring). They certainly were not brought to him for that purpose, but for Jesus to “bless them” and so he did. Your efforts to force this passage to harmonize with “Methodist doctrines” is deceitfully handling the word of God (2 Cor. 4:2; 2 Pet. 3:16). Neither Acts 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:16; Acts 16:33 nor any other passage of the Bible speaks of the “Gospel as being a message for the whole family” nor of infant baptism. The Gospel is for those capable of being taught and of believing (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16) and infants (those that suck the breast) can do neither. It seems therefore that Methodist doctrines do not “square with the Bible” at all. Since baptism puts one into the kingdom (John 3:5; Gal. 3:27) and Jesus says of little children “of such is the kingdom of Heaven” then the baptizing of babies would serve no purpose. These children were humble, trustful and unafraid and “to such” (those that are humble and trustful) “belongeth the kingdom of God.” That this is the thing under consideration is seen in Luke 18:17 where Jesus says those who “shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child (in humility and with trust) shall in no wise enter therein.”

The bulletin says, “We believe in and practice open communion.” Under this heading we have this, “It is the Lord's Supper, and not a Church Supper” (true RED) and “... we Methodists invite all Christians to the Communion Table.” If it isn't a “Church Supper” (Methodist Church) but “the Lord's Supper” what right does the Methodist Church have inviting someone to eat at another's table (the Lord's)? Then you say, “The Bible says let every one examine himself” (1 Cor. 11:28). No, it says, let “a **man** examine (prove) himself and so let him eat the bread...” It is significant that those who commune are to examine themselves and no infant can do that. But you may say, “We do not give the Lord's Supper to infants.” But why not? The Supper is in the kingdom (Luke 22:29-30) and if “infants belong to the Kingdom” why do they not “have a right to the Sacrament of the Kingdom?”

The following is a clear-cut example of how those who seek to uphold error contradict themselves. You say, “It is not for the preacher or the congregation to say who may come to the Lord's Table” and then you turn around and say, “So, we Methodists practice the broadminded Christian principle of inviting all Christians to the Lord's Supper.” Mr. Goodrich you are altogether right concerning your views under the heading of “Dangers of Sin after Conversion.”

Perhaps the gem (?) of reasoning is in your discussion of the “Form of Bible Baptism.” You say, “We practice the Bible Form of Baptism—Affusion.” Then you say that affusion is sprinkling or pouring. You are saying that Methodists do not **immerse**! But would you refuse to immerse a man if he requested it? I know many Methodists who



do immerse. But if Bible baptism is “sprinkling or pouring” (affusion) and many Methodists do immerse (when it is requested) they are **not baptizing at all!**

When you use John 7:38; Isa. 12:3; 44:3 to prove “water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit” you have proved nothing about “water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism.” Your comparison in these verses is between water and spirit; and baptism is not under consideration at all. To what length will one go to sustain error??? Then you jump to Acts 10:47; 11:15-16 where actually two baptisms occurred (Holy Spirit and water baptisms) and conclude that because water is sometimes used as a symbol of spirit that “water baptism” (in this instance) is a symbol of “Holy Spirit baptism.” The text does not say so; it is a figment of your fertile imagination. You then conclude that since “water baptism is a symbol of Holy Spirit baptism” the symbol should be like that which it symbolizes. But this conclusion is based on assumption. Then in an effort to make “water baptism” **affusion**, you cite us to the following: Joel 2:28; Isa. 44:3; Acts 2:18; 10:45; 11:15; Titus 3:5-6 (of God pouring out his Spirit, in which people were baptized.) When I was small my mother would pour water on me and I was bathed in water. But I was put in the tub and she **poured forth water on me** and **then the bathing followed**.

Likewise, God “poured forth his Spirit upon those baptized” but the baptism **followed** the pouring. The **pouring** and the **bathing** were not simultaneous; neither was the pouring and the baptism. The word *baptizo* means to “immerse, to dip, to plunge, to submerge.” When one is submerged or immersed, or baptized he is overwhelmed. Those baptized, submerged, or immersed in the Holy Spirit were overwhelmed in God's Spirit.

Mr. Goodrich you say that you find *Sprinkling* mentioned 60 times and you have “searched in vain to find *immerse* one single time.” If you do not know the literal meaning of *baptizo* **is immerse** you need to broaden your education somewhat. If you were aware of this fact, you would know that everytime you read the word “baptize” (which is the anglicized form of the Greek *baptizo*) you are reading **immerse**. If the translators had given us the literal meaning of the word (*immerse*), it could never have been called “sprinkle or pour” (*affusion*). Sprinkling and pouring come from two entirely different words, and I imagine you already know that. Mr. Goodrich, you are hereby challenged to produce one verse where Baptism is ever referred to as sprinkling or pouring, or where water only was ever poured or sprinkled on anyone for any purpose.

You further state that “Not every time does the word *sprinkle* refer to baptism.” Well, I guess not; not one time to say nothing of every time. But you say, “*it* (sprinkling) is prevailingly used of ceremonial cleansing or purifying. In other words, sprinkling is used purely as a symbolical act to signify the cleansing or purifying of the object sprinkled.” Yes, but would you say they were cleansed before the sprinkling? You claim baptism is not necessary to cleansing; one is cleansed, saved, “justified by faith only” according to Article 9 of the *Methodist Discipline*. Then you say, “Since purifying is always by sprinkling, water baptism, the same as purifying, should be by sprinkling, symbolizing cleansing by the Holy Spirit.” That, Mr. Goodrich, is to say water “immersion” should be by sprinkling. That is not even common sense. Why not recognize the difference in the original words—sprinkle (to scatter about in drops) and baptize (to immerse)? There is a difference. When will men cease to “pervert the right ways of the Lord?”

You have labored to show that Holy Spirit baptism was pouring and that water baptism is a symbol of Holy Spirit baptism. This being true, the symbol (water baptism) must be like that which it symbolizes (Holy Spirit baptism); hence, water baptism is pouring and not immersion.

Second you have labored to show that **sprinkling** was used as a symbolic act of cleansing or purifying of the object sprinkled and that purifying is used to mean baptism in the New Testament, and since purifying is always by sprinkling, water baptism, the same as purifying, should be by sprinkling. First water baptism must be by pouring and second it must be by sprinkling. Which is it, Mr. Goodrich?? If it **must** be by

sprinkling it could not be by pouring and if it **must** be by pouring it couldn't be by sprinkling. No man can be consistent and uphold error; not even you, Mr. Goodrich.

## Religious Pluralism

Dub McClish



The term *pluralism*, when applied to religion, lauds diversity. *Wikipedia* states: “Religious pluralism holds that no single religion can claim absolute authority to teach absolute truth.” It insists that various religions (e.g., Hinduism, Judaism, Confucianism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, et al.), are all equally viable in their respective “truth claims.” Acceptance of the validity of such diverse (and contradictory) concepts of deity (e.g., dualism, polytheism, pantheism, deism, Greek mythology, monotheism, et al.) logically follows for the pluralist. The moronic bumper stickers that employ the symbols of various religions to spell the word *COEXIST* are produced by unmitigated pluralists. Perhaps the ultimate pluralist was Bahá'u'lláh, founder of the Bahá'í Faith. He taught “God is one” and therefore that Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, and (predictably) himself are all God’s messengers. Bahá'u'lláh was right about there being one God, but his conclusion concerning God’s messengers could not be more wrong.

Jesus the Christ does not allow Christians to (1) force their religion on others, (2) prevent non-Christians from practicing their religions, or (3) seek to make converts by any means besides preaching the Gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15–16). However, one simply **cannot believe the Bible, be a Christian, and believe in religious pluralism.**

The Bible unabashedly reveals and describes one God, the Creator of all things, Who alone is worthy of honor and obedience by His creation (i.e., the Bible proclaims monotheism). Hundreds of passages from both Old and New Testaments forbid the worship of anything or any being (imagined or real) besides the one “true and living” God. The great summary of all of the Bible’s monotheistic claims is the first of the Ten Commandments, which solemnly begins: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exo. 20:3–5). One may disagree with and reject what the Bible teaches in this regard, **but none can rationally deny that it so teaches.**

Likewise, one cannot accept pluralism and Bible teaching concerning the identity of God’s “messengers.” Although God once called Abraham a “prophet” (Gen. 20:7), we have no record of the message he proclaimed (albeit, God spoke to him on many occasions [e.g., Gen. 12:1–3; 15:7; 17:1; 18:23–32; et al.]). Moses was God’s great Old Testament prophet and lawgiver, to Whom God spoke in a unique manner (Num. 12:6–8). Upon his death, the Bible said of him: “And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face” (Deu. 34:10). Pluralists pay no attention to God’s chastisement of Peter at the Transfiguration. He proposed building “tabernacles” for Moses, Elijah, and the Christ, respectively, “not knowing what he said” (Luke 9:33). God immediately revealed to him the unseemly implication of his proposal as He returned Moses and Elijah to their Hadean resting places and thundered from Heaven, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Mat. 17:5b). If God would so summarily pre-empt the fledgling pluralism of Peter when it involved two of God’s mightiest spokesmen, we need not wonder what His attitude is toward those who equate false, self-appointed “prophets” with His Son.

Jesus is not merely “one of God’s messengers.” He is the Messiah/Christ of the Old Testament prophets (Mat. 1:21–23; Luke 1:26–33; Acts 3:19–26; et al.). **He alone** is the Savior of mankind from sin and its eternal consequences (Luke 19:10; John 1:29; 3:16; 8:24; Heb. 7:25; et al.). **He alone**—not Krishna, Buddha, Mohammed, Baha’i, nor any other—can bring men to God (John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5–6). Since He came down from Heaven, God has spoken only through Him (Heb. 1:1–2) and those to whom He revealed His will through the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; Acts 1:1–8; et al.). Pluralism is the devil’s means of deceiving mankind and leading them from God; Christianity—as

the New Testament defines it—is God’s way. Again, men may reject this teaching, **but the Bible undeniably teaches it.**

## What Does it Mean That Widows May Marry “Only in the Lord?”

Nana Yaw Aidoo



The Bible teaches that marriage is between one man and one woman for one lifetime. “The wife is bound by law as long as her husband liveth...” (1 Cor. 7:39). However, since it is appointed unto men once to die (Heb. 9:27), it is very possible for a woman to lose her spouse to death (and vice versa). If so, what next? The Bible teaches that it is not a sin for her to remarry. “...but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will...” (1 Cor. 7:39). Since marriage is an earthly institution, death of a spouse frees a person from the marriage bond and gives him/her the right to remarry.

However, it ought to be obvious to all that the widow being *at liberty to be married to whom she will*, cannot be a law without restrictions or limitations. Surely, no matter how much the widow wishes to be married to a particular man, if that man is lawfully married, she is not at liberty to marry him. It has to be then that the *liberty to be married to whom she will*, must have restrictions. That restriction is set forth in the words “only in the Lord” (1 Cor. 7:39). In my opinion, since the phrase, *only in the Lord*, restricts or limits the liberty the widow has to be married to whom she will, then the phrase must mean “only as is consistent with the Lord’s will.” Thus, what the apostle is saying is that a widow is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only as is consistent with the Lord’s will. This seems to me the correct interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:39.

However, the truth of the matter is that the above interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:39 is not the majority view. The majority view is that the widow under consideration may remarry **only** if she marries a Christian. Woods, who held the majority view, wrote:

On no other matter of biblical teaching known to me is there more agreement among scholars either *in* or *out* of the church. With singular unanimity this view has been advocated by writers both ancient and modern, liberal and conservative, the past two thousand years with scarcely a dissenting voice (91).

He was right. Of all the classic commentaries I consulted, only the 1599 Geneva Bible Notes did not explicitly say that the widow under consideration may remarry only if she marries a Christian. It says, “...she may marry again, but that she does it in the fear of God” (1599 *Geneva Bible Notes*). The reason why this is the majority view is that apparently, it is the natural interpretation of the text. Winters in speaking about this view wrote that it “...seems to be the more natural one (it is the concept one ordinarily gets upon first reading the verse)...” (101). Woods also in telling of those scholarly and respected brethren who held this view quoted brother Gus Nichols who wrote: “The natural and unstrained interpretation of 1 Cor. 7:39 is that the ‘widow’ is to marry one in Christ, a Christian” (95).

While this interpretation might be that which **one ordinarily gets upon first reading the verse**, it doesn’t necessarily make it the correct one. The **natural and unstrained interpretation** of 1 John 3:9 is that a Christian does not have the ability to sin. This is the view of all hardcore Calvinists. That however does not mean that interpretation is correct.

I struggle to believe that 1 Corinthians 7:39 teaches that the widow under consideration may remarry **only** if she marries a Christian for the following reasons.

### Reason 1: The widow under consideration

God’s law on marriage and remarriage applies equally to the saint and the alien. While it is the case that Paul wrote to a group of Christians, 1 Corinthians 7:39 is actu-

ally stating a general law. The wife who is an alien sinner, is bound by God's law to her husband as long as he is alive, just like the wife who is a Christian. And it is this same wife who upon the death of her husband is at liberty to marry to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. Is God saying the widow who is an alien sinner may remarry only if she marries a member of the church of Christ? It has to be the case, if the majority view is correct.

Suppose the widow were not even a Christian. If (A) this widow is **not** a Christian and if (B) "only in the Lord" means the **man** she is marrying **is** a Christian, then (C) when **she** marries **this man** she is marrying "in the Lord" I can't believe this is what Paul had in mind (as cited by Horner 195).

### Reason 2: The word "only"

The apostle wrote that the widow under consideration is at liberty to remarry **only in the Lord**. The word *only* means, "and no one or nothing more besides" (*Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Eleventh Edition)). What this means, if the majority view is correct, is that the widow under consideration cannot marry anyone besides a member of the church of Christ. To violate this law is to sin. Along this line, some questions are in order:

1. Is it a sin for a Christian to marry a non-Christian?
2. Is it a sin for a Christian widow to marry a Southern Baptist widower?
3. If (2) is a sin, what must the Christian widow do to repent of this sin?
4. Does 1 Corinthians 7:39 apply to all Christians or only to widows?
5. If (4) does not apply to all Christians but to widows alone does 1 Cor. 7:12-14 suggest that a virgin (one who has never been married) Christian may marry a non-Christian but a Christian widow cannot under any circumstances marry a non-Christian?
6. If (4) applies to all Christians then did Paul sin in telling those Christians married to non-Christians to remain with them?
7. Is there a separate law of marriage for the virgin Christian and a separate one for the Christian widow?
8. If it is a sin for a Christian widow to marry a non-Christian, why then does the apostle not tell Christian wives with non-Christian husbands to divorce their spouses in 1 Peter 3:1?

### Reason 3: No inherent sin in marrying a non-Christian

Yes, it is dangerous for a Christian to marry a non-Christian. While some Christians have been able to lead their non-Christian spouses to Christ, is that really what normally happens? It seems strange to me that any Christian would want to spend life with a person who is not in submission to God's will. Some years ago, I read an article entitled "*I did not marry a Christian*" from the *Bellview Defender* and it was an eye opener. Deaver in fact took the position that "it is dangerous for **any person** to marry **anybody**—period!" (in Horner 195). However, saying something is dangerous is very different from saying it is a sin. I once heard a preacher say marriage to a non-Christian is a sin, yet there were many Christians married to non-Christians where he preached this message. He never once attempted to withdraw fellowship from such Christians. I am yet to hear of or read of a congregation that withdrew fellowship from a brother or sister because he or she married a non-Christian. Is this not a silent witness that we believe there is no inherent sin in marrying a non-Christian though we think it's unwise?

Peter as has already been stated does not teach that there is anything inherently wrong with marrying a non-Christian. Paul also in 1 Corinthians 7:12-14 teaches that there is nothing inherently sinful in marrying a non-Christian. However, the view that says 1 Corinthians 7:39 teaches that a widow may marry **only** a Christian implies that there is something inherently wrong with marrying a non-Christian and thus for the widow to not marry a Christian is sin. Some who hold the majority view, might not accept this implication of their teaching but it is implied in their teaching the same. Since there is

nothing inherently wrong with marrying a non-Christian then 1 Corinthians 7:39 cannot possibly be forbidding a widow from marrying a non-Christian.

#### **Reason 4: The difficulty in practicing it universally**

Winters wrote:

The first view seems to be the more natural one (it is the concept one ordinarily gets upon first reading the verse), but further consideration soon reveals the difficulty in practicing it universally. For example, on the mission field Christians are often so few and so far apart that any available Christian man suitable for a Christian widow might not be found for hundreds of miles (maybe not until another country or continent) and the chances of them meeting are remote indeed. Yet the widow, for purity's sake, may have a pressing need to marry (v. 9). I knew of one such widow. After she had married a non-Christian (who by her influence later became a strong Christian leader) she said, "There were no Christian men available and I decided that if marrying a non-Christian was wrong, I would rather be lost for marrying than for lusting." Of course apparent impracticalities do not change what the verse teaches, but they do weigh heavily against one interpretation if there is another that appears to be just as reasonable. And in this case, I believe the second view offers us, not just a reasonable alternative, but a more reasonable and harmonious one. The context is concerned with the responsibilities of marriage in distressful times, not with the mate with whom one might choose to share those times. It stands to reason then that Paul means that the widow (or any other Christian who must make the choice for himself) must marry as a Christian, recognizing that she is in union with Christ, that she belongs to the Lord, and that all her actions must reflect this fact. This does not deny that such actions might require her to marry only a Christian, but (if the second view is the correct one, and it seems to me that it is) the Lord has not bound that upon her as an unvariable law (101).

#### **Answering an Objection**

An objection to the foregoing position is that "in the Lord" is almost **always** a reference to being in the church or being a Christian. Woods affirmed that "...the phrase, 'in the Lord,'...is a periphrasis for a Christian" (92). I agree that there are instances in the Scriptures where *in the Lord* or "in Christ" means "in the church." In the first chapter of Ephesians when Paul spoke of the Christian's wealth or blessings "in Christ" and ended the chapter with the idea that the church is "the fullness" of Christ, he was without a shadow of a doubt saying that to be in Christ is to be in His spiritual body, the church.

However, there are other instances that make me skeptical of the view that *in the Lord* always refers to being in the church or being a Christian. For example, Paul tells children to obey their parents "in the Lord" (Eph. 6:1). While it is possible that Paul was dealing with a situation where both the parents and the children were in the church, we have many instances today (and even very likely the case at the time Paul wrote the letter. Imagine a 16-year-old Christian child with non-Christian parents) where children have obeyed the Gospel and been added to the church, while their parents are not members of the church. In view of this command, what are they supposed to do? I really doubt Paul meant to say that if the parents are non-Christians, then the child is exempted from obeying them. Clearly, here as in 1 Corinthians 7:39, *in the Lord* is a limiting phrase and thus, Paul meant by this that children should obey their parents "as far as their commandments agree with those of God, and no farther" (Barnes). Some of the best expositors across the ages, both in and out of the church, have held this view. I note some of them.

John Chrysostom (A.D. 349—407):

'Children,' saith he, 'obey your parents in the Lord,' that is, according to the Lord. This, he means to say, is what God commands you. But what then if they shall command foolish things? Generally a father, however foolish he may be himself, does not command foolish things. However, even in that



case, the Apostle has guarded the matter, by saying, ‘in the Lord’; that is, wherever you will not be offending God. So that if the father be a gentile or a heretic, we ought no longer to obey, because the command is not then, ‘in the Lord’ (*Homily XXI*).

Charles Spurgeon also wrote: “Yet observe there is a limit—children are to obey ‘in the Lord,’ that is to say, so far as the commands of parents are not opposed to the laws of God” (*Spurgeon Devotional Commentary*).

Finally, David Lipscomb affirmed this of the phrase: “This limits the submission. That is, whatever can be done in obedience to the parents without violating the law of God, that do...” (118).

Therefore, since the phrase, *in the Lord*, is sometimes used in the Scriptures in such a way as to mean something other than Christian, then to argue based on that very phrase that a widow must marry only a Christian seems to me an untenable position.

### Conclusion

Again yes, it is dangerous for a Christian to marry a non-Christian and also yes, the position I take isn’t the majority view. However, as God’s children, we are not obligated to follow the multitude but to “speak as the oracles of God.” The majority view of 1 Corinthians 7:39 being fraught with problems, I think that what the apostle was saying to the widows is this: “Marry in harmony with the Lord’s will, and be faithful to the Lord regardless of the cost” (in Horner 196).

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## They Have a Zeal of God But Not According to Knowledge, No. 7

Don Smith

### Introduction



The word of God will always triumph over the error of denominationalism when handled aright. For those who have not followed this series, the following article is a portion of a reply to a letter that a certain Pentecostal named Mrs. Julie Jackson wrote in response to a lengthy article this writer authored and sent to her husband, Marc Jackson. This was by request of Mrs. Jackson’s son, Micah, after he heard the teaching in refutation of modern-day miracles. All of this is chronicled in *TGP*, beginning with the March 2023 issue of said paper. The reply will be given in full in segments, beginning with this current article. There will be many references to the original article, as well as Mrs. Jackson’s response, which will be done for this audience by referencing the issue of *TGP* in which it appears, with the page, paragraph, and sentence numbers as needed. By following these references, it will soon be learned just how absurd Mrs. Jackson’s arguments are. With this, let us begin.

(1)

Dear Julie,

12-29-14

<sup>1</sup>I received your letter in response to the various articles you've read that were written by members of the churches of Christ. <sup>2</sup>I thank you for responding. <sup>3</sup>In my reply, I plan to touch on six particular points you mentioned. <sup>4</sup>These are as follows: 1) Your experiences and life, 2) My religious position, 3) Legalism/Law, 4) Miracles, 5) The church, and 6) God's way of salvation. <sup>5</sup>I, too, want you to know that what I write will be with all the care and dignity that a Christian should have for another of God's creation. <sup>6</sup>Please understand that I am only a messenger of the word and will of God. <sup>7</sup>I am not the Judge of your eternal destiny and would never claim to be such. <sup>8</sup>However, I am completely within the bounds of the authority of God to warn you or commend you concerning the path you are on and have the obligation to prove the acceptable path of God (Eph. 5:10) with the honest and reasonable use of the scriptures in my attempt to persuade (II Cor. 5:11). <sup>9</sup>With that being said, let me begin this reply with what you wrote concerning your experiences and life.

(2)

**Concerning Experiences**

<sup>1</sup>You have relayed to me that your experiences and life are testimony to the truth of God's will being played out in your life through a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. <sup>2</sup>Please don't take this as an attack on you. <sup>3</sup>Just think with me for a moment about this. <sup>4</sup>Stating such things in opposition to the manuscript I sent, wherein the word of God was the sole basis of proof, is tantamount to holding that your experiences trump the word of God. <sup>5</sup>I don't believe that you consciously believe that to be the truth. <sup>6</sup>You probably believe your experiences line up with the word of God, as the same line of reasoning aligns with [*TGP* August 2023, pg. 19, par. 8, sent. 4] in your response. <sup>7</sup>So you probably believe your experiences are of God and therefore hold weight in the defense of your current position. <sup>8</sup>However, the truth is, whether intentionally conceived or not, you have used your experiences to trump the word of God. <sup>9</sup>Take a look at [*TGP* July 2023, pg. 31, par. 4; Aug., pg. 18, par. 7; and Sept., pg. 21, par. 16 and 17] where you used your experiences as defense. <sup>10</sup>There is not one passage of scripture cited nor quoted in support as proof that your experiences would reasonably line up with what we should expect today. <sup>11</sup>(I didn't over look the scripture citation in [Aug. pg. 18, par. 7] which has nothing to do with this current discussion, and I did recognize the partial quotation of Galatians 2:20 at the end of the paragraph which is just a statement of where you believe you stand and not a substantiation that your experiences are wrought of God.) <sup>12</sup>In truth, this is part of the previous teachings I had asked you to put on the shelf as you studied the manuscript. <sup>13</sup>Everything you've held on the subject is what I had in mind. <sup>14</sup>Please excuse my vagueness if I were not clear concerning that. <sup>15</sup>There are Pentecostal "pastors" who teach, whether explicitly or implicitly, to rely on experiences. <sup>16</sup>Read again the William Davis article and see the quotation of a Pentecostal "pastor" he uses in relation to this. <sup>17</sup>William Davis, himself of the Pentecostal faith over 50 years, knows they teach this. <sup>18</sup>However, the word of God teaches the opposite. <sup>19</sup>It teaches us to study to show ourselves approved (2 Tim. 2:15), to prove what is acceptable to the Lord (Eph. 5:10), and to prove all things (1 Thess. 5:21). <sup>20</sup>It teaches us that **all** scripture is given that the man of God may be complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17), that **all** things pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of Christ had been given (2 Pet. 1:3), and that the faith had been once for **all** delivered (Jude 3, ASV), **all** in the first century. <sup>21</sup>Paul stated that when all these things had been given, miracles would cease (Eph. 4:13). <sup>22</sup>If you line this up, we see that scripture is what we are given to solely rely on today, not experiences. <sup>23</sup>What you stated in [*TGP* July pg. 31] in the 2nd sentence of paragraph 4, and [Aug. pg. 18] in the last sentence of paragraph 7 is an unwillingness to move from your position whether the word of God shows it's right or wrong—and this is based upon experience. <sup>24</sup>Do you see how your experience has trumped the word of God? <sup>25</sup>I plead with you Mrs. Jackson, please do not take this closed-minded approach to this study with me. <sup>26</sup>I must tell you at this point that the word of God shows that your soul is certainly in jeopardy. <sup>27</sup>Please reason with me; this may be the most important study of your life.

(3)

<sup>1</sup>The things you described in [*TGP* Sept., pg. 21] paragraph 16 that your husband has overcome, as the alcoholism, Crohn's Disease, and the near death experiences, are all great feats. <sup>2</sup>I'm so happy for you both that he didn't perish in these. <sup>3</sup>However, people overcome things like this quite frequently, and it's through natural means. <sup>4</sup>Sure, God could have had His hand in these by His providence working through natural means, but none of this lines up with the **supernatural** essence of the Biblical miracles. <sup>5</sup>Biblical miracles were infallible proofs (Acts 1:3). <sup>6</sup>Described in this manner, the Bible shows us they were performed in order to "prove" (Acts 2:22). <sup>7</sup>They were completely beyond explanation. <sup>8</sup>So why might the Lord have been at work in your lives through His providence? <sup>9</sup>Maybe it was to bring you to this point.

(4)

<sup>1</sup>How you raised your children, as you described in [*TGP* Sept., pg. 21] paragraph 17, certainly shows you were devoted to what you believe. <sup>2</sup>I've never put into question your sincerity or devoutness. <sup>3</sup>In fact I believe you are very devout. <sup>4</sup>Notwithstanding, sincerity does not make a belief or practice scripturally sanctioned by God. <sup>5</sup>The apostle Paul was very sincere in putting Christians in prison and consenting to their deaths (Acts 8:1; 9:1-2), and we know he thought this was the will of God, as strict of a pharisaical life as he lived (Phil. 3:4-6). <sup>6</sup>Yet although he was sincere, he was sincerely wrong in this. <sup>7</sup>We have such great examples throughout the Bible to help us conform our lives to the will of God when properly taught. <sup>8</sup>Christianity is a taught religion. <sup>9</sup>I will touch more on this subject in my reply to the next topic, my religious position.

(5)

**Concerning My Religious Position**

<sup>1</sup>You've made several allusions in curiosity as to whether I profess to be a member of the church of Christ ([*TGP* Aug., pg. 19, par. 10]) and how I got in touch with this theology ([July, pg. 32, Par. 4], last 2 sentences). <sup>2</sup>So let me just give you a little more detail of how I got to where I am religiously.

(6)

<sup>1</sup>There must have been a slight misunderstanding concerning me having never stepped foot into a church building before. <sup>2</sup>When I was a child and growing up, there were probably not more than 10 times I had been in a church building. <sup>3</sup>There are only 4 buildings I had stepped foot in and 3 of those was only one time. <sup>4</sup>I had heard sermons in only 2 of those buildings, but paid little to no attention to what was being taught, so I certainly didn't acquire any knowledge from them.

(7)

<sup>1</sup>By the time of my incarceration, I had only read the book of Revelation, and that only one time. <sup>2</sup>So when I was initially incarcerated, I had a curiosity of what was in the rest of the New Testament. <sup>3</sup>I found a Today's English Version (which several years later I would come to find out is a very bad "translation"), and I read the New Testament. <sup>4</sup>This only made me further want to know what was in the Old Testament, so I asked a fellow inmate if I could borrow his Bible to read it. <sup>5</sup>During the time I spent reading it, there were many religious discussions among us (the inmates). <sup>6</sup>The fellow who let me borrow his Bible put me into contact with his grandmother, just before he left the county jail for prison. <sup>7</sup>She sent me various religious tracts and pamphlets from time to time, and my own copy of the Bible—it was an NIV.

(8)

<sup>1</sup>I began attending the religious services in the jail. <sup>2</sup>I had planned to attend the services of every church in my hometown on a rotational basis continually upon my release. <sup>3</sup>One day a new inmate began speaking with me out of nowhere. <sup>4</sup>He said he was a Christian, and his demeanor fit the description better than anyone I had ever known. <sup>5</sup>We had several discussions concerning Christianity, and I soon learned he was a member of the church of Christ. <sup>6</sup>In one of the discussions, I remember him claiming that there is only one church. <sup>7</sup>I assumed he was referring to the church he was a member of, and I was thinking in my head, "Yeah, I bet all the different religious groups

claim the same thing.” <sup>8</sup>Yet, I continued to hear out the things he was stating.

**(9)**

<sup>1</sup>One day I asked him to come to the religious services that were held there in the jail, but he said no. <sup>2</sup>I asked him why not, and tried to convince him it would be good for him, but he continued to decline and stated that the Gideons held those services and he couldn’t condone their false teaching. <sup>3</sup>So I went to the service anyway, thinking this man was wrong. <sup>4</sup>At the service, the preacher said something that really triggered my mind to think deeply about what the inmate had said. <sup>5</sup>The preacher said, when asked about women and sexuality, “You can look, but don’t touch.” <sup>6</sup>This floored me because I knew I had read in Matthew that if you look upon a woman in lust, you have committed adultery with her already in your heart. <sup>7</sup>This preacher was really teaching something false. <sup>8</sup>However, it would be several more years before I would know how much more deeply the extent of false teaching, both morally and doctrinally, was throughout the entire religious world of Christendom.

**(10)**

<sup>1</sup>The Christian in our jail pod continued to have religious discussions with me, and even explained that my translation, the NIV, was faulty. <sup>2</sup>I began to realize that this guy knew what he was talking about, so I cautioned myself as I continued to read it. <sup>3</sup>As I read, I noticed that whole verses were missing and placed in footnotes. <sup>4</sup>I wondered why they would do such a thing. <sup>5</sup>Later I would find that it was much more than footnotes that made this translation faulty. <sup>6</sup>My trust began to open up more and more to this fellow as I realized he was right on everything we had called him on, even the pamphlets and materials the other fellow’s grandmother had been sending me. <sup>7</sup>This was only because he was well informed and knew his Bible. <sup>8</sup>I had already determined to try to do all I could, to do all things right in everything I did, so I began to learn a few things from this fellow over the 6 months we were together.

**(11)**

<sup>1</sup>When my new friend was released, he had another fellow send in some Bible correspondence courses for me to study with. <sup>2</sup>This is when I began learning the basics of what we need to do to be saved and stay saved, the work, worship, and organization of the church, morality, and various other things. <sup>3</sup>Much later I learned of Dub McClish’s writings and then began writing with him and grew exponentially in the faith.

**(12)**

<sup>1</sup>You see, as I had stated before, Christianity is a taught religion. <sup>2</sup>Jesus Christ commissioned the disciples to teach all nations, baptize them, and teach some more (Matt. 28:19-20). <sup>3</sup>The Ethiopian eunuch asked to be taught, and so Philip preached Christ to him (Acts 8:30-31; 34-35). <sup>4</sup>Preaching Christ entails more than preaching about Him, but also includes teaching the pattern of the system of faith He gave the apostles to relay to us. <sup>5</sup>This is clearly seen in Acts 8:5 and 12 wherein Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans (v. 5), and then that preaching is described as the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (v. 12)—and then they were baptized. <sup>6</sup>This lines up perfectly with the Matthew 28:19-20 passage just cited—the disciples were commanded to teach and then baptize; Philip taught the things concerning the kingdom and then baptized. <sup>7</sup>The command is further given to Timothy to teach others who are faithful so that they may be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2). <sup>8</sup>This teaching must be the correct teaching. <sup>9</sup>If we were obedient to false doctrine, we must go back to the first step of hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17) and be taught correctly. <sup>10</sup>We cannot enter heaven through obedience to a false teaching. <sup>11</sup>This is why there are so many warnings about it (2 Cor. 11:3-4).

**(13)**

<sup>1</sup>So I was taught both by men and scripture. <sup>2</sup>It took reason, honesty, and independent investigation to know whether what I was taught was true. <sup>3</sup>This was work, and I believe it is required of us all individually. <sup>4</sup>I wasn’t forced into anything. <sup>5</sup>It was truth I was looking for. <sup>6</sup>I gave time to the things I didn’t quite understand initially, and eventually I received rock solid answers.

(14)

<sup>1</sup>I finally obeyed the gospel in 2008 (it would've been much sooner but my circumstances hindered). <sup>2</sup>Upon my obedience, the Lord added me to His church (Acts 2:47). <sup>3</sup>I didn't join it—no one can join His church. <sup>4</sup>Only He does the adding. <sup>5</sup>His church is certainly among us today known by the same descriptive phrases it was known by in the first century—one being the churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16). <sup>6</sup>It is still as fully organized as it was in the first century, and has earmarks that set it apart from all other religious bodies. <sup>7</sup>This is the church of the Bible. <sup>8</sup>If that church is not of Christ, then who would it be of? <sup>9</sup>I am a member of the church of Christ. <sup>10</sup>The church is His body (Eph. 1:22-23), and I am a member of that body (1 Cor. 12:27). <sup>11</sup>All of the faithful are also a part of that body. <sup>12</sup>If their theology lines up with the Bible, and my theology lines up with the Bible, shouldn't our theology line up with one another (1 Cor. 1:10)? <sup>13</sup>This is my religious position. <sup>14</sup>I will write more concerning the church and denominationalism later. <sup>15</sup>I believe by now you may be thinking, "Man, these legalists!" <sup>16</sup>So this will be the next issue I will address.

### Conclusion

In this segment, it was necessary to refute from the start the idea of being guided by experiences or holding them as authoritative. It was also important to correct Mrs. Jackson's assumptions about this writer's religious position, which gave opportunity for further instruction on the authority of the Bible through teaching. Each of the six segments of this reply were sent to Mrs. Jackson separately, about three days apart. This was done so she would have time to seriously reflect upon what was written in contrast to what she believed. As will be seen in the next segment, this should have had a great impact on the honest and good heart.

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## "What Saith The Scriptures?"

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### Harrell Davidson

The question is: "Should a congregation of the Lord's church participate in Truck or Treat? If not, can you explain why not? My congregation is pondering this issue."



I am assuming you mean "trunk" instead of truck. First, Col. 3:17 indicates that everything we do in word or deed be done in the name of the Lord. Word is what we say and deed is what we do. "Name of" means by His authority. Christ has all authority in heaven and earth (cf. Matt. 28:18). **With these two passages we know immediately that there is no authority for a congregation having or supporting such an event.** Please consider the following regarding halloween:

Carving pumpkins, trick-or-treating, and wearing scary costumes are some of the time-honored traditions of Halloween. Yet, the Halloween holiday has its roots in the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (a Gaelic word pronounced "SAH-win"), a **pagan religious celebration** to welcome the harvest at the end of summer, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. In the eighth century, **Pope Gregory III designated** November 1 as a time to honor saints. Soon after, All Saints Day came to incorporate some of the traditions of Samhain. The evening before All Saints Day was known as All Hallows Eve, and later, Halloween. Here is a look at the origins of some of the classic Halloween traditions we know today (*The Pensacola Journal*. Pensacola, FL, Oct. 29, 1922, Emph. HDD).

This holiday was originated in paganism just as Easter and Christmas. Notice that Pope Gregory III designated it. That within itself should be enough but there's more.

Moses wrote, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exo. 22:18). If there had been no witches, such a law as this would never have been made. The existence of the law, given under the direction of the Spirit of God, proves the existence of the thing being. I see signs already of witches on brooms in our little community and towns near us.



There are ghosts of different kinds and characters. I see church bulletins begging for people to give their candy to the congregation individual wrapped etc. to hand out to children. Not all are doing it this way with members setting up with trunks of cars of tailgates of SUV's who are dressed as witches, owls or bats. Makes no difference the sky is the limit it seems.

It is claimed that this is about the children. Is it really? How is the church doing these days retaining children or for that matters adults? This is not to judge the intents or those participating. The whole procedure did not originate in the Lord's church. It is borrowed from denominationalism and we think we can do anything they do without reservation. Where do these things function? Church parking lots! Who paid for those parking lots? The local church! The local church may say they are not supporting such but they are in fact.

September 8 is National Beer day in the USA. Would it be okay for a beer trunk to sit on the parking lot each year of September 8? I realize this is extreme and like comparing apples to oranges but it is the principle that I want to distinguish. This would never happen. Should we celebrate a pagan holiday? Do we celebrate easter in the church? No we don't, nor Christmas.

It is not the function of the church to care for the children. This is the responsibility of the home. Families may celebrate a time of the year like Christmas by getting together for a meal, exchange gifts as a family without any celebration of this being the birthday of Christ and that would be proper. How about a manager on the parking lot? This is the same principle.

Moses also wrote:

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee (Deut. 18: 10-12).

All these things are connected together.

It's started that this is a safer environment and that may be true but why can't families make an alliance of some kind and take their children to members houses that would be expecting them instead. Even this should not be a celebration of halloween but of giving treats to children. At least this would take the church out of the picture and the responsibility be on the home where it belongs.

Last, this is a very big event in our country. More than one half of all candy sold in America is sold for this holiday. There are dozens of websites designed with churches in mind that sell all the Halloween designs characters and stuff that churches would use. It's a very big business dollar wise. Is this what the Lord's church in the first century was known by? I think not for there is **no authority for it whatsoever** and there must be for the church to do it or else is in vain.

## Is Praying to Jesus Authorized?

Mike Demory



In our Pentecostal age of emotionalism, we hear individuals in public prayer addressing Jesus, or switching between the Father and the Son, while even going so far as to pray to the Holy Spirit Himself. The argument is often given that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all God therefore any one of the three can be addressed. When we speak of "prayer," we are not talking about a personal face-to-face conversation between two or more individuals as was the case between Stephen and the glorified Christ (Acts 7:59). If this particular example is to be used as the authority for "praying" then to be consistent, one would have to argue that every conversation is a prayer.

Prayer should be the life blood of the Christian that ever connects him to God. Unlike many societies today who spend special time in prayer, Americans tend not to devote as much time to prayer. The Jews had specific times three times per day to pray as do Muslims. Jesus' example in Luke 11:1-13 and Matthew 6:9-15 are not to be considered a specific prayer that is to be prayed, or sung, as is common with some religious groups, but rather a simple format or blueprint that shows what prayers should include. Please notice what is incorporated in these two examples that instruct our prayers to be addressed to none other than; "Our Father." No where do we find Jesus instructing His disciples to pray to Himself, the Holy Spirit, Allah, Buddha, Mary His mother or to deceased saints.

There are those who will argue that we find examples where men are "praying" to Jesus or where Jesus Himself instructs others to 'pray' to Him because the phrase, *calling on the name* is found. Context must always be maintained when considering any Bible subject and the phrase *calling on the name* is no different.

This phrase has been used from justifying the "sinner's prayer" to praying to Jesus. While it is true that the word *calling* is used some 32 times in the New Testament, this word has nothing to do with a "sinners prayer," let alone praying to Jesus or to anyone else. *Calling on the name* is used no less than ten times to refer to the process of salvation (Acts 22:16; 9:14, 21; Rom. 10:13, et al), while other times it is reference to Christ's authority.

Think about it rationally for a moment, why would Jesus, who said He was the "Way, the Truth and the Life," tell us we are to pray to the Father (Matt. 6:9), and then confuse the issue by inserting words that appear to teach otherwise? The only rational answer can be that it is **men** who are confusing the issue. Third Century martyr Origen wrote, "Now if we are to take prayer in its most exact sense, perhaps we should not pray to anyone begotten, not even to Christ Himself, but only to the God and Father of all, to whom even our Savior Himself prayed ... and to whom He taught us to pray." Yet men continue to be irrational in their interpretation of Scripture by the mere assertion that a particular thing refers to praying to Jesus. Whether they point to the use of the word *Maranatha*, or the idea that because we sing songs of praise to Jesus, that means we may then pray to Him is dishonesty gone to seed. The claim (assertion really) is made that Acts 7:59 is proof that one may pray directly to Jesus because the text states that as the Jews were stoning Stephen he "called" on God saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Advocates of Jesus prayer opine that *called* means *prayed* (NIV translation), because Stephen used the words "Lord Jesus," meaning he was praying directly to Jesus. The fact of the matter is that Stephen lived in supernatural times, that cannot be emulated today. If we can use his example as praying to Jesus, then we should expect the heavens to open, and be able to see Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, as did Stephen.

Other irrational arguments assert that the church fathers spoke of praying to Jesus or that there are hymns such as "Just a Little talk with Jesus," "I Must Tell Jesus," and "Tell it To Jesus Alone," that imply praying to Him. We must ask the question—Your point? Neither of these is authoritative as they come from men and not God.

So the real question is this, "To whom do we address in prayer?" Despite all the force feeding of the subject into passages of Scripture, or seeking out the opinions of men, it is the duty of every person to seek only what Saith the Lord (Acts 17:11). In the famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus while teaching the multitudes, instructs them that their prayers should not be repetitious or vain; and that they should be addressed to God the Father (Matt. 6:1-9). He gave no alternatives, no middle ground to whom we are to address our prayers!

The Apostle Paul understood the concept of praying to God the Father when he wrote to the Ephesians instructing them of the "giving of thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20); and again to the Colossians when he said, "and whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by Him" (Col. 3:17). The term "in the name of" is equivalent to saying "by the authority of" as is the case of the Jewish

leaders asking Peter “by what name” or “by what authority” have you done this? (Acts 4:7). The giving of thanks is always to be directed to God the Father—**through** or **by** the Lord Jesus.

In conclusion, there is no authority from God whatsoever to pray directly to Jesus or anyone else. If it is the case that we can use one example of conversation to make the case for prayer, then we must use all examples of conversation to do so which then opens the door to praying to just about anyone, if not, why not? There are three persons in the Godhead, each have a role to play. God the Father being the Great Architect deserves all glory and honor due His name. While we love and appreciate what Jesus has done, and praise is also due Him, it is to the Father alone that we are commanded to direct our prayers. As Paul said, “for this cause I bow my knees unto the Father” (Eph. 3:14).

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## ***“The Thing That Hath Been....” The Cycle of Apostasy***

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## **Worship Vs. Service and the Object of Worship**

**Lester Kamp**



The first reference Jesus made to worship is found in the course of the temptations in the wilderness immediately after His baptism by John. Our attention is focused on the third of these temptations. Satan took Jesus to “an exceeding high mountain” and showed Him “all the kingdoms of the world” (Mat. 4:8). Jesus was then told that He could have all of these kingdoms if He would simply fall down and worship Satan. The subject of the proper object of worship is involved in this temptation.

There are certainly other things which are also involved. For example, the possibility of Jesus’ obtaining the kingdoms of the world without going to the cross is part of the “snare” of this temptation. Now, carefully notice the response of Jesus. He said, “for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (4:10).

First, it is worthy of notice that there is an obvious difference between worship and service in this Scriptural response (a reference to Deu. 6:13). There are some brethren today who make the mistake of equating these terms and conclude that all of life is worship. All of life is to be given in service to God, but all of life is not worship. Service is a broader term than worship.

Some confuse worship and service. Worship is service to God, and it is right to say that

we go to worship services, but all service is not worship: plowing, guitar playing, eating hamburgers, etc. Some apparently have been misled by some new translations that have removed the word *service* from Romans 12:1, and have inserted the word *worship* (RSV, NASV, NIV). It is true that in certain contexts the Greek word in Romans 12:1 (*latreuo*) is properly rendered as worship (as in 9:4). But in itself, the word only means serve, whether the service is toward God or men (cf. *Latris*, a hired servant; *latron*, hire, pay). Sometimes the word refers to a lifetime of service to God (Acts 24:14; Heb. 12:28), and the context of Romans 12:1 shows one's offering his body as a living sacrifice is a lifetime of service, not of meditation (which is what worship is).

All worship is, therefore, service; but not all service is worship. We should notice here that worship does not occur accidentally without the realization of the participant and that worship is not continuous.

Abraham climbed a mountain to worship on its summit, and then, after worship, returned to his base camp at the foot of the mountain (Gen. 22:1-5). When David learned that his baby had died, he bathed, changed clothes, and went into the house of Jehovah, "and worshiped" (2 Sam. 12:20). When he had worshiped, he returned home and ate a meal. Worship is not all that one does. It is punctuated by stop and go. The Ethiopian had been to Jerusalem to worship (Acts 8); worship was not then nor is it now all of life.

Second, Jesus tells us clearly in this statement of Matthew 4:10 that the only one worthy of worship is God (the Godhead). Worship is to be offered to no other. Worship should not be offered to the pope, to Mary (the Lord's earthly mother), to special people who are highly regarded, etc. Worship is to be directed to the God of the universe, the Creator of man and of all the good things that are in the world in which we live.

## Yes, "It *is* a Shame"

Carrol Ray Sutton

There are some things that people do of which they should be ashamed, but they are not. Here are three things:

**It is a shame for a man to have long hair.** The apostle Paul said, "Doth not even nature teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" (1 Cor. 11:14-15) This is not discussing a particular class of men. It says, "a man." That would include all men, young and old.

Someone may ask, "Why did Jesus have long hair?" I have never seen any proof from the Scriptures that Jesus had long hair! Have you? If so, where? Yes, it is a shame for a man to have long hair.

**It is a shame for a woman to have short hair.** Read 1 Corinthians 11:14-15 again. In contrast with it being a shame for a man to have long hair, Paul said, "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her..." Paul also said, "...but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven..." (1 Cor. 11:16). Note: The use of the word "if" does not express doubt. It is the equivalent of saying, "since" it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven. The result of being shorn or shaven is short hair or no hair. Therefore, it is a shame for a woman to have short hair since it is a shame for her to be shorn or shaven. Long hair is a glory to her.

**It is a shame for women to speak in the church.** A careful reading of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 indicates that women are to keep silent in the churches (assemblies) as far as speaking and asking questions are concerned. They are to be submissive (i.e., "under obedience") as also the law teaches. Note verse 34b: "For it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

Some people try to make void the teachings of First Corinthians 11:2-16 and 14:34-35 by saying that those were "customs" back then that don't apply now. Others say that these passages were in the first century when "spiritual gifts" were in operation and don't apply now. But these are only assertions that can't be proven by truth.

## When Did It Begin?

Author Unknown

- Use of Holy Water—Began (ad 210); required (ad 1009).
- Infant Baptism—Introduced (over strong opposition) (ad 250).
- Sign of the Cross—Introduced (ad 310).
- First Human Creed—The “Nicean Creed” (ad 325).
- Veneration of Dead Saints and Angels Introduced (ad 375).
- Mariolatry—The veneration (worship) of Mary (ad 410).
- Latin Mass—Began (ad 394).
- Purgatory—“Second chance” for those who die in sin (ad 593).
- Latin Language used in prayer and worship (ad 600).
- First Pope—Boniface III assumed title of “Universal Bishop” (ad 607). But died out shortly thereafter, not until ad 858 when Nicholas I established the Title of Pope was Catholicism accepted.
- Instrumental Music—First used in Catholic Church (over strong objection) (ad 670).
- Kissing Pope’s Feet—(ad 709).
- Worship of Cross, Images and Relics—(ad 788).
- Holy Water—(ad 850).
- Veneration of St. Joseph—(ad 890).
- Canonization of dead saints—(ad 995).
- Fasting on Fridays and Lent—(ad 998).
- Mass introduced by Roman Catholic Church (ad 998).
- Celibate Priesthood—Introduced (ad 385); enforced (ad 1079).
- Rosary—(ad 1090).
- Indulgences—(ad 1190).
- Transubstantiation—(ad 1215).
- Auricular Confession—Confession of sins to a priest (ad 1215).
- Bible Forbidden by Catholic Church—(ad 1229).
- Sprinkling for Baptism—Universal Catholic practice (ad 1311).
- Seven Sacraments—(ad 1439).
- Ave Maria—(ad 1508).
- Original Sin—Introduced by Tertullian in ad 200 but gained universal acceptance when John Calvin reintroduced it in ad 1536.
- Limited Atonement—Introduced by John Calvin in ad 1536.
- Eternal Security—Introduced by John Calvin in ad 1536.
- Tradition equal in authority to the Bible (ad 1545).
- Apocryphal books added as defense against English Bibles being printed by Protestants (ad 1546).
- Sabbath Worship—Introduced by Peter Chamberlen in London (ad 1651). Has gained wide acceptance as more denominations meet on Saturday for convenience’s sake.
- Dispensationalism—Introduced in ad 1830 by John Darby, founder of the Plymouth Brethren Church.
- Immaculate Conception—(ad 1834).
- Papal Infallibility—(ad 1870).
- Mary affirmed as “The Mother of God” (ad 1931).
- Assumption of Mary—(ad 1950).
- Full Preterism—(ad 1970).