



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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DISTORTED AND CONTRIVED RELIGIOUS TERMS #2

Jon Gary Williams

Part one of this article appeared in the previous issue of STOP (Feb/21) and addressed terms found in the Scriptures but which are given **distorted** meanings by men. Now we turn to part two, which deals with **contrived** (improvised, invented) terms unknown to the Scriptures and are used to convey false religious ideas.

CONTRIVED RELIGIOUS TERMS UNKNOWN TO THE BIBLE

DENOMINATIONS

This is a word widely used to describe the various divided groups found in the world of “Christendom.” During the expansion of the Reformation, a number of churches were formed, all adhering to their particular creeds. Though the relationship between these churches was contentious, as time passed this changed to a cautious acceptance, and eventually became an “agree to disagree” alliance. So the word “denominations” became a charitable way of saying they were divided. However, the concept of divisiveness is contrary to the teaching of the New Testament. The apostle Paul was clear on this matter. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10).

PROTESTANT

Beginning during the reformation movement, this word was used to de-

scribe non-Catholic churches, for they were “protesting” the flaws of Roman Catholicism. Over the years this term became a fixed expression to describe the anti-Catholic view of these churches. To this day it is common to hear people being asked, “Are you Catholic or Protestant?” Though the Lord’s church should protest all that is wrong, the term “Protestant” cannot be used to describe the church. The church of the New Testament is neither Catholic nor Protestant.

JOIN (THE CHURCH)

“Joining the church” is an expression describing someone becoming a part of a particular denomination. In most instances the acceptance of a person into a church’s fellowship is determined by a vote of its members. Such a concept reveals a lack of understanding of how one becomes a member of the church. This practice is akin to joining a social group or civic organization and is foreign to the teaching of the New Testament. No one can “join” the Lord’s church. Rather, lost people are “added” to the church when they obey the Gospel. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were **added** unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord **added** to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

SINNER’S PRAYER

Most denominations teach that an alien sinner is saved from sins by

believing in Christ and then praying what is called the “sinner’s prayer.” People are told they must express their faith by praying for salvation. However, the Scriptures teach nothing of the kind. Rather, praying for the forgiveness of sins is meant for Christians when they commit sin. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). The New Testament contains no examples of alien sinners being told to pray to have their sins forgiven. To be forgiven of sins, a non-Christian must believe in Christ. “...For if ye **believe** not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). They must also repent of sins. “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to **repent**” (Acts 17:30). They must then confess faith in Christ. “...And with the mouth **confession** is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). They are then to be baptized in water. “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be **baptized**, and wash away thy sins...” (Acts 22:16).

MILLENNIAL REIGN

The millennial reign refers to a future, so-called, one thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. Most denominations believe that when Christ returns He will set up a literal, earthly kingdom over which He will rule for one thousand years. To the contrary, when Jesus comes again, the earth

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Distorted and Contrived...



Editorial...

CANCEL CULTURE CENSORSHIP — THOUGHT POLICE

Garland M. Robinson

Corruption, iniquity, evil, sin, has existed since the Garden of Eden; and, it will continue till God annihilates this world and time shall be no more.

Cancel Culture, Thought Police, Censorship are all expressions to describe the political and social climate that has gained a foothold among us today. According to Wikipedia.org, “Cancel culture (or call-out culture) is a modern form of ostracism in which someone is thrust out of social or professional circles — either online on social media, in the real world, or both. Those who are subject to this ostracism are said to be ‘canceled.’”

Merriam-webster.com: “The practice or tendency of engaging in mass canceling as a way of expressing disapproval and exerting social pressure; also: the people who engage in or support this practice.”

Dictionary.cambridge.org: “To completely reject and stop supporting someone because they have said or done something that offends you.”

Urbandictionary.com: “It is caused by a critical mass of people who are quick to judge and slow to question.”

Cancel culture seeks to nullify and abolish all opposing voices, especially conservative voices. It voids (terminates, shuts down, refuses a platform) those who would dare question the practice and position of the far left. Liberalism, Marxism is their desperate cry. Everything goes. Everything must be allowed. Don’t claim there is such a thing as “right and wrong.” With them, their thinking is the only right way and anyone who opposes their way must be canceled — silenced at all cost!

Cancel culture seeks to shut down all voices of conservative expression. Tragically, they are very successful in doing so. Conservative voices have been canceled from social media outlets (internet apps, TV, newspapers, radio,

etc). Conservative voice has been canceled from speaking on University campuses. The practice of the day is to tell everyone, don’t investigate, don’t question, don’t examine, don’t scrutinize, move on, move on, go away, there’s nothing to see here! Their greatest fear is that people will actually open their eyes and examine what’s going on. They not only fear Truth, they hate it. Truth always refutes and dispels error. They don’t want anyone thinking for themselves.

The concept of “cancel culture” arises from those who consider themselves to be in control of all things that are “acceptable” and “not acceptable.” They “shame” (cancel) anyone, everyone, who does not hold the same opinion as theirs. In this respect, they are “Thought Police.” If you don’t think like they think, you’re not simply ignored as one having a different opinion. In their eyes, your thoughts and voice must be shut down, canceled, terminated! You have no right to your opinion because they consider your opinion dangerous and that it must to be silenced.

Even American history is being “canceled” and rewritten to suit this corrupt and wicked agenda. It is a progressive operation that seeks to destroy our entire history and culture. This makes the time in which we live a very troublesome period. But, on the other hand, has there ever been a time in history that was not troublesome? Corruption, iniquity, evil, sin, has existed since the Garden of Eden; and, it will continue till God annihilates this world and time shall be no more.

There are three directions one may choose in life, but only one of the three is THE WAY that is approved by the eternal God of heaven who

made heaven and earth. 1) There’s God’s way, 2) There’s the way to the left of God’s way, 3) There’s the way to right of God’s way. Think of a grandfather clock. 12 o’clock is the way that leads to heaven. Every way to the left of 12 and every way to the right of 12 is wrong. It doesn’t matter with the devil whether one chooses the left or the right, both are wrong. It doesn’t matter if you stray off the road to the left or to the right, you’re in the ditch either way.

LEFT is the word that describes the way that does not respect God’s rule of law. It’s the way that takes “liberties” with the Scriptures. This way refuses to be bound by the restrictions God has made. It “takes away” from God’s law.

RIGHT is the word that describes the way that goes beyond God’s rule of law. They basically believe the Scriptures, but they go further and make their own laws and regulations and bind them upon men as if it was God’s law. This way “adds to” God’s law.

We are given warning in the Scriptures not to depart to the *right* or to the *left*. Moses revealed God’s instructions unto Israel: “*Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. ... Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left*” (Deut. 5:1-32). This precept is pointed out again and again (Deut. 17:11,20; 28:13-14; Josh. 1:7; 23:6).

Very powerful and influential voices today have strayed to the “left” of the strait and narrow way God has legislated (cf. Matt. 7:13-14). They repudiate and reject “God’s way” and have gone the way of Balaam who loved the wages of unrighteousness (2 Peter 2:15). “Cancel culture” has become the word that describes their wickedness. Because of current events, they have seized the opportunity to rally their mob in a concerted effort to silence the voices of those who seek to maintain the “right way.”

Cancel culture diminishes and seeks to stamp out “freedom of speech.” Under the banner of Progressivism, conservative voices that call for a firm stand for decency, morality, and righteousness, is being silenced at every turn. It has gained a foot hold with many because they have been brain-

washed into thinking that God's way is not valid. God's Word quells their freedom to do as they please. They don't want anyone telling them that what they're doing is sinful. They seek to silence everything righteous.

Canceling, silencing, muzzling, annulling, God's true and holy word is nothing new. What is going on now has been going on through the ages.

The devil canceled (nullified) God's word to Adam and Eve. In Genesis 2:16-17 we read: *"The LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"* (Gen. 2:16-17). The devil came along and told Eve: "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4) — thereby canceling God's word.

Jehoiakim (king of Judah) did evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Kings 23:37). He refused to hear the word of God because it wasn't favorable to him. The Lord had given warning: *"It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin"* (Jer. 36:3). However, when God's word was read in Jehoiakim's presence *"...he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire...until all the roll was consumed in the fire.... Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words"* (Jer. 36:23-24). The king commanded that Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet be taken captive, "but the Lord hid them."

God's word was canceled — so the king thought! However, God commanded Jeremiah to write again all the words that Jehoiakim had burned (v.28). *"Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not"* (vs. 29-31). God's word wasn't canceled after all was it? The Lord God almighty will do the same, not only as he did to

that generation, but all in every generation who refuse his word by seeking to cancel it!

The word Micaiah the prophet proclaimed was canceled by king Ahab. When the king wanted to go against Syria in battle, 450 false prophets told him he would succeed. But when Jehoshaphat the king of Judah ask if there were any other prophets of which they could enquire, Ahab said there is one, but *"I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil"* (1 Kings 22:1-8). When Micaiah was summoned he told Ahab the truth from God: *"I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil"* (1 Kings 22:17-18)?

Ahab canceled what Micaiah said and put him in prison. He believed the false prophets, went into battle, and was killed. *"So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake"* (vs.37-38).

Why won't people listen to God's everlasting word? It never pays to cancel the holy Scriptures. Actually, it can't be done and escape the consequences.

Isaiah the prophet wrote God's word from heaven: *"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it"* (Isa. 55:8-11).

Distorted and Contrived...

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will be destroyed. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). Also, the Scriptures plainly teach that the closest Jesus will come to the earth is in the clouds. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them [the resurrected dead] in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17).

Rapture

This word refers to a so-called rapturing up of the saved (both dead and living) to be with Christ when He comes again, and is based on a misuse of 1 Thessalonians 4:17. It is taught that this "rapture" is to last for seven years. At the end of the seven years Jesus and those raptured will then live on earth for a one thousand-year millennial period. Of course, no such teaching is found in the word of God. To the contrary, when Jesus returns, it will be immediate, with no seven-year delay. And at that time all those who ascend to be with Christ will at that moment go to be with God. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24).

Saved — Cannot Be Lost

It is taught by most denominations that once people are saved they can never be lost. This doctrine is sometimes referred to as "perseverance of the saints," suggesting that the saved will persevere to the end. However, the Bible clearly teaches that the saved can be lost. Paul told the Galatians, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are **fallen** from grace" (Gal. 5:4). Timothy was told, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall **depart** from the faith..." (1 Tim. 4:1). The writer of Hebrews said, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in **departing** from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). In

fact, the apostle Paul said that even he could be lost (1 Cor. 9:27).

INFANT BAPTISM

This is the practice of the majority of churches wherein water is either sprinkled or poured on small infants, and is sometimes referred to as “christening.” Such a practice is the spinoff of the belief that all children inherit the sin of Adam, often referred to as “Adamic sin.” However, that children are born guilty of sin is contrary to Biblical teaching. Jesus Himself said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14). Additionally, to be a subject for baptism there are several prerequisites. First, one must be able to believe in Christ (John 8:24). Second, one must be able to repent of sins (Acts 17:30). Third, one must be able to confess faith in Christ (Matt. 10:21). However, since infants are not capable of doing any of these things, they are not subject to baptism.

EUCCHARIST

The Catholic Church teaches that the communion emblems become the body and blood of Jesus. This practice is called the “Eucharist.” It is believed that when the priest prays over the bread and fruit of the vine they actually become the body and blood of Jesus. This is based on an erroneous view of what Jesus said in Matthew 26:26-28. When instituting the Lord’s supper, of the bread Jesus said, “this is my body.” Then, of the fruit of the vine He said, “this is my blood.” From this it is claimed that the emblems change into the literal body and blood of Jesus. However, such an interpretation is obviously false. When the Lord said, “this is my body” and “this is my blood” He was not speaking literally, for as He spoke these words He was in his fleshly body and His blood was still flowing through His veins. Since it was impossible for the “bread” and “fruit of the vine” to be Jesus’ actual body and blood, this must be understood figuratively. The bread and fruit of the vine were only emblematic of His body and blood of Christ.

CHRISTMAS — EASTER

These are terms commonly used of the celebration of the birth and resurrection of Jesus. However, they are both founded on the traditions of men

and have no Biblical basis. In fact, the actual dates of Jesus’ birth and resurrection are unknown. As to Christmas, many do not realize that this is a special mass devoted to Christ (“Christ-mas”) and that such an observance was not known for hundreds of years. As to Easter, the earliest record of such observance was also unknown for many years. Though the King James Version has the word “Easter” in Acts 12:4, this is a term that was arbitrarily and incorrectly inserted. The word here is *pascha*, and simply refers to the Jewish **Passover**. It should be kept in mind that the Scriptures place no emphasis on setting aside a time to observe either the birth or resurrection of Jesus. However, by way of contrast, it is important to know that the only observance regarding Jesus is the remembrance of His death in the Lord’s supper (Matt. 26:26; Acts 20:7).

CHURCH — HEADQUARTERS

Denominational churches are known for having centralized headquarters located in specific cities, for example: Catholicism (Rome), Mormonism (Salt Lake City), Southern Baptist (Nashville), and so on. These headquarters are overseen by a selected board. Concerns about beliefs and practices are, after designated conferences, determined at these headquarters. However, this is not true of the Lord’s church, for in the New Testament there was no earthly headquarters. Rather, local congregations were autonomous (self-governing) and did not look to a centralized, worldly body for direction. The Bible teaches that Christ is the head of His church. “And He is the **head** of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). Since Christ is the head of the church and since Christ is in heaven, the headquarters of the church must be in heaven (Phil. 3:20). Every congregation is to look to Jesus for guidance and this is done by looking to Him through His word (John 12:48).

CLERGY — LAITY

In both the Protestant and Catholic worlds the word **clergy** applies to those who are preachers or priests and others who hold high religious status. This word originates from the Latin, *clericus*, meaning “learned men.”

The function of the clergy principally involves overseeing their religion’s doctrines and practices. The word **laity** is the exact opposite of the position of clergy, for it pertains to those who are considered beneath the clergy. Laity is from the Greek *laikos*, meaning “the common people” and such people are generally referred to simply as “layman.” However, such a concept as clergy and laity is foreign to the New Testament, for in Christianity no one is considered to be above another. The Bible clearly teaches that regarding some people above others is contrary to the nature of God. “For there is no respect of persons with God” (Rom. 2:11).

POPE

The word Pope derives from the Latin “*papa*” and refers to the physical head, or Father, of the Roman Catholic Church. The concept of a Pope is fundamental to the ecclesiastical (pyramid) structure of Catholicism, but stands in stark contrast to the Lord’s church. Nowhere in the New Testament do we read of one man being a universal head of the church; this concept is blasphemous. It is also taught that such an office began with the apostle Peter and that it has continued unbroken through the centuries. Yet, history shows that such an office did not appear until the seventh century A.D. That Peter was not a Pope is shown by the fact that when he became an apostle he was a married man (Matt. 8:14) and that he remained married for many years (1 Cor. 9:5). According to Catholic belief this would disqualify him from being a part of the clergy.

DIOCESE

This word describes a geographical area overseen by a so-called “bishop” of the Catholic Church, with each diocese being directly subject to the Pope. But the church of the New Testament knew no such thing. To the contrary, each church was an autonomous body and subject only to Christ Himself, the Head of the church (Col. 1:18). In Christ’s structure for His church there is nothing above the local congregation.

COUNCILS

Councils are official church symposiums in which moral and doctrinal matters for the Catholic Church are negotiated by its Bishops. From these

councils an issue approved by the Bishops is sent to the Pope. To become acceptable it must then be approved by the Pope. Such councils are blatantly contrary to the Bible. The only source of authority for the Lord's church is the inspired word of God, for it contains all that men need to know on matters of faith and morals. The apostle Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16,17). The apostle Peter said, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3).

HOLY ORDERS

Within the structure of local Catholic churches are found several so-called "holy orders" (functions). They are named: Priest, Deacon (minister of the altar), Subdeacon (assistant to the Deacon), Lector (reader), Acolyte (worship assistant), Exorcist (expeller of oppressions), Ostiarius (doorkeeper). However, in the New Testament the Lord's church had no such official, titled functions. All such "holy orders" are obviously the invention of men and completely foreign to the Scriptures.

EXTREME UNCTION

Extreme Unction ("special anointing") refers to a Catholic priest giving a special blessing of salvation to someone who has just died or is at the point of death. This is also called the bestowal of "last rites." But the Scriptures are void of such a doctrine. No man has the power to forgive the sins of someone about to die. This is nothing short of "deathbed salvation." Nor can anyone's sins be forgiven after they die. A person's spiritual condition is sealed at death. Hebrews 9:27 makes it abundantly clear that judgment follows death. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Also, in Luke 16:19-31, the account of the rich man experiencing suffering after death vividly shows there is no forgiveness of sins after death.

PURGATORY

The Catholic Church teaches that

at death the souls of saved people go to a place called "purgatory" to be temporarily punished for their *venial* (temporal, lesser) sins. The length of time spent in "purgatory" depends on the volume of such sins. It is also taught that the length of time one spends in purgatory can be reduced by the granting of "indulgences." (See next) This doctrine is the invention of man and is nowhere found in the Scriptures.

INDULGENCE

This is a pardon granted by a priest which reduces the length of time a person is punished for temporal sins in Purgatory. Some of the things for which a priest can grant the pardon of an indulgence, are: Praying the Nicene Creed or Apostles' Creed, reciting several approved prayers, reciting Psalm 51, a devout use of a holy object (a crucifix or rosary), prayer for the Pope. This belief, along with Purgatory, is completely unknown to the Scriptures.

BAPTISM — FOR THE DEAD (BAPTISM BY PROXY)

This is the Mormon doctrine of living people being baptized on behalf of dead people. It is erroneously based on 1 Cor. 15:29. However, the baptism mentioned here is not a baptism on behalf of dead *people*. Rather, in this text Paul is responding to those who said there is no resurrection of dead *bodies* (v.12). He argues that if their own *bodies* will not be raised, why, then, do they baptize their *bodies*? Note: The only thing that can be raised is that which dies, that is, the physical body. Hence, Paul was not speaking of being baptized on behalf of *people* who have died. Note also: Clearly, the resurrection spoken of in this chapter is the resurrection of physical *bodies* (vs.35,36,37, 38,40,44).

MASS

The English word "Mass" refers to the main Catholic public worship. It culminates in a sacrament of the Eucharist. (See **Eucharist** above). The Mass consists of two parts. The first includes readings from Scripture or other sources, sermon, and intercessory prayer. The second includes the presentation of bread and wine at the altar followed by the Eucharistic prayer, after which the members receive the elements. The focal point of the

Catholic Mass is the claim that in the Eucharist, the "sacrifice" (crucifixion) of Jesus is repeated every week. The Catholic Mass is not only a man-made, laborious practice, the teaching of the weekly sacrifice of Jesus is contrary to the New Testament. The Scriptures clearly reveal that Jesus offered his body "once for all" (Heb. 10:10).

Many words unknown to the Scriptures are used to convey false religious ideas. However, when these words are properly researched and compared to the Scriptures, the corruptive use of them becomes obvious.

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Neelys Bend C/C, Madison, TN	\$125
Harrah C/C, Harrah, OK	\$50
Beginning Balance	\$18,848.80
Contributions	\$ 4,140.00
Debits	
Postage	\$1,933.91
Supplies.....	\$208.06
Repairs	\$929.00
Ending Balance	\$19,917.83

Voices from the past...

"THEN COMETH THE DEVIL"

Cled E. Wallace (1892-1962)

The devil wins when he can prevent the word of God from entering the heart, or remove it after it has done so. He invades pulpits, and even sits among the sons of God. Anything goes with the devil to get rid of what God says.

In the parable of the sower Jesus says "the sower soweth the word" and "the seed is the word of God" (Mark 4:14; Luke 8:11). Some of this seed "fell by the way side." "And those by the way side are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved" (Luke 8:12).

The power of the word is the power of seed. To deny the power of the word is to deny the power of seed. It is in keeping with this that Jesus says: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28).

Paul gave as a reason why men should not demand the personal presence of Christ that they might believe in him: "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach" (Rom. 10:8). The word is the source of faith. No word, no faith; no faith, no salvation.

Paul spent "a year and six months" in Corinth, "teaching the word of God among them" (Acts 18:11). A large church sprang up as a result of this sowing. He afterwards wrote the church: "I begat you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15). Gospel power is begetting power. Without it there could have been no Christians in Corinth, or anywhere else.

Peter wrote the disciples of the Dispersion that "ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth... having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. ... And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:22-25). It is evident that the gospel is God's power to make Christians. Further, the offensive weapon of the Christian is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). It is a poor weapon

if it is a "dead letter." It carved churches right out of the heart of Satanic dominion in the days of the apostles, and is still the weapon to cast "down imaginations" and bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Who says the word of God has no power? The devil knows better and is horridly interested in keeping it out of the hearts of the people.

The devil is deeply interested in the ways and works of God. God is the enemy of the devil. He wills the salvation of man, while the devil is hell bent on his (man's) damnation. When Satan invaded Eden, he "beguiled Eve in his craftiness" and used his cunning resources to destroy her confidence in the word of God. He wins when he can prevent the word of God from entering the heart, or remove it after it has done so. His sole interest in Job was to prevail on him to renounce God. He asked to have Peter that he might sift him as wheat, when he was aware of the major part the apostle was to play in the drama of redemption.

We should not underestimate Satan's resources as Peter once did. His experience in the devil's sifter must have still been in his mind when Peter afterwards wrote: "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). He bullies and intimidates and crushes where he has the power to do so. He was able to kill Jesus through the means of the religious setup of the time. He uses means even as God does. He sought to destroy the church by persecution when he could not prevent the resurrection.

When intimidation is inexpedient, the devil makes master use of *deception*. He "beguiled Eve in his craftiness," and in cunning ways seeks to corrupt the minds of Christians "from the sim-

plicity and the purity that is toward Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3). He does this through men who "are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ." "And no marvel," exclaims the apostle, "for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Marvel at the ingenuity of the devil! He invades pulpits, and even sits among the sons of God.

"Then cometh the devil." Wherefore? To take the word out of the hearts of the hearers. Why? This word is the seed of salvation, the seed of faith. If it springs up and grows, it will transform these sons of Satan into redeemed sons of God. He takes the word out "that they may not believe and be saved." Satan has his "ministers," even as God has his. Unlike God's ministers, they must disguise themselves as does their master. He "fashioneth himself into an angel of light," and they "fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness." The fact that these disguises fool so many is evidence of their efficiency.

Let us X-ray some of these "ministers" with the word of God. The word of God says there is *one way to be saved*. Christ is the Savior and the gospel is the power, and men must obey the gospel or be lost. "Then cometh the devil" and babbles about broad-mindedness, many ways to heaven, you are all right just so you are honest, etc., etc.

The word of God says that Christ died for all, and that man is responsible and has the ability to accept the truth and must accept it to be saved (Acts 17:30,31; 1 Tim. 2:5). "Then cometh the devil" and preaches the *limited election* and *partial atonement* of Calvinism. That God eternally and

unchangeably foreordained all that comes to pass and fixed it so that man has nothing to do about either his salvation or his damnation. This, along with *total depravity* and the *direct operation of the Holy Spirit* in conversion, comes from the devil to get and keep the word of God out of the hearts of the people.

The word of God says “there is one body,” one church (Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18). “Then cometh the devil” and says: “Phoey! One church is as good as another; get saved and then join the church of your choice.” If perchance you think the devil is right and Paul is wrong, then try to join two of these “churches,” and you will possibly find out what each one thinks of the other one.

The word of God says there is “one faith” and “one baptism” (Eph. 4:5). “Then cometh the devil” and says you may believe as you like and be baptized any way you want to, if you want to; otherwise let it go — it is not necessary, anyway.

The word of God says that baptism is “unto the remission of your sins” (Acts 2:38); to “wash away thy sins” (Acts 22:16); a condition of salvation (Mark 16:16); and introduces believers into Christ (Gal. 3:26,27). “Then cometh the devil” and says that baptism is just “an outward form of an inward grace”; that it cannot save, is a nonessential; and then this contradiction of the word of God is followed by some perverted [intense] appeals to prejudice. Anything goes with the devil to get rid of what God says.

The word of God says a Christian must give diligence to make his calling and election sure by doing something (2 Peter 1:10,11). “Then cometh the devil” and says it is already sure — a child of God cannot be lost whatever he may or may not do.

Men who thus contradict the word of God are ministers of the devil, regardless of their “fashion” (2 Cor. 11:15). Whatever the word of God says, “then cometh the devil” and says something else.

Do you stand with God or the devil? I have even heard of brethren calling on the devil to lead in prayer!
GA, 2/3/1938

Elder's COLUMN

SHOW TIME OR WORSHIP?

Ivie Powell

Church buildings were once looked upon as places of worship. Now these same structures are viewed as places that “meet the needs” of the whole person. Many religious groups are marketing their church through means of recreation and entertainment. Everything to accommodate the family including “Family Life Centers” (gyms) to playgrounds is on the “drawing card” for the 21st century church. The mega-churches have really gone all out to capitalize on the craving for modern man: Theaters, bowling alleys, cafes, and large auditoriums to accommodate the “gospel” rock groups to entertain the young people which draws thousands to satisfy the flesh.

The instrument (piano, organ) which made its entrance into the assembly without Scriptural authorization (Col. 3:17) has now expanded to orchestras. Not only are people entertained by choruses, and solos, now drama and dance have been accepted in many places as acceptable expressions of “worship.”

Friends, there simply is no Scriptural authorization for recreation and entertainment as a work of the church! The only drawing power that has heaven’s approval is the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 1:16). Some have attempted to justify the use of dramatic reading, drama and dance as simply a method of presenting the Gospel. This cannot be the case for the following reasons:

1. In order for any method to be used it must first and foremost be Scriptural. Dramatic reading, drama and dance fail the test since there is no authorization for them in the Scriptures (Col. 3:17)! It isn’t unusual after a “performance” that many will burst forth in a resounding applause. Actually, these things cheapen worship; making it a spectator event, and takes away the praise and honor due only to the Almighty!

2. All worship must be directed to God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24) and not for the purpose of elevating or exalting man! The simplicity of God-approved worship consists of Singing praises unto God (Eph. 5:19, without the use of instruments of music), Prayers (Acts 2:42), Preaching (Acts 2:42), partaking of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-29; Acts 20:7), and Giving of one’s means as God has prospered them (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Remember, friends, additions to God-ordained worship results in “vain worship” that God rejects (Matt. 15:8-9; Gal. 2:21-23)!

John informs us of the great AWE (reverence) demonstrated in heaven toward Almighty God when he wrote: “...And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped him that liveth forever and ever. ... And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God” (Rev.5:14; 7:11). My friends, the atmosphere of the assembly must reflect Him whose presence we are to honor and praise!

As we enter the assembly let us remember we are in the presence of God. We are not there for a show or to be entertained, but to worship the great I AM (Exodus 3:14). His holiness, His greatness, His goodness, and His severity, demands we worship Him and Him alone “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24)!

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"Please add me to your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*" ...**Travis Arrant, West Monroe, LA.** "H. M. (Doc) Turner has passed away" ...**Decatur, AL.** "Donald Haddix has passed away. He enjoyed reading your paper" ...**Davison, MI.** "Thank you" ...**Joe Turbeville, Dresden, TN.**

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