



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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THE HERALD OF WHAT?

Lloyd Gale

I received in the mail a letter from Billy G. Brant, President of the **Herald of Truth**. This letter was a mass mailing to churches of Christ. I am wondering just how many congregations today will recognize the false doctrine this letter teaches? The letter reads as follows.

Dear Brethren,

Have you ever seen or read something many, many, times, only to be shocked one day that you had overlooked a profound thought or image that had been there all the time? I have read a gazillion times, but then for some reason it jumped and almost bit me. It was the word “witnesses” — meaning to publicly attest that what was said or done actually happened because one had seen it. Jesus said just as he was ascending to heaven “...you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:9). He was speaking to His followers then and now.

Before we proceed any farther, may we digest the error thus far taught. Billy Brant had read “a gazillion times,” but he had not one time rightly divided the word by diligent study (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15). Perhaps he became confused by reading one of the modern translations. You see, God’s word is not supposed to “grab

you” or “jump out and almost bite you.” It should instead inform you, teach you.

A *witness* is a person who actually saw or heard the things to which they witness. It cannot be something one read or heard from another; such is “hearsay”. The apostles were witnesses and indeed could and did bear witness. Mr. Brant overlooked one of the basic requirements for “rightly dividing the word of truth.” One must observe who the speaker is and to whom he is speaking. The snake handlers make the same deadly mistake (cf. Mark 16:18). The apostles were supernaturally given a perfect memory of every thing Jesus said and did and were guided into all truth (John 14:26). Jesus was speaking to His apostles when He told them they were to be witnesses. This does not apply to us today because we are not witnesses. We are messengers. The apostle Paul did not tell Timothy to “witness.” He told him to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:1-4). We are no more “witnesses” than are those of the “Jehovah Witness” cult.

When my three children were in College, a preacher for the “Christian Student Center” was falsely teaching from the Baptist book “Mandate To Witness.” When I learned of it, I was asked to come and speak to the students. In one lesson, I was able to put a stop to the false doctrine being taught. No one can be a true witness to anything unless they either saw or heard ‘first hand’ the things to which they witness. Hearsay does not make one a witness.

“Since the beginning in 1952, Herald of Truth has been using the mass media to be a witness for Jesus.”

In the early days of *Herald of Truth*, the program broadcast the truth; however, never was it a “witness”. Later, progressives got control of the program and it no longer is reliable. There was a day when I both supported and raised support for the program, but I can not in good conscience do so now.

“In 2008 and 2009 we have created, produced and offered free of charge to churches: 11 60-second radio spots, 10 30-second radio spots, 2 60-second TV PSAs, 2 30-second TV PSAs in high definition, 10 videos on our hopeforlife.org evangelistic website.”

If *Herald of Truth* had remained true to God’s word, this would have been a blessing, but such has not been the case. They may herald “some” truth, but it has been mixed with “much” error. This very appeal for funds is an example of the error they herald.

“Now in 2010 we are preparing to record, produce and offer free video and TV

(Continued on page 51)

The Herald of What?...



Editorial...

DUCK COMMANDER SUNDAY!

Garland M. Robinson

It's so sad when people lack faith in the Lord to simply do what he said. Let's always remember to respect the Lord and his Word.

We occasionally hear of congregations who make all sorts of appeals in an attempt to attract people to attend church services. There are gimmicks galore: gymnastics and aerobics, weight loss and exercise, financial advice, kissing a pig, money taped under a special seat, entertainment venues to raise money, hearing and/or learning bird calls; you name it, and some brethren have tried it. Some places call attention to and promote the fact that a “celebrity” will be in their midst in an effort to get people to come. One church recently held a ‘Duck Commander Sunday’ where hundreds were expected to come dressed in their best Sunday camouflage. In addition to sermons, it was reported in the local newspaper that there would be a demonstration of duck calls! Now who wouldn’t be interested in that?

We’ll have to admit, such antics draw a crowd. It appeals to the worldly appetites of people. It has all been done and is being done in an attempt to captivate and allure precious souls. While hunting and fishing and many other sports are good and right in and of themselves, they have no part nor parcel to be mixed in with the spiritual service we offer to God in worship. Things of the world and things of the church are separate. The world is material, the church is spiritual. We worship God in spirit (John 4:24). We walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7).

God’s drawing power is the GOSPEL (John 6:44-45). Before his ascension into heaven, Jesus gave the great commission to the apostles. “Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to

observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” (Matt. 28:18-20). The parallel account given in Mark 16:15-16 says, “...Go ye into all the world, and **preach the gospel** to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Notice the command of the Lord Jesus. “Go into all the world and **preach the gospel.**” Preach what? The GOSPEL. He did not say preach yourselves, preach ball games, preach hunting and fishing. He said, “preach the gospel.” The Gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). It concerns the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:1-4). It involves the whole counsel of God on all subjects (cf. Acts 20:27). It’s the entirety of the New Testament.

The Bible gives emphasis to the WORD, the Gospel. Jesus answered the devil by saying, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every **word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4). In the parable of the sower, Jesus talks about those who hear the “**word of the kingdom**” (Matt. 13:18-23; Mark 4:14-20; Luke 8:11-15). Jesus preached the **word** (Mark 2:2; 4:33) and talked about those who made the **word of God** of none effect through their tradition (Mark 7:13). Jesus said, “**blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it**” (Luke 11:28). He also said, “...**If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed**” (John 8:31).

The apostles **preached the word** everywhere and confirmed it with miracles (Mark 16:20). Luke says the apostles, from the beginning, were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the **word** (Luke 1:2). Christians are set apart (sanctified) from

the world through the **word**, the **truth** (John 17:17). The **word of God** will judge us in the last day (John 12:48). Those on Pentecost obeyed the Gospel when they heard and obeyed the **word** (Acts 2:41). Paul gave command to Timothy, “**preach the word**” (2 Tim. 4:2).

The words of Paul are very clear when he said they had “**renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully**” (2 Cor. 4:1-2). We must not abandon the all inspired word of God. Such is dishonesty, human craftiness and handling the word of God deceitfully. When the word of God is pushed aside and replaced with what men deem as a greater attraction, such as ‘duck commander Sunday,’ then we’ve abandoned God’s power to save.

Showing irreverence and disrespect for the Almighty in worship, such as being dressed in camo as though we’re wandering through the fields and woods ready to hear the calls of the wild, is a position that surely no faithful child of God would ever approach. This trivializes the powerful Gospel. It makes the Word of the Lord unimportant, insignificant, irrelevant, frivolous, trifling, worthless.

Can you imagine the apostles broadcasting the news far and wide that next Lord’s Day we want all the members of the church in Jerusalem to come to worship dressed in their finest fishing outfit to hear Peter, James and John divulge their award winning angler techniques? Could they get Simon of Samaria to demonstrate some of his best magic tricks? Would doing some preaching make the occasion more acceptable? Is there anything more disrespectful or worldly? Does the Lord’s suffering and crucifixion at the hands of wicked men mean nothing more to members of the church (and the public) than hearing and seeing a celebrity demonstrate his best duck calls? Are we justified if doing these things appeals to those in the community and brings them in? Is that the message we want them to see and hear?

But, what is that you say? Are you saying that once you get people there you will teach them the truth? Won’t the truth involve teaching them that worship is respectful, rev-

erent and solemn? Does not Habakkuk 2:20 tell us “...*the LORD [is] in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him?*” Worship is not a party atmosphere even though a preacher in Tulsa, Oklahoma, once said it was. Worship does not appeal to men’s worldly appetites. It can not, must not, be soiled with a show of human wisdom in ‘will worship’ (cf. Col. 2:23). All such will “*perish with the using; after the commandments and doctrines of men*” (Col. 2:22). Paul made very clear, “*we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake*” (2 Cor. 4:5).

The word of God, the holy Scriptures, is given emphasis throughout the New Testament more than 100 times. It’s by the preaching of the WORD that men are saved (1 Cor. 1:18-21). The WORD is THE POWER of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). How can anyone seek to replace it, intentional or otherwise, with worldly attractions? Is the Gospel not enough? Is knowledge of the Lord Jesus too simple? Is He not as exciting as a bird caller? Do we need ‘duck men’ to bring people in? Must we appeal to the worldly appetites of the community by having them dress in camo? What about a clown outfit? I bet that would bring them in. One of “our” preachers(?) once told me, “the gospel just won’t do it any more. We’ve got to have something else. We’ve got to spice it up.” Worldly wisdom gone to seed!

Paul told Timothy (2 Tim. 4:2) to preach the **word**, be instant in season and out of season (when the Gospel is popular and when it’s not, when people like it and when they don’t). Since we did not write the book, we have no license to change it in any way. It’s so sad when people lack faith in the Lord to simply do what He said. Let’s always remember to respect the Lord and his Word. Let’s pay the utmost honor, respect and reverence that is do His high and holy name. That may not be what interests the world (and a lot of church members), but our goal must be in what interests the Lord. Our job is to trust him and obey Him.

Remember, we serve God, not ourselves. “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him*” (Col. 3:17).

The Herald of What?...

(Continued from page 49)

PSAs to be that witness, not just in the United States but worldwide...to the end of the earth. There are enormous costs associated with the production of mass messages, but if we don’t create them who will? Through the use of television and internet videos our witness has the potential of being seen by billions around the world.”

It is sad, but likely true, that many elders, preachers and members of the church of Christ will support this propagation of error because they have the misguided notion that the “end justifies the means.” But error will never produce good results. It will only produce more error. Why would any knowledgeable Christian support such an erroneous program directed by a president who does not even understand the concept of being a witness?

“We need your financial support in order for us to be the kind of witness Jesus expects us to be. Help us to go throughout the world. We are asking each church of Christ for a gift of \$100.00. It is critical that we continue to take the words of Jesus to His world.”

Oh how I wish they were teaching the truth throughout the world, but I remind Mr. Brant once again, that neither he nor their program is a witness. What you have shown yourself to be is a propagator of destructive progressive philosophy.

“Join us as we are witnesses of Jesus in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.”

How could any informed student of God’s word not understand that these words were the Lord’s instructions to His Ambassadors, the Apostles, and that they did as the Lord commissioned? Billy G. Brant is working hard to falsely teach the

man-made doctrine of Christians today being “witnesses”. As Fibber McGee’s wife often told Fibber. Tan’t so McGee. Tan’t so brethren!

Do Christians have an obligation to preach the Gospel throughout the world today? Yes, indeed, our role is to proclaim the inspired words of Jesus Christ and His witnesses the Apostles. But such does not make us witnesses any more than it makes the *Herald of Truth* a witness. The inspired witnesses of Christ were endowed with authority. So, does Billy G. Brant and the *Herald of Truth* claim the authority to bind and loose?

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NOTE: Now would be a good time to send a contribution if you are able to do so. Postage for this issue will take away approximately \$1700 from the balance above. We sincerely appreciate everyone who helps us in this great work. It is for the Lord’s cause. To God be the glory.

Elder's COLUMN

STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF

Wayne Coats

The fellow who desires to show-off may demonstrate his dullness by presenting some new, novel, far-out, exegeses of Bible verses...

The inspired apostle gave some explicit instructions to Timothy relative to studying and preaching. This instruction cannot be misunderstood unless one has expert help. It is certain that Paul did not tell Timothy to study or give diligence to show-off. Do you suppose any preacher would be tempted to show-off? Do you suppose a congregation of sensible people is so demented and deranged as to not be aware of what is happening with the show-off pulpiteer?

Some years ago, I worked as a counselor with the old Federal MDTA Program under the Lyndon Johnson Administration. "The Great Society" sounded great and insofar as I could see, the only great thing about the program was its great cost and waste.

We tried to infuse some energy and work ethics in school drop-outs. The most frequent trait to be seen among the trainees was the desire to show-off, get attention, run-off the mouth, and perform on center stage.

There was no limit as to how many dollars we could spend for materials to be used in our efforts. One very interesting film strip which we used was titled, "The Show-off." The show-off student suffered from low self-esteem. The school drop-out used various mechanisms in order to get attention. The usual effort to show-off was to babble a lot and wag the tongue. This characteristic is so often seen by little toddlers who have been the objects of very close personal attention. Sadly there are some preachers who never leave this trait of infantilism behind. It is seen in its worst form when one ambles upon the church house podium and begins to show-off. Do the auditors not know? Do those who slumber not discern? Does the show-off not know that the auditors know?

Who among readers of the New Testament do not remember the

great show-off who arrayed himself in royal apparel (Acts 12:21)? Why did Herod do this? He wanted to attract attention to himself. Would we approve of a Gospel preacher getting into the pulpit wearing the habit of a Monk or Amman? Such would get a lot of attention for sure. The show-off wants attention.

I doubt not that some preachers would exchange the Deacons bench for old Herod's throne and sit thereon in order to get attention. If the aim is to show-off, what difference does it make regardless of what freakish tactics one uses? The show-off craves attention.

No preacher of sound judgment would study to show himself in the aforementioned ways, but notice that Herod "made an oration unto them." Do you suppose the old reprobate was vying for attention with his masterful words? His royal robe and the great swelling words would get a lot of points for Herod before the worms had their lunch.

We recall how Simon the sorcerer amazed the people in Samaria. What an attraction! What a show-off! What a curse! Simon told the people how great he was. His speeches, utterances, and babblings pointed to himself as "some great one." Like Simon, the show-off feigns himself to be "some great one." This kind of preacher performs in such manner as to get dead-heads to mutter something about the show-off being, "the great power of God." In comparison, the Goodyear blimp is small compared to the self-esteemed, high-minded, bloated, show-off preacher.

In 1951, a faithful Gospel preacher wrote an article titled, "To Greek or Not To Greek." The brother dealt with the practice of the smatterer who desires to show-off by spouting forth what the Greek says. Why do brethren act in this manner? The purpose is to get attention and honesty will admit as much.

When Paul wrote to Timothy he said, "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers" (2 Tim. 2:14).

The fellow who desires to show-off may demonstrate his dullness by presenting some new, novel, far-out, exegeses of Bible verses, which is but an effort to declaim, "I know more about these matters than all the saints and sages who have ever lived. Let me show you how smart I really am. You have heard it said by others, but I say unto you, and what I say is correct."

Words to no profit! How useless! Time-servers revel in such absurdities while the flock of common people groan and move along in a backward direction waiting until relief shall come. Timothy was told to give diligence as a workman who would not be ashamed to stand before the Lord in the final day.

If we can get the picture of a working man who is to be paid for his labor, we will be able to see what Paul is saying to Timothy. The young preacher was to be diligent. He would have to give account of his work and he did not need to be slovenly, lest he would be ashamed. Timothy would meet Jehovah God and he would need to work so as not to be ashamed. The truth must be handled aright.

A very close friend and I were hunting on the vast Fort Campbell military area. It was time for us to come out of the woods for breakfast. As I sat silently in my deer stand, I heard my friend ambling along somewhat like one of Hannibal's elephants and he was singing, "It's hard to be humble, as great as I am." How many of our preachers sing that song?

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"SHOULD YE NOT HEAR THE WORDS WHICH JEHOVAH CRIED?"

Marvin L. Weir

No man has the right to establish his own church in an attempt to draw people away from the Lord's church. It is God who is to be worshipped and not man's every felt need.

The Jews were returning to their homeland from Babylonian captivity. Zechariah sounded a call for the people to repent. The prophet said, "The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and [from] your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD" (Zech. 1:2-4). Their fathers had refused to hear God's prophets and seventy years of exile was the price paid for rejecting God's Word.

Delegates from Bethel inquire about the relevance of fasting in view of their release from captivity. God's law demanded one day of fasting in the seventh month on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:37). The people had, however, instituted fasts to commemorate numerous calamities: the burning of the temple, the beginning of the siege, the capture of Jerusalem, and the murder of Gedaliah. Thus, God answers, "...When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh [month], even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, [even] to me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat [for yourselves], and drink [for yourselves]" (Zech. 7:5-6)? God did not authorize these additional "fasts" nor were they for His benefit. They were only for the benefit of the people who were wallowing in their self-pity.

There are two eternal principles that would have benefitted the people of Zechariah's day and they will also benefit all people today. First,

God says, "...Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you" (2 Chron. 24:20). Second, Isaiah said, "the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40:8).

If the people of Jerusalem had not refused to heed and obey God while the city "was inhabited and in prosperity" (Zech. 7:7), there would have never been the occasion to introduce these feasts lamenting their afflictions. Is it any different today? No, it isn't!

1) *Most people are convinced they have the right to attend the church of their choice.* The truth of the matter is that we have no rights except those given to us by God. Denominationalism comes from man, not God! The Lord promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18). No man has the right to establish his own church in an attempt to draw people away from the Lord's church. Christ is the "head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:22-23). There is only "one body" (Eph. 4:4) and it was purchased not with man's blood, but by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). It is indeed true that "except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psa. 127:1). "Should ye not hear the words which Jehovah cried?"

2) *Women are now demanding to be placed in positions of leadership within the church.* Even those who now balk at letting a woman preach, will let her teach a class where men are present. When people want only to be "politically correct," it matters not to them what God has said regarding the matter. God's Word states that women are to "keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith

the law" (1 Cor. 14:34). The apostle Paul further instructs young Timothy who is to teach others (2 Tim. 2:2) that a woman is to "learn in silence with all subjection" and is not "to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:11-12). Again we ask, "Should ye not hear the words which Jehovah cried?"

3) *Most people today advocate "unity in diversity" so that everyone can worship as they please and not as it pleases God.* Christ clearly and firmly taught, "God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The Ephesians were commanded to diligently "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). The "unity of the Spirit" is again set forth when the Lord fervently prayed "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21). The apostle Paul did not advocate "unity in diversity" when he implored the Corinthian brethren to "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). "Should ye not hear the words which Jehovah cried?"

4) The entertainment craze that demands "family life centers" (palatable language for gymnasiums) glorifies most "youth ministers," but not God. It is God who is to be worshipped (John 4:24) and not man's every felt need. Many choose to support entertainment instead of missionaries. "Should ye not hear the words which Jehovah cried?"

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PROOF OF DISCIPLESHIP

Ronnie Whitemore

When the beliefs, doctrines and practices of people correspond with the commandments of God, the examples of the apostles and the implications of New Testament teaching, then such people constitute the church of God.

Through webs of deceit and perversion, people in the religious world are confused concerning true Christianity. Are all churches acceptable unto God despite their contradictions and differences? Do people have a standard of righteousness upon which they can depend? What about all of the various creed books, traditions of men and decisions passed by committees and councils? How can one determine whether a person is a Christian? After all, there are so many “good” people in this world that claim to be “Christians,” yet they believe, teach and practice different things. Has the Lord given us a means by which we can identify Jesus’ disciples?

Certainly, there are marks of identification found in the New Testament. When the beliefs, doctrines and practices of people correspond with the commandments of God, the examples of the apostles and the implications of New Testament teaching, then such people constitute the church of God. Of course, any religious organization or person that is contrary to the New Testament cannot belong to God. “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13).

“IF YE CONTINUE IN MY WORD”

In John 8:31-32, Jesus said, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” True disciples of Jesus are distinguished from facsimiles by their abiding in the word of Christ.

Christians are cleansed by the word of the Lord. Initial obedience to the Gospel and continued obedience to the word of the Lord cleanses one

from sins (James 1:21). “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3). “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:26-27).

Christians walk in the light, not in darkness. “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). This light represents the “glorious gospel of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:4). God has given us power whereby we can become sons of God (John 1:12). By the Gospel, men are called to salvation (2 Thess. 2:14). Therefore, Jesus’ disciples “walk in the light” of His Word.

Christians will be judged by the Word of the Lord. The apostle John wrote of the judgment scene. “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. 20:12). People who lived during the two previous dispensations will be judged according to the laws of those two dispensations (Patriarchal and Mosaic). All men now living (since the death of Christ, the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of the church on the day of Pentecost) will be judged by the law of Christ. For that reason, Jesus stated, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge

him in the last day” (John 12:48).

“IF YE HAVE LOVE ONE FOR ANOTHER”

Jesus told His chosen disciples, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another” (John 13:34-35).

Christians are identified by their love for other Christians. The apostle Peter exhorted that Christians “love the brotherhood” (1 Peter 2:17). The apostle Paul wrote, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Rom. 12:10). Christians are the children of God (1 John 3:1); therefore, they comprise the household or family of God (1 Tim. 3:15). Our appreciation for our physical families should underscore the importance of our spiritual family, the church.

Christians use Christ as the standard of their love. “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12). Jesus demonstrated His love in the giving of His life and the shedding of His blood upon the cross. The degree of love we all should appreciate is that Jesus died for men and women who are described as “ungodly,” “sinners” and “enemies” (Rom. 5:6-10). How is our love in comparison?

Christians cannot love God without loving one another. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also” (1 John 4:20-21).

IF “YE BEAR MUCH FRUIT”

Jesus told His disciples, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:8). Men can identify the Lord’s people by the works they accomplish.

Christians are commanded to bear fruit for the Lord. The Lord’s church is often described as a vineyard or husbandry (1 Cor. 3:6). A

vineyard is a place of labor. Jesus frequently used this setting in His parables to stress the work of His disciples (Matt. 13).

Christians are commanded to bear much fruit. The Lord’s standards are such that Christians not only should bear fruit for the Lord, but MUCH fruit. Jesus described the harvest in this way, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few” (Matt. 9:37). Christians will

reap a great harvest IF they plant the true seed, the word of God (Luke 8:11) and IF they have the right attitude regarding their work.

“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10).

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SOME THINGS I KNOW THE BIBLE TEACHES

Stephen Wiggins

No human knows absolutely everything there is to know. Thus, infinite (unlimited) knowledge is possessed by no one person. However, to say that no one person is omniscient (all-knowing) is not to say that a person cannot know at least some things. The Bible teaches there are some things a person absolutely must know and do to live in harmony with God’s will (Matt. 7:21-23; John 3:1-7; 4:24; 8:31-32). Those things essential for men to be saved, we can know, and know that we know.

It is neither arrogant nor conceited to teach from the Bible what one knows to be true. As a Christian, I am obligated — as is every Christian — to teach in a very kind, loving, and courteous way; yet clearly, firmly, and truthfully, the truth made known and proclaimed by God’s word.

Following are at least some things (truth) I know the Bible teaches.

1. I know the Bible teaches there is but one, and only one, God, the Father, Who created all things, Who loves every human being, and Who wishes every person to be saved (Eph. 4:6; Acts 17:24-25; 1 Tim. 2:3-4).

2. I know the Bible teaches that this same loving God is a “great and terrible” God and that He will punish the majority of the human race eternally in hell for their disobedience to His will (Deut. 10:17; Neh. 1:5; Matt. 7:13-14; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

3. I know the Bible teaches there is one, and only one, New Testament church, and that every person who obeys the Gospel is added to that one

church by God so that every Christian is a member of the church of Christ for which He (Christ) died (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; Acts 2:37-47; 20:28).

4. I know the Bible teaches that denominationalism is sinful, that it is a hindrance to world evangelism and thus contributes to infidelity, that it is in direct opposition to Christ’s prayer for unity (John 17:20-23), the apostles’ plea for unity (1 Cor. 1:10-11), and God’s eternal plan for every Christian to be united into one body (Eph. 2:14-18; 3:9-11; 4:3-6).

5. I know the Bible teaches that it (the Bible) is the all-sufficient and verbally inspired revelation from God to man, and that additions to, subtractions from, or substitutions on the part of man are presumptuous, foolish, and seriously sinful (1 Cor. 2:12-13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Rev. 22:18-19).

6. I know the Bible teaches that Jesus never authorized, the Holy Spirit never revealed, the apostles never approved, and the first century New Testament church never employed the use of mechanical instruments of music in Christian worship to God. Furthermore, I know that the introduction of all such man-made innovations in Christian worship is an addition to God’s word and therefore must be regarded as sinful (John 16:13; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17; Rev. 22:18-19).

7. I know the Bible teaches that Christians are saved by the mercy and grace of God and not of one’s own works of human merit; while simultaneously teaching that unless (except) every accountable person

complies with the Gospel terms of obedience (faith, repentance, confession, and immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins), one will lose his soul and suffer eternal punishment in hell (Titus 3:4-7; John 3:1-7; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

8. I know the Bible teaches that the terms “gospel” and “doctrine” are but two different words to designate the same message to be preached or taught, and not two separate and distinct messages, one for alien sinners and the other for the saved. No such distinction is in harmony with the Bible (Rom. 1:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:8; Acts 13:12).

9. I know the Bible teaches it is sinful for one to be so radical as to make laws forbidding or condemning what God allows. Furthermore, I know that it is sinful for one to be so “liberal” as to go beyond God’s written word and uphold or practice that which the Bible does not authorize (1 Tim. 4:1-3; Acts 15:1-29; 2 John 9-11).

10. I know the Bible teaches that, even though many hated Him and eventually killed Him for it, Jesus told people the truth because He loved them and wanted them to be saved (Luke 6:11; John 7:7; Mark 14:60-65).

These Biblical truths are here stated in love for God, His Son, His Word, His church, and for every person who has never obeyed the Gospel. May we realize there is no possible way we can truly love people while withholding the truth from them.

*105 East Planters
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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

Bethlehem Church of Christ, Baxter, TN is in need of a preacher. **Contact David Gnatt at davidgntt@yahoo.com, phone (931) 858-2232.** “Refused. Return to sender” ...**J. Todd Clippard, Hamilton, AL.** “Maynard Alt has passed away”

...**Shawnee, KS.** “Ray Bedford has passed away” ...**Bremerton, WA.** “Pete Knight has passed away” ...**Elk City, OK.** “Keep up the good work dear friend and brother. I enjoy STOP. I have recently moved to work with the church in Belle, Missouri and ask you to please note my change of address so I can continue to receive your publication. I look forward to each issue. I especially enjoyed your editorial in the May issue on MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE (HOW TO GET AROUND GOD’S LAW). This very thing had something to do with my recent move. I am now 71 years old and still active in preaching God’s powerful, precious, soul saving gospel — plain, bold, and clear with all the love I can muster. I have been doing so for over 50 years. I just completed conducting a Sunday through Wednesday gospel meeting for the church in Clarion, Pennsylvania on the theme, SOME THINGS JESUS SAW. God bless you and please keep sending me STOP” ...**Jack Simons, Belle, MO.** “Thank you for sending STOP to me over the years. I have always been edified by your efforts in upholding the truth of God’s word. You are in my prayers to be strengthened to continue for many more years. I still try my best to be sound in the faith and in my preaching. I was at West Main church in Tupelo, MS, for 18 years and then I came to Aberdeen and have been here for six years. All that time I have read and been encouraged by your periodical. Keep the faith and keep up the good work. Enclosed is a check to assist in your expenses in any way you see it” ...**Charles & Frances Tharp, Aberdeen, MS.**

A GOOD TUNE-UP

An old car went by sputtering, missing and backfiring. What an awful commotion it made. One always wonders how far they will get before they quit. You see, they first sputter, then they miss, and finally, they quit. Generally, this is due to faulty ignition or bad fuel. Quitting is expected in due time according to the law of probability.

Church members sometime get into this predicament. They first begin to sputter — an indication of what is likely to follow. The ignition of the Christian is a fervent zeal for Christ. Peter speaks of being, “zealous of that which is good” (1 Peter 3:13). Paul states that we were “redeemed” to be “zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). Jesus exhorted the Laodicean church saying, “as many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent” (Rev. 3:19). When zeal for the Lord, His church, and His cause is lacking, you’ll begin to hear sputtering, especially when you ask them about their slack attendance!

The necessary fuel for the Christian is the word of God. Jesus said, “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Paul exhorts to, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you

richly in all wisdom” (Col. 3:16). This is in keeping with Jesus’ statement: “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). A failure to refuel or the taking in of contaminated fuel will cause one to sputter lifelessly. This is in accordance with the Lord saying we can’t serve two masters (Matt. 6:24) and friendship of the world is enmity with God (James 4:4). The thorns of Luke 8 representing the cares and riches and pleasures of this life (v.14) make it impossible for the seed [the word of God] to survive.

Where there is a tendency in a Christian to gripe, complain, miss services, assume everybody else out of step, and find little right with the church, a good “tune-up” is vital. Brethren can encourage it, but only Jesus can give it (2 Cor. 7:10). Someone has said that busy people will find very little to complain about — how true this is! When we tune our heart to the Lord continuously, we are not likely to demise spiritually and if we find ourselves failing spiritually, we can resurrect ourselves by being spiritually re-vitalized and refueled (Heb. 12:12-13).

A final observation might be to consider where the old quitters end up. The junk yards and scrap yards are full of them. However, a choice few are restored, prized, and on the road again. What a beautiful sight they are and a joy to gaze upon.

— Joe W. Nichols

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