

# 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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## "GREAT COMMUNION"

*Rusty Stark*

Douglas Foster (Abilene Christian University) and the Disciples of Christ Historical society are calling upon all members of the churches of Christ (the Lord's church), the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the Christian Church/Churches of Christ (instrumental) to share in a special communion on October 4, 2009. They call this special celebration, "Great Communion."

1) Why October 4th? It's because this is the date for "World Communion Sunday." A day first established by the Presbyterians in 1939 and practiced among some denominations since then.

2) Why 2009? Because this year marks the 200th anniversary of important events in the restoration movement (also referred to as the Stone/Campbell movement).

3) What exactly would be involved in the celebration of "Great Communion?" A joint service with denominations who have historical ties to the restoration movement during which the Lord's supper would be eaten.

4) What is the purpose of "Great Communion?" Specifically, "Great Communion" is an effort to memorialize the *Declaration and Address* set forth by Thomas Campbell in 1809. Organizers say, "This, we thought, was the perfect opportunity to remember Thomas Campbell and his contribution, as well as live out the unity that we all hold so dear" ([www.greatcommunion.org/about.htm](http://www.greatcommunion.org/about.htm)).

One of the things (there are many) separating us (the Lord's

church) from the Disciples of Christ and the Christian Church is the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God. This idea of "Great Communion" is an appeal for the Lord's church to demonstrate a unity with those who are doing evil in God's sight.

Let's make no mistake about it. This call to "Great Communion" is evil.

- 1) It is divisive and sectarian,
- 2) It shows a lack of respect for scripture, and
- 3) It is wholly without authority from the Scriptures.

### CONTRARY TO THE APPEAL OF THOMAS CAMPBELL

Douglas Foster informs us that "Great Communion" is to celebrate the *Declaration and Address* of Thomas Campbell. In fact he goes on to say that the *Declaration and Address* is the "constitution" of the restoration movement ([www.greatcommunion.org/about.htm](http://www.greatcommunion.org/about.htm)).

How unfortunate is the choice of the word "constitution"! According to Funk & Wagnalls it is "The fundamental laws and principles that normally govern the operation of a state or association." Isn't the Lord's church supposed to be governed by the Bible? Isn't this the appeal of the restoration movement? Is the *Bible* our constitution, or is the *Declaration and Address* our constitution?

I claim no worldly scholarship of any kind, but I know enough Bible to see the difficulty and trouble here. When Thomas Campbell set forth the

*Declaration*, he plainly did not want to make a creed. Just before he set out his 13 propositions, read what he said: "Let none imagine that the subjoined propositions are at all intended as an overture towards a new creed, or standard, for the church...."

But what is the difference if we call this document a "constitution" instead of a creed? A constitution is the same as a creed. Viewing the *Declaration and Address* as a constitution or a creed is not in keeping with the call of Barton Stone, or the Campbells.

### DIVISIVE AND SECTARIAN

Can you imagine holding a communion service to celebrate a creed written by a man? How sectarian can you get? What would we say if someone took communion to celebrate the writings of Martin Luther or John Calvin?

Is it not true that the religious world has been divided by the creeds of men? What makes a Baptist a Baptist apart and distinct from a Methodist if it is not his church manual? To take the *Declaration and Address* of Thomas Campbell and turn it into our "constitution" is the same kind of sectarianism. And then to celebrate that "constitution" in a communion service is so twisted and unscriptural that it defies imagination, as well as logic.

If we are going to use the *Declaration and Address* as our constitu-

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**"Great Communion"...**



Editorial...

## CAN A CHILD OF GOD BE LOST? #2

Garland M. Robinson

There is grave danger and warning of falling away throughout Scripture. Consider these verses. (Refer also to the August issue of #1 in this 4 part series)

**1 Timothy 3:6**, “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride **he fall into the condemnation of the devil.**” The Bible is clear as to the consequences of the sin of pride. “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts” (Psalm 10:4). “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate” (Prov. 8:13). “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18). “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16).

Pride has been, and is, the downfall of everyone who embraces it. It caused the devil to be condemned by God and the warning of 1 Timothy 3:6 shows that men can fall into the same condemnation. Who will believe that God condemned the devil for his pride, but will not condemn men who do the same thing as the devil?

**2 Peter 3:17**, “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, **fall from your own steadfastness.**” This passage says a Christian can be led away from God — that a Christian can FALL. If this is not so, then someone needs to inform God that He is mistaken and that Christians can’t fall.

Verse 16 tells about those who “wrest” (pervert, twist, wrench, torture, misuse) the Scriptures “unto their own destruction.” Does the word “destruction” not mean what we know it means? Its definition is: “ruin or loss (physical, spiritual or eternal), damnable, perdition, perish, waste.” So, let me get this straight. Is this verse saying that those who pervert

the Scriptures to make them say something different than what they were intended, will be lost? Yes. Such persons will perish spiritually, eternally? Yes. If you run across someone who tells you that God does not mean what He says, then run away from them immediately and hold to the Bible, not false doctrine.

Verse 17 tells us to “beware” (be on guard). Beware of what? Be on guard about what? We are to beware of those who would lead us away from the Truth and into error. When we follow error, we fall from our steadfastness in the Truth. And, if we don’t follow the Truth, we cannot be saved because Jesus said it is the Truth that makes us free from sin (John 8:32). It’s only when we obey the Truth that our souls are purified and cleansed from sin (1 Peter 1:22).

**1 Corinthians 9:27**, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, **I myself should be a castaway.**” The word “castaway” means: “unapproved, rejected, worthless, reprobate.” This verse clearly says that Christians are to continually take heed to themselves. We are to make sure we do the Lord’s will and not depart from it. We must continually yield our will to the will of the Lord (cf. Rom. 6:12-18). And, if we don’t, we can’t expect to go to heaven when we die.

If one can’t fall away and be lost, then a very pertinent question needs to be asked. Paul, if one can’t so sin as to be eternally lost, then why bother with watching out for your own soul? Why would you be concerned regarding your own self? Did the Holy Spirit not lead you to believe in the doctrine of Calvinism that says you can’t be lost? This is a strange passage indeed if it is the case that one cannot fall away and lose his soul.

**Hebrews 12:15**, “Looking diligently lest any man **fail of the grace of God;** lest any root of bitterness

springing up trouble you, and thereby **many be defiled.**” Why must we take such pains to do the Lord’s will? Because if we don’t, we will fail in the grace of God. Since God’s grace saves us (Eph. 2:8), then we want to make sure we don’t fail in regards to it. If we fail when it comes to grace, we are of all men most miserable. If we fail in grace, there’s no hope for us. If we can’t fail, then why the warning?

**Galatians 5:4**, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are **fallen from grace.**” There are not any unclear verses in the Bible on the subject of a Christian falling away from God and being eternally lost. This passage, like all the rest, is quite obvious. What more would God have to say to convince men that Christians can fall?

Grace is God’s favor — the benefit He bestows toward all mankind (cf. Titus 2:11-12). But, the benefits of His grace is only enjoyed by those who OBEY Him (Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:8-9). On man’s part, salvation (the receiving of God’s grace) involves FAITH (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24), REPENTANCE (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38), CONFESSION of faith in Jesus (Matt. 10:32,33; Rom. 10:9,10), and WATER BAPTISM for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-18; 1 Peter 3:21). When one has met the conditions God lays down in order to receive His saving grace, that one is saved from their past and alien sins. For one to continue to be blessed with the benefits of God’s grace, he/she must continue faithful to God and obey His commands.

The book of Galatians describes a situation where those who believed the Lord and obeyed His will and thereby became Christians, wanted to go back to the Old Testament (the law of Moses, the ten commandments). They wanted to go back to the old law concerning circumcision and demand that the Gentiles who became Christians keep that part of the Law. The Holy Spirit tells them that if they do, they have cut themselves off from Christ. They have FALLEN FROM God’s saving grace. “Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; **ye are fallen from grace** (Gal. 5:4).

The definition of “fallen” is: “drop away; specially, be driven out of one’s course; figuratively, to lose, become inefficient: — be cast, fail, fall (away, off), take none effect.” Since grace is what saves us, then to FALL FROM grace means that we no longer benefit from it. It is no longer effective for us. One can’t fall from a place he has never been. I can’t fall from the roof of my house if I’ve never been on the roof.

Excuse me, but when God says we can fall from His grace and men tell me we can’t fall from His grace, then I’ll believe God every time. It is our goal to please God, not man (cf. Gal. 1:10). I don’t want to be severed (cut off) from God’s saving grace.

**Luke 8:11-15.** These verses illustrate so clearly that men can and do fall away from God. Jesus taught, *“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”*

These verses tell us of four kinds of hearts into which the word of God is sown. 1) There are those who hear the Gospel, but as we say, it goes in one ear and out the other. They don’t consider it, even for a moment. 2) There are those who hear it, receive it with joy and believe it for a while, but when temptation confronts them, they FALL AWAY from the Christian life. 3) Others hear the Word and obey it but later become choked with cares, riches and pleasures of life. They never grow in Christ. They fail to add the Christian graces in their lives. They may still attend church services, but are not involved in

faithful living. They too have fallen away. 4) Some hear the Word, obey it and grow in Christ all of their lives. They are fruit-bearing servants of the Lord.

Those who teach that a Christian can’t fall away from God would tell us that those in the stony soil and those among thorns never were Christians in the first place. But verse 13 says they FELL AWAY. You can’t fall from somewhere you’ve never been. These people embraced the Gospel, became Christians, but fell away from the Lord. This is consistent with every verse in the whole Bible.

**James 5:19-20,** *“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multi-*

*tude of sins.”*

Could it be any plainer? The Holy Spirit said that men and women “err from the truth.” That is, they violate the Truth, the Gospel. Such persons need “converting.” And, when such a person is converted, he/she has been saved from death. This cannot be physical death because all men die (Heb. 9:27). It has to be eternal death, eternal separation from God.

Converting one from the error of their way covers a multitude of sins. Why would one’s sins need to be covered or hidden if they can’t cause one to be lost? Why worry about it? Why seek to have your sins forgiven anyway? The conclusion is, erring from the truth causes one to be eternally lost in the devil’s hell unless one repents and turns back to God.

*Part 2 of 4*

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## “Great Communion”...

*(Continued from page 65)*

tion, we might as well simply denominate ourselves as “Campbellites” and give up any argument against sectarianism. Right, wrong, or some mixture of the two, the words of Thomas Campbell must not be made the calling card of the Lord’s Way. The Bible is sufficient for that. It furnishes us completely (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).

### LACK OF RESPECT FOR SCRIPTURE

The whole concept of this “Great Communion” service violates Scripture, and it does so in a number of ways.

1) “Great Communion” is a violation of what the Bible teaches about the Lord’s supper. It is not to celebrate what some man has done or written. Communion is about Christ, his suffering and his death. His admonition to us is to do this “in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24-25). If you are partaking of the Lord’s supper to celebrate the words of some man, you are not remembering the Lord, you’re remembering man! In remembering man, you are not reverently discerning the Lord’s body and blood. And, consequently, you are eating and drinking damnation to your soul (1 Cor. 11:24-29)?

A communion service cannot wipe sins away. For an alien sinner, sins are washed away in water baptism by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16). For an erring child of God, sins are wiped away when he/she confesses and turns from those sins in repentance and prayer (Acts 8:18-24; 1 John 1:9). Sins are not forgiven in the partaking of communion. Since worshiping God with a mechanical instrument is sinful (Col. 3:17; John 4:24), then having a joint communion service will not take that sin away.

2) Participation in “Great Communion” is a violation of the Bible doctrine of fellowship. Since worshiping God with mechanical instruments is sinful, we cannot extend fellowship to those who use them (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11; Rom. 16:17-18). Joint participation in this “Great Communion” violates the lines of fellowship that God has drawn. We must not overlook those lines in accordance with the modern trend of “agreeing to disagree,” for that violates the command that we all speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10). Instead of joining in a communion service with them, Ephesians 5:11 says, *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”*

3) “Great Communion” is an effort to demonstrate a unity that is contrary to Scripture. Not all unity is

acceptable before God. Purity, which comes by doing God's will, comes before peace (James 3:17). Peace is therefore subservient to purity. Peace is not to be desired or obtained at any and every cost. Why would we want to demonstrate a unity with those who defy God in their teaching, practice and worship? Instrumental music and fellowship of denominations is in complete defiance to God's Word (John 4:24; Col. 3:17).

4) Participation in "Great Communion" sets us up as unrighteous judges. We are to judge "righteous judgment" (John 7:24), but there are some judgments we simply don't have the right to make. We have no right to make a judgment that violates God's Word. When we judge it is all right to join in fellowship with those in error, then we have stepped out of fellowship with God.

Who are we to judge that the unauthorized practice of worshiping with the instrument doesn't matter? Violating Colossians 3:16-17 and worshiping in our own way, devised in our own hearts, is sinful. Joint participation in this event would be giving the impression that these things do not matter. Ask Nadab and Abihu if worshiping in an unauthorized manner makes a difference (Lev. 10:1-2).

Who are we to judge that it is alright to compromise truth and accept error? Consider the prophets of old. They knew their responsibility was to speak the truth and stand against error regardless of any external considerations (Isa. 8:20; 2 Tim. 4:2).

If our judgment is that God will overlook error, therefore we should overlook it too (in the name of unity), then we are wrong, dead wrong (Nahum 1:3; Matt. 7:21-23).

Joining hands in fellowship with those who are wrong will not make them right or wipe away their sins. We can offer all the endorsement and praise we wish, but God will not accept them just because we endorse them. We are not the judges in these things, God's Word is (John 12:48). We are committing sin ourselves (along with them) when we participate in joint services such as "Great Communion."

5) A celebration of the writings of Thomas Campbell as our constitution is an insult to the all sufficiency

of the Scriptures. Isn't it strange that we need the *Declaration and Address* of Thomas Campbell as a constitution when Peter claimed that God had already given all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3)? Paul never mentioned Thomas Campbell when he declared that the Scriptures equip us to all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

6) "Great Communion" is contrary to Scripture because it is a lie. It is an effort to demonstrate unity with those who have divided the church with their man-made practices. We refuse to be cowed or shamed by those who tell us that if we condemn their use of instruments that we somehow are sectarian. History simply does not bear this out.

To use the words of Thomas Campbell in his *Declaration and Address*, "Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the church; or be made a term of communion amongst christians, that is not as old as the New Testament" (proposition 5). Instruments are not as old as the New Testament. Any scholar worthy of the name knows they were never used in New Testament worship. And, Campbell's *Declaration and Address* is certainly not as old as the New Testament.

Notice this quote from the *Declaration and Address*: "That, (in some instances,) a partial neglect of the expressly revealed will of God; and, (in others,) an assumed authority for making the approbation of human opinions, and human inventions, a term of communion, by introducing them into the constitution, faith, or worship, of the church; are, and have been, the immediate, obvious, and universally acknowledged causes, of all the corruptions and divisions that ever have taken place in the church of God" (proposition 11). Those who use the instrument have made it a term of communion. When you bring this "human invention" into the worship, you say to all present, "Worship in this way, or be quiet, or leave." How can this possibly be endeavoring to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3)?

In their insistence on using this innovation of man, this appeal to the sensuality of man, advocates of the instrument have divided the church and now wish to camouflage themselves under the sheep's clothing of

soft words (Matt. 7:15; Rom. 16:17-18).

Let those who wish for unity do as Thomas Campbell insisted: "But this we do sincerely declare, that there is **nothing** we have hitherto received as matter of faith or practice, which is not expressly taught and enjoined in the word of God, either in express terms, or approved precedent, **that we would not heartily relinquish**, that so we might return to the original constitutional unity of the christian church; and, in this happy unity, enjoy full communion with all our brethren, in peace and charity" (*D & A*, emphasis mine, RS). Those who use instruments must relinquish their instruments, otherwise their calls for unity are but "sounding brass" and "tinkling silver."

Lying is sinful (Eph. 4:25). And, it is a lie to call for unity while practicing that which has no New Testament authority and has divided brethren.

We applaud all calls for the kind of unity the Scripture demands, a unity where we all speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10). But we cannot applaud, approve, endorse, nor participate in this "Great Communion" celebration. It is sad that some are taking the great memorial of the Lord's supper and using it to advance a sectarian and divisive agenda, and then claiming that it is a way to demonstrate unity.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

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Postage .....	\$1,590.21
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# HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT WITNESS TODAY?

Roger D. Campbell

Many people are convinced that the Holy Spirit speaks to them and testifies to them. Count me in, because I am one of those folks. Yes, the Spirit of God speaks to me and bears witness to me. That the Spirit talks and testifies is an undeniable biblical fact. The question which we must address, though, is how does He do it?

On the night before Jesus' death when He was gathered with His apostles in an upper room in Jerusalem, He told them, *"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning"* (John 15:26,27). Jesus went on to tell the apostles, *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you"* (John 16:13,14).

We would make these observations from the above statements about the Holy Spirit. First, the Christ promised that the Comforter would testify of Him (Jesus). Second, according to Jesus, the Holy Spirit would not glorify Himself, but would glorify Jesus. Third, the promise of the Comforter miraculously guiding someone into all truth was not given to every person in the world, nor was it even made to every follower of the Christ. Rather, it was a special promise made to a specific group of people — the apostles of Jesus.

When the apostles testified in the first century, of what were they witnessing? On the Day of Pentecost they witnessed of the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:32). At the temple, John and Peter testified of Jesus' resurrection (Acts 3:15). In Jerusalem, the apostles gave witness of our Lord's resurrection (Acts 4:33). In Acts 5 we read that both the apostles and Holy Spirit bore witness in Jerusalem of Jesus' death and resurrection (5:30-32). The apostles were simply telling

of what they had seen and heard. They were eyewitnesses to Jesus' death, then later saw and heard Him after He rose from the dead.

How was the Holy Spirit testifying in the first century? He was not going to and fro and whispering in the ears of lost people, "Jesus is Lord." Make no mistake about it, the Holy Spirit got the message out about Jesus' death, Jesus' victorious exit from the tomb, and Jesus' instructions about what to do in order to be saved. But, the Holy Spirit did not give witness of such matters by speaking directly to lost people.

The Holy Spirit gave witness to Jesus and glorified Jesus through the message that He (the Spirit) inspired. At first, that witnessing was done orally. The Holy Spirit revealed the mystery of the Lord to apostles and prophets and inspired them to preach it mistake-free to others (Eph. 3:4,5). The Holy Spirit thus testified through them.

At the same time, the Godhead gave witness or testified to the authenticity and authority of the Gospel by providing the preachers and teachers with the power to do miracles. Those miracles served to confirm the word, that is, show to all that heard it and observed the accompanying miracles that the message came from God and thus must be true (Mark 16:19,20). Hebrews 2:3,4 also records that God bore witness to the truthfulness of the Gospel message by means of "signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will."

Those miraculous signs from the Spirit were temporary (1 Cor. 13:8). Once "all truth" was revealed to mankind (John 16:13), there was no further need for such miracles. When God's revelation was given in its fullness, there were **no more miracles needed** since there would be no more new revelations.

So, in the first century the Holy Spirit testified through the oral propagation of the Gospel. God's Spirit also witnessed or gave confirmation

through the "signs" that He empowered the disciples of Jesus to perform. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit testified through the written Word. That the Spirit spoke through the written Word is a matter of indisputable fact. When quoting from Psalm 95, the writer of the Book of Hebrews wrote, *"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts ... They shall not enter into my rest)"* (Heb. 3:7,8,11). Thus, it is clear that the Holy Spirit spoke through the written message of the Book of Psalms.

Let's turn our thoughts to a statement that is recorded a few chapters later in the Book of Hebrews. In a context in which the subject is the once-for-all-time-saving sacrifice of the Christ, the writer of the Book of Hebrews wrote, *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them"* (Heb. 10:14-16). Note what verse 15 says: *"...the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us."* In this instance, to whom was the Spirit witnessing? To the Christians. How did the Spirit witness to them in the first century? He witnessed through the written Word, which in this case was the inspired Book of Hebrews coupled with a quotation from Jeremiah 31.

What about Romans 8:16? There it is written, *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."* According to this verse, there are two spirits that bear witness of the truth that we are God's sons and daughters: the Holy Spirit and our personal spirit. If we have obeyed the Gospel, then we are children of God by "faith" and through "the faith" (Gal. 3:26,27). When we have complied with the conditions set forth in the Gospel about how to become a child of God, then our mind/spirit knows that and can say, "I have done what God said to do to become a Christian, and

since He keeps His promises, then I know that I am His child.

But what about the Holy Spirit's witness? How does He give witness that we are the children of God? He does so through His sword, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:17). The Holy Spirit revealed the Gospel by which we are born again (1 Peter 1:23-25). When we comply with the conditions of salvation that the Spirit of God set forth in the Gospel, then we are born

of water (baptism) and of the Spirit (John 3:5). The Holy Spirit's testimony is that anyone who complies with God's terms of salvation is God's child. That is His witness.

The correct conclusion is that the Holy Spirit speaks today and testifies today, but He does so through, and only through, the message of the Bible (the Word of God). The Holy Spirit's witness is not a *feeling*, it is not a *hunch*, and it is not a *direct*

*message* from Him. Anyone that thinks the Holy Spirit has directly witnessed to him that he is a child of God either misunderstands the Bible or has been deceived. Anyone who claims to others that the Holy Spirit has miraculously revealed to him that he is a child of God is a deceiver. Beware of the deceived and deceivers.

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## THE REMEDY FOR FAILURE IN CHRISTIAN LIVING

Marvin L. Weir

**T**hanks be to God there is a remedy for the sins we commit as Christians. One only fails when he refuses to apply the **only** remedy God gives to correct our failings of continuing to walk in the light of God's Holy Word (1 John 1:7).

**Surrendering of the will.** The apostle Paul sums up best what must occur in one's life in saying, *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"* (Gal. 2:20). The human will must yield to God's will if one is going to turn from the error of his way. Pride, stubbornness, and a haughty spirit will prevent one from surrendering to the will of God. It is always possible to **know** God's will regarding any spiritual matter. The Ephesian brethren were admonished, *"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is"* (Eph. 5:17). There is a big difference in **knowing** and **doing**. One who will not surrender his own human will is never going to make needed corrections in his life.

**Laying aside our sins.** One must desire to give up sin. So many living in sin give lip-service about going to Heaven, but have no **desire** to cease their sin. That which is unholy will never become holy, and that which is wrong will never become right! God requires those traveling the strait and narrow road to Heaven (Matt. 7:13-14) to *"...lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us"* (Heb. 12:1). *Living* like the world, *dressing* like the world, and *acting* like

the world is not **laying aside** worldly sins. Are you willing to lay aside the sins which if practiced will prevent you from entering into Heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-32 22:19; Prov. 6:16-19)?

**Repentance and Confession of sins.** The Bible is straightforward and simple in saying, *"...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3). The Lord is clear in teaching, *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him"* (Luke 17:3). Notice the conditional "if" in this verse. One who does not repent cannot be forgiven! Repentance of sin is a prerequisite to one being baptized for the remission of his sins. This is made clear in Peter's answer to the question ask of him at Pentecost: *"...Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."* (Acts 2:38). The church at Ephesus was told: *"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. 2:5).

One cannot attempt to **hide** his sins and expect to enjoy God's favor. James admonishes, *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much..."* (James 5:16). John boldly declares, *"...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). One's confession of guilt and repentance needs to be as public as

the committed sin.

**Setting your sights on things above.** To the brethren at Colosse, Paul said: *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"* (Col. 3:1-2). The "things that are above" are things of greater importance — and spiritual rather than carnal or worldly. Jesus commands the child of God to *"seek...first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"* (Matt. 6:33). If one's desire is greater to follow the world than to follow the Lord, then that one cannot correct his drift away from the Lord and His church. Without the proper mindset, you cannot save your soul!

**Walking humbly in the light.** The Bible clearly states, *"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 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 1:6-7). The word "walk," in the sense we are using it, stands for the totality of human conduct. One cannot **walk** according to the ways of the world and be a **follower** of Jesus Christ. The Holy Scriptures remind us: *"...Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps"* (1 Peter 2:22).

May our desire be to go to Heaven, and to influence others to do likewise! We cannot accomplish this goal unless we recognize and apply God's remedy for our failures in Christian living.

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# THE GOSPEL IN FIVE POINTS

Marlin Kilpatrick

In Romans 1:16, the apostle Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” The Gospel of Christ is good news for man. It is good news because it reveals God’s love for mankind. So great is that love, that he sent his Son into this world to save man from his sins (John 3:16; Luke 19:10). The simplicity of the Gospel makes it possible for all to understand. In our text, there are five points, worthy of our consideration.

The apostle Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel...” (Rom. 1:16a). Here is the **PRIDE** of the Gospel. Paul was proud of the Gospel of Christ. Perhaps this is one reason for his tireless work in preaching the message of salvation. We need the same attitude today. How proud of the Gospel are we when we’re reluctant to mention it to our friends? Can you imagine the apostle Paul or any apostle being reluctant to tell the “story of the cross of Christ?” No doubt their being proud of the Gospel is one reason for it being preached to every creature under heaven by the time Paul wrote his letter to the church at Colosse (cf. Col. 1:23).

Another reason why Paul was “not ashamed of the Gospel” is because of its **POWER**. Concerning the Gospel, Paul wrote, “...for it is the power of God...” (Rom. 1:16b). The word power is translated from the Greek *dunamis*. It is from this word that we derive several of our English words, e.g., dynamic, dynamo, and dynamite. The Gospel is not God’s only power, but it is the only power he uses to save man from his sins. The Gospel is God’s “dynamite” which he uses to blast away our sins! The greatest spiritual power the world will ever experience is the Gospel of Christ.

The salvation of man’s soul is the **PURPOSE** of the Gospel. Paul wrote, “...for it is the power of God unto salvation...” (Rom. 1:16c). Jesus came to save man from his sins (Luke 19:10). The message of Christ, the Gospel, has but one purpose — to save our souls. Jesus asked, “For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his

own soul...” (Matt. 16:26a). Friend, your soul is worth more than the whole world. If we lose our soul, we will have lost everything. This is why Jesus gave us the Gospel plan for our salvation (Mark 16:15,16).

The Gospel is “...to everyone that believeth...” (Rom. 1:16d). Here is the **PLAN** for man’s redemption. Yes, the Lord has a plan for our salvation. The Gospel of Christ is God’s plan for man’s righteousness. It is the theme of the book of Romans. When we obey the Gospel, our sins are washed away by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5). The word “believeth” is a figure of speech where a ‘part’ is put for the

‘whole.’ It encompasses the commands to believe in Christ (John 8:24), to repent of our sins (Acts 17:30), to confess the sonship of Christ (Acts 8:36,37), and to be baptized in water for the remission (forgiveness) of our sins (Acts 2:38; 10:47,48).

The Gospel was preached, “...to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16e). Here we have the **PEOPLE** to whom the Gospel is preached. The Gospel is for all! Through the Gospel we can see God’s love for man, and man’s opportunity to be saved and enjoy a home in Heaven, one day.

Friend, if you haven’t obeyed the Gospel, why not do so today? Tomorrow may be too late. Please contact the nearest church of Christ and allow them to assist you in your obedience. You will be glad you did!

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## WHY DOES TERRORISM EXIST TODAY?

**SIN.** Sin is the cause of evil and wickedness. Any sin, all sin, is committed when one violates God’s will. First John 3:4 says, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” Sin began among men in the garden of Eden with Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:6,7) and continues to this today. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ... As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:23,10). The devil delights and revels in sin. He uses his influence to entice people to sin and is behind every vice of sin.

Pain, misery, suffering, heartache and death exist because of sin entering the world. People often bring hurt and misery upon themselves as a direct result of their own immoral behavior such as drunkenness, drugs, adultery, lying, etc. Many times the innocent get hurt, suffer and die as the result of others who sin. All disease and tragedies of the world exist because of sin. Acts of terrorism exist because of corrupt minds who cannot cease from sin (cf. 2 Peter 2:14). God does not cause suffering as punishment for sin; it is simply the natural consequence of wickedness. Sin brought wickedness into the world and opened the flood gates for suffering. It shows that life on earth is temporary and that we must prepare for the life to come after this world.

God does not cause or tempt people to sin. This is made clear in James 1:13-15: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

The Lord God of heaven is a merciful and loving God. He warned Adam and Eve about sin just as He has warned all men through the generations and warns us today in the Scriptures. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). God desires to forgive men of their sin if they will comply with His divine Will. We are not left hopeless, but we must turn to the Lord in humble obedience. We must obey Him (Matt. 7:21-23).

To obey, one must: **believe the Word of God** and what it teaches concerning **Jesus the Christ** (John 8:24; 3:16), **repent of sins** (Acts 17:30; 2:38), **confess faith in Christ** that he is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37), and be **baptized for the forgiveness of sins** (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21). This makes one a child of God. The child of God must continue living a faithful life to the Lord to be saved eternally (Matt. 10:22; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10).

Are YOU willing to believe and obey?

— Editor, Garland M. Robinson



## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"We very much enjoy, and share, all copies of STOP. They're ALL GREAT. But in our congregation, we are in great need of more copies of this particular one, especially Bro. McDade's, Bro. Adams', Bro. Campbell's, and your articles. Unfortunately, because some of the 'leaders' in our congregation are delusional, they see nothing wrong

with fellowshipping denominations, or with bringing in family members from APOSTATE churches, to 'help' us! Please also keep our congregation in your prayers that plans for bringing in grown children of some of our leaders will not materialize! Those 'children' have been duped by false-teaching wolves in sheep's clothing the Bible warns us about. But all those trips, parties, 'new ideas', denominational-style singing, etc., are drawing young people away from the church, and to the apostate congregations by the droves. It's downright frightening, especially with our nation's 'government' going down the 'tubes', as well! Many thanks" ...**Name Withheld**. "I would like to start receiving STOP. I would enjoy any back issues that you have extra especially the one that has Denominations Are Sinful. Thank you" ...**Sharon Eads, Piedmont, MO**. "I don't know who gave you my name and address. But save your expense for I only trash it. I'm not interested in the church of Christ. I'm a born again Christian and am in church regular. I'm a Baptist but I'm not like you all and think only Baptist is going to heaven. So please remove me from your mailing list. Thank you. ps. Your junk mail has costed me money" ...**Viola Adkins, Ona, WV**. [NOTE from editor: What a shame to not be interested in the Lord's church, the church Jesus purchased with his life's blood; but instead, be a member of a church founded by man. That don't sound quite right!]. "Joe Chunn died on April 8, 2009. Please remove his name from your mailing list. Thank you" ...**The family of Joe Chunn, Greenbrier, AR**. "Please add five more to our order. Thank you" ...**Saratoga church of Christ, Saratoga, AR**. "My cousin received STOP before moving to Mississippi. They would greatly appreciate getting it now. Will you please send it to them again" ...**Petal, MS**. "Please take Janet Kelly from your mailing list. She is deceased" ...**Blanchard, MI**. "If possible, please send STOP to the following names here in east Texas. Thanks" ...**Dan Whatley, Fruitvale, TX**. "I would like to get my *Seek The Old Paths* magazine started again. I went back home for a lengthy stay and I could not get my magazines forwarded so I lost all of my magazines. I really enjoy this magazine and I thank you for doing a wonderful work. Thanks" ...**Vivian Dorman, Rison, AR**. "My wife passed away April 15th this year and I'm a little behind with my works. But here is my check to support the good work you are doing. I pray God will bless you with good health that you might continue in this work. It is much needed. It breaks my heart to see what is happening to the beautiful bride of Christ, especially in my area, but continue on in your work and I know the Lord will bless you" ...**H. Hopkins, Locust Grove, VA**. "I so enjoy *Seek The Old Paths*. They explain so much in the teaching. I want to bear fruit for my Lord and this is the only way I can do so. I'd like you to send me six of the July 2009 issue. And, could you send me six of the ones in the series of 'Answering Questions on Salvation' and also 'Denominations are Sinful?' These things need so much to be known. If you print, please no name and no name on my gift. Thank you. Keep up the good work" ...**Name withheld, OH**. "Hello my Christian Fellow Workers of the Faith. I come to you as a first time listener. I am really enjoying the radio program via internet. I have used The Old Path webpage as a tool to help me as I study and grow in the word of God. I hale from Memphis, Tennessee, having been brought up at the Vance Avenue church of Christ, now the Norris Rd church. I reside in Chicago, IL, and worship at Chatham Avalon church of Christ. Let me applaud you for keeping the word of God alive through this media. It has increased my faith and given me wisdom as I meditate upon the riches of the scriptures. May God continue to bless you" ...**Curtistine Carter-Brown, Chicago, IL**. [NOTE: our radio station plays 24/7 on [www.wsoj.net](http://www.wsoj.net)]. "I would like to add two families to your monthly publication. My husband and I have been receiving STOP for about two years. We believe it has very good articles that always seem scriptural" ...**Billy & Mary Hassell, Ferris, TX**. "Really like the website" ...**John Halcomb, Tucson, AZ**. "Greetings. I pray this finds you all doing well. Many thanks for your Scripturally sound articles. They have been a true blessing to me these last couple of years. I pass them

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*Seek The Old Paths* is a monthly publication of the **East End Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed FREE upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson**

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