

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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SHALL WE CHANGE OUR WORSHIP?

Roger D. Campbell

Jesus told the Samaritan woman, *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:23,24). God wants us to be "true worshippers." True worshippers are those that worship the Lord God "in spirit and in truth."

Today in the church we often hear the cry for "change." One area that is often targeted for change is the worship of the church. Some have openly charged that the worship of many congregations is dry, boring, lifeless, and traditional. The claim is that our worship is in need of a major overhaul if we want to avoid losing our members, or if we want to attract any new people. The word "change" is a neutral word. Change might be bad, or it might be good, depending on the situation. Webster's Dictionary defines "change" as "to become or make different; to alter."

Is it Scriptural for the church to make any changes in its worship services? That depends on the type of changes one has in mind. Some changes might be acceptable under the right circumstances. If the present worship in which a congregation engages is already in harmony with the Scriptures, then any acceptable changes to such worship would all involve matters of judgment, wisdom, or expediency. Consider a few

examples of this kind of change:

1) *Changing the times of services on the first day of the week.* We are commanded to refrain from forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, so out of necessity there must be assemblies (Heb. 10:25). The first century church assembled on the first day of the week in order to worship (Acts 20:7). Since the specific time of day for the Lord's day assemblies is not designated in the New Testament, then the leaders of a local church have the right to choose which time(s) of assembly is in the best interest of that particular congregation. Thus, it would be acceptable for the same leaders to make a decision to change the times of the church's Sunday services.

2) *Changing the order.* Because the New Testament does not specify the order in which we are to engage in the five different acts of worship (praying, Lord's supper, singing, giving, preaching), it would be acceptable to change the order of these, and no harm would be done. Changing the order of such Scriptural acts would not cause them to cease being "in spirit and in truth."

3) *Changing the length of services.* Nothing is said in the New Testament about how long worship services are to last. Therefore, if the elders/brothers of a local church decided to change the duration of services from what it was in the past, this in and of itself would not do anything to prevent the church from worshipping

in spirit and in truth.

4) *Changing the place of assembly.* The church must assemble (Heb. 10:25). Just where it is to do this is nowhere specified in the Bible. Each congregation is at liberty to choose what location is most expedient for its assemblies. This might change from time to time, and such change would in no way hinder the church from worshipping Scripturally.

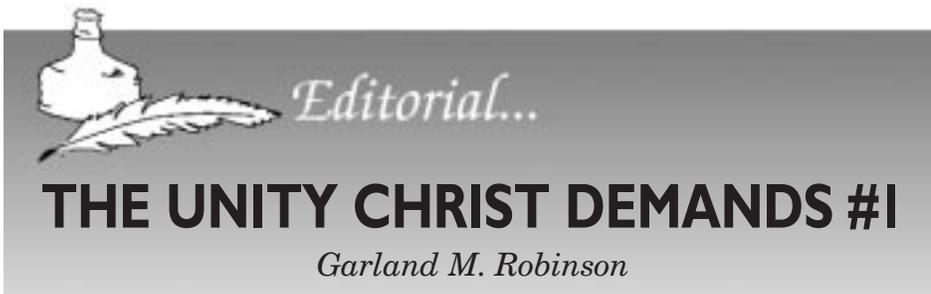
Having pointed out that there are some areas pertaining to worship in which changes are acceptable, we want to emphasize that this does not mean that every form of change related to the church's worship is pleasing to God.

Let's now turn our attention to some cases in which we have no authority to change the worship of the church.

1) *The purpose of the worship assembly.* The purpose of our gathering to worship is to pay homage to God, to give Him honor, praise and glory. Our attention during our worship is to be on the Lord and His word. Worship is not to be entertainment or a show that is "put on" in order to please men. Thus, hand clapping in worship is totally out of place. It is wrong because we come together to worship Jehovah, not applaud any actions that men might take or words they might speak. If clapping

(Continued on page 88)

Change Our Worship?...



Unity — such a sweet, pleasant, congenial word. It summons to mind the oneness, harmony and fellowship of agreement. It allows us to walk together in accord, for Amos said, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed” (Amos 3:3)?

Our Lord prayed for unity (John 17:20-21). Shall we not work to fulfill our Savior’s dying prayer? Oh yes, we must do our part to not only bring about unity, but to maintain it as well. Does your life promote unity or division?

DIVISION

The world is filled with division of all kinds. Especially is this so in the realm of religion. No one knows the exact count of religions in the world because it changes almost daily. It numbers into the thousands. A *Good House Keeping* article of twenty years ago listed 1,200 different churches in the United States.

People are confused, and rightly so. Man says, “join the church of your choice,” or “one church is as good as another.” However, God says differently. The Lord does not give man a choice of religions or churches. Though one denomination is as good as another (since none of them are authorized by God), it is not true that one church is as good as another. The Bible clearly shows there is only “one body” — the church (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). God does not and never has given man a choice.

The word “denomination” is an ugly, repulsive word when applied to religion. It is contrary to Bible teaching. The word means, “a value or size of a series of values or sizes (as of money).” Each piece of change in your pocket is a denomination of a dollar. It is only a part of something greater, the whole. The church Jesus died for to establish (cf. Acts 20:28) is not a part of something greater. It is not a part of the whole. The church of

Christ is the whole itself. It is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). It, and it alone, is the means through which God has chosen to make His manifold wisdom known unto the world (Eph. 3:10). It is God’s eternal purpose (Eph. 3:11) even as Jesus was slain before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20). The church, not a denomination, brings glory to God (Eph. 3:21). It is composed of the saved because God adds the saved to it (Acts 2:41,47). It is made up of the redeemed (Titus 2:14) and will be presented unto Himself without blemish and spot at the last day (Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22).

GOD HATES DIVISION

The Old and New Testaments alike clearly show God’s hatred of division. Proverbs 6:16-19 lists seven things God hates. Among them is “...he that soweth discord among brethren.” The New Testament tells us to “...mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:17-18). Paul warned Timothy of Hymenaeus, Alexander and Philetus (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17) who were trouble makers that divided brethren. The Judaizing teachers in Acts 15 were condemned because they taught contrary to the right way of the Lord.

God is not pleased with all the confusion and division concerning man’s ideas with his creeds, councils, synods and conferences. He desires such man-made organizations be done away and for all men to simply follow His Word.

The apostles were not members of conflicting religious groups in the first century. Can you imagine Peter being a Methodist, James a Roman Catholic, John a Baptist, Andrew a

Pentecostal, Philip a Lutheran, Thomas a Jehovah’s Witness, Bartholomew a Unitarian, Matthew a Mennonite, James the son of Alphaeus a Mormon, Simon a Seventh Day Adventist, Judas a Presbyterian, Paul an Episcopal and Matthias a member of the Deliverance House of Prayer? This may seem comical to suggest such, but that is exactly what men advocate in the world today. Every group thinks everyone else is all right with God.

GOD DESIRES UNITY

Unity originated with God. He is its source. “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Cor. 14:33). There was unity at the creation (Gen. 2). The Bible is the book of unity (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; James 1:25; Psalm 19:7).

The Lord’s prayer in John 17:20-21 was for unity. Unity is defined by Thayer as: “one, unity, unanimity, agreement” (p.217). Concerning His apostles Jesus said, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they **all may be one**; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also **may be one** in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” We all should work to bring about the unity for which our Lord prayed. The only way this is possible is to do away with all of man’s ideas and embrace the pure and unadulterated Word of God. There will never be the unity God desires until this is done.

Everything Jesus worked and prayed for was that his disciples be united. But, it must be unity based upon Truth. He 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**” (John 8:31-32). “Buy the truth, and sell it not...” (Prov. 23:23). “Love the truth” (Zech. 8:19). Believers are to “...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). “...Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel...” (Col. 1:23).

The standard of unity is the eternal book of God — the Bible. All men everywhere, Christian and non-Christian, are amenable to the Law of Christ — every word of the Law of

Christ. None are exempt (cf. Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21). The Law of Christ is the Truth (John 17:17; 8:32), the Gospel (Rom. 1:16), the Faith (Jude 3; Acts 6:7; 13:7,8), sound Doctrine (Titus 1:9; 2:1) and the Doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11).

Those who care not to embrace the Truth and abide by the unity it brings will receive the condemnation of God. *“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness”* (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

GOD’S FIVE-FOLD PLAN FOR UNITY

First Corinthians 1:10 sums up God’s plan for unity better than any verse I know. *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye 1) **all speak the same thing**, and that 2) there be **no divisions among you**; but that ye 3) **be perfectly joined together** in 4) **the same mind** and in 5) **the same judgment**.”*

If those who desire to be pleasing unto the Lord and go to heaven when they die will all speak the same thing, there will be no divisions among them. They will be perfectly joined together which will lead them to have the same mind, which in turn, will cause them to have the same judgment. Though men say this can’t be done, God says otherwise! He not only says it, He demands it. With all the division in the church at Corinth, an inspired apostle rebukes and exhorts them to have unity among themselves and then tells them how to have it. Follow God’s Word!

In our day there are many ecumenical movements, each desiring to have unity. We hear of community-wide non-denominational worship services wherein many denominations come together under the banner of laying aside their doctrines and prejudices to accept one another “just as they are.” However, according to the Scriptures, these are not attempts at God-approved unity. They do nothing more than “agree to

disagree.” They may claim they have achieved unity, but it is nothing more than union. Tying two cats tails together makes a union but it sure does not make unity!

Unity is not “union.” It is not “diversity” or “agreeing to disagree.” Unity is not “going along to get along” or “turning one’s back on and ignoring our differences.” Unity is not “ecumenical cooperation.” Unity involves oneness, singleness, truth, harmony, that is based on God’s Word and humbly submitting to Him. It is being of one mind (1 Peter 3:8) — the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5-8).

There are two kinds of unity: one approved, one not approved. There is unity among people or groups that is not approved of God because it is not in accordance with God’s will; and, consequently there is no unity with the Lord. Just because some come together and agree to be at peace with one another does not mean they meet God’s approval. The second type of unity is that which is approved of God because it is in accordance with God’s will; therefore, there is unity with the Lord. True unity, God-approved unity, is based on God’s Word and adhere’s to the New Testament pattern. Otherwise, it is of no value at all and is not true unity.

FELLOWSHIP AND UNITY

In the New Testament, we read of Christians being fellowcitizens (Eph. 2:19), fellowsoldiers (Philemon 2), fellowservants (Col. 1:7), fellowhelpers (2 Cor. 8:23), fellowdisciples (John 11:16), fellowprisoners (Col. 4:10), fellowworkers (Col. 4:11), fellowlaborers (1 Thess. 3:2) and fellowheirs (Eph. 3:6). In these terms we have the idea of sharing, cooperating, communing. This is only possible when there is unity with one another and with God. Many have fellowship with one another but that does not mean it is God-approved. We not only must have fellowship with one another, our fellowship must be with God as well (cf. 1 John 1:3-7).

When unity prevails we have been called into the fellowship of God’s Son (1 Cor. 1:9). We have fellowship in ministering to the saints (2 Cor. 8:4). If there is unity, we are able to extend our beloved brethren the right hand of fellowship (Gal.

2:9). Only then can we have fellowship in the Gospel (Phil. 1:5) and the fellowship of the Spirit (Phil. 2:1). As we live by the faith of Christ, we are able to *“...know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”* (Phil. 3:10).

ONE CHURCH

The Bible authorizes and reveals only one church. Daniel 2, Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 all speak of one kingdom/church. Jesus spoke of only one kingdom/church. He said *“...I will build **my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Matt. 16:18). How many did He say He would build? He said “my church” — one. He did not say “churches.”

The apostles revealed only one church. There is *“one body...one faith”* (Eph. 4:4-5; cf. 1 Cor. 12:13). Paul did not teach there were many bodies and many faiths. The one body is the one church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The one faith is the one system of faith, the Gospel, by which the church is governed (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3; John 12:48).

No one can find more than one church, one body, one faith in the New Testament. Jesus is the one head of the one church which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). He does not have many bodies any more than He has many heads.

THE RESTORATION PLEA

In the New Testament we read of only one church. All those who became Christians were added by the Lord unto His one body (Acts 2:41,47). Not long after the time of the apostles, men began to severely corrupt the teaching of Christ. This apostasy from the one true faith was prophesied (Acts 2:28-31; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; 2 Peter 2:1-2). It became apparent first in the leadership of the church. By 606 A.D. the first Pope was recognized as the head of the church in Rome. Ignorance of the Scriptures reigned supreme for centuries until the period of the Renaissance when a renewed interest in the Bible was stirred. As men began to read the Bible they soon began what is known as the *Reformation Movement*. Men such as Martin Luther sought to reform the Catholic

Church and bring it closer to the first century church. Others also joined in and from these efforts arose the Presbyterian Church in 1536, the Church of England in 1552, the Baptist Church in 1611, the Methodist Church in 1739 and Episcopal Church in 1789.

The *Reformation Movement*, though a step in the right direction, did not go far enough. A far better goal is the *restoration* of the pure, simple, organization, membership, worship, teaching and work of the first century church of Christ. To restore something is to put it back in its original condition.

If a polluted river is to be restored to its purity, that which contaminated it must be removed. The only way a polluted religion can be restored to its original form is to remove that which causes it to be polluted. The doctrines and commandments of men must be laid aside before there can be a return to pure, simple, New Testament Christianity. In order for there to be unity, true Bible unity, God-approved unity, men must lay aside everything they have added to God's Word and put back in everything they have removed from God's Word.

Change Our Worship?...

(Continued from page 85)

is right for that which we approve, why not boo when we don't like something (or whistle instead of booing, as is done in Europe)? Secondly, hand clapping in worship is not acceptable because it is not authorized in the New Testament. Brethren, it is a sad day for God's people when we stoop so low as to try and drag the pep rally and "show time" atmosphere into our worship assemblies.

2) *The time to partake of the Lord's Supper.* Jesus commanded His followers to break bread (1 Cor. 11:24-26). Acts 20:7 shows us when this is to be done — on "the first day of the week." There is no authority in the New Testament for the church to have communion on any other day of the week. To partake of it on a different day is to act without divine authority, and thus to be wrong (2 John 9; Col. 3:17).

3) *The sex of the preacher in a*

mixed assembly. God does not permit women "to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:12). Thus, only brothers in Christ are permitted to preach in a gathering when both men and women are present. True, in the denominational world, women often preach when men are present, but such is a clear violation of the Bible's teaching. It is wrong, and those in the church who are wanting to ape the actions of the denominations are just as wrong! Those who desire to change the worship of the church and make it more appealing to the world by putting in women preachers are going against the will of God and leading the church into apostasy.

4) *The sex of those who lead prayers (or lead in worship).* Again, many are crying for the church to "get with it" or "wake up" and begin using women in leadership roles in the worship. Friends, God has spoken on this matter, and His word says that men (males) are to serve in leadership roles in the worship of the church, not sisters in Christ (1 Tim. 2:8). We do not apologize for this, because it is God's decision! Any changes being made that put women into the role of leaders during public, mixed assemblies are without Bible authority.

5) *The type of music that we are to offer to God.* God has charged His children to praise Him with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). The use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God is completely without New Testament authority, and thus is prohibited. So, any cry to bring instruments into the worship of the church or at least do away with ("change," "tone down") our opposition to their use is simply not in harmony with the Bible. We must not buckle in to those who want to "have it their way" in the church's worship.

Still, the thought prevails in the minds of some that somehow the church must "spice up" its worship. Why? Because our worship is just "too dry and boring" (according to them). Such an idea is extremely offensive to those who still want to "hold fast the form of sound words" given in the New Testament (2 Tim. 1:13).

What is it that is so boring and

dry about worshipping God according to His Word? Could it be the Lord's supper? Is it boring and dull to eat unleavened bread and drink the fruit of the vine, allowing our minds to go back to Calvary and the blood that Jesus poured out for our salvation (Eph. 1:7)? We think not. Remember, God is the One that planned this memorial for our benefit!

Maybe the fault lies with praying to God. Is it really that dry and boring to pour out our hearts to God with supplication and thanksgiving so that the peace of God will keep our hearts (Phil. 4:6,7)? Not for the spiritually minded!

Maybe the culprit is our spiritual songs. "Is any merry, let him sing psalms" (James 5:13). When we joyfully sing about the death of Jesus, the love of God, the need to work for the Lord, the day of judgment and scores of other Bible themes, is this really boredom gone to seed? Such songs of praise are far from being boring to those who sing from the heart in order to praise their God. So if we are going to stand up and cry for change in our worship, then surely it won't be a cry for getting away from Scriptural songs that stir our souls.

Could it be that boring and dry factor #1 is the preaching and study of God's word? My friends, the word of God is living and active (Heb. 4:12), it lives and abides forever (1 Peter 1:23,25). If we are bored by its message, then we kindly suggest that what needs a serious overhaul is not the worship of the church, but the heart within us!

Oh yes, in many cases we probably ought to sing with more enthusiasm. We ought to greet one another and our guests with more enthusiasm. We can probably find room for improvement in the way that we as individuals approach our prayers, the supper, and hearing the Bible preached. For sure, we must worship God from the heart.

But making personal improvements such as these does not mean we need to bring changes into our worship that are without Biblical authority. Brethren, let's stick with the Book and keep on worshipping God His way!

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THE ONE BODY

Marvin L. Weir

*Religious division is sinful and contrary to the will of Christ.
It is not the church of man's choice but rather the church which Christ built
(Matt. 16:18) that people should give their allegiance to.*

People often make amazing decisions based purely upon biased or prejudiced feelings. The Bible clearly reveals that the church of the Lord is **one body**. A human body with two or more heads is abnormal. The same would be true of a human head having two or more bodies. The human body is used in the Scriptures as a metaphor of the church or the body of Christ.

The church of our Lord is one body. The apostle Paul says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof" (1 Cor. 12:27). There is only **one** body, but many members of the one body. Paul likewise taught the Roman brethren, saying, "so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another" (Rom. 12:5).

In our world there are many different religious bodies all claiming Christ as the one head. Such surely is the wistful thinking of man because such a concept cannot be found in the word of God! Christ promised to build only His church (Matt. 16:18). He never promised to build one belonging to someone else. The church and the body are terms that refer to the same thing (Eph. 1:22-23). There is only **one body** for which Christ died (Eph. 4:4; Acts 20:28) and only **one body** He has promised to save (Eph. 5:23).

The act of water baptism puts one into the one body of Christ. Paul proclaims, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:13). The same apostle taught the Galatians, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Peter commanded those on Pentecost to "Repent ye, and be baptized

every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins..." (Acts 2:38). This baptism is a burial and not a sprinkling as is evidenced by studying the fourth verse of the sixth chapter of Romans.

All people are to be members of the same body. It matters not whether one is young or old, rich or poor, educated or uneducated — all who obey God's word are members of the same body. To the Galatians Paul said, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:28-29).

Each member of the one body is important. "And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (1 Cor. 12:21). All members of the body are to work together for the glory of God. What one member does or does not do can have an effect on the rest of the body. It is also easy for folks to see that one leg does not travel in one direction while the other leg travels in the opposite direction and yet they both end up at the same destination. Such is the claim of many religious groups who contend that although they take different routes (doctrine and worship) they will all arrive at the same destination (Heaven).

Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt.

7:21-23).

There is to be no division in the one body of the Lord. The plea of the inspired Scriptures is that members of the body are to give "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). Please note that this is not some man-made, man-agreed upon unity, but rather the "unity of the Spirit."

Religious division is sinful and contrary to the will of Christ. It is not the church of man's choice but rather the church which Christ built (Matt. 16:18) that people should give their allegiance to.

Pride will stand between many people and their obedience to the Gospel. Bias and prejudice will cause multitudes to reject the simple truths found in God's word. How horrible it will be for those who had every opportunity to see, yet chose to remain blind!

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THE CONSEQUENCES OF IGNORING 2 JOHN 9-11

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

This trio of valiant verses reads, *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that bid-deth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”*

CAN ONE REMAIN FAITHFUL WHILE IGNORING THIS TEACHING?

A gigantic NO and for reasons both cogent and convincing at least to the mind that loves truth and loves it supremely, to the mind that loves righteousness and hates iniquity as our blessed Lord did (See Psalms 45:6; Heb. 1:8,9). Ten reasons will now be numbered and noted.

1) These three verses constitute a portion of God’s word. If one can ignore three verses with impunity, why not three hundred verses, three thousand verses or thirty thousand verses which gets nearly all the 31,102 verses from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21? John did not write

these three verses to be ignored. The Holy Spirit did not inspire these three verses to be ignored. God the Father and God the Son, the real originators of all truth, did not direct the Holy Spirit to convey them to John to be ignored when once written.

2) To ignore a potent passage like this shows spineless toleration for error and no real regard for maintaining a sound faith and a faultless practice. Please recall that there is only one acceptable stance for any soldier of Christ toward any error, toward all error — EXPOSURE AND OPPOSITION.

3) To ignore such shows that one is not really concerned with the doctrine Christ taught and/or had others proclaim in his name so faithfully and fervently. To despise the doctrine of Christ is to despise Deity who authored the doctrine or teaching.

4) To ignore such means that one thinks as highly of error and the errorists, who push and promote such, as of truth and the dedicated soldiers of Calvary who preach and practice such. A person of such disposition surely cannot love righteousness and hate iniquity as did our Lord.

5) To ignore such makes impossible our abiding in the doctrine of Christ and this means that we forfeit both God the Father and Christ the Son. We cannot have one without the other and we cannot have either minus the doctrine of Christ.

6) To ignore such means that we are giving our stamp of approval to every flagrant falsehood and erroneous error that comes along. It means that we are supportive of those who would destroy the very cause of Christ on earth.

7) To ignore such means that we are really more interested in the spread of error than in the spread of saving truth and this defeats the very purpose of our being.

8) To ignore such means that our

homes would soon become the very citadels of every corruptible error that comes along. The concept of CHRIST IN THE HOME could NOT remain in such surroundings at all. Children would soon be corrupted by such devious influences ever surrounding them.

9) To ignore such would place us in the position of influencing all others to ignore this same passage and its weighty warning. We would thus become a millstone around the necks of others pulling them down into the waters of destruction.

10) To ignore such is the equivalent of erecting a sure blockade toward our going home to heaven at last. Ignoring Scripture and going home to heaven are incompatibles.

HOW SHOULD THE FAITHFUL REGARD THOSE IGNORING THIS PASSAGE?

The very same way that John would have regarded the elect lady and her children had they responded back with a rousing rejection of this sage, apostolic counsel. John did not write it for the initial readers to reject it, ignore it or defy it. He wrote it to be believed and practiced with dedication and permanence. Had they rejected or ignored it, it would have produced a very serious rupture between John and this Christian family. No longer would John have designated her as “the ELECT lady” (v.1). No longer would he have commended her children because they walked in truth (v.4). No longer would he have referred to this family as ones *“whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth...”* (v.1). John would still have loved them but they would no longer have been fellow-dwellers in the righteous realm of kingly truth. No longer would he have referred to the fact that truth indwelt this lady and her children (v.2). No longer would he have anticipated a fullness of joy

in a face-to-face meeting (v.12). No longer could he have conveyed joyful greetings from the children of her elect sister — her faithful nephews and nieces. Rejection of truth always mars such family ties in Christ. It would have broken the heart of the aged apostle had he learned that this esteemed lady and her children treated with contempt and a sneer such precious points as he incorporated into this trio of truthful admonitions, these needed exhortations. John would have surmised promptly that the whole scope of Biblical teachings relative to discipline would have been in serious jeopardy with this lady and her children. This would have been inclusive of instructive discipline and corrective discipline and both of these get nearly the whole of apostolic doctrine. Instructive discipline is very comprehensive including all New Testament truth designed to keep us in the way that is holy and right.

But even more important than John's disappointment would have been Deity's view of such. Can anyone imagine that the Timeless Trinity would view such rejection with ardency of approval, with pleasure ready to be pronounced? Jesus pleased the Father by honoring his will. This is the only way we can please God now — by heeding and honoring his will and that will is intently inclusive of 2 John 9-11.

Deep suspect should be our attitude toward any person who would tamper with truth as set forth in these three verses of towering truth. What about those who once knew the truth of these passages, believed these passages, faithfully pro-

claimed them, defended them when they came under attack and lived in harmony therewith but now have rejected them or rewritten them. The reason is very evident why some have turned from these passages or have rewritten them. They want to join hands with denominational groups like the *Independent Christian Church*. They wish to count them as long lost brethren. With others, they want to be invited to their growth seminars and teach them how to grow a thriving denom-

inational church. They wish to be in full fellowship with such. The principles of 2 John 9-11 condemn in forthright language such compromises and so these spiritual weaklings have rewritten or outrightly ignored what John wrote here. Such people have left the truth PERIOD!!! They should be warned. If the marking works no change for the better, they should be avoided as per Romans 16:17-18. Some of our hedging brethren evidently have ignored the Romans passage as well as 2 John 9-11. A

rejection or ignoring of these passages cannot be treated with lightness. It is a momentous matter that is solemn and serious. We are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful of darkness as per Ephesians 5:11 and these are definitely of that order when they come with their Christ-denying doctrines of flagrant falsehood and fatal errors. We are straitly forbidden to receive such or convey to such God speed or good speed in the spread of their nefarious notions of wrong and wickedness.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

wish I could have been there the whole week. I get charged-up when around faithful brethren. You and the elders are to be commended for a job well done. Will look forward to next year. Hopefully, I will get to attend more of the sessions" ...**Tom House, Fulton, MS.** "It is I who should thank you for the privilege of speaking in the lectureship. Hearing the good lessons really helped! I plan to write your elders to express my appreciation for the lectureship and their stand for truth. Best wishes!" ...**Dwight Fuqua, Middleton, TN.** "I enjoyed very much the lessons that I heard at the lectures this year. I have always considered the lectures at East Corinth one of the best. I appreciate you and the elders there for your stand for the truth. Look forward to next year's lectures" ...**Ben Justice, Cherokee, AL.** "Just a line or two to let you know how much my wife and I enjoyed the lectureship. It was apparent that much planning went into the program and you did a great job in keeping everyone on track. I know what a challenge that can be. The topics were very timely and the speaker line up was just great. Everyone did an outstanding job in presenting their lesson. It is really a shame that this type thing is necessary. It would be wonderful if we could spend our time teaching the Gospel and edifying the church, but it is comforting to know that many sound men are willing to stand and speak out against the enemies of the Lord's church. We have enjoyed reading *S.T.O.P.* for many years now and I commend you for the great work you continue to do in that area also. The paper is received and distributed in my congregation, and many of our members read and appreciate it. I am sending you a little money to help pay for the new printer or to use in the work as you see fit. As I said earlier, this was our first time to attend and we felt welcome from the beginning. We really enjoyed the fellowship and meeting so many of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. If it is God's will, we will be back next year and we will try to bring some others with us. We will pray that the Lord will continue to bless your efforts and give you and your co-workers there many more years in His service" ...**Bobby Redd, Lake City, GA.** "May the Lord continue to bless you as you fight for the Truth and give so much encouragement to those of us whom you have never met but are kindred spirits" ...**TX.** "Thank you for the stand for truth you make publicly through the publication *S.T.O.P.* The church that Christ paid for with His blood is surely worth our all when it comes to protecting it, building it up, and seeking its growth. Thank you for the faithful effort East Corinth is making for the cause of Christ" ...**Jimmy & Cindy Palmer, Cordova, TN.** "I enjoy reading *Seek the Old Paths* and would like to receive the lectureship cassette tapes of "Dangers Facing the Church — Changing Views" ...**Don Stingle, Clearwater, FL.** "We are sending a small contribution to be put toward the cost of the printer. We enjoy *Seek the Old Paths* and want it to continue to be put in the hands of the people. Wish we could have been in our beloved Mississippi for the excellent lectureship. I know it was because it has always been in the past. I kept the schedule out so I could think about those that were speaking each day. Keep up the good work" ...**Don & Marilyn Potts, Youngstown, OH.** "Please send me a copy of audio cassette tapes of the 15th annual lectureship. Appreciate your good work" ...**Daniel (Pete) Hankins, Moss Point, MS.** "I sure appreciate you sending me the paper. Please keep on sending it to me" ...**Helen McCasland, Savannah, TN.** "I hope all is going well with you. It is hard to express what a great relief it is to get *S.T.O.P.* The articles are timely and well written. Keep up the good works" ...**Claud Reese, Batesville, AR.** "Please don't send no more papers to me. I don't need them" ...**Lurlene Wood, Crossville, TN.** "Recently someone sent my wife and I a copy of your paper *Seek the Old Paths* and we appreciate that which you believe and uphold. We would like to make a contribution to this work and also send to you some names and addresses of those whom we believe would also appreciate receiving your publication. Your work is appreciated and may God bless you in your efforts" ...**Otto Barron, Newport, AR.** "Would you please send 15 copies of your publication *Seek the Old Paths* per month? We will most certainly appreciate you doing so.

"We certainly had a wonderful edifying time at East Corinth. Thank you for providing the lectureship in July. And, thank you for the book. It was certainly my privilege to have had a small part. In Christian love" ...**Gary McDade, Memphis, TN.**

"Thanks again for the invitation to come to the lectureship. I enjoyed the short time that I got to stay. I

Thanks very much" ...**South Middleton Church of Christ, Middleton, TN.** "How does one get off your *Seek the Old Paths* mailing list? I have asked that you no longer send your publication and yet it still comes to our house every month. Please take my name off your mailing list. I do not wish to receive this publication any longer" ...**David Franklin, Memphis, TN.** [NOTE: Many loving brethren send in names to be added to the mailing list in hopes that some friend or family member will read and heed. Sometimes they do not and request their name to be removed (which we always try to do promptly). I could say that if you don't read *S.T.O.P.* and wish to be taken off the list, then let us know and we will comply. However, if you don't read it, then you won't be reading these lines. —gmr] "Please continue to stand for the truth. Enclosed check to help with printing and mailing" ...**Shirley Waggener, Pineville, LA.** "Thank you again for preaching and upholding the truth" ...**Arkansas City, KS.** "Thank GOD we still have people such as you all defending the Gospel! More and more, the church is becoming a people who want to be entertained. Refer to these passages; Isaiah 30:9, 10; Psalms 106:15; II Timothy 4:3. Thanks and God bless you (II Timothy 4:17)" ...**Cary & Kay Barron, Mobile, AL.** "Just a note to let you know how much I appreciate your stand for the truth. *S.T.O.P.* is great. I wish that all of the brotherhood could see the wisdom in following God's Word and would abandon the teachings of man that so many congregations are following. Keep up the good work" ...**Gary Rayborn, Camden, AR.** "I would appreciate it so much if your would put my name on your mailing list for your publication of *Seek the Old Paths*. I have heard it is a very scriptural paper which I need" ...**Betty Reed, Knoxville, TN.** "Please mail your publication to me. My dad, John Milligan, gets your paper and I just saw it. God bless you and keep up the work" ...**Charlotte Rouchle, Memphis, TN.** "I would like to thank you for the great work you are doing in publishing *Seek the Old Paths*" ...**Kevin Hadley, Senatobia, MS.** The dates of our lectureship next year are: **July 22-26, 2001.**

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