

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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FELLOWSHIPING DENOMINATIONS

Charles Ivie

Looking through our newspaper, the HOBBS NEWS-SUN, (Hobbs, New Mexico) Saturday, October 22, 2005, an article entitled "Churches to host Harvest Carnival" captured my attention. Reporter Michelle A. Fox began the article with the words, "It is not something that happens very often outside of a disaster — three churches of different denominations getting together on a project." Reading that statement didn't seem surprising, as denominations have been working together for years. Denominations refer to themselves as particular parts of the "universal church." With this misinformed view of Christ's church, it is logical that denominations are willing to cooperate on most activities.

It was the next two paragraphs that surprised and saddened me. The article stated, "On Sunday, Oct. 30, Taylor Street Church of Christ, First United Methodist Church and First Baptist Church will host a Harvest Carnival near the churches." The next paragraph included a quote from Tim Day, the family life minister at Taylor Street church of Christ.

"This is going to be an exciting event, particularly for this area of town," said Tim Day, Taylor Street family life minister. *"The fact that three different denominations are working cooperatively to bring this event to the neighborhood makes it more exciting."*

This became even more distressing, not only because a group claiming to be the Lord's church was having fellowship with denominations,

but also because the group bearing the name of the Lord's church was depicting themselves as a denomination.

Surely Tim Day did not make that statement! I know that I, at times, have been misquoted by newspaper reporters. Therefore, I called Tim Day and found out that he did indeed make the statement. Of course he explained that he was only using this term in the manner the world understands.

In my reply to Tim Day, I stated that I try to explain to people that we are not a denomination. But I also stated it is becoming more difficult for the world to understand or accept this concept as others who are "members of the church of Christ" refer to themselves as a denomination. Tim Day then asked if I thought a certain person in a certain denomination was a part of Christ's church. I told him, "No, because he doesn't teach what is necessary to get into Christ's church, and he doesn't worship according to the teaching of the New Testament." You see, Tim Day really does believe he is a part of a denomination, although he would say Taylor Street church is closer to the truth than other denominations.

I believe the action taken by Taylor Street church of Christ in Hobbs was unauthorized for three reasons:

1) I cannot find in the word of God where the church (nor individuals in the church) has authority to celebrate "holidays of pagans." Paul was concerned about Christians who were celebrating special days com-

manded under the Law of Moses. Galatians 4:9-11 states, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

In the article mentioned above, "trunk-or-treating" was a part of the activities of the "Harvest Carnival." I assume this was planned to observe "Halloween." This holiday originated from the false celebration of "All Saint's Day" or "All Hallows Day." On the eve preceding "All Saint's Day," it was believed the evil forces appeared, hence "All Hallow Even," shortened to "Halloween." The Lord's church should never be connected to such a celebration of evil forces, no matter how harmless it might appear.

For Christians to celebrate "Easter" as a religious holiday is also unauthorized in God's word. Christians are commanded to remember the Lord's death each first day of the week when assembled together to worship God (I Cor. 11:26). Neither is there any authorization from God's word for the church to celebrate Christmas as Christ's birthday. For individuals to celebrate Christmas as a strictly secular holiday is not wrong, but we must never join with the world in celebration of Christ's

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Fellowshipping Denominations...



Editorial...

GOD ORDAINED WORSHIP

Garland M. Robinson

God-ordained worship is a place where we stand in awe of the majesty and presence of God. We recognize that when we participate in those things prescribed by God Himself, we are pleasing in His sight. When we incorporate our own actions and add to what He has commanded, we know He is not pleased — we've turned from worshiping Him to doing that which appeals to us. What "we" like and what makes "us" feel good is not an option. We must act totally under His authority if we desire His approval.

We find five acts of worship outlined in the New Testament church. These are performed on the Lord's day, the first day of the week. They include:

SINGING

What a joy to lift up our voices with the whole congregation in praise and adoration to our heavenly Father. Two verses especially give us direction in our worship in song: Ephesians 5:19, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" and Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." From these verses we learn that acceptable worship in singing is done by the whole congregation singing together, not special groups of singers such as choirs, choruses, solos, duets, etc.

We learn that the songs used are limited to psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Songs of patriotism or ballads of secular interest have no place in God-ordained worship.

We learn that our singing is to be acappella; that is, without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music such as a piano, guitar, drum, etc. Acappella is simply the

human voice speaking WORDS wherein we, as well as others, may learn (be taught) the will of God. This does not include sounds such as humming, whistling, imitating mechanical instruments, clapping, stomping, beating, or whatever. "Words" communicate thoughts and concepts. They teach and admonish. Other sounds do not. Humming does not teach. Clapping does not instruct. Cornelius was instructed that Peter would come and tell him WORDS whereby he and all his house may be saved (Acts 11:14). If Peter had hummed or played a harp when he arrived in Caesarea, Cornelius would not have learned what he needed to do to be saved. He had to speak WORDS.

PREACHING

On the first day of the week, there is a period of Biblical instruction. The congregation is to be fed a diet of spiritual words so they may learn and grow. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever" (I Peter 3:18). This is what Paul did when he met with the brethren at Troas. "...Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7). The whole book of Acts consists of sermon after sermon, lesson after lesson. People must be taught before they can obey the Lord. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, Every man therefore that hath **heard**, and hath **learned** of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45). God draws people unto Him by and through the Gospel — the teach-

ing/preaching of His will (II Thess. 2:14). Preaching must be "thus saith the Lord," not "thus saith me." It must be "sound words," not unsound words. Paul wrote to Titus, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Timothy was to hold on to the form or pattern of "sound words" (II Tim. 1:13) and preach the "word" (II Tim. 4:2). There have always been many who will not receive it. They do not love it and will not obey it. Instead, they despise it; men like Hymenaeus, Alexander (I Tim. 1:20) and Philetus (II Tim. 2:17). Friend, don't be in that camp.

PRAYING

Jesus taught his disciples to pray (Matt. 6:5-15) and gives us an example that we should follow His steps (I Peter 2:21; Matt. 14:23; 26:36; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12; John 17). It is no wonder then that we see the early church continuing steadfast in prayer (Acts 2:42; 4:31; 6:4,6; 8:15; 12:5; 13:3; 14:23).

Prayer is directed to God the Father in the name of Jesus the Son. Jesus taught the disciples saying, "After this manner therefore pray ye: **Our Father** which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9). "And whatsoever ye shall ask **in my name**, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13; 15:16). "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask **the Father in my name**, he will give it you" (John 16:23). Prayer is not to be offered to anyone but our heavenly Father. We do not pray to any man, whether Mary or dead saints!

GIVING

Every Christian is to contribute a portion of that which he/she has prospered. By inspiration, Paul instructed the church at Corinth, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Cor. 16:1-2). The time specified for this to be done is the "first day of the week." It is to be a free-will offering given with a cheerful heart. "But this

I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (II Cor. 9:6-7).

The church is not authorized to raise funds by any means other than free-will contributions. The church has no authority to have rummage sales, car washes, or operate a business to gain funds. Notice also that we are to give bountifully (generously) and not sparingly.

This contribution is used in the work of the church; that is, to do the work God has commanded the church to do. The church must, therefore, use its treasury in a way that is consistent with the guidelines and principles of the New Testament. The treasury is not to be used to play ball and throw parties. It’s not for the recreation and entertainment of its members. It will not be used to support works that oppose the body of Christ. It will be used in the furtherance of the Gospel which consists of: evangelism, edification and benevolence. Evangelism teaches the lost, Edification builds up the saints and Benevolence helps the needy.

THE LORD’S SUPPER

Communion (the Lord’s supper) is an act of worship that is enjoyed by every Christian. It is where one communes with brethren and the Lord. We’re mindful of the Lord’s suffering and death on the cross. His sacrifice for mankind is so wonderful that it defies comprehension.

The Lord’s supper is made up to two elements: *unleavened bread and fruit of the vine* (grape juice). The bread reminds us of the Lord’s body and the fruit of the vine reminds us of the blood he shed in his death. The example of the early church will not allow substitutions of hot dog buns, potato chips, apple juice or soft drinks.

Paul explains the supper to the church at Corinth. *“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which*

is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (I Cor. 11:23-30).

Christians around the world commune on the Lord’s Day. No other day of the week will suffice. In Acts 20 and verse 7 we read, *“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”*

Some try to incorporate the supper into a wedding or funeral or perhaps some other occasion, but they do so without Bible authority. How in the world can they attempt to pervert this precious institution of our Lord and degrade this authorized act of worship and make it mundane to fit our purpose. What will be next?

The Lord’s supper is an essential part of worship, but it is not any more important than other acts of worship. We should not make sure we partake of the supper while leaving out other essential parts.

CONCLUSION

Worship is vital to our salvation. We have been called out of the world, added to the Lord’s precious body (the church), and given the solemn privilege of worshipping God. It is not to be taken lightly or cast aside as trivial. It is that time when we totally focus upon our heavenly Father and give praise unto His high and holy name. What a shame and embarrassment it is for those who degrade it unto their own satisfaction. They forget whom they worship and set themselves up as objects of praise. They will find out someday

what true worship is all about, but then it will be too late.

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EXPLANATION

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THE KIND OF PERSON GOD WANTS

James W. Boyd

God created man, giving him life, making him a spirit, placing him in the perfectness and sinlessness of the Garden of Eden. But man departed from the Lord by a violation of God's instructions concerning the fruit in the garden. By that transgression, sin came into the world (Rom. 5:12), and "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23; 5:12). In sin, we are not the kind of person God wants us to be. But we can be what God wants us to be. Before that will be the case, we must have an earnest desire to be what God wants us to be. It begins with the heart of man wanting to please God and continues with man learning just what kind of person God wants us to be. This lesson is centered on some of the characteristics that God wants of us.

SELF-EXAMINER

God wants a person to be a self-examiner, paying close attention to self, lest we go astray. The warning to the elders of Ephesus, "*Take heed unto yourselves...*" (Acts 20:28), is useful for us all. We are sometimes so busy watching the other fellow to note his mistakes that we are not mindful enough of our own lives. We hear a sermon and make application to somebody else rather than ourselves. It is like the story of the time a preacher began his lesson by saying, "Some member of this church has been heard cursing last week." Then he preached against the sin of the tongue. He knew one man was guilty because he had heard him curse. But when the people were leaving, several members told him that they were guilty, except the one who he knew to be guilty, and that person said, "You sure did set them straight this morning, preacher." He did not apply it to himself.

In eating the Lord's supper, Paul said, "*But let a man examine himself...*" (I Cor. 11:28). Self-examination is emphasized in Romans 2:1-3. "*But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that*

judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."

In restoring those who have fallen, Paul taught, "*Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted*" (Gal. 6:1). Christ said, "*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye*" (Matt. 7:3-5).

BUSY

God wants a busy person. When you want something to be done you usually ask the busy man to do it. Why? Because the busy man works. God wants people busy doing the work that must be done. We might ask, "How can we be busy in the work of the Lord?" This little poem is a good thought along this line.

"Father, where shall I work today?"

And my love flowed warm and free.

Then He pointed me out a humble spot,

and said, "Tend that for me."

I answered quickly, "Oh, no, not that!"

Why, no one would ever see. No matter how well my work was done;

Not that little place for me!" The word He spoke, it was not stern;

He answered me tenderly: "Ah, little one, search thine heart;

Art thou working for them or me?

Nazareth was a little place,
And so was Galilee."

We may be guilty of only wanting to work when some prominence will come our way as a result. Prayer for the sick, family, church, or nation may never be heard from you by others, but God hears. Talking one-on-one to a neighbor about the soul may not bring you acclaim, but it may save a soul. Being faithful in worship, inviting others, visiting the needy, reading the Scriptures, may not bring you brotherhood notoriety, but what of that? You are busy doing what God wants done. Your day-to-day work, whether it be in the home, on the job, or wherever, may seem insignificant to those around you, but you will be doing what God wants done. You are being busy in what is right. Too many of us might be like the man who prayed for the Lord to use him, but only in an advisory capacity. Many are willing to work when it is noted. Many are willing to complain, criticize, or advise others. Too few are willing to be busy workers.

COOPERATIVE

God wants a person who will cooperate. After all, the church is to be "fitly joined together" (Eph. 4:16), and this implies cooperation by brethren. Unity, harmony, being "fitly joined together" is a mark of Christianity.

Nobody even likes that person who always has to have his own way or will not cooperate with others. Have you ever watched children at play and noticed what happens to the child that insists everything must be as he calls it? Soon the others will leave him alone. The same thing is true on the adult level. God is not pleased with the uncooperative person who is unwilling to sacrifice himself for the benefit and good of others.

In the New Testament we find Christian fellowship, joint participation, brethren working hand-in-hand and heart-in-heart together. This demands cooperation. It is only

because there is a cooperative spirit that we can have our Bible study periods, our Gospel meetings, our worship services, our efforts to preach the Gospel near and far. It is a sad spectacle when someone exhibits the attitude that he does not have a responsibility to others to be working alongside others for the common good of the whole church. We all ought to look upon all matters of the church as “my work” and not “their work.” We must support it, do our part, cooperate with others under the leadership. A lack of this attitude hinders the progress of the cause of Christ.

ONE WHO LOVES

God wants a person who both loves and hates. The same ability that enables one to love, will also equip him to hate. There are those things that God hates just as those things that God loves. *“For God so loved the world...”* (John 3:16). But Solomon writes, *“These six things doth the Lord hate...”* (Prov. 6:16). Those who love God, love what God loves and hate what God hates.

God wants us to love His truth and to demonstrate that love. To love God means that we will love His truth enough to obey it. *“If ye love me, keep my commandments”* (John 14:15). *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.”* (I John 5:3). We show our love for the truth by believing it, obeying it, living according to it, defending it against attack, teaching it to all who will hear. By doing this we are able to obey the two greatest commandments of Matthew 22:37-39, *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”*

God wants us to love one another. *“For ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another”* (I Thess. 4:9). *“And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity”* (I Cor. 13:13). The word most often used in the original language of the Bible to depict the love we are to have is the word *“agape.”* The real meaning of the word is a sacrificial love, a love

that seeks the other person’s highest good.

We show our love by being long-suffering, not quick to condemn, but not hesitant to condemn when the soul is at stake. Love is kind, pleasant, friendly, without envy. When we love someone we are not interested in showing ourselves better than they are to make us puffed up with self-righteousness. We are not primarily interested in seeking our own interest to the neglect of others. We will grieve over their errors just as we do over our own. We will have a forgiving attitude toward them, supporting them, encouraging them. Love will help us prevent hard feelings, suspicion, verbal abuse, false accusations and insinuations to discredit and destroy. There are many ways to display the love God wants us to have in the heart. *“Follow after love”* (I Cor. 14:1). It is that more excellent way of which Paul speaks in First Corinthians 12:31.

ONE WHO HATES

God wants us to hate every false way. God hates sin because sin destroys the sinner and God loves even the sinner. He sent His Son to die on behalf of the sinner. We must hate sin and love the sinner. We must learn to despise and abhor evil (Rom. 12:9). Those who look lightly upon such things as that which keep one separated from God, have not yet learned to hate as God hates. Sin ought to be so repulsive to us that we would abstain from the appearance of evil (I Thess. 5:22). We have noted how people laugh at the antics of one who is drunk. But may we impress, there is nothing funny about sin, whether it be drunkenness, or any other transgression.

OBEDIENT

God wants us to be persons who are obedient. When God speaks, man is to hear and heed. At the time of the disobedience of Saul, the first king of Israel, Samuel taught, *“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”* (I Samuel 15:22). Christ is the author of salvation, and in this truth we rejoice. But Hebrews 5:9 teaches that He is the author of salvation to them that OBEY Him.

Is it possible that when we read the will of God that we do not weigh it and measure it as we ought, failing to see what is required of us, and considering the evidence to decide to obey? Obedience is to do what God says because God has said it. We do not even have to understand why God has said something before we recognize we must submit to it. We are to try to understand His will. But when we have faith in God as God wants, when we love the truth as He wants us to love it, we will be found trying to learn it, and determined to be obedient because this is what He wants.

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birthday.

2) We are not to cooperate or have fellowship with the world. John wrote in II John, verses 9-11, *“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 biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”* This type of cooperation (referred to in the above mentioned article) is certainly “bidding God speed” to the denominations. Paul said again in Ephesians 5:11, *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”*

3) To call Christ’s church a denomination is to make it as one of the many “churches” in the world. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, *“...upon this rock I will build **my church**”* (emphasis mine, CLI). In I Corinthians 12:13, we are baptized into *one body*. In Ephesians 4:4, there is **one body**. Paul said it very well in I Corinthians 1:10, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be*

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Fellowshipping Denominations...

PREACHING WHAT THE LORD "LAYS ON YOUR HEART"

Roger Campbell

The Holy Spirit's direct guiding of preachers was a temporary phenomena that came to an end in the first century.

What message should preachers preach? Many of our denominational friends would say, "Just preach whatever the Lord lays on your heart." Is that what the Bible says?

If one claims that he preaches "what the Lord lays" on his heart, how does he know that it is the Lord and not Satan "that lays it on his heart?" How does he go about proving that it was more than his own personal gut feeling? There is no way that a person living today could ever prove that his decision to preach on a certain topic, or to deliver a lesson in a certain way, came directly from the Lord! One man that called himself a former youth pastor emphasized to me that a preacher just needs to preach whatever the Lord lays on his heart. Then, in the next breath he spoke of his support for women preachers in public assemblies, the use of mechanical instruments of music in Christian worship, and other unbiblical concepts. This is, as we say, "par for the course." Why? Because those that advocate preaching "what the Lord lays on your heart," sooner or later always get around to propagating unscriptural messages, showing that, alas, their message was not something that the Lord laid on their heart after all. Folks, if the message that they speak is not scriptural, then guess what? It did not come from the Lord, and people ought to stop accusing Him of being the source of their self-imagined doctrines!

Have you ever read in your Bible that the Lord told Christians they should teach or preach "whatever He would lay on their heart?" Someone might say, "No, not in those exact words, but surely you would agree that there were inspired preachers." Yes, and the key word here is "were," not "are." There WERE inspired preachers, but there ARE NONE

alive today. Inspired preachers were those who received God's revelation in a miraculous way, being directly led by the Holy Spirit to speak forth God's message. For instance, we read in Matthew 10:18-20 that Jesus told His apostles, *"And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."* That was a promise Jesus made to His apostles, not to people living in the 21st century. Later, Jesus promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth and would cause them to remember all that Jesus had spoken to them (John 16:13; 14:26). Again, those were special promises for the apostles, not you and me.

We further read in the New Testament that the "mystery of God," which is the salvation of Jews and Gentiles through Jesus, through the Gospel, and in the church, was "revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:4,5). The Holy Spirit miraculously revealed it to the apostles and first century prophets and they preached it to others. Those men were, indeed, inspired preachers.

Observe this about inspired preachers. In the first century, inspired preachers also received from God the power to perform signs or miracles. What was the purpose of such signs? To confirm the message they preached (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3,4). In other words, inspired men preached the Gospel of God, and as they did so, by the Holy Spirit's power, they performed miracles to prove that what they were saying was from God, and thus it was true and should be accepted as authentic

and authoritative.

Miracles were a temporary phenomena that ended in the first century. Thus, today there are no preachers that are performing genuine miracles. The Holy Spirit's direct guiding of preachers was also a temporary phenomena that came to an end in the first century. The Spirit now leads men through His truth, the word of God (John 16:13). Instead of having inspired preachers, we now have uninspired men that are obligated to preach the Holy Spirit-inspired Gospel.

What is it that preachers are supposed to preach? Not their own feelings, not their personal hunches, not their private preferences, and certainly not what they surmise to be "the Lord laying it on their heart." No, friends, true Gospel preachers "preach the word" (II Tim. 4:2), or as Jesus said, they "preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15).

"So, you don't think that preachers should preach with emotion?" Preachers ought to energetically and enthusiastically proclaim the Lord's Gospel. They, like the apostle Paul, should feel, *"Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"* (I Cor. 9:16). But that is a far cry from saying that they ought to claim that "the Lord laid it on their heart." Preaching WITH feeling is not the same as preaching which is totally BASED on feelings or pure emotionalism. For one to claim that he preaches "what the Lord lays on his heart" simply means that he is basing his message on his own personal speculation and what he feels is right. Jesus did not say, "Go and preach whatever you feel in your heart." The Master said to preach "the gospel." That should settle the matter for those that want to please Him.

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REPENTANCE

John Cotham

Repentance is NOT simply “sorrow for sin.”

Throughout the ages God has required that man repent. Before God forgives, man must repent. John the baptizer preached repentance, “...*Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Matt. 3:2). Jesus preached repentance, “*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*” (Luke 13:3). The apostles preached repentance. Paul said, “*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent*” (Acts 17:30). The apostle Peter taught, “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (II Peter 3:9).

Perhaps we sometimes emphasize baptism to the point of excluding proper teaching concerning repentance. It is necessary to place as much emphasis upon the need to repent as we place upon the need to be baptized for remission of sins, because without either, no man's sins are remitted.

THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE IS EQUAL TO THE NEED FOR BAPTISM

Peter, in his great sermon on the day of Pentecost, said, “...*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 2:38). We have often expressed the coordinate conjunction “and” in order to express the importance of baptism to the remission of sins. And, baptism IS just as necessary as repentance. But how about turning this argument around? Repentance IS just as necessary as baptism. It seems to have been the case (in some situations) that in order to get someone to understand the necessity of baptism, we might have left off the same emphasis upon repentance. This will cause a response that nearly guarantees the quick falling away of the one just converted. Again, the need for repentance is as important (equal to)

the need for baptism — “Repent and be Baptized” (Acts 3:38). The coordinate conjunction “AND” means each side carries EQUAL weight.

THE NEED FOR BAPTISM IS ONCE, BUT THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE IS CONTINUAL

We take note of what the apostle John said, “*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. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (I John 1:7-9). Continuing faithful to God requires a faithful walk (v.7). However, man is occasioned to stumble in sin (v.8). The blood of Jesus is always available to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (v.9). However, there is/are conditions. One must repent of and confess his sins (v.9). One might quickly argue that the term “repent” is not found in this verse. It is not stated, but necessarily understood, because confession of sin without repentance of sin accomplishes nothing. Peter told Simon the sorcerer to, “*Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee*” (Acts 8:22).

WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

Repentance is NOT simply “sorrow for sin.” Many mistakenly think this is what repentance is about. It is true that there can be no repentance without being sorry for our sins; but, one can be sorry about their sins for a long time and still not repent of their sins. In I Corinthians 7:10 we find that there are two kinds of sorrow: “*For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*” There is godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. Mankind must take notice that it is only godly

sorrow that “works” or brings man to genuine repentance. Just being sorry (worldly sorrow) does not bring about forgiveness of sins, but will cause a man to die in his sins.

Repentance is a changing of wills, a changing of attitude, a changing of ways. It requires the leaving off of the sins for which one confesses and ask forgiveness.

Without faithful living, one will not receive the crown of eternal life (Rev. 2:10). Repentance is a necessary part of that faithful walk before God.

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Fellowshipping Denominations...

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perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

Brethren, if we seek to help the religious world by becoming one of them, how can we make a difference and teach those outside of Christ? We must do what Paul enjoined in II Corinthians 6:14-18: “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*”

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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