

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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WHAT LIBERALISM DOES TO THE CHURCH

Virgil L. Hale

Liberalism has been around for a long time, and for the last several years, it has affected the Lord's church. This can be seen in a number of ways, and I want to observe some of those ways in this study.

Liberalism affects the church by its attitude toward God. Anything that has an adverse affect on our attitude toward God is serious, to be sure. Liberalism would have us believe that God is not absolute, unchangeable or vengeful. However, Paul wrote by inspiration, *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"* (Gal. 6:7-8). Again we read, *"...Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord"* (Rom. 12:19). And we are told that *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Heb. 10:31). Certainly God is a God of love and mercy and grace, but we must also recognize *"the goodness and the severity of God"* (Rom. 11:22). For more information along this line, please read Romans 2:6-11.

Liberalism affects the church by its attitude toward the Bible. Liberalism repudiates verbal and total inspiration. A liberal can make the statement, "I believe that the Bible contains the

word of God." This may sound like he has respect for the Bible, but in reality, he does not. There is a great difference in saying that the Bible contains the word of God and in saying that the Bible is the word of God. The Apostles were told that they would be given **"how"** and **"what"** they were to speak (Matt. 10:19). If that is not verbal inspiration, what is it? Paul could write, *"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ"* (Gal. 1:11-12). He also made this clear in 1 Corinthians 2:9-13. In fact, he concluded in verse 16, *"...But we have the mind of Christ."* With all of this evidence before them, liberals would dare to make light of anyone who believes in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Bible. With their view of the Bible, they are able to trim down God's commands, as though they are not really all that important anyway.

Liberalism affects the attitude one has toward the church itself. Several years back, people were saying, "Christ, yes — the church, no." When Philip went to the city of Samaria and *"...preached Christ unto them"* (Acts 8:5), we learn from verse 12 that he preached *"concerning the kingdom"* which is the church. One cannot preach Christ and fail to preach concerning

His spiritual body, which is the church. After all, Christ purchased the church *"with his own blood"* (Acts 20:28). He *"gave himself for it"* (Eph. 5:25). It is in the church that people are reconciled to God (Eph. 2:16), and it is to the church that the Lord adds the saved (Acts 2:47). Some would like to make the Lord's church just a denomination among many denominations. However, the Lord's church is not a denomination, it never has been and it never will be. Whether people like it or not, *"There is one body"* (Eph. 4:4), *"...but one body"* (1 Cor. 12:20).

Liberalism affects one's attitude toward fellowship. The word fellowship carries with it the idea of "joint participation." Some have espoused the idea of "unity in diversity." These terms are self-contradictory. How can there be unity and at the same time diversity? As I heard brother Robert Taylor say one time, "That is about like talking about a married bachelor." One cannot be a married man and at the same time be a bachelor, and one cannot have unity and diversity at the same time. Some would have us believe there is no real pattern given in God's word. However, Paul speaks about *"that form of doctrine"* (Rom. 6:17); our Lord said that *"the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32); and

(Continued on page 23)

What Liberalism Does...



Editorial...

QUESTIONS ANSWERED #2

With all due respect, with much fear and trembling, I will seek to make reply to more inquiries from students of Lipscomb University.

QUESTION: "I would like to know what obstacles and divisions that Lipscomb is putting before you."

ANSWER: I don't understand the intent of this question. As far as I know, Lipscomb is not affecting me personally. Are you saying that unless Lipscomb affects me personally that I have no obligation to examine their teaching and practice? What about the thousands that are directly and indirectly being affected by their promotions? Should not brethren be warned? Heaven says yes. Paul said, *"Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears"* (Acts 20:31).

Lipscomb's use and promotion of false teachers is enough evidence for anybody. Do you support instrumental music? Would you endorse those who do? **Jeff Walling** is on record as supporting it and yet Lipscomb uses him and parades him before its students as though he were a faithful preacher. Walling's use of instrumental music at the '98 Jubilee is evidence enough. Such evidence could be multiplied over and over again. He told me personally that he could not condemn mechanical instrumental music because the Bible did not condemn it.

QUESTION: "I would also like to know why you always talk about negative things."

ANSWER: I (we) do not always talk about negative things. There are many works in which we are involved that are evangelistic in nature, such as TV, newspaper, radio, printed page, etc. You appar-

ently haven't seen these. The intent and thrust of *Seek The Old Paths* is our balanced approach to also obeying God's command to *"earnestly contend for the faith"* (Jude 3), *"mark them that cause divisions"* (Rom. 16:17) and *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"* (Eph. 5:11). What evidence can you show that you are obeying these passages?

QUESTION: "You talk about being focused only in one direction, what direction would that be? Please elaborate."

ANSWER: Any one can become focused only in one direction of the Lord's work, be that evangelism, edification or refuting error. To concentrate in only one of these areas would of necessity ignore the others. When such is done, the proper balance of the Lord's work is not achieved. If one focused only on first principles (evangelism), he would be leaving off the vital and critical command of the Lord to *"contend for the faith"* (Jude 3). That is not proper balance. However, if one focused only in the area of *"contending for the faith,"* that likewise, would be leaving off the vital and critical command to *"go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15-16).

Remember what Paul told Timothy? — *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine"* (2 Tim. 4:2). This passage is not altogether saying that a certain portion of our sermons should be positive and a certain portion should be negative. Actually, both the positive and negative should be reflected in every sermon.

Each Gospel sermon should include **"reproving."** This involves telling one his fault, to convict, to refute, confute, generally with a sug-

gestion of shame of the person convicted, to bring to light, to expose, to reprehend severely, chide, admonish (Thayers). When doing this, we expose sin for what it is.

Each Gospel sermon should include **"rebuking."** This means "to charge, tax one with fault, to admonish or charge sharply, in the sense of merited penalty" (Thayers). After we expose sin, we seek to convict those who are guilty and show they are lost.

Each Gospel sermon should include **"exhorting."** This means to address, speak to, call to, beg, entreat, beseech, to encourage (Thayers). After we expose the sinfulness of sin, convict those guilty of sin, we then seek to get them to repent and turn to God. We try, as best we can, to get them to obey the Lord so they may have forgiveness and be saved.

If there is another way to be balanced in one's Christian life and the preaching of the Gospel, then I'd like to know about it. Are you suggesting we leave off or ignore all references to condemning sin and those engaging in it? Is there no one among us that is guilty of teaching error, causing division and deceiving the hearts of the innocent? From the way many teach and act, it appears they have never seen anyone anywhere teach error or otherwise practice things not according to the Scriptures. Are you saying that "anything goes?" I actually had a "preacher" tell me that some time ago. His comment was: "anything goes; as long as you are growing and the members are happy, whatever the church does has to be acceptable to God. Nothing is wrong." The number appears to be growing that have accepted this devilish corruption.

QUESTION: You don't mention any errors that Lipscomb has made.

ANSWER: There have been numerous errors documented in **"Seek The Old Paths:"** June, October and December 1998. We will be glad to send copies of these issues to anyone. They can also be accessed on the web: www.tsixroads.com/~ecorinth/stop698.htm, stopo98.htm, stopd98.htm.

QUESTION: Even if you did mention errors you cannot speak

unless you are free of mistakes yourself.

ANSWER: If your statement is true, then it would be impossible for any man to preach the Gospel at any time and at any place, for all have sinned (Rom. 3:23). No one could preach to an alien sinner so the sinner could be convicted of his sin, because we are not without fault ourselves. Where and how did you arrive at such a far-fetched notion? Is that what they teach at Lipscomb? If so, it's worse than we even thought! Your statement negates the whole process of going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16). The apostles and every evangelist of the New Testament (having made mistakes themselves) were in direct violation of Scripture since they preached to others, exposing error and even naming some (cf. 2 Tim. 2:17-18). Please think again concerning your statement.

QUESTION: Go alone to the source of the problem.

ANSWER: If a Christian must first go alone (privately) to the source of the problem (publicly taught error and practice) before he has the right to publicly deal with error, then we would never be able to preach against Catholicism, Methodism, Hinduism, Premillennialism, Pentecostalism, etc., etc. Do you contend we must first go alone to Rome and talk with the Pope before we refute Catholic errors? Did Paul go alone to the Judaizing teachers before he exposed them to the Galatian brethren? Did he need to do so? No. They were teaching their man-made doctrine and Paul had every right to examine that doctrine and expose it publicly with the Word of God, which is what he did in the book of Galatians.

QUESTION: What do you believe that Lipscomb is doing that is causing brethren to lose their souls? What lie is Lipscomb supporting?

ANSWER: Lipscomb has supported and continues to support those in error. By so doing, they become a partaker of their evil deeds (2 John 9-11). They become even as one of them (Obadiah 1:11). If they disagree and deny this is the case,

let them sponsor a program where they invite sound preachers of the Gospel that refuse to tickle the ears of men. They will have about anybody on their programs except one that is not afraid to preach the whole counsel of God. Let faithful men come and preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27). No, they won't do that! They would not even consider it. If you think they will, ask them. I'm sure many faith-

ful brethren would be glad to come for a day, 2 or 3 days, a week or whatever (even donating their time) and examine the Scriptures, rightly dividing the truth. Let them accurately deal with passages such as: Rom. 16:17, Eph. 5:11, Jude 3, 2 John 9-11. They won't touch them with a ten foot pole.

With kindest regards,
Garland M. Robinson

UNITY IN NASHVILLE

(A News Brief)

Woodmont Hills hosted the annual unity forum in November. Three elders (**Bill Tallon, Roy Hamley, Robert Hooper**) of this congregation are staff members of Lipscomb University (www.woodmont.org). **Jeff Walling** was a "presenter" during a worship seminar at Woodmont Hills also in November. Jeff is once again to be the featured speaker at Lipscomb at what they are calling "The Summit" planned for March 5 & 6 which is billed as "a mountain-top experience." **Keith Lancaster**, founder and continued promoter of a number of singing "ministries," has been named "worship minister" at Madison church of Christ (www.madisoncofc.org). **Keith** and **Marvin Phillips** have teamed up, according to the Acappella website to start scheduling joint seminars "that offer Marvin's outstanding teaching and Keith's praise and worship skills. **Acappella** (www.acappella.org), begun by Keith and of whom he is promoter (in a professional, money, sense) was at Woodmont Hills the last of January with a \$10 admission price, the proceeds some of which were to go to "Mercy Ministries" (www.mercyministries.org). The president of this foundation, **Nancy Alcorn**, has **Joyce Meyer**, woman preacher, as her "spiritual leader and mentor" and Meyer is a large contributor. Woodmont Hill's Youth and Family Ministry had a SUPER BOWL PARTY January 31 from 4:00 to 9:00 at Lipscomb University Student Center. By the way, **LaGard Smith** is a new faculty member at Lipscomb (www.dlu.edu). **John Mark Hicks** is going to be or already has been at Woodmont Hills (see web-page) and he is to be a seminar presenter on preaching at Lipscomb in May with Rick **Atchley**, **Randy Harris**, and **Gary Holloway** according to an ad in *The Christian Chronicle*, January issue.

This is just a sampling of the evidence that there is a great unity enjoyed in Nashville among the various congregations and with the so-called Christian university in their midst. However, there was a great unity that existed among the people in the building of a city in Genesis 11.

The facts speak for themselves, but liberals simply hate facts. Let those who love the Lord say so. And, while they are at it, why not confront the apostate leaders in righteous indignation for these failures and two-facedness.

All this information was/is available from the web-pages. Anybody could know what's going on IF IF IF IF they wanted to.

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WHAT IS A MAN?

Glenn B. Ramsey

To most people, a man is merely the male species of the human family. However, a man is more than this. Jeremiah said, *“Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it”* (Jer. 5:1). Obviously, Jeremiah was not just looking for a male. The streets of Jerusalem were full of males.

To other people, a man is just a money maker, a provider of material things. When he does this, he has fulfilled his role in life well. Yet, this is not Isaiah’s definition of a man. He said, *“And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land”* (Isa. 32:2). Four things describe a man according to this prophet.

A man is a hiding place. Perhaps Isaiah was thinking of the storms and winds that sweep across the desert and with clouds of dust bring death and destruction. We must recognize there are many winds that sweep across the lives of people and move many of them from their moral foundations. A man, according to Isaiah, is one who can become a hiding place for these and protect them from the storms of life.

A man is a covert from the tempest. Here is the picture of a rain storm with its floods that shake the very foundations of life. Christ suggested this in Matthew 7:24-28. The following rather familiar story describes such a storm and pictures a proper attitude toward such:

A wild storm was raging. It had blown the windows out of the house and no lights could be kept burning. It was hard to keep the doors from being blown in. The father was away, mother, grandmother and three children sat in the darkness afraid the house would be swept from its foundation at any time. Suddenly, they discovered the boy was missing. He had been

whispering something to this grandmother just a few minutes before. The mother started out, feeling her way through the darkness looking for him. She found the boy in the bed asleep. She asked him how he could sleep in all of the danger? Sleepily, he replied, “Why, grandmother said God would take care of us so I thought I might as well go to sleep.”

A man then is one that becomes a covert to the one in whose life the storms may be raging.

A man becomes as a river of water in a dry place. We have all heard of the tragedies of thirst in a desert. There are dry, hard places in human life. There are hearts in the deserts of sin and sorrow. A man who becomes as rivers of water for these people is worth more than much medicine. A man can change a life that is dry and barren to an irrigated life of fruitfulness.

A man becomes like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. We know the comfort of shade on a dry, hot day. But this is nothing compared to the heat of the desert. There are those who toil in the heat of the desert of life and bend under the burdens upon them. A man, according to Isaiah, is one that becomes a shadow such as cast from a rock in the desert for these burdened souls.

Noah fit Isaiah’s description of a man. The drift of sin had set in and was about to take the whole human family down to destruction. Noah became a rock in a weary land. We are still living because of the shadow Noah cast. We are here today because he stopped the drift of sin enough for God to make a new start in the world through him.

When history left the shadow of the rock cast by Noah behind, the drift began again. This time it was **Abraham** who turned his back to the practices of his forefathers and turned to God, walked by faith and worshiped the one unseen God. In the shadow of his faith, and sheltered by his example, his descendants learned to believe in God. Even today, men

look back to him as the “father of the faithful.” People today are resting in the shade cast by the rock of Abraham’s faith.

When Israel was engulfed in bondage and falling beneath the cruel hands of Egypt, a shepherd came from the fields of Midian. Under this shepherd’s leadership they eventually stand across the Red Sea, safe from the Egyptians. They rejoice. They are sheltered by the shadow of **Moses**. For forty years Moses was to the Israelites as rivers of water in a dry land. Those who reached the land of milk and honey were there because of Moses. He was to them a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest and a river of water in a dry place and a shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

In Isaiah’s time his countrymen were rushing down the steep way to political suicide. The powers of fear and greed carried them off to be on the side that seemed the strongest. **Isaiah** stood still in the midst of the panic and said, *“In quietness and confidence shall be your strength”* (Isa. 30:15). He stopped one of the most dangerous drifts in history and created a shelter for spiritual graces that give strength and character.

When the dark drift of Judaism threatened to engulf the church and rob the Jews of their salvation and the Gentiles of their salvation and liberty, **Paul** turned his back on his kinsmen, withstood Peter to the face, endured hardships by false brethren, went to prison and finally died. But in doing this he became a rock that checked the drift. Today, we enjoy the Gospel in all of its fullness as the results of the shadow that was cast by Paul.

Today, the **radicals** and **extremists** would bind man made laws. They would dictate to every congregation in matters of expediency. Some of these would rob the church of effective teaching, have some congregations use a gallon jug in communion, lose the heart of compassion for the needy and refuse the congregations the right to cooperate in getting the Gospel to a dying world.

The **liberals** of today would ignore all divine principles and tear

down the walls of the Gospel that separate the church from the sectarian world and then let the world engulf and ruin the church.

We need men today, neither radical nor liberal, who believe the gospel to be the power of God and refuse to be moved. We need men who will remember the world is lost and needs the gospel, not pet opinions. We need men who know that the world in the church spells ruin. We need men who will teach the truth to all who are in the church, even if many in the pews do not want it.

We need men who will not be sidetracked by the howling winds of the radicals, or the burning words of the liberals who cry out, “legalism,” “phariseism,” “mote-hunter,” etc. We need a covert from the tempest, a river of water in dry places and a shadow of a rock in a weary land. We should pray for such men. All men should strive to be such.

In Jesus Christ the promises that Isaiah gave are fulfilled. Jesus is the supreme example of personal influence and of one becoming a haven of rest for others. The drift of sin had been in the world for 4,000 years. Noah, Abraham, Moses and others had helped check the drift. But their rocks were not large enough to cast the shadow that men needed to rest beneath. Only **Christ** could stop the drift and turn the desert of the world into a fertile plain! Beneath the shadow of Christ, men have found shelter from the guilt and power of sin. They have been sheltered from temptation and the fear of death. Under the Rock thousands have found that sin loses its glitter and the burdens of life are made lighter. It is in this Rock that men hide from the winds, tempest and dryness of the desert of life. It is here that men have rest.

Men today, through Christ and by following His example may shelter others from the infection of sin. Men may shelter others from the scandal and gossip of our age. **Let men today become a shadow and a shelter by letting others see in them the value of faith, love and devotion.**

The church of Christ must be a rock in every community. Otherwise, what will stay the drift of sin? In any community where the church exists, it ought to be harder for sin to make any progress, harder for men to follow the commandments of men, harder for men to live a life of sin,

harder for dens of iniquity to exist, harder for the needy and poor to be forgotten and harder for children to become wayward and prodigals. Is this true? It is if the church is the rock it should be.

The danger of drifting is always present. We owe much to those of the past who have stopped the drift and let us enjoy the blessings of refreshment that comes from the fountain of truth. **We all need to become rocks to stop the drift of sin and depar-**

ture in our day. There is a crying need for men and women who will become rocks that cast shadows where others may rest. How sad it will be if we have the same problem Ezekiel had. He wrote: “*And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none*” (Ezek. 22:30).

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WHAT IS “CROSSVIEW” — REALLY?

Skip Andrews

CrossView is a TV interview program that airs over the Odyssey network in Atlanta on Tuesdays at 10:30 A.M. Frequently having watched the program, I would like to make some observations. First, the regular interviewer is **Terry Rush**. I knew practically nothing of him before watching the program, but became interested in viewing after seeing a full-page ad in CHRISTIANITY TODAY in the fall of 1997. Of the 13 people who were to be interviewed, only one, **Max Lucado**, had ever had any connection with the church (as far as I know). There was not one time in any program that Rush ever said a word of disagreement with any position espoused by his guests.

Second, the guests were interviewed primarily in reference to books they had written. Rush referred to them as Christian writers. All of them are false teachers – and all but Max Lucado are denominational preachers (one was a woman). They endorsed errors on the subjects of Calvinism, denominational “salvation,” millennialism, the Holy Spirit, etc., with not the slightest word of Biblical truth coming from Terry Rush to refute any of the errors.

Third, there are commercials inserted in the programming. Locally, one of them is about an exercise program and machine where the people in the commercial are clothed immodestly. Other “commercials” are for tapes and materials from CrossView, including one that implies that they believe in some sort of rapture-like event at the second coming. (The Rapture, of course, is a premillennial doctrine.)

Fourth, the list of people to be interviewed soon (early 1999) includes nothing but more of the same – Patti R. Huey, R. C. Sproul, David Balsiger, Jerry Jones, Pat Scott, Patsy Clairmont, Jerry Schemmel, Philip Yankee, Bill Crossman, Jeff Walling, Ray Fullenwider, Claude Kin, and Dave Dravecky. You will note the total absence of the names of any one who teaches the gospel in its purity.

Fifth, there is the visual at the end of the program that claims that they have been doing this work for many years. Anyone who remembers the days when V.E. Howard and others spoke on the World Radio broadcast (CrossView and World Radio are part of the same work of broadcasting from the White’s Ferry Road church of Christ in West Monroe, Louisiana) knows for a fact that the present stance is almost totally opposite to that of former days.

Brethren, if you think the money you send to World Radio is being used to preach the gospel to the world, please watch CrossView and learn the truth. Terry Rush obviously considers all of these people to be in fellowship with God and therefore with him. And, most of them have never even obeyed the gospel (Matt. 7:21-23). World Radio is pointed 180 degrees from its stance in the past — and all who support it are clearly participating in fellowshiping evil (2 John 9-11).

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HOW DOES THE BIBLE DESCRIBE THE CHURCH OF OUR LORD?

Roger D. Campbell

In Matthew 16:18 it is written that Jesus made this promise: *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* Jesus loved the church (Eph. 5:25) and with His blood He purchased it (Acts 20:28). While people today speak about the church in many different ways, we are interested to know the answer to this question: *“In the Bible, how is the church of the living God described?”*

The church is the **Kingdom of God** or the **Kingdom of Christ**. This shows its form of government, that it is a monarchy with the Lord Jesus as its King. Daniel prophesied of the church, saying that it was *“a kingdom which shall never be destroyed”* (Daniel 2:44). John the Baptizer, Jesus, the twelve apostles, and at least seventy other disciples all preached about the coming of the church, saying, *“The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* We noted above that Jesus promised to build His church (Matt. 16:19). In the next verse Jesus referred to the church as the kingdom, saying, *“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven...”* (16:19). Paul reminded the saints in Colosse that God had translated them into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13). Into which kingdom did He translate them? Answer, the church.

In the Bible, the church is called the **House of God**. This shows that the church is the family of God, for He is the Father of all those (and only those!) who are in the church. Members of His church are His children, and the relationship they have to one another is that of brothers and sisters (Gal. 3:26; 6:1). Paul directly called the church the house of God: *“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”* (1 Tim. 3:15). Those who are in Christ are in *“the household of God”* (Eph.

2:19). Jesus Christ is the *“high priest over the house of God”* (Heb. 10:21). But Jesus is head of and rules over the church. Thus, Jesus is the high priest over the church, which is God’s house or family on earth.

The Bible also describes the church as the **Body of Christ**. *“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all”* (Eph. 1:22,23). Calling the church the body shows the unity of the church, with all members working together for the good of the body (1 Cor. 12:12-27). Because Jesus is the head of the church, then it is to be in subjection to Him in all things (Eph. 5:24). The Bible plainly says, *“There is one body”* (Eph. 4:4), so since the body is the church, then there is one church that belongs to and was bought by Christ. How many spiritual bodies does Jesus have? Only one. How many churches? The answer is the same!

In the New Testament we also read of the church as the **Temple of God**. The apostle Paul said the church *“groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord”* (Eph. 2:20). While the Holy Spirit said the physical body of Christians is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), in the same epistle, through Paul, He said to all the church at Corinth, *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you”* (3:16)? He later again wrote to them, *“Ye are the temple of the living God”* (2 Cor. 6:16). The church is thus God’s temple. In the Old Testament, the temple was a place of worship, God’s dwelling, and holiness. Today, acceptable worship is given to God only in the church. The church is not a physical building, but the kingdom of priests who offer up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). Today, God dwells in the church (that is, in His children) (2 Cor. 6:16). And, it is in the church that God’s people are made holy or sanctified, acting as *“obedient chil-*

dren” (1 Peter 1:14).

In other New Testament passages, the God of heaven describes His church as a **vineyard** (Matt. 20:1,2), the **church of God** (1 Cor. 1:2), and the **church of Christ** (Rom. 16:16). When we speak about the true church of the Lord, let us be certain that we describe it or call it only in the same manner that the Lord Himself does in the Bible.

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A “PARTIAL REPENTANCE” IS NO REPENTANCE AT ALL

Rocky Craig

Repentance is so necessary for the child of God that Jesus said in Luke 13:3, “*I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*” In verse 5, He repeated it again for emphasis sake. Repentance is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. Jesus described Bible repentance when He told of a certain man who had two sons. He came to the first and said, “*Son go to work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, “I will not, but afterward he repented and went”* (Matt. 21:28-29). Paul, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Rom. 6:4 said, “*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” He explained to the church at Corinth that Bible repentance is brought about by Godly sorrow. Judas Iscariot was overtaken by the sorrow of the world and hanged himself (Matt. 27:5). “*The sorrow of the world worketh death,*” Paul said (2 Cor. 7:10). But he explained that “*Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.*”

The child of God should “*walk in newness of life*” (Rom. 6:4). “*Henceforth, we should not serve sin*” (Rom. 6:6). John said “*whosoever is born of God doth not committeth sin*” (1 John 3:9). He is not saying we will not make mistakes and commit isolated acts of sin, but when we do, the child of God will confess that sin (1 John 1:9), pray for forgiveness (James 5:16) and make corrections in his life. He will not continue to wallow in the mire of the proverbial pig pen of sin (2 Peter 2:22)!

We have those among us, however, who have employed a pseudo or “partial repentance” which is no repentance at all. We have those who want to rub shoulders with the devil and all he has to offer, and still have the fellowship of God and faithful New Testament Christians. One cannot have it both ways. “*Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness*” (Rom.

6:16)? “*No man can serve two masters*” (Matt. 6:24). Yet we see members of the Lord’s church committing spiritual fornication with the devil through the use of tobacco, gambling, dancing, social drinking, immodest apparel and whatever else the lust of their flesh doeth hunger for. One scenario among many we see repeatedly is individuals who call themselves Christians engaging in public pornography via the modern day swim suit. “*How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: hut if Baal, then follow him*” (1 Kings 18:21).

How many sins can a Christian cleave to and be pleasing to God? “*For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*” (James 2:10). God said through the prophet Ezekiel that a man must “*turn from all (emphasis R.C.) sins that he hath committed, and keep all (emphasis R.C.) my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right*” (Ezek. 18:21). A “partial repentance” is no repentance at all. Which mind set manifests a true Bible repentance? The individual who says, “Now that I am a child of God I will seek to please Him by keeping His commandments (John 14:15) and assemble with the saints (Heb. 10:25) every time it is possible for me to do so” or the one who says, “I have other priorities now, don’t expect to see me too often in worship services.” I recently heard a young lady give the excuse for forsaking the assembly, “Our dog has been tearing up things, lately.” She had to stay home to tend the dog and his trifles. What a pitiful excuse to trod underfoot the Son of God (Heb. 10:29)! I know things come up that are beyond our control but, “company’s coming” is not one of them. “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God*” (Matt. 6:33) and bring grandma to worship and Bible study with you. She might obey the gospel if you set the right example and show her the church of our Lord means something to you.

A “partial repentance” is no repentance at all, yet we have not only individuals but “gospel preachers” who advocate such by teaching that you can obey the gospel and yet continue

to live in fornication (Col. 3:5-7; 1 Cor. 6:9-11) with an unscriptural mate. God’s spokesman will say “*It is not lawful for thee to have her*” (Matt. 14:4).

One of my instructors in Preacher Training School said he believed the heart and core of liberalism was to loose the law of God (Gal. 6:2) so that man could live the way he wanted to and not be accountable to God and His code of ethics. I believe he made a wise observation. But God “*hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world*” (Acts 17:31) and this kind of ignorance He no longer winks at (Acts 17:30). Jesus said, “*If you love me, keep my commandments*” (John 14:15). Let us seek Him with our whole heart (Psalm 119:2). “*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, but rather delights in the law of the Lord. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, neither shall his leaf wither nor his soul fail*” (Psalm 1).

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What Liberalism Does...

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Jude wrote that we are to “*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” (Jude 3). Paul said we are to “*speak the same thing*” and that there are to “*be no divisions*” among us (1 Cor. 1:10). Some are of the persuasion that we can fellowship anybody who believes in God and Christ. Even “*the devils also believe, and tremble*” (James 2:19). We are told that we are to “*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*” (Eph. 5:11). There is a limit as to who we can fellowship. We can fellowship those who are walking “*in the light*” (1 John 1:7) because they are in fellowship with God. We can fellowship those who are in fellowship with God, and we cannot fellowship those who are not. It is just that simple.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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