

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 6

EMBRYONIC DENOMINATIONALISM 1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 1

By DAVID GRIFFIN

“For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, ‘I am of Paul,’ or I am of Apollos,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ or ‘I am of Christ.’ 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:11-13).

I sometimes hear members of the church say that it is really not a legitimate use of this passage to apply it to denominationalism because Paul is not writing to denominations; he is writing to a congregation of the body of Christ and condemning division within the church. While it is certainly true that the passage condemns division within the body of Christ, it is no less true that the passage condemns denominationalism as the following reasoning will show.

“Embryo” is the biological term for a living organism in its earliest stages of development in the womb. In that state the organism is only partially developed and is not capable of living on its own, separate from its mother’s womb. In 1 Corinthians chapter one we find a case of denominationalism in the embryonic stage. It was not fully developed; it had not grown beyond the confines of the congregation of the body of Christ at Corinth, but it was present nonetheless, in potential, if not in fact. Significantly, Paul wrote to the congregation condemning their actions in this matter. Paul said in verses 11-12, “...it has been declared to me concerning you... that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” It appears that Christians at Corinth were claiming special affinity with certain leaders of the church and forming themselves into groups distinct from one another on the basis, perhaps, of whichever leader had baptized them or whichever leader they happened to favor for whatever reason. Paul condemned this as “division.” In verse 13 he

asks these rhetorical questions, “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” The answer to these questions is an obvious “no.” “No! Christ is not divided. Paul was not crucified for you. You were not baptized in the name of Paul.” Paul’s point is that for the professed followers of Jesus Christ to separate into antagonistic groups, call themselves after mere men, and harbor allegiance for their favored leader and his group is to divide the one body of Christ.

Is that not exactly what denominationalism is and does? Denominational divisions are formed, often on the basis of something not even addressed in the Bible, and the resulting organizations choose their names either on the basis of some religious leader, some particular religious practice, or some distinctive emphasis in doctrine. For example, the Lutheran Church is named after Martin Luther, the 16th century reformer (This action, by the way, was against Mr. Luther’s own protests). The fact is that most if not all of the denominations honor, extol, preach, and practice Luther’s doctrine of Faith Alone. Moreover, the Baptist church is named after the ordinance of baptism. The Methodist church is named after a particular “method” of church work. The Anglican Church is named after the Anglican (or English) people. The Menonites, historically related to the Baptists, are called after a man named Meno Simmons. The Pentecostal Church is named after a Jewish holiday referred to in Acts chapter 2. The Episcopalians and Presbyterians arose because of and are named after differing theories of church government, etc. I cannot name them all and do not intend to single out the above mentioned denominations for special criticism any more than others, and there is much more that divides these groups than just names.

The point is that what we read about in the embryonic stage in 1 Corinthians 1, we now see in the modern age as a fully developed phenomenon, seasoned and solidified now with the authority of centuries. If Paul condemned division in the stage of an embryo in 1 Corinthians, what would he say of the full-grown

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Editorial

WHAT’S RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH?

By RICK MARTIN

Today when most people want to hear the news they are interested in the “dirt.” We hear dirt about politicians, movie stars and a host of other people. Unfortunately people are also interested in “the dirt” when it comes to fellow Christians and the church. In church, social and family circles you can hear all sorts of explanations as to what is wrong with the church. Every disgruntled member has some charge to make against the church. In some cases these charges are true. The church is made up of humans, who are subject to mistake, errors and wrong. Although the Lord’s church is perfect in all that God has planned and all that God is doing, the church, being composed of human beings never measures up to this divine standard.

We have often before, and sadly, will often again, be forced to speak out concerning problems that come with men and women who fail to follow the will of God. Although there are some real and substantial problems about the church, there are some good things too. I would like to consider some good news. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to hear people sitting around talking about what’s right with the church? The purpose of this article is to discuss some things that are right with the church.

Respecting the Bible is something that is right with the church. The church respects the Bible. Respecting the Bible is right and anyone who does so is right. But doing what is right is not always easy. Many people have lauded the Bible without ever respecting it. It has been extolled, admired, honored and praised, but often it is not respected. Respect for the Bible involves two things: hearing and obeying. Hearing the Bible means hearing it for what it is, which is the very word of God. When people believe the Bible is nothing more than an ancient text or good moral teaching, they are not hearing God speak. They are hearing one body of religious text or moral teachings among many. The Bible is not on a par with other writings of similar character or nature. The Bible always stands out and is above all others. The Bible is the word of God.

God expects to be heard because he expressed himself to be heard. Respecting the word, demands that it be heard, because God has spoken, Hebrews 1:1-2. God’s people have always been defined by respect for His word by both hearing and obeying it. Because of Israel’s failure to obey God, they were prevented from entering the land God had promised to them. This principle is no different under the New Covenant. God’s people

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QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Would you please explain what is meant by Proverbs 22:6?

Answer: The verse in question reads “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Many believe Solomon is saying that in the event a child becomes unfaithful to God his/her parents failed somewhere in the teaching/training process.

Or to say it another way, if a child is correctly taught he/she will not fail to obey the gospel, or ever fall away from the truth. I do not believe the verse says or teachings such an idea. The word “train” translates a Hebrew word that means “put in one’s mouth” and “to initiate, to lay the ground work of character, to instill principle.” This would obviously include the ability of the child to both receive and put into practice those things taught. Without doubt there are some parents that do not teach or train their children as they should. If, however, parents teach those principles necessary for godly living and the child refuses to accept that teaching the result will be failure. The failure is not due to the fact that the child wasn’t taught, the failure results because the child failed to receive the teaching. Often two children in the same family are taught and trained the same way, one receives the teaching and is faithful, the other rejects the teaching and never obeys the gospel or falls away after doing so. We must never forget that both parents and children have responsibility in the training process.

The phrase “in the way he should go” is often misunderstood and misapplied. The conclusion often drawn is that if a child is taught and raised in the church he will obey the gospel and remain faithful in the church as long as he lives. The phrase actually means “according to the tenor of his way,” that is in harmony with his disposition, his natural talents, and his individual character.”(Woods) Solomon is merely instructing parents to study and know the nature and disposition of their children and train them accordingly. This is essentially what Paul taught in Eph. 6:4 “And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.” Col. 3:21 Parents must consider the temperament of their children as they teach and train them so that the greatest benefit to the child can be realized.

“When he is old” is a phrase that many interpret to mean “when he is grown or has reached adulthood” the child will become a Christian. In reality Solomon

is actually saying that “when a person is old” that is when he reaches old age he will not abandon the teaching he received when he was young, but continue in it. We must remember that the scriptures do not teach the impossibility of apostasy. In fact the word of God abounds in passages that teach those who obey the gospel often do fall away. The teaching by Solomon offers no comfort to those parents who do not properly train their children. Neither does it condemn those parents who try their best to train their children in ways of righteousness only to fail through no fault of their own. God condemned Eli for his ungodly children, because he failed to restrain them, however Samuel who attempted to restrain his children was not condemned. Hence, parents are responsible for teaching and training their children, and at times restraining them because of disobedience. I offer the following article written by an English writer named Clarkson, who advances information worthy of consideration.

“Not the very best training of the very wisest parents in the world can positively secure goodness and wisdom in their children. For when they have done everything in their power, there must remain that element of individuality which will choose its own course and form its own character. Our children may choose to reject the truth we teach them, and to slight the example we set them, and despise the counsel we give them. In the will of every child there is a power which cannot be forced, which can only be won. Therefore: 1. Let all parents seek, beside teaching their children good habits, to win their hearts to that Divine wisdom in whose friendship and service alone will they be safe. Where sagacity may fail, affection will triumph. Command and persuasion are the two weapons which parental wisdom will do its best to wield. 2. Let all children understand that for their character and their destiny they must themselves be responsible. All the very worthiest and wisest influences of home will lead to no good result if they oppose to them a rebellious spirit, if they do not receive them in the spirit of docility. There is but one gate of entrance into life, and that is the personal, individual acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of the spirit. The parent may lead his child up to it, but the child must pass through it of its own accord.”

“There is bitter irony in the fact that he who penned these words (Solomon, son of the dedicated David, the “friend of God”), forsook the counsel of his father (1Chron. 28:9; 2Chron. 7:17), and “turned away his heart after other gods,” in flagrant, open disobedience to the expressed will of God. (Kings 11:1-13.) And, it is remarkable that the sacred historian particularly observed that it was “when Solomon was old,” that this occurred. (1Kings11:4.) He had not properly received and adapted the instruction of his illustrious father.”

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THE TABERNACLE*BY AL FELDER*

Not long after Moses had led the children of Israel out of Egypt, God required Him to collect an offering of gold, silver, and other precious materials from the people in order to build the tabernacle. One interesting point about this command is that the Israelites had been slaves in the land of Egypt for some four hundred years. How did they have all of these precious materials to contribute to the building of the tabernacle? If you read in the book of Exodus 12 you will find that the Egyptians gave the Israelites these precious materials as they were leaving. God had completely humbled the Egyptians with the plagues that He had brought upon them, and the Israelites left the land with great riches. God in turn required that they give some of this great wealth for the building of the tabernacle. They obeyed his command, and many estimate that the tabernacle would have been worth well over a billion dollars today.

Under the Law of Moses, the tabernacle was to be a representative dwelling place for God. It was the place where God met with man, and the various services He required were carried out. God gave Moses very specific instructions regarding the tabernacle and its services. God gave Moses the design of the tabernacle, the materials that were to be used, and all of the significant details pertaining to its construction and its services. Absolutely nothing was left up to Moses decision, or the people for that matter.

As was the case with many things under the Law of Moses, the tabernacle was a representation of something else. It was a shadow, a figure, or a type of something. Basically, it was a pictorial illustration of what exists today under the New Covenant. The word tabernacle means a movable building. It was constructed so that it could be taken down and carried from place to place as the children of Israel journeyed to the Promised Land. It was 45 feet long from east to west and 15 feet wide from north to south.

The building itself was constructed of boards 15 feet long and 2 feet thick. Each board was overlaid with gold. The boards had silver sockets used to lock them together as well as gold staples through which golden bars were passed, and gold rings at the top through which a cord passed. All of these features fastened the

building together and made it sturdy.

The building was divided into two compartments by a veil crossing from north to south. The first compartment was called the holy place. It was 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. The second compartment was called the most holy place, and it was 15 feet squared. The tabernacle was surrounded by a fence made by suspending a curtain on pillars. The fence enclosed an area 150 feet long from east to west, and 75 feet wide from north to south. This area was referred to as the outer court. Both the outer court and the tabernacle had one entrance on the east side.

As we begin to get into specifics concerning the tabernacle and its services, we are going to pair each item with its true image under the New Covenant. As we do this, it is important to keep in mind that every piece of the building was by God's design. Every item of furniture was built according to God's instructions and placed exactly where He told Moses to place it. All things had to be according to the pattern.

The first part of the tabernacle that we would approach would be the outer court. The outer court was an area that was open to all. Both Jew and Gentile could enter into this area. In other words, it was a place that was open to all people. It was a representation of the world.

The tabernacle itself was only for the priests. In order to enter the holy place the priests had to go through the proper steps so that they would be qualified. As you went through the eastern gate to the outer court, the brazen altar was the first item you would find. It was upon the brazen altar that all of the burnt sacrifices were made (Leviticus 9:7). Before a Levite could become a priest and enter into the holy place, he had to have a sin offering made for him upon this altar.

Washing in the laver was the next part of the priest's consecration ceremony. The laver was located directly between the brazen altar and the tabernacle. It was at the laver that the priests washed themselves so that they would be pure (Leviticus 16:4). The priests would lay aside their old clothes before washing, and after they had washed they would put on their priestly garments and enter the tabernacle.

The tabernacle itself represents the Lord's church

today. The Levitical priesthood represents those who are Christians (1 Peter 2:5). Today all who obey the gospel of Christ become a part of a royal priesthood in which they may serve God, but they must go through a consecrations process just like the Levites had to go through under the Law.

The sacrifices that were made upon the brazen altar represented the ultimate sacrifice that was made by Christ. Christ gave Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for all. Any person who wishes may benefit from His sacrifice.

Next, the priest had to wash in the laver. God specified that the laver be placed between the altar and the tabernacle. Today baptism is the washing that a person undergoes to become clean, and God has placed it between the sacrifice of Christ and the entrance to the church (Romans 6:3, 6). Just as the Levites did under the Law of Moses, we place aside our old garments and become cleansed of all impurities.

After the priests had been washed they put on their priestly garments. Likewise, it is only after we have been washed in the blood of Christ through baptism that we can put on our priestly garments. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27) Upon doing this a Christian has been made spiritually pure and is ready for service unto God.

As I stated before, the tabernacle represents the Church. In particular, the holy place was a representation of the Church. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16) It was in the holy place that the Levites entered for the purpose of serving the Lord. Today, those who obey the gospel and become members of the body of Christ are expected to serve God.

Once inside the holy place the priests would wait upon the table of showbread. Every Sabbath the priests would eat the loaves that had been placed upon this table. Today we have the Lord's Table from which God's people eat on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Every Sunday when we observe the Lord's Supper we do so in the exact manner that God has commanded us in order to remember the death of Jesus.

The next piece of furniture within the holy place was the candlestick. The candlestick had a central stem and six branches, three on each side. It provided the only light within the tabernacle, and God gave instructions for it to burn continually. Its true image today is the only source of light for the Lord's Church, the word of God (2 Peter 1:19). We draw knowledge and strength from the word of God, and we are also charged with the task of proclaiming and defending the word of God. Just as the Levites were charged with the task of keeping the candlestick continually lit; our lives, words, and attitudes are to be reflectors of the word of God to the world around us.

Just before the veil that separated the holy place from the most holy place was located the altar of incense. Every morning and evening the Levite priests would burn incense upon the altar while the people were outside the tabernacle praying. This altar was a representation of the prayers of the Lord's people (Revelations 8:3). As John was given this vision, he was able to see the very throne room of God. There, just before God's mercy seat was located the altar upon which incense was burned where the prayers of the Lord's people were offered.

Beyond the altar of incense we have the veil that separated the holy place from the most holy place. The most holy place contained the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat of God. It was a representation of the throne room of God. Once a year the High Priest would enter into the most holy place in order to make the atonement sacrifice for the people. Christ being our High Priest accomplished this for us (Hebrews 9:12). Christ is in heaven, and He has offered the atoning sacrifice for us.

The veil itself was a representation of the flesh of Christ (Hebrews 10:20). This veil represented the separation that existed between God and man. Before the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; the way to heaven had not been made clear.

Upon the death of Christ the veil was torn from the top to the bottom. When the veil was torn upon the death of Christ, it signified that the way to heaven had now been made clear to all men.

In closing, there is one final point to make. As the children of Israel traveled from camp site to camp site, God gave very specific instruction that the tabernacle

was to be placed in the center of the camp. This can be found in (Numbers 2, 3). Three tribes camped on each side of the tabernacle. This was done for the purpose of making the tabernacle and their service unto God the center of the life of an Israelite.

Today, we have the Lord's Church. We have an awesome responsibility and obligation to take care of the services that God has given us. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25) God has given us a command that we as His people assemble ourselves together upon the first day of the week in order to worship Him. We like the Levite priests under the Law of Moses have certain acts which we must perform. Also, just as they had to do all things according to the pattern that they had been given, we too must follow God's instructions today.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

BY KEITH THOMSON

One of the greatest privileges we have as Christians is being able to partake in the Lord's Supper. When we partake in this sacred meal we partake in a memorial: we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26). In partaking in the Lord's Supper each Sunday we continue a pattern that was given to the first century church (Acts 20:7). We are fulfilling the Lord's command to worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24).

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper during the Jewish Passover; this has a great significance for us when we study the Lord's Supper. The Passover is also called the Feast of Unleavened bread (Matthew 26:17). The significance of this is that it determined the items that could be in the house and therefore used during the Lord's Supper.

It was called the Feast of Unleavened bread because the Jews had to only use unleavened bread in the feast; in fact they were to have no leavening in the house at all! In preparation for their departure from Egypt Moses told the children of Israel to remove all leaven from their houses and prepare unleavened bread (Exodus 12:15). These were part of the instructions for the first Passover and became a perpetual law for the Jews (Exodus 12:14). Thus, there would have been no leavening in the house when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. Therefore we know the bread that Jesus used was unleavened: it contained no leavening (or yeast).

This is important for us as we continue this God given tradition.

Jesus gave the bread of the Lord's Supper very important spiritual significance. He said of the bread, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me," (Luke 22:19). Jesus' body was pure just like the pure unleavened bread. His body was not tainted with the leavening of sin. For this reason the bread which we partake in the Lord's Supper needs to be unleavened, just like the bread Jesus used in that first memorial meal. When Jesus taught us that the bread represents His body (1 Cor. 11:24) He points us to his physical body that was nailed to the cross and the church: which is His body today on the earth (Ephesians 1:22-23).

When Jesus was crucified, alongside of Him were two thieves. Towards the end of their torment the thieves' legs were broken. When the soldiers came to Jesus they saw He had already died, so they did not break His legs (John 19:32-33). This was to fulfill the Scripture, "not a bone of Him shall be broken" (John 19:36). Jesus' unbroken body gives us an important picture today as we consider the Lord's Supper.

We are taught that today the church is Christ's body. "He is also head of the body, the church..." (Colossians 1:18). Christ is the head of the church: the head of the body. "As there is only one head, so too there is only one body" (Eph. 4:4). The church is to be unified, without any divisions (John 17:20-21, 1 Cor. 1:13).

Once again we can see this is an important picture that can be seen in the Lord's Supper. "Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread." (1 Corinthians 10: 16-17)

As there is one body (Eph. 4:4) so too there is one bread (loaf) on the table as we partake in the Lord's Supper. This bread is not divided (that would signify a divided body). We each share in the body by breaking the bread. As the undivided loaf is passed to us we see unity symbolized. We then break a piece of the bread to eat, thereby sharing in the body of Christ. The one unbroken loaf of unleavened bread has great significance us each Lord's Day, as we partake in the Lord's Supper.

We noticed before that Jesus gave spiritual significance to the bread: he said "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." (Luke 22:19).

Jesus also gave spiritual significance to the next part of the Lord's Supper. We read: "And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the

covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:27-28)

Jesus talks about the drink, but we are not left wondering what it was they were to drink, Jesus tells us in the next verse (Matt 26:29). We are told it was “fruit of the vine”: grape juice. This is not to be confused with “wine” which could not have even been in the house during the Passover feast (the Feast of unleavened bread). As we have seen already, all leavening was to be removed from the house during the feast. It is interesting to note that what turns fruit of the vine into wine is leaven: therefore wine could not be present.

Jesus tells us that the fruit of the vine in the Lord’s Supper represents His blood of the new covenant. Moses used the blood to ratify the old covenant using practically same words, “the blood of the covenant (Exodus 24:6-8). We also read in Heb. 8:19-20 “For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, “THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU.”” (Hebrews 9:19-20)

As Moses used blood to ratify the covenant God made with the children of Israel, so too Jesus used blood to ratify the new covenant: the covenant God has with us. The blood of the New Covenant is Christ’s blood, and that is what we remember when we drink the fruit of the vine.

We also remember that it is Christ’s blood that takes away our sins. We have redemption through Christ’s blood and receive the forgiveness of our sins (Eph. 1:7). Note also: “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)

Jesus gave spiritual significance to a third item on the table. Notice what we read in Luke’s account of the Lord’s Supper, “Likewise he also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” (Luke 22:20 NKJV — also see 1 Cor 11:25). We notice here that Jesus gives significance to the cup: He tells us it represents the new covenant.

It is important to recognize that the covenant is not Christ’s blood and the blood is not the covenant. So too, the cup is not the fruit of the vine. They are different but are connected. The new covenant came into being through the shedding of Christ’s blood, without the blood there would be no covenant. The cup and the fruit

of the vine are connected, we could not drink out of the cup without the fruit vine and we could not drink it if we did not have the cup.

Not only did Jesus teach us about the fruit of the vine, He also taught us about the cup. Jesus uses very similar language when talking about the cup as he did when talking about the bread. Of the bread He said “this is my body (Matt 26:26, Mark 14:22, Luke 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:24). Of the cup He says, “this cup is the new covenant” (Luke 22:20, 1 Cor. 11:25).

Jesus gave significance to three items on the table the night he instituted the Lord’s Supper. When we look at what He said we notice;

1. “Take, eat; this is My body.” (Matthew 26:26)
2. “for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:28)
3. “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” (1 Corinthians 11:25)

We partake of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week we need to recognize the significance Jesus gave to these three items. Through doing this we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes (1 Cor. 11:26).

EMBRYONIC . . . continued from page one

denominational “adult” of the modern age? If a baby in the womb is indeed a human being (and it is), a living being with all the potential of the full-grown adult it will eventually become, then when Paul condemned “embryonic denominations” in 1 Corinthians 1, he did by extension condemn the birthed and full-grown adult of denominationalism. In light of these observations then, it is unthinkable that Paul would look upon the modern situation and say (as modern denominationalists do) that “God doesn’t care about the organization; he only looks on the heart.”

To the contrary, it appears much more likely that Paul would say the same thing he said to the Corinthians in verse 10, “Now I plead with you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

And if the apostle Peter also had a chance to speak today on this matter he would surely repeat what he himself said in Acts 4:12: “Nor is there salvation in

any other [than Christ], for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Thus Paul’s condemnation of division in 1 Corinthians 1 does indeed condemn both division in the body of Christ and the entire premise upon which denominationalism is based.

**SOUND SPEECH AND PURE LANGUAGE:
IMPROPER USE OF RELIGIOUS TERMS**

BY MICHAEL BOLTON

The fact that God gave the people of Israel an “intensely sanctified” law is almost an understatement. In Leviticus 11:45 He introduced the concept of the requirement of holiness, “For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.” We see this command taking a different form in the NT: Hebrews 12:14 “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

The idea of holiness required in the life of the believer is not a strange idea to the New Testament. Holiness, or sanctification was/is to come as a result of repentance, Ephesians 4 17-24, I Peter 1:14, Romans 12:2 all express the idea of holiness permeating our manner of speech, dress, mode and manner of life in the world. The injunction to flee those things is written to all who through obedience to the word of God become the elect of God. These people are to put off their former conversation.

The design of God’s calling is holiness, or the sanctification or setting apart of the whole life to Him. The holiness to which we are called is, essentially, separation from a life of sin and worldly defilement. The words sanctify, sanctification, saint, holy, and holiness are all derived from the same root word and have related meanings. We read in, “I Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification” This idea of sanctification or being set apart is not a mysterious change wrought by an incomprehensible operation of the Holy Spirit, but it is a manner of life affected by godly conduct learned through the word of God.

The command to be holy is found five times in the OT book of Leviticus (11:44, 45; 9:2; 20:7; 20:26) They

were often addressed to priests and sometime addressed to the nation of Israel. But it is important to understand that Peter regarded all Christians as priests, and Christians are the anti-type of the nation of Israel who are likewise required to be holy, because the God whom we imitate is Holy.

Ultimately we are responsible for the words that we utter. It is our desire to apply the principles of holiness and sanctification to our vocabulary concerning religious terms. Think of this, if our entire life is to be set apart, what business do we have using terms and phrases in our service to a Holy God that teach false doctrine, or demonstrate irreverence?

Since the beginning of the Restoration Movement we who identify ourselves as Christian only have fought to call Bible things by Bible names, and do Bible things in Bible ways. This lofty goal of maintaining pure speech is a biblical mandate as we have seen in our texts. When the Christian speaks he must express sound or wholesome concepts and ideas “that cannot be condemned,” or censured. So “healthy” or “pure” that no judge shall be able to find a single indictment against it. The language of the Christian should be limited to accomplish only the good for which it is designed and there be no room left for an impression that could do harm or be misconstrued.

The terms we use to refer to men who are in positions of leadership are a matter of concern, because they may denote a reverence or respect that is undue. 1.) The term “REVEREND” is found only once in the word of God; David glorifies God in Psalms 119:9 by saying “...holy and reverend is His name.” It is never used in the Bible as a title for a human being. 2.) The term “RABBI” is often found in scripture, and the sad fact prevails that there exists in some that old Pharisaical spirit which loves titles and accolades. Today men with the same carnal spirit are called, Archbishop, Primate, Pope, Cardinal, Reverend, Doctor, Metropolitan, Apostle, President and so forth. The attitude that causes this blasphemy is unbiblical and rebellious. 3.) The term “PRIEST, is one of great concern. Actually the Bible teaches that every Christian is a priest. This has reference only to the fact that a Christian can approach Divinity and be heard. It is utter and complete foolishness to suggest that there is another system superior to the one God gave. These titles are honorific ecclesiastical titles given by men to men. They take the honor due God alone and bestow

it on men. Christians should eliminate them from their vocabulary.

There are terms that are too often used today which demonstrate an improper understanding of the church that Jesus built. I have heard and am ashamed that I ever did say, "Going to church." We need to understand a very simple concept; the church is not a building. The church established by Jesus is the group of people who assemble at a designated time and place to worship Him in spirit and truth. In light of the simple truths found in God's word no legitimate claim can be made by any denomination to be the church Jesus established. The modern mindset of liberalism has too often and too long prodded us to be more accepting of other viewpoints and to compromise with teachers of false doctrine. We have been goaded into feeling guilty about declaring the truth as absolute and knowable. But the fact of the matter is that the Lord's church has no reason whatsoever to look back into the Egypt of fractured faith. We need to remember: 1 Tim 3:14-15 "but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." We are not some building of man's genius. We are not some glorified business structure; we are the pillar and ground of truth. We need to start acting like it, and we need to start talking like it.

Secondly, one doesn't get to "join the church of his choice." There is in reality only one church; all others are synagogues of Satan. We must never forget the saved are in the church, the church does not have an earthly headquarters. Rather the church consists of a group of people who have obeyed the gospel (B, R, C, Bap). It is then that the Lord adds them to the church. This removes the idea that the church is not needed, or that one can be "saved" outside the church. It is the pillar and ground of truth, 1 Timothy 3:14-15.

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are defined by their respect for his Word. John 8:31 "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Respecting the Bible means hearing it as the very promises of God and rendering obedience to it. If anything is to be said about the heritage of the church, respecting the Bible has to be at the forefront. Where the Bible is respected, the Lord's church is; and where

the Lord's church is, the Bible is respected.

Withstanding the Devil is something that is right with the church. Many so-called religious people are making evil a part of their lives rather than withstanding it. The prophet Isaiah speaks of those who call evil good and good evil. Who put darkness for light and light for darkness: Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, Isa.5:20. The church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ stands firmly against the devil and never condones evil. What a great privilege it is to be a member of such an organization. We need help in confronting evil.

Throughout the ages the church has been strong in preaching against sin. If she ceases to do so, she becomes a useless organization. The church must make people aware of Satan's devices and point out how he works. Those who preach the Gospel must put people on alert. If they justify the sins of members, they defeat the purpose for which they were called.

Paul made sure that he declared the "whole counsel of God" to the Ephesian elders so they could "shepherd the church of God" Acts 20:27-28. Helping brethren confront the constant temptations they face is powerful work of the church. The church should be a place where people lovingly listen to the problems people face and where they are taught how to overcome them. What else in this world will withstand Satan but the church? Only the church of Jesus Christ, preaching the pure word of God and living the life of Christ before the people will help withstand Satan. What's right with the church? It withstands evil and Satan and I am happy to be a member of such a body.

The fact that the church is the glorious body of Jesus Christ is something that is right with the church. The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 5:27 "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish". David said of Zion, long ago, "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." David of course was referring to Zion of old, yet we can say the same of spiritual Zion today.

The church is glorious because it is the body of the Christ, Eph. 1:22-23 "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".

The glorious body of Christ is charged with making known to lost men the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. 3:10 "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God". The church is the glorious body of Christ maintaining the New Testament's

marks for the church, in name, in organization, in work, in the plan of salvation taught, and in the form of New Testament worship.

No organization, company, family, or team is perfect because they are made up of imperfect people. The same is true of the church here on earth. There are people in the church who don't live as they should. There are those who teach false doctrine, and there are other problems that exist. Are there some problems with the church? Yes.

In this article I have written some things that are right with the church. Instead of criticizing the church, we should talk about things that are right with the church. Something that can be right with the church is you and me. We can live our lives in a way that people can find no cause to criticize the church. We should make it our goal to live good lives so that we can be something that is right with the church.

Pray for the brotherhood.

Rick Martin mmartin@bellsouth.net

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

By JOHNNY ELMORE

On occasions, I have been asked if I don't think God could have used evolution to bring human beings into existence. This is called "theistic evolution." Some view it as a position between that of the absolute evolutionist and the creationist. Of course, if evolution has not occurred, then it is not necessary to deal with the question of theistic evolution.

Let me state unequivocally that I do not accept the theory of evolution. There are too many problems connected with it for me to accept it in any form. One of the greatest problems is that the evolutionist has no information or evidence about the beginning of life on earth. It is difficult for me to understand why men would subscribe to a theory that can not be demonstrated or proved, but I personally believe that it is all due to a rejection of our benevolent Jehovah God.

All Bible-believers should be concerned about the negative effects of the general acceptance of the theory of evolution. Some of the most obvious trends are these: (1) the trend toward materialism with less and less emphasis upon spiritual concerns; (2) the trend away from the morality of the Bible and toward a greater degree of permissiveness; (3) the trend toward more and more crime until crime is presently rising faster than the population is growing; (4) the trend away from respect for all forms of authority, including that of parents,

teachers, church leaders, and leaders of government; (5) the trend toward less and less self-discipline, and (6) the trend toward atheism and the loss of religious faith.

It is my conviction that the widespread teaching and general acceptance of the theory of evolution is responsible in a major way for these trends. After all, if men are taught for several generations by men who are supposed to be leaders of thought that men descended from beasts, is it any wonder that men and women would come to behave like beasts?

What do you believe? Do you believe that man evolved from cold, dead matter, or do you believe that man exists because God created him? Look at these syllogisms:

Thinking beings cannot come from non-thinking beings. But, thinking beings exist. Therefore, thinking beings have always existed. Note again:

Something cannot come from nothing. But, something exists. Therefore, something has always existed.

Christians believe that something that has always existed is that self-existent, eternal God who created the heaven and the earth. Christians believe the statement in Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. We believe Jesus when he said: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female" (Matthew 19:4). Jesus did not believe that Adam and Eve "evolved" from some lower form of life but that God "made them at the beginning.

DOES JESUS' CHURCH NEED REMODELING?

By JOEY HICKEY

About a year ago, I became aware that in some denominations, leaders come together every year to vote on whether or not they would keep their stances on what they deemed morally acceptable. Although I shouldn't be surprised, due to the current state of the "religious world" and in light of Paul's warning to Timothy that men would alter God-given commands until the Lord comes back (2 Timothy 3:1 9, 13), this came as a shock to me. That religious institutions would trust their creed books over God's word has this effect on me for the following reasons:

Because the power of God does not rest in man's wisdom but in the gospel (Romans 1:16), in elevating their own rule book, they've unplugged all power lines

connecting them to God. But not only that, they also willingly choose to place their faith in a counterfeit book written by uninspired men, while passing over the book that contains the words that will determine where their eternity is spent (John 12:48). Jesus doesn't want man to be uninformed when it comes to his teachings. He told his disciples in Matthew 15:14, "...if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch." If we are not acquainted with "the faith that was once delivered to the saints (Jude 3)," how could we "contend" for it? Do we care about that faith or do we like our own faith better?

Jesus has already built his church. Who are we to act as if we have the authority to renovate? The bottom line is, you and I will not make it into heaven by accident. Those who are saved will be saved because they studied and obeyed the word that was given by inspiration of God—something that no man-made rule book can do. The word of God has every instruction needed to make man complete (2 Timothy 3:16-17); why settle for a document that can do anything less for you than that?

Your soul is too valuable. -OPA

Our Departed

RENNER, Billy Hess Sr., -Bill Renner Sr., was born February 23, 1934 and departed this life April 19, 2016 at Bethesda North Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio. He is survived by his loving wife, Wanda Lucille, a son, Bill Jr., and one daughter, Gail. One son, David, preceded him in death. He also leaves grandchildren, a great grandson and several sisters to mourn his passing. One brother, Rich, survives and three brothers have passed previously as has one sister. Bill was a good man and a faithful member of the church for many years of the congregation which met in West Chester, Ohio. When the West Chester congregation ceased to exist he began meeting at near-by Sharonville. Bill led singing and usually preferred lively songs. He was generous, hospitable and kind to everyone. Several remarked at his funeral that he showed others how one should live the Christian life by the way he lived before others. Pat and I first met Bill and Lucille in 1969 when we moved to Ohio to work with the West Chester congregation. Our friendship has lasted all of the years since then. We loved the family and certainly will miss Bill. Our prayers are with Lucille and the children as they must learn to

get along without him, God bless them all. Several years ago, he and Lucille asked that we conduct their funerals and we were honored to comply with those wishes. We did our best to speak words of comfort at the service on April 25 in West Chester. We laid him to rest near their son, David, at Rose Hill Cemetery in Mason, Ohio to await the resurrection of the saints. -Don L. King

Field Report

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I recently closed a very enjoyable meeting at the Sharonville, OH congregation. I enjoyed being with fellow preachers, Stan Owens and Barney Owens. We had visitors from several of the surrounding congregations and their attendance was very much appreciated. Brother Bill Renner passed away at the beginning of the meeting. Our prayers are with his family. Jane and I made our home with Barney and Bea. Their hospitality was superb. They are very dear friends. I was traveling with Barney, when Jane and I met. Lord willing, my next meeting will be in Walterboro, SC, May 12-15. Your prayers would be appreciated.

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HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Christianity was entirely Jewish at the beginning. Jesus was a Jew, His disciples were Jews, and the first converts were Jews. Their first assemblies took place in Jewish synagogues and in the temple. The first controversies in the church concerned Jewish laws, and the first critics of the church referred to it as a “Jewish sect.”

For a lot of these Jewish Christians, believing in Christ raised many questions. What about the temple and animal sacrifices? What about the Law of Moses? Did believing in Christ really abrogate so much of what they had grown up believing? Was it really enough to trust and obey Christ? They could not find the answers to these questions in the OT and they needed answers now!

Emperor Nero was not going to ignore this strange group forever. Rome ruled the entire Mediterranean world. When it conquered a region, it would allow the people to maintain and practice its religious beliefs as long as the beliefs did not conflict with Roman law. Consequently, Rome was somewhat tolerant of the church initially. The time was fast approaching, however, when tolerance was going to give way to intolerance, torture, and executions. Becoming a follower of Christ would become a life-or-death proposition, and there would be a tremendous temptation for these Jewish Christians to abandon Christianity and go back to their old ways—unless they could be confident they had made the right choice.

The epistle of Hebrews was written to address the doubts of those second-guessing their conversion to Christianity. It shows that Christianity is the true successor to Judaism and that it is superior in every way.

Angels were very important in the Jewish religion because thousands of angels assisted in the giving of the Law to Moses at Mount Sinai (Dt. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19). The Jews figured that any revelation conferred upon man through the medium of angels must be superior to anything else.

The Hebrews writer begins his defense of Christianity by showing that Christ is superior to angels in every way. Christ is a Son who receives the inheritance and blessing of the Firstborn (1:4-6). He is enthroned and anointed (1:8-9). The Father says to Christ, “Thy throne O God is forever and ever...” (Cf. Ps. 45:6-7). The Father has never addressed an angel in that way. Christ is the Eternal Creator (1:10-12), and angels are a part of His creation. He is Sovereign and angels are servants (1:13-14).

The apostle’s conclusion is that if Christ is superior to angels, the revelation that came by and through Him must be infinitely greater than the revelation that came through the medium of angels.

The Gospel is indeed superior to the Law of Moses in every way. It has greater confirmation (Heb. 2:3-4; Mk. 16:20), a greater portrayal of God’s love (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8), a greater remedy for sin (Acts 3:19), a greater transforming effect upon souls (Rom. 12:2), and a greater promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15).

Based upon this conclusion the apostle says in Hebrews 2:1-3, “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard (from Christ), lest at any time we should let them slip (drift away). For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard him.”

If any disobedience of the Law of Moses was followed by strict and just punishment, any refusal to heed the revelation of Christ must of necessity be followed by a far greater and more terrible punishment. If Jews could not neglect the revelation which came through angels, how much less can we neglect so great salvation that comes through the Son?

Some would have us to believe that sin is not as big a deal in the age of grace as it was under the Law. However, a common theme of the NT is that greater privileges bring us greater responsibilities (Cf. Jesus says, “That servant that knew the Lord’s will...” Lk. 12:47-48).

The Hebrews writer argues that the more convincing the evidence is by which a truth is confirmed, the more binding is the obligation to believe it. He argues further that the more gracious a revelation is, the greater is our obligation to accept it in love. The very grace which provides so great salvation renders the punishment of those who reject it more certain and inexpressibly more terrible—because their guilt is greater. It will be punishment from the One who in infinite love has done everything He can do to save us. It will be the wrath of the Lamb. How then shall we escape if we neglect it? cmjthebackpage@gmail.com