



Bible Bulwarks

“Mark ye well her bulwarks” Psalm 48:13

Editorial

WHY ALL THE FUSS? John M. Brown

Why all the fuss about liberalism? In the first two issues of Bible Bulwarks, and in issues yet to come, we have made and will make much ado about the liberalism currently plaguing churches of Christ. Not only this paper, but a host of other voices (too numerous to mention here, and too many to ignore anywhere) have been raised across our brotherhood in opposition to the change agents, new hermenutikers, denominational-fellowship advocates, compromisers, faith-onlyists, and false teachers at work in the Lord’s church today. Someone might well ask, “But why all the fuss? What’s the big deal here anyway? Why are so many speaking against certain brethren and their practices? What’s at stake, and why get so excited about it?”

Those surely are legitimate questions deserving of answers. There is a reason why we do, and indeed must oppose liberalism. At its very heart and core, liberalism is a threat to the purity of undenominational Christianity, to everything we in churches of Christ champion and hold dear!

Anything that tampers with the purity of the doctrine of Christ must be exposed and opposed. If liberals have a right in America to advance their agenda (it is, after all, a free country), then surely others of us, knowing the agenda to be false, have the same right to oppose such, do we not? Are we to submit to vicious attacks on the Lord’s church with nary a word? Where is the critical evaluation, not to mention fairness, of that course of action? Are we not to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21)? Are we not to “try the spirits whether they are of God...” (1 John 4:1)? We scrutinize the teaching currently advanced by liberal brethren under the light of Divine revelation and find it sorely lacking. So to the question, Why all the fuss?

1. LIBERALISM IS A THREAT TO THE PURITY OF CHRIST’S DOCTRINE. We deal not with “personalities,” but with an issue much greater in magnitude: doctrinal purity. It matters not who suggests false doctrine, nor do we even seek inquiry into their motive (we’ll leave that to the Judge of all mankind), but if that which is taught is not in harmony with Bible teaching, it must be withstood. The

tenets of liberalism are clearly not in accord with scripture, as any faithful student of the sacred text can discern, and thus must be vigorously confronted. Inquire into the discourses of liberals and you’ll not fail to see the scriptural shallowness and contradiction. We ask one question of liberals: Is doctrine essential?

If doctrine, true doctrine, is essential (and it is), then it must be mightily advanced while false doctrine must be actively opposed (2 Timothy 4:1-4; Titus 1:10-13; 2:1).

2. LIBERALISM IS A THREAT TO THE ONE BODY OF CHRIST. The New Testament certainly teaches that there is one, and only one, body, or church, of Christ as per the promise and purchase of our Lord (Matthew 16:13-19; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Yet, who among liberals today will affirm this? At best, they set forth the “church” as but a conglomeration of members of various sects with no one group THE body of Christ. But is the Lord’s church that unexact and inexplicit? Indeed not!

Where is the liberal who will maintain that Christ’s one church is recognizable, definable, identifiable, and reproducible, in contradistinction to the denominations of men? One of our “visitor’s cards” at Flatwoods, under the category “member of what church?”, one visitor wrote that his church affiliation was “THE LORD’S”. Exactly! I’m with him!

3. LIBERALISM COMPROMISES NEW TESTAMENT FELLOWSHIP. There are certain parameters (lines) of fellowship in the New Testament (see, for example, Ephesians 5:7, 11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 1 John 1:5-7; 2 John 9-11). But liberals would erase all such lines and distinctions. A few years back one called for “big F” and little “F” fellowship; the whole purpose of which was to break down the biblical barriers erected by Deity. Such a course was pursued until practically anything and everything has been admitted into the fellowship of some, while extending, without reservation, fellowship to almost any sort of denominational advocate. (It is not without interest we note that many of these same liberals will have practically nothing to do with “us”, their brethren, while romping with Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Holiness, etc... Engrossing, is it not?)

4. LIBERALISM SEEKS TO CHANGE THE UNCHANGEABLE. A host of liberals began raising, a few years back, the cry of

“Change! Change! Change!” “The church must change”, we were told,” or it will die-become irrelevant – seek to arouse interest...” But what, we ask, should be changed? Change is neither good nor bad; it all depends upon what one wants to change! I frankly have had much difficulty in securing from the change chanters what, specifically, they want to change. Shall we change God (who changes not – Malachi 3:6)? Shall we change Jesus Christ (Who is the same yesterday, today, and forever - Hebrews 13:8)? Shall we change the church, and if so, what shall we change about it (Its promiser, builder, foundation, mission, head, organization - Colossians 1:18)? Shall we change the gospel (which is not to be perverted - Galatians 1:6-9)? Shall we change the Word of God (which must not be tampered with – Proverbs 30:5-6)? Shall we change worship (from in spirit and in truth to that which is vain – Matthew 15:9)? WHAT?

If one advocates changing from death to life, from lethargy to zeal, from a sinner into a new creature, from religious error to truth, from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, I'M ALL FOR CHANGE! But if the change one advances will restructure the Lord's church, or abandon the New Testament pattern, or modify God's plan of salvation, or warp Bible truth, STOP the chariot, I want off! Yet it is not laborious to determine that the change liberals desire would alter the very nature of undenominational Christianity. They would change that which is unchangeable.

5. LIBERALISM UNDERMINES THE RESTORATION PLEA. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) long ago abandoned any pretense at restoring New Testament Christianity. Liberals among us are heading in exactly the same direction. Our great and wonderful plea for men and women to abandon the creeds, dogmas, doctrines,

catechisms, traditions, and theories of men, to stand upon the Word of God as the only authority in religion, and to uphold and advance the one church built and bought by Christ, is being relinquished by liberals in droves. They don't even TALK about restoration, let alone practice it. They are not moving away from man-made denominationalism, but toward it. The liberal car is in overdrive, headed in the wrong direction, and the brakes are out! Among liberals, the plea is dead!

6. LIBERALISM IS BEREFT OF IDEAS AND DEVOID OF CONVICTIONS. If one listens casually to liberal sermonizing, without much understanding or knowledge of either scripture or the history of church-dom, one might think himself impressed that perhaps a fresh, new wind is blowing. But upon more careful inspection, one discovers it is rather the same old stench of discarded falsities. The liberal does not offer some new, great, deep, profound insight into Biblical teaching and exegesis, but a rehash of the same refuse tossed onto the rubbish pile of Protestant discardings centuries ago. The liberal reworks and rewords old leavings; he is not the harbinger of stimulating intellectual thought, but is in fact woefully bereft of ideas and simply regurgitating old and bad notions long rejected by Bible students. We can identify cud, even when it is chewed the second time.

And where is the liberal with the courage of conviction to defend what he professes? I'd like to find one! Many faithful brethren have publicly and privately challenged liberal brethren among us to come forth and defend their propositions, only to be met with the shattering sounds of silence. Liberals will aim at brethren, the church, the restoration plea- but are just as quick to cut and run and hide.

7. LIBERALISM DENIES GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION. Who would have thought that a preacher in the church of Christ would ever publicly proclaim to lost sinners that by prayer only, without gospel obedience including baptism, one could be saved? Yet that is exactly what has happened (Max Lucado). This is perhaps the greatest and gravest of liberalism dangers, because it means the loss of souls of those thus influenced. How sad! With blood on their hands, liberals meddle with God's plan of salvation. I wouldn't trade places with them on the day of Judgment for all the silver and gold this world could offer. You may have money, houses, lands, possessions, prominence, prestige, position, honor, status, and education, but if you don't have salvation, friend, you will be eternally destitute! Have we not learned through the decades the falsity of denominationalism on the matter of salvation, and have we not been able with the Spirit's sword to defeat all such when confronted by it? Yes! But apparently, liberals need a refresher course on redemption.

8. LIBERALISM WILL KILL EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH. How will the liberal teach others the necessity of their obeying the gospel of Christ to receive the remission of sins and be added to the Lord's church, if the liberal thinks the denominational folks are in about as much a relationship with God as the liberal,

Our Purpose:

Bible Bulwarks is sent fourth to teach and defend the simple truths of New Testament Christianity.

Pure Bible doctrine will be upheld, while innovations in worship, unscriptural organizations, and denominationalism will be condemned!

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(Continued on Page 5)



CALLING NAMES Steve Miller

After Saul's conversion to Jesus Christ, the Bible records "he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him" (Acts 9:29). What did Paul do to get the Hellenistic Jews mad enough to kill him? The Bible says "he spake boldly." J. A. Alexander, in his commentary on *Acts of the Apostles*, sheds light upon what it meant in the first century to speak boldly.

Spake boldly (literally, speaking freely) i.e. identical in Greek with the preached boldly of v. 27, and describes Saul as doing at Jerusalem precisely what he had done at Damascus. Preaching boldly in the name of Jesus, he both talked and disputed with the Grecians.' ...not only discoursed in a didactic way, but reasoned and disputed. Against, literally, to or at, not in their absence or behind their backs, but in their presence, to their face (p. 377).

Webster defines "bold" as "forward to meet danger; venturesome; daring; not shrinking from risk; courageous" (*Webster's New International Dictionary*, p. 303). Too many individuals are compromising their lives, morally, socially, and doctrinally. As a result; in many congregations preachers are warned not to be bold, or name false teachers.

There are those in the church who advocate that preachers; or Christians, should refrain from calling the names of groups or individuals who are in sin and error. Calling names of those who are documented as departing from the faith is alleged to be a repulsive act that drives people away. Today when a preacher or writer uses labels or names to identify a specific group, many will say, "does this attitude represent the actions and teaching of Jesus Christ, the apostles, the early disciples, the restoration preachers, the true gospel preacher today?" What does the Bible say?

Matthew 23 records a scathing rebuke and condemnation of the Pharisees. Jesus gives some advice to his disciples concerning this group. "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23:3). Jesus is discussing how the Pharisees are not consistent in their living, work, and worship. Notice the words that Jesus Christ himself used to label the Pharisees: hypocrites (13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27); blind guides (16, 24); fools and blind (17); blind (26); full of hypocrisy and iniquity (28); serpents, generation of vipers (33).

It is ignorant to say we have no authority to call the names of those who are in sin and error. Jesus called names; called sin in the lives of individuals, and was bold in proclaiming the loving message of God! How many pulpits would Jesus be allowed to preach in today?

The apostles were bold and uncompromising in preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified (Acts 4:13). Peter referred to the Jews when he said "ye have taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain" Jesus Christ of Nazareth (Acts 2:23). Peter later accused his listeners of denying the "Holy One and the just," and desiring "a murderer to be granted unto you: And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:14-15).

The Apostle Paul rebuked and called the names of those in sin. When Elymas the sorcerer withstood Paul and Barnabas in Paphos, Paul spoke out boldly against this reprobate. "Then Saul (who also is called Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord" (Acts 13:9-10)? Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost, and had the authority from Almighty God to use the language in the passage just quoted. When Paul came to Athens, he called the Athenians ignorant. "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:23). Too many brethren are like the Athenians, they go through life ignorant of what the Bible teaches!

In Paul's letters to Timothy, he named seven individuals who were condemned, guilty of sin. Can you imagine what it would feel like to have your name written in the Bible as one who was against God and Christ for all the world to read? In First Timothy, Paul writes, "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1:19-20). In Second Timothy, Paul mentions, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes" (1:15); "And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2:17-18); "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica..."(4:10); "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words" (4:14-15).

The Apostle John encountered a trouble-maker in the church and called him by name. "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (3 John 9-10). John did not hesitate to call his name and reveal that he was carnal and wanted to be in charge. Will those among us who say we should not call names say that John was wrong in

calling Diotrephes by name?

Among the early disciples, there was a true gospel preacher named Stephen. The Bible says, "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts 6:8). Stephen preached boldly without compromise and was murdered. He spoke the truth of God when he stated, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:51-52). Stephen did not use a weak-kneed approach to sin and error as many do today. He preached the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), and died for the cause that makes men free!

At this point, we have revealed that Jesus Christ called names in his preaching and teaching. We also noticed that Peter, Paul, and Stephen "spake boldly"; calling names and recognizing sin and error publicly. Let us study our subject further and discuss how the restoration preachers and true gospel preachers today preach the gospel of Christ.

RESTORATION USAGE

As we glance back at some restoration preachers and the writings we have available, it is evident that they called names. They also were not afraid to call names through the printed page; *The Christian Baptist*, and the *Millennial Harbinger*, along with the many volumes of Alexander Campbell, pronounced denominations and false teachers. Let us keep in mind that just because a man; such as Alexander Campbell practiced these methods, does not justify the practice of calling names. We have already established that it is a scriptural practice to call the names of denominations and false teachers!

Benjamin Franklin, a true defender of the faith did not shy away from calling names to identify groups and individuals.

While Franklin gained wide fame as an editor and a debater, yet in the pulpit he came as near representing perfection as a gospel preacher that could be found. He quoted scripture voluminously. He did not pretend to be a philosopher, a politician, a teller of stories, or anything of the kind. He was a gospel preacher in everything the term implies" (Earl West, *The Search For The Ancient Order*, p. 102-103).

In an article entitled, "The Beginning Corner: Or, The Church of Christ Identified," brother Franklin stated,

Justinian made the beginning corner of Romanism, Henry VIII of England made that of Episcopalianism, John Wesley that of Methodism, Meno of Baptistism, John Knox of Presbyterianism, Martin Luther of Lutheranism, John Calvin of Calvinism; and thus on to the end of the long catalog of religious sects or parties in Christendom.

But the Apostle Peter made the beginning corner of the Christian dispensation, of pure, uncorrupted Christianity, and, as we have shown, by special commission of the Lord Jesus Christ himself (*Biographical Sketch And Writings Of Elder Benjamin Franklin*, p. 213).

Faithful soldiers of the cross of Christ, like N.B. Hardeman, stood against the denominations and false teachers without compromise. In a sermon entitled, "The Church - Its' Identity," brother Hardeman named the Mormons, Joseph Smith Jr.; the Methodist Church, John Wesley; the Baptist Church, John Smyth and Roger Williams; the Presbyterian Church, John Calvin; the Episcopal Church; and the Catholic Church (*Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons*. Vol. 2 , p. 188-197). This sermon was preached in a series of twenty-three sermons delivered in the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee from April 1, to April 22, 1923. These sermons reached thousands of people.

Brother Fred E. Dennis had a sermon titled, "Calling Names," he introduced that sermon by saying,

We have some 'softies' among us today who seem to think it is an almost unpardonable sin for a preacher or writer to call the names of false teachers and hypocrites; but it seems to me we have some mighty good precedents for this in the New Testament. However, the motive back of the name calling might enter into it. Our motives should be absolutely pure in every act or word. If we call names simply to ridicule or get 'smart' or something of that kind, of course that would be sin; but if we are trying to save souls, why not point out the erroneous teaching and who it is that teaches that? But some will say that just preaching the truth would be sufficient, and that we should leave others alone. The preachers and writers of the New Testament days did not thus act. They preached the truth and then contrasted error with the truth" (*Fifty Short Sermons* Vol. 2 p. 129-132).

Brother Dennis recognized church members who were against calling names and answered their arguments against this scriptural practice.

It is a fact that faithful gospel preachers from Pentecost to the present have called names when they exposed false teachers and error! Abundant examples exist in the sermons of Moses Lard, T.W. Brents, and Foy E. Wallace Jr. to name a few. There are still gospel preachers who are not ashamed of the gospel who will call names in order to obey the command to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3).

Let us not be afraid to call names when it is necessary with the right mindset. Our purpose should be to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). The Apostle John called Diotrephes by name to reveal in the Bible a principle we all need to heed. "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (3 John 11).

Integrity Of The Scriptures

BIBLE BURGLARY
John M. Brown

I promise not to steal your money. I won't steal your tools, your jewels, your furniture, your books, your good name, your wife, or even the tomatoes in your garden. I promise not to steal that which you value, or even that which you don't. I am not a crook and don't intend so to become. Surely all upright persons could in good conscience make such a pledge. The Bible admonition is to "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17).

Most of us can't abide thieves. Borrowing is one thing; stealing is something else entirely. All moral codes and governmental laws condemn stealing, and all just societies punish those who engage in such, and rightly so. Liars and thieves are not harbingers of propriety nor exemplars of an orderly society.

Even as I pledge not to rob, BO I don't want to be robbed. I wouldn't appreciate, no not for a moment, someone stealing my money, my things, my car, my cat, or my wife. Hands off!

But there is an insidious plundering going on, worldwide, of which many persons are unaware: BIBLE STEALING! There are those whose aim is the theft of God's Word. They are robbers of truth, stealers of scripture, thieves of divine revelation. God spoke in Jeremiah 23:30, Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbor." Prophets engaged in stealing God's Word! And in our contemporary world, Bible burglars are busily engaged.

Now I don't mean that there is an organized group going around swiping books. I don't know that I have ever had a Bible physically pilfered.

But that's what makes this current campaign of calumny so deceptive. God's Word is being stolen, and people don't even know it. HOW is this insidious Bible burglary taking place?

1. GOD'S WORD IS STOLEN THROUGH IGNORANCE. People could have access to truth, but chose to remain ignorant. Truth, which is readily available, is stolen from under their noses. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," lamented God through the prophet (Hosea4:6). Paul wrote of those "ignorant of God's righteousness" (Romans 10:3), and that condition prevails abundantly in our land. It is not that God's Word cannot be known (see Ephesians 3:3-5; 5:17), but rather through sheer negligence, laziness, and apathy, many simply elect not to know God's Word. People don't bother to study (2 Timothy 2:15), they don't search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11), they don't prove all things (1 John 4:1), they are willingly ignorant (2 Peter 3:5).

It is an unnecessary shame and disgrace that society in general, and many pulpits and pews in particular, are filled with "Bible blockheads." While civilization is advancing in practically every other realm of knowledge, we are regressing in Divine truth.

The Bible has been given to keep man in the right way (Psalm 119:104; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 4:2-5), but when man is ignorant of God's way, and goes his own way, hell be going the wrong way every time. (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12; Isaiah 55:8-9). While apostasy is forestalled through Bible knowledge, digression is incited through ignorance.

2. GOD'S WORD IS STOLEN THROUGH PERVERSION. The apostles pronounced a divine curse upon any who would "pervert the gospel of Christ" (see Galatians 1:6-9); and we read in the New Testament of those who would "wrest" the scriptures "unto their own destruction" {2 Peter 3:16}. I have heard people say, "The Bible says...", and then proceed to say what the Bible, in fact, does not say. It is a serious matter bearing eternal consequences to tamper with God's revelation. Man has no mandate from heaven permitting him to tamper with the Word of God, but in fact is warned to the contrary. Man must not add to, take from, alter, change or transform, sacred Scripture (Proverbs 30:5-6; Jeremiah 19:1-5; Revelation 22:18-19).

Often a false doctrine is justified with the words, "I got

(Continued on page 7)

("Fuss" Continued from page 2)

that one needn't understand the plan of salvation, and that all churches are about the same? The answer is, the liberal won't! Thus is evangelism killed.

If liberals thinks the church of Christ is a denomination (which they do), they couldn't "convert" the denominational members; about the best that could be accomplished would be to encourage others to merely "switch denominations". But, why should you leave your denomination to join mine, or vice versa? The only way a liberal church could "grow" (that is, increase their numbers) is by simply bringing ever larger groups of persons together, regardless of doctrinal considerations or conviction. But please note that a mere conglomeration of people does not a New Testament church make.

I personally have never encouraged anyone to "switch denominations". I have, instead, persuaded many people to forsake all denominational affiliations with their creedal traditionalism, and, upon the terms of the gospel, come into the Lord's church. Indeed, churches of Christ have grown in this and previous centuries by this very course of action. The church grows when people are brought out of religious error (whether first century Judaism or paganism or heathenism, or twentieth century atheism, or creedalism or sectarianism), and into the truth of the gospel. But the liberals misunderstanding about the necessity of informed obedience and the nature of the undenominational body of Christ will kill real evangelism and stop church growth.

(Continued on page 7)

YOUTH MEETINGS IN LIGHT OF BIBLE PRINCIPLES

Steve Miller

Throughout our brotherhood, youth meetings are held periodically as a means of reaching the young people with Jesus Christ. This is noble and we should do our best to support youth gatherings whenever possible. When planning an event; such as a youth rally, Christians should have the following Bible principles in mind, and remain true to them through their whole presentation. Youth meetings are beneficial; when...

1. The Bible is taught. The early church practiced this principle everywhere, even during persecution (Acts 8:4). Our youth need to be taught to respect the Bible as the verbally, inerrant, inspired word of God (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). They must be exhorted to obey the Bible and live by it faithfully (Acts 20:32; 2 Peter 1:3). We must teach the Bible to our youth at every opportunity!

2. Youth are encouraged to flee, follow, and fight. The apostle Paul exhorted young Timothy to preach that one must “flee” worldliness, and the love of money, and “follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness,” and TIGHT the good fight of faith...” (1 Timothy 6:11-12). School systems, the media, and the world in general, are constantly filling our young people’s minds with ungodly attitudes surrounding materialism, fornication, lying, stealing, drinking, drugs, and anything that is anti-God! We must encourage our youth to flee these things! Teaching the young to follow fruits of the Spirit, and Godly principles, will help them in their walk toward heaven. As they enter into the Lord’s army, they need to be trained for battle. Equipping them with the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17), will enable them to fight off the enemy; Satan.

3. Youth are taught to be proper examples. Timothy was reminded by his father in the gospel, of his powerful influence. “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity (1 Timothy 4:12).

4. Young people are taught to trust and obey God. Like David; all should say, “Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust” (Psalm 16:1). Putting our trust in a gracious, merciful, loving God, will cause us to make the right choices. “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 (Romans 6:16)? We must plead with everyone to answer as the apostles did, “...We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

5. We teach the youth how to get into Christ. The Bible teaches that all spiritual blessings are found in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). God’s word also teaches us that salvation is in Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). God has supplied the grace, the free gift; whereby we can be saved. Man must accept this gift by faith (Ephesians 2:8-10). We get into the grace of God through Jesus (John 14:6). A Christian’s responsibility is to faithfully relay that one must believe, repent, confess, and be baptized, in

order to get into Christ (Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3; Romans 10:10; Galatians 3:27).

When the above are incorporated into the program of a youth meeting, it will be beneficial for the youth that attend. On the other hand, what about rallies, workshops, jubilees, or summits, where Bible principles are ignored, left out, and forgotten?

Youth meetings are NOT beneficial when...

1. False teachers are the speakers. It is tragic that many youth meetings have false teachers on the program. This results from brethren who are not honoring the Bible on the subject of fellowship. Men who have been marked (Romans 16:17-18), should be avoided and not used for any activities! Impressionable youth, often sit at the feet of Satan’s servants and are taught for doctrines, the commandments of men (Matthew 15:9).

2. False doctrine is promoted. Various man-made doctrines are promoted at youth meetings where the Bible is not honored. Teachings such as, all of life is worship, faithful Christians in all denominations, open fellowship with denominations, hand clapping in worship, special music in worship (solos, choirs), unity in diversity, grace only, women leading public prayers, etc. Faithful brethren will not support or send their young people to youth meetings where the above are promoted (2 John 9-11; 2 Peter 2:1).

3. Pharisaical music groups are showcased. Music groups who promote instrumental music sounds, rebellion to the authority of the Bible, and encourage disrespectful attitudes toward older, faithful, members of the church are not beneficial for youth or anyone! Several music groups have no problem appearing with some of the rankest false teachers in the church. Harm is done when our youth are permitted to sit at the feet of groups who do not honor the Bible.

4. Unscriptural change is promoted. Youth meetings are oftentimes a popular ground to sow the seeds of change in the church. Bible change is conforming to the will, way, and life of Christ. The change-agents in the church, corrupting our youth; encourage change that is prohibited by the word of God. Congregational singing is replaced with choirs, boundaries of biblical fellowship are removed, women preach, offer prayers and serve, (instead of men), the plan of salvation is replaced with the theory of faith or grace only, etc.

5. Emotionalism and holy rollerism are encouraged. Those who no longer have reverence respect, and dedication to God, Christ, and the Bible, try to appeal to the emotions of our youth at such functions. Hand clapping, shouting, swaying, whistling, and a spontaneous combustion of feelings are encouraged by some promoters of youth gatherings. Rationality, knowledge, and the Bible are cast aside, for an “anything goes” attitude.

Youth meetings are beneficial when the Bible is faithfully followed, taught, and promoted. Our youth need wholesome, Christian atmospheres, that encourage their obedience and growth in Jesus Christ. Gatherings that have false teachers, false doctrine, and unscriptural principles being promoted, always damage our precious youth.

(“Burglary” Continued from page 5)

that right out of the Bible...” Indeed, “out of the Bible” is the accurate sentiment, as the doctrine is not “in the Bible” at all! On one occasion a lady protested to a gospel preacher that her Bible didn’t have Mark 16:16 in it. “Surely it does,” said the preacher. “No,” declared the woman, and she proceeded to show the preacher her New Testament, in which someone had carefully and deliberately cut out Mark 16:16 with a pair of shears! While some are not as dramatic in excising God’s Word, to alter what the text of scripture says, or to block its truth from one’s mind, bears no lesser consequences than the lady with the mutilated New Testament.

The only criterion worth of consideration, spiritually, is, “What saith the Word of God?” That question should determine the extent, scope, limit, and totality of doctrinal investigation. Let us stand upon what the Bible says, all that the Bible says, nothing besides what the Bible says, and nothing in addition to what the Bible says. This posture will ensure avoidance of Bible perversion and keep truth from being rifled from us. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

3. GOD’S WORD IS STOLEN THROUGH NEW TRANSLATIONS. Our age has seen a proliferation of new translations the like of which is unknown in the history of mankind. The old slogan we have long rejected, “Join the church of your choice,” can have placed alongside it a new slogan, “Read the Bible of your choice,” the latter of which must be disavowed with the same intensity as the former. One can find a “Bible” that says about whatever one wants it to say. “My Bible doesn’t read like yours” is a somber notation with dangerous overtones. And yet the “Bible” market is flooded with such.

How is God’s Word stolen through new translations? Simply, many of the newer versions are teaching doctrines that are not true! Calvinism, denominationalism, sectarianism, faith-onlyism, and every other brand of falsehood, can be found in some “version” somewhere. But these philosophies of men are not the doctrine of Christ! Thus when one reads from his “Bible” that which is not in harmony with truth; (in fact completely contrary to it), that one has had, even if unawares, God’s Word stolen from him. Remember, finding the word “Bible” stamped on the cover of a volume filled with the theories of men no more makes that book “THE BIBLE,” than finding a quarter in a sewer makes the sewer a bank.

“But,” someone protests, “don’t all the new versions make the Bible easier to read and understand.” If that were in fact the case, then with all the “clearer” modern versions available, there would of necessity be much more Bible knowledge today, right? Yet we are drowning in a sea of Biblical ignorance! Why? Because the clearer versions have not contributed at all to either Bible knowledge, or godliness in life. We have more versions and translations today, with more godlessness and scriptural illiteracy than ever before.

No, the Bible doesn’t need to be “updated,” it needs to be taught, read, believed, and obeyed.

All of the above is “Bible Robbing” for sure. Satan, the father of lies and the originator of theft, has certainly done his work well. Surely one can see that the above three points are interrelated: one ignorant of truth is open to perversion and probably toting a modern version. On the other hand, one familiar with truth is not easily deceived and can readily recognize the falsehoods in the “new Bibles.”

Guard your Bible! Hold on to its integrity and clutch it close to your heart. There are thieves on the loose!

N.B. HARDEMAN ON UNITY

Unity means the combination of elements of the same composition. It follows, therefore, that if men are united and have fellowship in the church of the Lord, they must be converted precisely as the Bible directs, and they must be of the ‘same mind and the same judgment.’ From these statements of fact, it ought to be clear to all why it is that as a people we cannot fellowship those who have not obeyed the gospel of God’s Son. It would be wholly inconsistent with all of my preaching for me to recognize as an associate or comrade in the work of the Lord any man who has not ‘obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered.’ Neither can I fellowship or be a joint partaker with any man who preaches or practices that which I believe the Bible does not authorize. I cannot bid such an one God-speed (*Hardeman’s Tabernacle Sermons*, Vol.V, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1976, p. 82).

(“Fuss” Continued from page 5)

But actually, it is easily seen that these final, terrible characteristics are but a consequence of all that proceeded. If doctrine isn’t important, and one cannot determine what the body of Christ is nor its limits of fellowship, and if the restoration plea is useless at best and terribly divisive and wrong at worst, and if the bad dogmas of the past are good enough to be resurrected for the present, and if one has little conviction about any of these things anyway, it is but a small, very small, step to drop all such “dogmatic and narrow views” about things such as “repentance” and “baptism”, doctrines that have put us at odds with our denominational friends lo these many years, and thus none are genuinely. No one should be surprised that the final line of demarcation, the wall separating spiritual Zion from the sectarian world, has finally begun to collapse in the minds of liberals. One cannot cling tenaciously to “baptism by immersion for the remission of sins” while acknowledging John R. W. Stott, Francis Shaeffer, Billy Graham, C.S. Lewis, and Mother Theresa as exemplars of Christian faith, can one?

Surely if you have read thus far, and you stand fast and firm in Bible-grounded conviction, you know **WHAT THE FUSS IS ALL ABOUT AFTER ALL!**

Pioneer Pulpit



SOMEWHAT CONFUSING

Cled E. Wallace

When I was a baby preacher, I cut my teeth on Dr. T.W. Brents' "Gospel Plan of Salvation" and Robert Milligan's "Scheme of Redemption." I do not recall that any of the older, abler school of preachers and writers, and there were giants in those days, offered any objection to the use of these terms. They echoed from tents, brush arbors and school houses, thousands were led to Christ and nobody had any suspicions that heresy was being preached or that legalism was squeezing the blood out of the gospel. I still use them and know of no good reason why I should quit, even after reading what some of our comparatively modern "advanced thinkers" have said on the question. I cannot always figure out just what they are driving at, and frankly do not think they know. I freely admit that some people know more than I do and think clearer than I can, but to me these critics make more noise than sense.

After all, what is wrong with the gospel plan of salvation? It is a development of "the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:11). We are "called according to his purpose." God "glorified," all according to purpose. The divine scheme, or should I use that term? Developed through promise, prophecy and type until "the fullness of the time came" and Christ appeared as the supreme exhibition of the grace of God, the Savior of men. We read about "the way of salvation," "the pattern of sound words," "the form of doctrine." All divine, and all without plan? If you get it, you are more adept at splitting hairs than I am. All should at least admit that the gospel is a revelation of divine intelligence, as well as holy mercy.

How can God plan, or purpose, or gradually develop a scheme through the ages culminating in the glorification of man? In recognition of human limitations, the Holy Spirit condescended to "speak after the manner of men." Possibly some of our critics are so transcendent they feel no need of this sort of aid. The most of us do. The way of salvation, the plan of salvation and the scheme of redemption all refer to

identically the same thing. They have all been equally and effectively used by Faithful men, and misused and abused by misinformed, ignorant, or vicious men. The good old gospel way, plan, scheme, pattern and form all look good from where I sit.

I had been preaching the gospel and baptizing people for a good many years before I ever heard of any gospel preacher who objected to "steps" leading to salvation. Now some are allergic to steps. The word conjures up shades of legalism. Just what is wrong with stepping, or walking, by faith? It is all right to run if you are headed in the right direction and looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith. If there is any "legalism" in it, it is gospel legalism and equivalent to "the obedience of faith." When Jesus says "Come," and I do not think he means to slide into home base. No man can come until he believes, "for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11:6). We must seek him according to the gospel scheme, way or plan. It is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16).

In order to claim the promise of remission of sins, salvation from sin, the blotting out of sins, a man must believe, repent, confess Jesus as the Christ, and be baptized. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). These are all acts of the man in coming into Christ, and finding freedom from condemnation (Rom. 8:1). But there are no steps! I suppose he gets there just standing still or sitting down!

But steps obscure or hide Christ and the cross! A Baptist might so contend but how a gospel preacher can, I am unable to see. Hide Christ, indeed, when it is "the obedience of faith" in Christ. "He became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9). If you obey him, you will do some stepping. Of course every act of obedience is related to Christ, finds its meaning and explanation in the cross, and because it spells out or steps out submission to Christ and reliance on him as the Savior, is art emphatic repudiation of human merit. Salvation is by grace through faith, and the gospel plan of salvation is divine. (*Gospel Advocate*, September 16, 1954).

Bible Bulwarks

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