

The Essentiality Of Christ's Church

Of the multitudes who entertain a hope of eternal salvation, most reject the essentiality of Christ's church, which He purchased with His own blood. Even among those who have obeyed the Gospel of Christ, some have been greatly influenced by this soul-condemning error.

Even before man sinned in the Garden of Eden, God's "wisdom" contained a provision whereby man could be saved from the terrible consequences of sin, eternal punishment. God's plan unfolded over many centuries. That plan of God for man's salvation pointed to Christ and the church which He would build. The shedding of Christ blood as a once for all sacrifice, provided for the forgiveness of sins of those who lived before Christ. The blood of Christ also purchased the church which He said He would build and did build. Those who reject Christ's blood-bought church have no hope of salvation.

In order to make clear the meaning of the subject of our discussion, we shall give attention to the terms used. Webster's definition of **essentiality** is: "Absolutely necessary, indispensable." This is the sense in which we are using the term, and let it be understood that there are no exceptions. Family ties, emotions, and teachings of error do not change the fact. It is our intention to prove the above conclusion by God's word in the following discussion.

By **Christ's church**, or the **Church of Christ**, we have reference to the one true church of the which the prophets spoke, which Christ said He would "build" and did build. That church is the one of which we read in the New Testament. No other church is essential, since no other is Christ-built or blood-bought. To further identify Christ's church, consider the following which gives more specific information.

The church predicted by the prophets. In Isaiah 2:2-3, the prophet says, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it....for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." By "the Lord's house" is meant "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). Daniel said, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed...and it shall stand for ever" (2:44) Daniel was speaking of Christ's church.

Christ said he would build his church. As the prophets had predicted, Christ sets forth God's plan of salvation, which was according to God's "wisdom." Upon Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Christ responded by saying, "...thou art Peter, and upon this rock [the truth confessed] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:16-18). In Acts 2, Christ's church becomes a reality.

The church is purchased by Christ's blood. The apostle Paul charges the Ephesian elders: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to the feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Only one church was purchased "with his own blood." All others have been man-made.

The Lord added to his church. The only church to which the Lord ever added anyone was His church. His church is the one we can learn about from God's word, and know how to become members of it and how to live therein.

That Christ's church is essential, that is, **absolutely necessary, indispensable**, relative to salvation is easily seen when God's word is given its proper respect. The importance of salvation is seen in that it amounts to forgiveness of sins here and now, and in the world to come a place in the eternal home of the soul.

In view of the above, nothing should be of greater concern than **The Essentiality Of Christ's Church**. This means that we should give special attention to two important things. One, the essentiality of Christ's church is clearly set forth in God's word. This can be seen and understood by any average person who has a desire to know God's will. Two, we must ever be on guard against that which makes Christ's church **Unessential**. By that we mean that the gospel can be perverted (Gal. 1:6-9).

When the church moves away from the divine pattern, into error, it ceases to be essential. Only the true church of Christ is essential.

Though we have already called attention to the essentiality of Christ's church, we want to go into greater detail with regard to divine evidence. Therefore, we shall consider at some length:

THE ESSENTIALITY OF CHRIST'S CHURCH CLEARLY REVEALED

The church was in God's mind eternally. On this point Paul writes: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11).

The importance of the truth revealed in the above passage is often overlooked. The point is that God's wisdom is evidenced by His glorious church. It serves His purpose, it makes salvation possible through Christ and his church. To deny the essentiality of Christ's church is to contend that **God's Wisdom** is of no value. Who is mere man to take issue with God's wisdom? However, many do. It is somewhat of a mystery as to why knowledgeable people so often overlook God's plan with regard to the church when there is so much revealed about it.

The first reference to the church in God's revelation is found in Genesis 3:15. Though the word "church" is not mentioned, it is clear that it is alluded to in the statement by God to the serpent: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." From Paul's statement to the Galatians we know that the "seed" of woman is Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). In God's plan of salvation, Christ cannot be separated from His church, though many try to do so.

From Genesis 3:15 onward, God's plan of salvation points to Christ and His church. God's promise to Abraham was that "...in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). When Abraham offered his son, Issac, God's promise to him was renewed: "And in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:18).

The promise to Abraham would be carried forth by Abraham's great grandson, Judah. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). Christ, to be an offspring of Judah, was described as "Shiloh," bearer of peace.

The prophets predict the establishment of Christ's church. We noted earlier that Isaiah said, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains...and all nations shall flow into it. And...out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:2-3). We find Isaiah's prophecy repeated almost word for word in Micah 4:1-2. There is no question but that "the Lord's house" has reference to "the church of the living God" (I Tim. 3:15). "The church of the living God" is the one we read about in the New Testament, which had its beginning on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts.

The prophet Daniel wrote: "And in the days of these kings [Roman kings] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed....and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44). The writer of Hebrews helps to identify that kingdom of which Daniel spoke when he said, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved..." (Heb. 12:28). That kingdom is the church, and note that it is in the singular.

The coming of Christ and His church would involve a new covenant. Jeremiah said, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah..." (Jer. 31:31-34). The Hebrew writer speaks of this new covenant. It was not the covenant made with the Israelites when they were led out of Egypt (Heb. 8:8-13).

In harmony with the promises made to Abraham and verified by the prophets, we note some things of great importance. 1) Christ says, "I will build my church" (Mt. 16:18). From Acts 2, the church is in existence, and people were added to it. 2) The blood of Christ purchased His church, only one (Acts 20:28). 3) The church is always in the singular, except in instances where a plurality of congregations are mentioned, such as "the seven churches of Asia," or "The churches of Galatia."

The evidence of "one church" is sufficient to remove all doubt as to its singularity. Paul says of Christ, "And he is the head of the body, the church..." (Col. 1:18). To the Ephesians Paul said of Christ, "...and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body..." (Eph. 1:22-23). That "the church" and "the body" are one and the same cannot be truthfully denied. Now that we have seen clearly that "the church" and "the body" are one and the same, let us consider what the inspired Paul said relative to the matter. "There is one body, and one Spirit..." (Eph. 4:4). To deny the oneness of the church is to outrightly deny God's word on that subject.

Salvation found only in the one church. Anyone who takes God at his word, cannot deny that salvation is found only in Christ's church. Paul settles this matter when he said, speaking of Christ, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23). If Christ would save people outside "the body" [the church] why did He go to the cross and shed His blood to purchase the church? It would be nonsensical to contend that Christ went to this end to purchase that which is not essential. To be honest and realistic about it, if one would be saved, that one must be in that which Christ saves, and that is His church.

When Paul wrote “the saints which are at Ephesus” he made reference to their state before they became a part of Christ’s church, Christians. “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). Those who are today “without Christ” can have no true hope and are “without God in the world.” Salvation is “in Christ” (2 Tim. 2:10), and to be in Christ is to be in His church.

WHY HAVE WE REVIEWED THE FOREGOING MATERIAL?

Much of what we have discussed above does not relate directly to The Essentiality Of Christ’s church. We have called attention to God’s plan for the church, even His “eternal purpose.” This goes back to Genesis 3:15. All that is said of God’s plan for salvation, and as it points to Christ’s church, signifies something of tremendous importance.

As Isaiah points out, God’s thoughts and ways are higher than our thoughts and ways, “as the heavens are higher than the earth” (Isa. 55:8-9). But even so, we can understand that God wouldn’t have given so much attention to something unimportant, as He has given to Christ and His church. No subject in God’s word equals in importance that of man and his salvation. The center of that subject is Christ and His church. How is it that multitudes can believe that Christ’s church is of little, or even no importance? It seems that many give little attention to serious thinking when it comes to God and His will for man. Let us consider, for example, the thinking of those who see the church as unessential. How does one who thinks that way explain the following. That is, if the church is not essential?

That Christ’s church is a display of God’s wisdom, and was in his “eternal purpose” (Eph. 3:10-11)? Was God’s wisdom worthless?

That reference was made in Genesis 3:15, to the salvation which would come through Christ. The blood of His sacrifice would purchase the church?

That several prophecies were made relative to the coming of Christ and His church, and that salvation would be found therein?

That Christ, John and others preached that the “kingdom is at hand” if the kingdom is after all not necessary in order to have salvation?

That Christ said, “I will build my church (Mt. 16:18), if it was not an essential part of His plan?

That Christ would shed His own blood to purchase the church (Ac. 20:28) if not essential?

That people were commanded to be baptized for remission of sins (Ac. 2:38) in order to be added to the church, if it’s not essential?

That those who were “baptized into Christ, have put on Christ,” (Gal. 3:27) which is to become a part of the church, if the church is unessential?

That Christ is the “head of the church” and the “savior of the body” (Eph. 5:23), if salvation is not found only in the church?

That people are “translated” into the “kingdom of his dear Son,” where “redemption” and “forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:13-14) are found, if the kingdom [church] is not essential?

If man-made churches are equal to Christ’s one true church, why isn’t this set forth in God’s word? Our Savior said that “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” is vain (Mt. 15:9). He also said that “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Mt. 15:13).

To deny the essentiality of Christ’s church is to deny God’s plainly spoken word. It is to say that Christ’s death and sacrifice were in vain. Many warnings are given in the New Testament, that men will reject the truth and turn to error. We are seeing that happening at an increasing rate in our time. The doctrines of men are much more widely accepted than the truth of God. The danger of accepting such doctrines is great, even within the church! In view of that danger, we believe it is highly important that attention be given to:

THINGS WHICH MAY RENDER CHRIST’S CHURCH NONESSENTIAL

By rendering Christ’s church “nonesential” we mean the acceptance of error which makes it unacceptable to Christ. Christ’s true church will always be essential. The church at Laodicea is a good example of rejection by the Lord (Rev. 3:14-19). It was still the church but it was totally unacceptable in its present condition. Not one good thing was said about that church, and unless there was repentance, the Lord would “spue” [vomit] them out. If the Lord would reject a congregation because of error in the first century, would He not do the same today? Do we have any modern-day Laodiceas? Of course we do! In its present condition, Laodicea was no longer essential. If that church was nonessential because of error, so are a growing number today..

There is great and urgent need to be aware of the danger which the Lord’s church now faces from within. We must not allow ourselves to be a part of error in the congregation of which we are a part, nor fail to stand up against error which will make the church nonessential. Not only is error creeping into the church at an alarming rate, it is also very widespread. The

variety of error is so wide that we can only touch upon a few. These should help awaken people to the “perilous times” we now face.

Underlying error, and responsible for much of it, is the spirit of indifference which is now prevailing. It is heartbreaking to note the lack of concern about spiritual things, even among our own brethren. As long as the spirit of indifference prevails, the devil will have his way with multitudes. Thirty years ago I never would have dreamed of seeing the indifference which is now evidenced by so many here in my own county. There’s almost nothing that I know of which will stir up most of the members of the church with regard to spiritual dangers. An attitude of indifference encourages the acceptance of various forms of error. We shall take note of a few.

Acceptance of denominationalism. To accept the man-made church is no less than an insult and affront to our Savior who purchased His church with His blood. For scores of years courageous brethren worked hard at extricating themselves from the shackles of denominationalism. The efforts of these brethren were greatly blessed, and so much so that in the 1950s we were considered the fastest growing religious group in the U.S.

It is hard for me to understand why so many of our brethren are now striving to take us right back into the shackles of denominational religion, where salvation can never be found. Money is probably a factor with some. Some will do almost anything for money, even sell their souls. Some people love notoriety, the praise of men. Standing boldly for the truth is not the way to have the most followers in our day. Peter speaks of false prophets, “who privily shall bring in damnable heresies...” (2 Pet. 1:1-3). It must be that some are actually working for the devil under the guise of being a Christian. Paul, weeping, speaks of those who were “the enemies of the cross of Christ...whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Phil. 3:18-19).

Among our most influential brethren are those who are in love with denominationalism. The fact that they have so many followers is most tragic. A false teacher without followers would soon fade from view. One who follows a false teacher is often just as guilty as the false teacher. The following rank among the better known false teachers, though there are many others: Lynn Anderson, Rick Atchley, Joe Beam, Buddy Bell, J. Wayne Kilpatrick, Max Lucado, Rubel Shelly, F. LaGard Smith, and others of lesser note.

The above people are denominational in different degrees. Some outrightly uphold man-made religions and engage in fellowship with them. Some are close friends with them and would never criticize them in any way.

Accepting denominationalism is to reject Christ’s church, as the one true church. It is to imply that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross of Calvary need not to have been. I wonder if these brethren and others like them ever stop to think what their actions are saying, and if they really deep down have a care? I can’t see how they could.

God’s law on fellowship ignored, cast aside. Anyone who is at all familiar with God’s word knows that God has a law with regard to fellowship. That law disallows much of what is happening in our time. To more and more people it seems to make no difference. This can be seen among some who claim to be sound in the faith.

God’s law on fellowship includes such passages as: Ephesians 5:11; 2 Jno. 9-11; 2 Thess. 3:6; Titus 3:10; Rom. 16:17-18, and others. These passages are quite clear, as is the meaning of “fellowship.” We simply cannot be joint participants with those in error and be right in God’s sight. We see this being violated in a number of ways. These include direct participation in that which is error, both inside and outside the church. A most flagrant example of this was seen last September when the Glendale Road congregation and its elders and preacher (speaker at the revival), along with elders from the East Wood congregation in Paris attended the Catholic Revival at St. Leo’s Catholic Church here in Murray. In spite of this flagrant action, the board at Freed-Hardeman elected John Dale as a board member. According to President Sewell, FHU found nothing wrong with the above. Brethren, this shows how far we have gone in fellowshipping error.

Just this very day I receive a message from a person in Michigan, stating that a flyer advertising Rubel Shelly, who supported the Billy Graham Crusade in Nashville, in some activity had been posted where this person worships. Apostasy is real!

Another distressing thing about fellowship is that some brethren who claim to be sound, and who will put up a stiff fight against some innovation which does not have God’s approval, and then go right ahead and fellowship those unrepented brethren as if nothing had happened! I just don’t know how to explain this in a favorable way.

New doctrines oppose God’s law on fellowship. In recent times we’ve seen a number of new doctrines brought into the church, which are affecting the fellowship of brethren. One of these doctrines says one congregation cannot withdraw fellowship from another. Some who are pushing this divisive doctrine would classify me as a “Neo-Sectarian.” The leaders in this error are known for their vituperative language and severe bitterness. Yet, they have a handful of followers.

Church politics and followers of men. These two subjects are very closely related. It is evident that some act on the basis of what is politically expedient. That is, they may act in such a way as to violate the Lord’s will, rather than go against the political current to which they are attached. Yes, in some instances, political uprightness is more import than spiritual uprightness.

The same as the above is often true with regard to people who are followers of men. In some cases people will follow a man regardless of what course he takes. There is no better example than in our own area. Cults originate as a result of people following some person, to the extent that they blindly accept whatever they are told. Some follow schools like others follow

men. They, too, evidence a loyalty which is stronger than their loyalty to God's truth. Those who cultivate followers are not without fault when God's law is violated. Paul gives a rule which is safe to follow. That is, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). It is usually the case that when men set out to cultivate followers of themselves, they fall short in being followers of Christ themselves.

Among recent divisive doctrines within the church is the "All life is worship" error. Then there is the "Direct operation of the Holy Spirit." Another is referred to as "Christian Church baptism." We can add the parachurch groups. Who knows what will come on the scene tomorrow or new week?

God's law on worship cast aside. God's law on worship could hardly have been more concise and easy to understand. Christ said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Christ also said, "...the Father seeketh such to worship him" (v. 23). A good definition of worship is, "Acts of reverence paid to God by man."

These "acts of worship" are to meet two standards, in spirit and in truth. "In spirit" is that which is from the heart, from the inner man. That which is sincere and true. "In truth" simply means that which is according to God's truth. Transgressing God's law on worship is sin, just as transgressing His law on other things is sin (I John 3:4). To worship according to the two standards above will automatically rule out a great many things.

Acceptable worship must never be based on what we like or what makes us feel good. We should like what God has approved for worship and it should make us feel good to be able to engage in that exalted privilege. But at the same time, we must bear in mind that it is not left up to us to set up our own acts or standards of worship. God has taken care of that, and we should be satisfied.

The doctrines of men must never be included in our worship if it is to be acceptable. Christ said, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). In our day all manner of things are being done as worship, which have absolutely no authority from God. The very attitude which should characterize true worship is often missing. How to please and entertain people is in — Reverence and Respect are out!

Some of what I'm hearing about worship, and even some times within the church, sounds much like the worship of Hindus or other pagan worship, which I have personally seen. I hear of people raising their hands, clapping their hands, swaying their bodies and even dancing about. It surely cannot be that those engaging in such can think such action pleases God! Undoubtedly, these things must be happening because people want them. Whether God is pleased or not cannot carry much weight.

Unauthorized works of the church. Back in the 1950s it was generally the consensus of brethren that the work of the church was limited to three categories: Evangelism, Edification, and Benevolence. The veering away from this standard did not happen overnight, but little by little over a period of years. A monumental step of departure was the "Giant Step Forward" by the Madison congregation in 1978. They exulted in their "Step Forward," which included a "Family Life" center. That center included a "gymnasium," and "exercise room," and such activities as: "Ladies Slimnastics, Ceramic Class, Macrame Class, Bowling League, Volleyball League." This information was from the *Madison Marcher*, a Madison church publication.

The above was a big boost in church provided amusements, sports, entertainment, etc. While that was highly unusual then, it ceases to be so now. It is a matter of fact now that congregations are providing a wide variety of things which fit into neither of the three categories as works of the church. Various forms of entertainment are a high priority now in many places. There are various singing groups which perform in worship. Some have solos. Drama teams are a rage with some. With some they are trying to provide just about anything the people want. The great problem can be boiled down to a simple matter. The main thrust with many is to give people what they want; whether or not it pleases God is given little or no consideration.

SOME CLOSING REMARKS

Perhaps some may wonder as to my purpose in discussing several things which are now happening within the church, which constitute great dangers. With some such is strictly out of bounds.

My objective in this discussion has been to show the Essentiality of Christ's church. As stated earlier, the church can become such that it is no longer essential. That is, when a congregations departs from the truth, the divine pattern, it can be rejected by the Lord himself. It must be understood, however, that the true church of our Lord will always be essential. It is congregations that depart from the truth to such an extent that the Lord will "spue" them out, as with the Laodiceans, that we are greatly concerned.

We've never seen a more crucial time of need for faithful brethren to "stand fast in the faith," and "contend for the faith." Otherwise, a growing number of congregations will no longer be essential to salvation, because their love for the truth has died and they are no longer serving God acceptably.

Who would dare contend that the Woodmont Hills congregation is now essential to salvation? Other congregations have also departed from the faith. There are scores and scores of congregations which are in some stage of departure from the faith.

If ever there was a time when we should show our love for and loyalty to God's truth, it is NOW! Let us pray that error will fail and truth will prevail, but let us also do all within our power to uphold the truth and oppose error of every sort. Let us sing with truth and sincerity, "I love thy church of God."

- - - Walter W. Pigg

WHY NO MORE DIVINE MIRACLES TODAY?

Jozel S. Aguliar

Today, we hear various claims of miracles, such as healings and speaking in tongues, by our Pentecostal friends and other denominations. The word **miracle** (Greek dunamis) is defined by *Vine's* the following way: "power, inherent ability, is used of works of a supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural agents and means" (p. 757). This was evident in all the divine miracles found in the Bible. According to John 20:30-31, "many other signs [miracles]" were done by Christ in the presence of his disciples which were not "written" down or recorded. The purpose of those miracles which were "written" was that people "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye [they] might have life through his name." The apostles were also endowed with the power through the Holy Spirit to perform miracles to confirm their preaching of the Word (Mark 16:20).

We will not compare the miracles in the Bible with the declared miracles of today in this discussion. However, we contend that there are big differences between them. According to the Scripture, we are to "try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (I John 4:1). Hence, it is mandatory that we consult the Word of God and judge righteously (John 7:34) whether God is legitimately behind the miracles (?) of today.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians 12:4-10, are all miraculous. After Christ ascended to heaven, the Apostles received this power through the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2. These were transferred to others by the laying on of the hands of the apostles (Acts 8:14-19). Simon the sorcerer witnessed the miracles and desired to buy the power to perform miracles, for which he was sternly rebuked (vv. 18-20). From Acts 8 we learn that the church in Jerusalem had to send Peter and John to Samaria to lay hands on the people that they might receive the Holy Spirit, even though they had already been baptized (vv. 13-15). Cornelius received the Holy Spirit prior to water baptism (Acts 10:44-47). Hence, receiving the Holy Spirit in these passages differ in meaning. The previous refers to the power to perform miracles, while the latter was to show that salvation was for the Gentiles.

Healing, performing wonders, speaking in tongues, faith, knowledge, prophecy and interpretation are miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, as noted in I Corinthians 12:4-10. In I Corinthians 13:8-10, Paul tells us that prophecy, speaking in tongues and knowledge will vanish "when that which is perfect is come." Healings, tongues and other gifts of the Holy Spirit could be imparted only by the apostles. Since all the apostles have died, that power ceased.

What is meant by the word "perfect" as used in I Corinthians 13:8-10)? Does it mean the Last Day or being in heaven? The passage says that "knowledge" will be gone when "that which is perfect" comes. If this knowledge is an ordinary knowledge, will that mean that in the judgment day, we cease to have information on who Christ is and what the Bible teaches? Matthew 7:21 and Romans 14:10-12, teach us that knowledge remains on the day of judgment. These and other passages affirm that it is a miraculous knowledge that is being discussed, and does not refer to the Judgment Day.

The word "perfect" in the New Testament has two meanings: qualitative (Lk. 1:13; Col. 4:12), and quantitative (I Cor. 13:8-10). *Kittle, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 8, p. 75, agrees, based on its explanation of the Greek word *teleion*. (Wayne Jackson, *Notes from the Margin of My Bible*, p. 76). By considering verses 9 and 10 of I Corinthians 13, we conclude that "perfect" means the complete unfolding of God's will about salvation. When that happened, speaking in tongues, knowledge and prophecy, as spiritual gifts, vanished away. Therefore these do not exist today.

These gifts deal with revealing and communicating the will of God to man. So, in verse 9, Paul was teaching that when he wrote I Corinthians all that man should know about salvation had not been revealed. This he means by saying, "for we know in part, and we prophecy in part." "But when that which is perfect is come (when all truth has been given or completed)," then that which is "in part" (prophecies, tongues and knowledge) will vanish.

The Lord says the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into "all truth" (Jno. 16:13). "All" means perfect or complete, no more no less. Therefore, "all truth" was given to us by the apostles. They have communicated to us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). That which is "perfect" has come. Hence, no more prophecies, tongues and knowledge (miraculous kind) since the time of the apostles. We now have the complete truth, as verified by 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

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Editor's Note: It was my privilege to know brother Jozel in the late 1980's. I was preaching in a gospel meeting in Manila, in the Philippines. On my last trip to the Philippines (Feb. 1997) I worked with Jozel, and came to know his wife to be, "Bing." She was so very active in the Lord's work, as was Jozel. I was invited to attend a lectureship in Gen. Santos City early next year, but will not attend as much as I would enjoy doing so. I have great appreciation for a number of the Filipino

brethren that I've had the privilege to meet. The Ted Lingrens, who spent some years in Iloilo City, Philippines, are now working in Gen. Santos City.

We Express Our Thanks

to all those who make *Banner of Truth* possible. The Hickory Grove congregation serves as our sponsor of the paper. A number of people from Hickory Grove and the Dexter congregations contribute many hours of labor getting the paper ready to mail. Individuals and congregations supply the necessary finances. We are indebted to all these brethren and are ever mindful of and thankful for them. - - - *Editor*

Response From A Reader:

"Mr. Walter Pigg, Please remove our name from your distribution. I do not, nor does the church at Middletown want to receive material that will condemn, defame or ridicule other churches or brothers in Christ. I believe that this type of behavior is not necessary and it only destroys rather than builds up. Regarding the 'Andy Griffith videos? What is wrong it that? If you cannot find anything good you need to go to the brother or church yourself rather than write about them in a paper. I am highly offended by your actions. Note, I am coming to you, not the brotherhood. Brian McCutchen. Middletown church of Christ, 13006 Shelbyville Road, Louisville Kentucky 40243."

My response: "Brian, I'm sorry that you are 'highly offended' by my actions. This could mean that your attitude toward God's truth is not what God would have it to be. I wonder if you have the right to speak for the church at Middletown, or are you assuming that position of authority? I also wonder why you didn't point out some specific error of which you believe me to be guilty, and then show me from God's word wherein I'm in error. I also wonder if you are guided by your subjectivism rather than by God's objective word? As for the 'Andy Griffith videos,' I believe we should look to the 'gospel of Christ' rather than Andy Griffith. If you believe it is wrong to speak out against error and false teachers, you must have a problem with the actions of: Christ, Paul, John and Peter. If you believe, and you must, that it is wrong to respond to the public teaching of error in a like public way, then you have been misled in that area. Brian, do you really believe that our 'behavior' should be based upon what we 'believe' rather than the principles set forth in God's word? I think I may understand why you are 'highly offended.' Over the years, especially in more recent times, I have noted that there are those who are 'offended' when people speak out against error, but they seem not to be 'offended' when people teach error. Brian, since you believe me to be in error, would you be so kind as to follow Galatians 6:1, and point out to me my error from the standpoint of what God's word teaches?" - - - *Walter W. Pigg*

“But We Are All Sinners”

One of Webster's definitions of "deceit" is, "a dishonest action or trick." God's truth is even used by men on some occasions in a **dishonest** way, or as a **trick**, to effect deceit or mislead people. The above statement, "**But We Are All Sinners**," is some times so used. Note that Paul clearly speaks against such when he said: "But we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 4:2).

If one should ask: "Is it true that we all sin?" our reply would be "Yes." One may then ask, "Since it is true that we all sin, how could it be deceitful to say, **But we are all sinners?** This is easy to understand when God's word is used properly, and not handled deceitfully. You see, it is true that all men, even Christians, sin (Rom. 3:23; I Jno. 1:8, 10). It is NOT TRUE that because all men sin, all men have the same relationship to God. Therefore, when men say, **But we are all sinners**, in an attempt to lead others to believe that because all men sin, all are on equal standing with God, they have used deceit. If all men who sin have the same relationship, then ALL MEN are either saved or ALL MEN are lost. Some couldn't be saved and others lost, but God's word says some are saved and some are lost.

Let us now consider an example which clearly shows how the above statement is used deceitfully. Here is a man who is guilty of lying and causing division and dissension within a congregation. He is confronted with regard to his sins and exhorted to repent, but no repentance is forthcoming. Instead of repentance, as God's word demands, his reply is, "But we are all sinners." To imply in this way that he has no responsibility to repent because "all sin" is nothing but deceit, because God's

word does not so teach. All who sin **do not have** the same realtionship with God.

John, who says, “If we say we have no sins, we deceive ourselves” (I Jno. 1:8) also said, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light... the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7). Therefore, the person who sins (all men) but walks “in the light” has the continual forgiveness of sins, whereas the one who is not walking “in the light” does not have forgiveness. “Walking in the light” would demand “confession of sins” as is pointed out in I John. 1:9. John points out that there is a “sin unto death” and a “sin not unto death” (I Jno. 5:6-7). John says of the “sin unto death,” “I do not say that he shall pray for it.” Is not the “sin unto death” the sin of which one will not repent, as in the above example? Jesus said “repent or perish.”

All men are not sinners in the sense that they are in open rebellion to God, or that they are continually living in sin, as in the above example where one stubbornly refuses to repent. To take the position that because all men commit sin at some time, that sins of which men will not repent should be **overlooked** or **tolerated**, is a classic example of deceit. If this position of deceit were true, it would mean that Paul’s command to “mark them which cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17), would have to be ignored. It would mean that such sins as those in I Cor. 5 (fornication, drunkenness, etc.) would have to be tolerated. The “works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) would be allowed because “all men sin.” Jesus said, “If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Lk. 17:3). But some would say that since “we all sin” there is no need to rebuke sin, overlooking the fact unless there is **repentance** there will be no forgiveness, not ever.

Those who would use the “we all sin” trick (deceit) to uphold sin within the church, and not demand repentance, are bringing about their own destruction and those who follow them. Nevertheless, this false reasoning is being used quite extensively among brethren. But if we will let God’s word speak we will realize that some repent and have forgiveness, whereas those who will not repent will never have forgiveness. It is not true that because all men sin, even when doing their best to live the Christian life, that willful sin should be overlooked, tolerated or upheld in the absence of repentance. Let us be aware of **deceit** in every way!

- - Walter W. Pigg

THE DANGERS OF CHORUSES

Michael B. Willy

Much has been written about the efforts by some to introduce choirs and other “special music” into the worship of the church. However, the brotherhood has been silent about a practice that has become commonplace for many congregations of the Lord’s church around the country: the hosting of a performance of a choral group from one of our Christian schools. These performances generally take place prior to or immediately after worship services, and generally involve the choral singing of spiritual songs. The purpose of this discussion is to examine some of the dangers involved with these activities.

It is necessary at this point to briefly discuss the “law of exclusion,” which stands for the proposition that where God has given a specific commandment to do something in a particular way, all other options are excluded, since they are not authorized. A familiar example is God’s selection of a type of wood which Noah was to use to build the ark. Because of God’s command to use gopherwood (Gen. 6:14) in building the ark, all other types of wood were excluded, since no other is authorized. In order to be pleasing to God, Noah had to follow God’s specific command and use gopherwood in the construction of the ark.

The singing of spiritual songs is very definitely controlled by the law of exclusion. We are told to, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). Ephesians 5:19 says, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs are to be sung “to the Lord.” While singing, we are to teach and admonish each other, but God is the One to whom our song worship is directed. The Greek words “one another” and “to yourselves” are reciprocal reflexive pronouns which require the participation of all persons present. Therefore, what is authorized by these two verses is the a capella, congregational singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to the Lord. All other options are excluded by the specificity of God’s command. They are not authorized.

When spiritual songs are sung in a choral performance, the songs are not sung to the Lord as commanded, but to the audience. The audience does not participate in the singing as commanded, but merely listens. Because such performances violate the authority given us in Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19, they are an unscriptural method of singing spiritual songs. Because there is no authority in the Scripture for the choral performance of spiritual songs, Christians cannot participate in such choral concerts, either as a performer or spectator, and be pleasing in God’s sight.

Proponents of the use of choruses would argue that because choral performances do not occur during worship, they are approved. This argument seems to stand for the proposition that, prior to or immediately after the worship service ends, the use of another form of music in singing spiritual songs is authorized, and that a Christian's conduct needs to be conformed to God's standard only during worship services. Furthermore, this argument has the logical result of reducing New Testament Christianity to a religion that has effect only during worship services. But in Colossians 3:17, Paul tells us, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." If we are to do all things in the name of the Lord, or by his authority, then we must do all things in accordance with his will. God has given his commands regarding music. If we go beyond that authorization, we are doing works of iniquity (Matt. 7:21-3). Regardless of when choral performances of spiritual songs occur, they are unscriptural. Such is not authorized.

Others will argue that because the purpose of the choral performers is entertainment, such is approved. In Exodus 20:7, we are told, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Reducing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, all of which invoke the name of God or His Son, Jesus Christ, to entertainment is, in effect, calling on the name of God and then saying, "Don't pay attention God, we're just entertaining." It is taking the name of God in vain. There is no difference between the choral performance of spiritual songs and a performance by a "contemporary Christian" band. In either case, spiritual songs are sung in a manner which is not authorized by God's word, and both are a form of entertainment. Yet, why is one allowed while the other most assuredly would not be? Clearly, such "entertainment" is not pleasing to God.

Allowing choral performances before or after worship services desensitizes brethren to sin. This situation is similar to the one years ago, where some elders allowed the membership to keep a piano in the basement of the church building in order to practice their singing. It was not long before the piano was moved into the auditorium. As noted above, many in the brotherhood are advocating the use of "special music groups" during worship. Surely the practice under consideration here helped pave the way for this apostasy, and will continue to do so in congregations where these activities are allowed.

In I Thessalonians 5:22, we are told to "abstain from every form of evil" (ASV). In my opinion, it is the height of hypocrisy for brethren to criticize denominations and apostate brethren for using a choir during worship services and then have their own choir perform five minutes after the worship service is ended. These activities communicate the message that the church of Christ approves of choirs, thereby placing a stumblingblock in the path of the lost and those weak in the faith.

Many elderships allow such performances because they feel that since one of "our" schools supports the chorus, such activities must be scriptural. However, elders have the responsibility to feed and watch over the flock (I Pet. 5:2), and these responsibilities cannot be delegated to the administrators of our Christian colleges. Elders who allow such unscriptural practices will one day have to give an account (Heb. 13:17).

It should be apparent that there are many dangers inherent in these choral performances. Those who respect God's Word will reject such unscriptural "entertainment," and seek His authority for all things (Col. 3:17). Only in so doing will we be found acceptable in God's sight.

586 Cottonwood Drive, Gallatin, TN 37066

Muslim leader denounces 'act of terror'

600 people gather to pray
for nation at Woodmont Hills

By ANNE PAINÉ
Staff Writer

The above article appeared in *THE TENNESSEAN*, Sat., Sept. 15, 2001. The article includes a 3 1/2 by 6 inch photo. Under the photo are the following words: **"Iman Ilyas Muhammad, at right, Steve Brumfield, Mark Black and Woodmont Hills minister Rubel Shelly pray together at Woodmont Hills Church of Christ on Franklin Road. Muhammad, a spiritual leader of Muslims in Nashville, was asked to speak at the remembrance service."**

The first paragraph of the article was as follows:

"A Muslim leader and Christians bowed their heads together yesterday at Woodmont Hills Church of Christ and prayed for justice, for peace and for those who mourned loves ones lost in the terrorist attacks."

As the article continues, various statements of Iman Ilyas Muhammad are mentioned. It is also stated that Shelly "had asked Muhammad to speak..." and that about half the 600 people were not members of the congregation.

My primary reason in mentioning the above is that it is a case in point to show that when people depart from the truth as Rubel Shelly has done, there is likely to be no stopping place. To bid godspeed to the Muslim religion is about as far as one could go. This makes one wonder about Rubel Shelly's love for truth many years ago. - - *Editor*

Watchdog, or Hound of the Baskervilles

Alan Adams, Assistant Editor

Not all praise is good (cf. Lk. 20:21; Gal. 1:10), nor all criticism bad (Jno. 7:24; Cf. Matt. 23). Living the Christian life in general, and Preaching the Gospel in particular demands, as the need arises, both Bible-based praise as well as criticism. Sometimes, being critical of brethren who are teaching or practicing error will *itself* be criticized as being somehow improper. It seems that only the criticizer of critics is immune from this charge.

I readily admit that I do criticize some things. Not too long ago, a brother implied that I fancy myself as a watchdog. He said, “We don’t need a watchdog.” At first, I was a bit stung by the term, and I even denied. “I’m *not* a watchdog.” However, after some sober reflection, I realize that my denial was out of place.

A watchdog is one that is trained and kept to guard property, valuables or the life and well-being of its owners. Sometimes the term is used in reference to “A person or group that keeps watch in order to prevent waste, unethical practices, etc.” (Webster, 1605). Understanding clearly what a watchdog is, two questions may be raised: (1) Why shouldn’t a Christian be a watchdog, and (2) Why doesn’t the church need a watchdog?

Take a concordance and read all the passages that have to do with “watching” or being “watchmen.” In Jeremiah 12, God speaks of His “house” and “heritage” (v. 7) These are references to Israel, the people of God. Old Testament Israel was the type of the real “house” or “people” of God (I Tim. 3:15; I Pet. 2:10), which is the church of Christ. Jeremiah describes God’s people as being “surrounded” and “devoured”: “Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds round about are against her, come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour” (v. 9). Why would God seemingly invite the scavengers and beasts to come in and have their way? Was it because he wanted it that way?

Isaiah explains why the “house of God” was open for pillage and destruction:

“All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from every quarter” (12:9-10).

It would seem that Isaiah did not subscribe to the We-Don’t-Need-A-Watchdog view. The “watchmen” refers to the prophets. Sometimes they didn’t do their job of warning of impending danger (see, Jer. 29; Ezek. 34:14). In verse 10, Isaiah compares the prophets to watchdogs. Unfortunately, the watchdogs in Isaiah’s day were all “dumb dogs,” meaning they could not, or would not bark. They raised no voice of warning, rather they were “sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.” He says they were greedy and only looking out for their own “gain.”

I take it back. I am, in fact, a Watchdog, and proud of it. I trust I will never be a “dumb dog” who won’t bark when he’s supposed to, nor a wild monster like that in the story of the Hound of the Baskervilles. Of course, there was no such thing as that mythical Hound from Hell; it was merely convenient for some people with ulterior motives to make others think that there was.

Remember Paul’s charge to the Ephesian elders:

“Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchase with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears (Ac. 20:28-31).

- - 1653 Pine Ln. Dr., Cantonment, FL 32533

Christ’S Words Will Judge

By Marvin L. Weir

Some scoff at the concept of a Day of Judgment but it is just as sure as the resurrection of Christ. God’s Word declares, “*The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent; inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained;*

whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). People will continue to doubt and mock the idea of a universal judgment, but the Holy Scriptures do not lie. Jesus warns, "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Mt. 25:31-33).

The Judgment will be both sudden and complete. The judgment is coming, but no one on earth knows when. Many claim there are signs that suggest the date of the Judgment and thus dates are announced for the Lord's return. All that have been announced thus far have been wrong! The Bible states that only the Father knows the day and hour that the Son will come (Matt. 24:36), and reminds all to "watch" Matt. 24:32), as he will come "*in an hour that ye think not*" (Matt. 24:44). Just as one does not know when the thief will strike, one does not know when Christ will return (Matt. 24:43).

The Judgment will be **complete** in that all of the age accountability will be judged (2 Cor. 5:10). Each person will be judged as an individual, and thus it matters not what others may or may not have done (Rev. 20:12; 22:12). The Judgment **will** be based upon whether you were obedient or disobedient to the will of God.

The standard for the Judgment is the Word of God. Jesus clearly states, "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spoke, the same shall judge him in the last day*" (Jno. 12:48). But an ever growing number **feel** that God's Word will no read the same in Judgment as it now reads. Friends, Acts 2:38 will still be the answer to "what one must do to be saved?" Repentance and baptism are perquisites to salvation. Mark 16:15 will still read the same in the Day of Judgment. "*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned*" (Mk. 16:15-16).

It will still be true that only Jesus is "*the way, and the truth, and the life*" (Jno. 14:6), and no one will reach the Father but by Him. It will also be true that not everyone that saith unto him, "*Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven...*" (Matt. 7:21). Only those who **do** the Father's will – will be saved (Matt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46).

Romans 6:4 will still be a **burial**, and not a sprinkling. The Scriptures reads and will read, "*We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.*" Obedience to the gospel will mean the same thing then as it means now. The apostle John said, "*For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous*" (I Jno. 5:3). Those who choose to travel the "*broad way*" will lose their soul and those who choose to travel the "*narrow way*" will enjoy eternal life (Matt. 7:13-14). Nothing that the Bible states will change!

All should be thankful that it is the Word of God that will judge them. False and man-made standards will judge no one. If it were not for

god's Word it would be impossible to discern which man-made standard is correct. There are many religious standards, and they all differ. Will one be judged by the catechism or the book of discipline? Will you be judged by what I think or what you think? Will a person be judged by a church manual or creed of by the decree of some synod or council? Will your conscience be your judge, or will you be judged by what the majority think?

Friends, God "*hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son*" (Heb. 1:2). God no longer speaks to people through the fathers or the prophets "*by divers portions and in divers manners*" (Heb. 1:1). Listen to the Psalmist as he declares, "*The sum of thy word is truth; and every one of thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever*" (Psa. 119-160).

The Father and the Son do not change (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8) and neither does their Word. In view of the coming Day of Judgment, do not forget the words of Christ: "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spoke, the same shall judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48).

P. O. Box 975, Rowlett, TX 75030

Second Annual *Banner of Truth Lectures*

Tentative Date June 24 - 27

The above date in 2002 has not been finalized. The facilities are not available for the 2nd and 3rd weeks in June.

We are looking forward to the lectures next year. We realize that whatever the date, it will be a conflict with some. Some may be able to keep the above date open, since it is known this far in advance.

We should finalize the dates by the time of the Sept. issue of B.O.T.

- - **Editor**

TERRORISM!!!

Since the tragic heathen attack, in the name of religion, upon our country on September 11, the subject of **Terrorism** has been on the mind of many people all over the world, and most especially in the U. S. In most of the bulletins, publications, etc. that I receive, mention has been made of this most tragic event. Brethren have approached the matter from various angles. It is my intention to take my turn in the September issue of *Banner of Truth*. My approach will be somewhat different when compared with what I have seen thus far.

The Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies Lectures Sept. 16-20, 2001

It was my privilege to attend and participate in the above lectures, as I have done for the past several years. The lectures were most encouraging, with an increase in attendance over past years. The quality of the students now in the school is very good. For brethren who want to study God's word and preach the Gospel, we encourage them to consider this school for the excellent training needed.

Alan Adams, our son-in-law, has been added to the faculty as a full-time teacher. He still needs additional financial support. Contributions can be sent to: NW FL School of Biblical Studies, 57 E. Hanna Cir., Pensacola, FL 32534. Further information can also be obtained at that address or by phone: (850) 479-4405. Brother Adams' home phone is: (850) 937-1460. - - **Editor**

Being On Time

People are creatures of habit. While some of their habits are good, some are undesirable and should be broken. One of the undesirable habits affecting many congregations is that of being late for services, rather than **Being On Time**. Whereas some are habitually late, others can always be counted on to **be on time**.

What do these habits mean in relation to spirituality? Do they not generally reflect the measure of interest? It seems that the matter of priority is involved. Aren't we usually more prompt in keeping the appointments we consider of greatest im-

portance? For example, some who are habitually late for church services are **On Time** for work. Why the difference? Isn't interest involved?

Few of us are so pushed that we could not start to worship services five minutes earlier. There are instances when things happen which are beyond our control, but generally we are late, not because we don't have enough time; **We are late because we didn't start on time!**

Don't you think we could make every church service more meaningful by BEING ON TIME EVERY TIME? If we are in the habit of being late, why don't we make it a point to **Be On Time** for the next service and see if it isn't better that way?

- - Editor

READERS' RESPONSE

"We've enjoyed reading Banner of Truth and appreciate the strong stand for the truth. Please put us and two of our children on your mailing list. Enclosed is a donation to help with this work - **Don Tiffany.**" - NC. (*Thanks for your help by your contribution and by adding names. - Ed.*)

"Thank you so much for the mailing of the May issue of B.O.T.; but many more thanks for you and your wife for working so hard and mailing the pure gospel of God's Holy Word instead of like so many that are changing to the perverted gospel this day and time. Thanks for the truth. Please accept this small gift to help you keep up with expenses for whatever it is needed. May God richly bless the two of you and give you a very long and healthy life to carry on his work in the future as you have in the past - **Den Ferguson.**" - TN. (*Thanks for your encouragement and financial help. As so much of our society is departing from any semblance of a God Ordained standard of morality, so are many departing from God's word and the manner of life which it teaches. - Editor.*)

"I have heard of a publication by you called 'Banner of Truth.' If this is available, please enter my name or list to receive. Thank you very much. If there is a charge, please advise - **Kelly D. Francis.**" - MO. (*We've added your name to our mailing list. A number of people ask us about the cost of the paper. It is sent free to those who request it. Banner of Truth is made possible by gifts from individuals and congregations which want to have a part in our work. We're indebted to them. - Editor.*)

"Dont send mail to this address - **Daniel Dexter.**" MS.

(*We won't. The address is given - Editor.*)

"Received the back bulletins today and really appreciate them. I had printed some from the internet but I certainly appreciate what you sent me. I hope Alan has great success in his new work. I'm sure he will. I sent a small check to his attention to the school. Also enclosed is a check to Banner of Truth. I appreciate very much what you are doing for the work of Christ. Without several people like yourself, I don't know where we'd be - **Bob Price.**" - FL. (*Your interest and support of the work we are trying to do is greatly appreciated. Your generous contribution to B.O.T. means much and is of great help. We believe Alan will do a good work at the school. We spent a week with them and the work is going well. Your financial help is greatly appreciated. He had to start the ground since he had to raise all his support. - Editor.*)

"A brother of the church recently gave me a copy of the Banner. It's with joy I ask to be added to you mailing list! My copies will be passed on to those struggling with a liberal preacher in their pulpit. I left that congregation in Feb. and will drive 20 miles further to hear the truth - **Amanda L. Kemp.**" - OH. (*Your concern for the truth is commendable! Some will not leave a congregation which was once sound but has now become liberal. In too many instances brethren will stay on the sinking ship and go down with it when they could have been victorious by their support of the whole counsel of God. Preachers of a liberal persuasion could not continue with a congregation without support from at least a portion of the members. Many will say or do nothing to support the truth, while allowing error to prevail. - Editor.*)

"Just a note to say I have just read some of your writings, that a friend and sister in Christ gave me to read. 'Thank God' we still have some in the (*See next page*)

church that are still not afraid to preach and teach God's word and confront false teaching. When I obeyed the Gospel 50 some added years ago, preachers told people denominationalism was wrong. Now in most congregations you can't tell the difference. So thanks for standing up for the truth and confronting false teachers. I just left a congregation where the preacher and his wife teach that the Holy Spirit works separate and apart from the Word. From what I can read and understand He works through the word of God. I would like to have B.O.T. sent to me at this address - **Mrs. Lotrell Dilbeck.**" - GA. (*You are indeed correct in your belief that the Holy Spirit works only through His word. When one takes the position that the Holy Spirit works apart from God's word — there's no stopping place. With that position, how could anyone deny anything which is claimed by direct-operation-of- Holy Spirit believers? Just as a spirit of indifference has so adversely affected our society, so has it affected the Lord's church. So many seem not to care what the Word of God teaches. We are living in men-pleasing times rather than in God-pleasing times. - Editor.*)

Free 20 Page Tract

We have mentioned this free tract in Banner of Truth some time ago. Our last mention of it had an incorrect address. The correct address is: Clarence E. Hall, 2107 Cedardale Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70808. Phone: (225) 344-6519. The purpose of this Free Tract is to strengthen brethren in the faith and to be used in evangelistic efforts. The tract is entitled: **Non-Denominational Christianity.**

Welcome New Readers !

We look forward to hearing from our new readers. Comments are appreciated. If you have suggestions for improving BOT, let us know.

Editor's e-mail: <wpiggbot@apex.net>

Visit BOT on David Lemmons' web at:

<http://www.hcis.net/users/lemmons/BOTlist.htm>

Readers may get on David's LemmonsAid e-mail:

<LemmonsAid-Subscribe@YahooGroups.com>