

Banner of Truth

March 2002

Scriptural Response to Liberalism

A “sickly” and “sleeping” brotherhood is being swept by a scourge of pernicious **LIBERALISM**, which is being encouraged by a growing number of influential and ultraliberal brethren among us! Outside the church, the most liberal agenda of our current dominant political power, the liberal bias of the news media, and the entertainment industry are creating a climate which is very conducive to the furtherance of this evil. **True hope** for the well-being of the cause of Christ in the days ahead depends largely upon what is now “*a remnant*” of truly devoted, God-fearing brethren who are **unafraid** to “*contend for the faith*” as they become and persist as active participants in the **Scriptural Response to Liberalism**.

WHAT IS LIBERALISM? This term is difficult to define, being subject to a wide variety of definitions, not all of which suggest evil. Due to the complexity of the term we shall give our own definition, as it will be most often used in this discussion, and as it is most commonly used by those of us who recognize the evils of **Liberalism** and stand opposed to it. “**Liberalism involves an attitude which rejects God’s word as the complete and absolute authority for belief and practice in the realm of spiritual things.**”

The **Liberalism** of which I speak is exemplified by quite a variety of things, things which are not authorized by God’s word. A **Liberal**, therefore, may accept one or more of the following list, which is by no means exhaustive. The **Liberal** may believe: 1. Silence of the Scriptures is authority for a practice. 2. One’s subjective feelings, and desires, justify actions. 3. All activities in worship and serving need not have Bible authority. 4. There are few restrictions relative to Christian conduct in daily living. 5. Faith does not mean “Taking God at His word.” 6. God’s word may not mean what it clearly says, as we have learned from the current “New Hermeneutic.” 7. The **KJV** and **ASV** are **old** and **outdated** and should be cast aside for new and modern versions, such as **NIV**. 8. Preaching and teaching should always be **Positive**. 9. Our “five stepper,” “Scripture quoting,” “radical,” “Church of Christer” preachers are unloving and out of date. 10. Salvation is by “grace alone” and/or “faith alone.” 11. We should not speak out against and/or criticize or denominational friends. 12. Others.

One need not have all the above marks of **Liberalism**, or others that could be mentioned, to be a **liberal**. If God’s word is knowingly and wilfully rejected as being authoritative in just one area, that constitutes **Liberalism**. As noted above in **our definition of liberalism**, an attitude which rejects the authority of God’s word is what we mean by the term. If God’s word can be rejected in one area, so can it be in others as well. Therefore, if our objective is to please God by following His will, we must recognize the fact of **liberalism** and be prepared to face it as God’s inspired word has instructed us clearly.

FACING THE FACTS OF TODAY'S LIBERALISM

Some of our number within the church are not aware of the frightening state of things. Some may not want to know, and others have simply failed to keep informed relative to the grave danger. And, there are some who just **refuse** to face reality. In either case, such has helped to create the condition in which we find ourselves today relative to **liberalism**. No doubt but that some who read these very words will cry: "Alarmist," "negative minded," and "un-loving." But facts are facts whether we accept them or not, and reality is reality, even if some live in a dream world of oblivion. There is nothing good to come from the **liberalism** of which we speak. As we pointed out years ago, even the religions which have gone all out for **liberalism** have experienced drastic decline. Untold harm has been and is being done to God's people through **liberalism**, and this can only be measured in the multitude of lost souls!

In the following we are setting forth a number of examples of the "**Facts of liberalism**" as seen today. Though many other examples could be given, we trust these will suffice to awaken at least a few to the spiritual dangers now faced by those who would be servants of God, and encourage them to become engaged in the **Scriptural Response to Liberalism**. There is no other God-appointed way to combat it! If we fall victim to this evil we will have no one to blame but ourselves.

THE EXTENT OF TODAY'S LIBERALISM

All across the country faithful brethren are voicing their concern about the **liberalism** in their respective areas. An elder in this area said to me recently, "Over half the congregations have already gone into apostasy." It has been stated recently that in the Nashville, TN, area (with some 130 or more congregations) only a **very few** are sound. A preacher from Arkansas said that in a given area of, I believe 28 congregations, only two or three would be considered as sound. It is a matter of fact that in many cities, or areas, where several congregations are located, one would be hard pressed to find even one congregation which is truly *contending for the faith* and unwilling to compromise. Now if this is not something to **disturb** and **alarm** us, what would it take? Would anything do so?

The condition within the church today is so much like that which existed a century or more ago, when **liberalism** held sway over the greater majority of church members, and the authority of God's word was rejected as people opted for that which pleased themselves rather than God. We know what the shameful results were. The **liberal** brethren took the church buildings in many instances, and went their way of digression, playing their pianos in worship, and paying the Missionary Society to evangelize, as they listened to the preaching of a diluted gospel where "silence was consent." Of this condition a knowledgeable, and well-read man on church history, **Johnny Ramsey**, had the following to say a few years ago, and present conditions are even more pronounced now than then.

"Any honest, careful student of church history knows we are living again the scenes of apostasy that shattered the restoration movement of the 19th century. Attitudes, and probably motives, are virtually parallel to the sad saga of digression that shattered the work of great servants of the Lord a century ago. The powerful

*emphasis of ‘What does the Bible say?’ is once again being replaced by ‘Is this acceptable to the people ‘round about us?’ One can detect an almost worshipful atmosphere at the shrines of higher education on the part of brethren today. And any student of history can tell you the end results of THIS arrangement! Even from among those who must know better comes an appeal for cheap grace, and not the deeply based teaching of the commands of Christ. It would appear that some are wilfully ignorant (2 Pet. 3:5) as they **wrest the Scriptures** and go about **seeking their own righteousness** (Rom. 10:2; 2 Pet. 3:15-16). While they often speak of liberty and freedom in Christ, they and their devotees become the abject slaves of error (2 Pet. 2:17-22).”*

The above words of brother **Ramsey** cannot be successfully denied, and he could have pointed out many other things. One thing which should also be mentioned is that among the **liberals** of today, some are fellowshipping denominational men in preaching, and in fellowship with the Christian Church and other denominations. Yes, it is much later than so many think!

LIBERALISM IN OUR SCHOOLS

There is not a single one of our sizable brotherhood colleges or universities, that I know about, which has not already gone deeply into **liberalism**, or is headed in that direction. The fact that some deny this is just more evidence that many people no longer recognize **liberalism**, or for some reason will not admit its existence. This will simply encourage further inroads of **liberalism**. When schools become, as they have with some, a “sacred cow,” the influence of these schools, including that of **liberalism**, will be reflected in congregations where those people preach, teach, or participate as members. Some powerful lessons can be learned from history, by those who care to learn. In some instances schools have rendered great services, and I am personally thankful. But when the “tail begins to wag the dog” things have gone too far!

TODAY’S RASH OF MODERN VERSIONS

There is absolutely no evidence, that I have seen, that today’s modern versions in any way contribute to a greater respect for God’s word as our sole authority in religious matters. But, to the contrary, where modern versions are used extensively **liberalism** will generally be evident, and respect for God’s word will be less. In view of this, it should be of great concern to those who love Truth, that outcries from faithful brethren concerning the proliferation of modern, unreliable versions of the Bible are being heard less and less. Though it should not be, **time** seems to be on the side of **liberalism** in that the faithful’s resistance to error seems to wear down with time. We must be aware of this and constantly renew our determination to **stand**, and encourage others to do likewise.

As mentioned in the Oct. 1993, issue of **B.O.T.**, the “Campaign America” organization is pushing the use of the **NIV** through literature sent out to callers. And, they are critical of the **KJV**, making it appear that one would have a hard time learning the truth from it. The *Gospel Minutes*, which now has a circulation of well over 100,000 weekly, is now recommending the use of the **NIV**, and is quoted by **David Thurman**. Many preachers, teachers and members across the country are now using a modern version in spite of the errors contained therein. Millions have

learned the truth from the **KJV** or **ASV** in the past and people can still do so today, if they desire to do so.

LIBERALISM THROUGH THE POWERFUL PRINTED PAGE

The widespread use of written material which promotes **liberalism** is increasing among preachers and members day by day. Not only is the material by our own **liberal** brethren being promoted and sold by brotherhood bookstores, such as F-HU and other places, this is also true of the writings of such men as: **Swindol, Schuler, Graham**, et.al. Materials from these false teachers (**liberals**) are cropping up more often in the writings of men who claim to be sound. Bible Class and VBS materials which have not been influenced by **liberalism** are becoming more scarce and difficult to find.

Liberalism brought in by the printed page is just as destructive as that delivered from the pulpit or the teacher's lectern. But some seem to be unaware of this. Take for example, a congregation which claims to stand for the truth, but allows **liberalism** to come into the congregation by way of the printed page. **Liberalism** is truly one of the Devil's **devices**, and he promotes it in many effective ways.

SILENT PREACHERS ENCOURAGE LIBERALISM

There are more preachers now who, though they would not preach and teach a false doctrine, will not raise their voice against the error of **liberalism**. Such action as this is a rejection of God's authority, which demands that truth be used in the battle against error. But some still remain **silent!** Just a few days ago a friend related to me how that he had heard a preacher recently, who through his teaching had taught my friend out of the Masonic Lodge. My friend asked this well-known preacher, who left the church for many years but has supposedly been restored, if he was still teaching men out of the Masonic Lodge. The preacher's response was, "I don't preach anything but positive anymore."

More than 30 years ago I heard that same preacher preach a powerful sermon on **The Dangers of Liberalism**. He couldn't do that now; it would involve the **negative**. Anyone who will not preach negatives as well as positives has rejected the authority of God's word, making him a **liberal**. **Liberals** do not like negatives, but when their error is shown up, they some times used them very freely in their opposition to the lovers of Truth.

LIBERALS SUPPORTED BY CONGREGATIONS

For the most part, **liberal** preachers are supported in their **liberalism** by the congregations where they preach. But in some instances a **liberal** preacher may be supported by congregations which claim to **stand for the truth**. An example of this occurred in an "area-wide" meeting in Corinth, MS, some years ago. Nine congregations were listed as "participating congregations." At least one of the congregations listed, and their preacher, would quickly affirm that they stand for the truth. But the preacher in that meeting, the well known **Larry West**, is very liberal, even as

affirmed by his heart-broken father in a public statement. Therefore, the nine congregations supported **liberalism**. Whether this was done deliberately or through ignorance does not change the fact or nullify the influence.

The “**Jubilee**” in Nashville, TN, the very epitome of **liberalism**, has been supported by a number of congregations in Middle Tennessee. Everyone of those supporting congregations were partakers in **liberalism!** Twenty or thirty years ago most of those congregations would have been considered **sound**. If such actions as the above, and so many others, do not tell us something as to the state of the church, we simply do not want to be told, or we **don't care**.

THE PREACHING OF GOD'S WORD IS BEING RESTRICTED

Some 35 years or so ago, many preachers affirmed that they would preach God's word “without fear or favor of man,” and they meant it and were not restricted in doing so. But it is **different now!** That expression is not being heard very often nowadays. Why so? More and more preachers are being **restricted** in what they preach. Of course, some preachers don't mind being **restricted** since they don't want to preach the whole truth anyway, a characteristic of **liberals**.

In this day of “divorce for every cause,” the preaching of God's law on marriage and divorce (Matt. 19:9), simply would not be tolerated in a growing number of congregations where God's law is not respected. A preacher will not get very far in some congregations if he chooses to preach on the “*works of the flesh*,” including such social sins as social drinking, dancing, mixed bathing, immodesty, etc. In fact, I had a letter from a good friend in which he said the following with reference to the elders of a congregation where he had worked less than a year, before having to move on. The preacher said:

“In April this year they called me in and told me I could not preach on the works of the flesh, Masonry, marriage, divorce, remarriage, denominationalism because the people did not want to hear about such. This was judging, according to Matt. 7, they said....The oldest ‘elder’ told me I could not call names such as ‘Baptist,’ ‘Methodist,’ etc. because such was not in the Bible. The same man did not know the terms ‘bishop’ and ‘pastor/shepherd’ also pertained to an elder or how they applied. It is not difficult to see why the church is in trouble today.”

This preacher has a good knowledge of God's word and believes it should be preached in its fullness and without compromise.

Yesterday I had a call from a young, **discouraged** preacher who had to leave a congregation due to unfair treatment and **restrictions** on what he could preach. He was **restricted** to preaching **only positives**. Needless to say that submitting to such conditions would be compromising the Truth, and make of one a **liberal**.

In more recent years, with quite a few congregations, it has become “out of bounds” to call attention to errors in our brotherhood schools, including that of **liberalism**, as mentioned earlier. The liberal influence of a school upon the congregations in this area is unmistakable to any observing person, and few preachers mention it.

Calling attention to the dangers of modern, unreliable versions of the Bible is a “**no, no**” in some circles. It would hit a sensitive spot in many places, since their use is upheld by the congregations, even by elders and teachers.

Though Christ spoke rather specifically with regard to the Pharisees, Saducees and their error, speaking out on the errors of denomi-nationalism will not be tolerated in an increasing number of places. And, when it comes to being specific, unless a preacher is ready to receive **flak**, even moving orders, he best not follow the example of Paul and call the names of rank false teachers, as did Paul in his naming **Hymenaeus** and **Alex-ander**, who “**concerning faith**” had “**made shipwreck**” (I Tim. 1:10-20), and **Hymenaeus** and **Philetus**, who had erred concerning the truth, “**Saying that the resurrection is past already,**” overthrowing “**the faith of some**” (2 Tim. 2:17-18). Sadly, too many preachers are willing to abide by the restrictions, even though God’s word is compromised in doing so. I never want it to be said of me that I would not abide by and stand for my convictions.

LIBERALISM RAGES OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

Never before in the history of our nation has there been a government in power which was actually determined to completely secularize our society, and snuff out the **righteousness** which **exalteth a nation** and encourage the basest of **sin** which is **a reproach to any people** (Prov. 14:34). As this governmental influence gains a greater control of the people in its effort to make our country a “**queer**” and “**perverted**” nation, reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah, the spirit of multitudes will be broken and the quest for God slackened even farther. This condition, which is the result of political **liberalism**, is one in which spiritual **liberalism** thrives. Spiritual **liberalism** has neither the power nor the will to impede the progress of ungodliness.

In addition to the governmental influence of **liberalism**, we may add the far-out news media, the entertainment industry, and the abundance of pornographic material by way of the printed page. With the promotion of **liberalism** by these sources, the harmful effects will be seen in a greater way in the church as liberalism grows.

Now that we have considered some of the facts and the extent of **liberalism**, let us turn our attention to what our response should be if we would be victorious in the battle against it.

SCRIPTURAL RESPONSE TO LIBERALISM CONSIDERED

It may sound somewhat redundant to suggest that the only **Scriptural Response** is found in the **Scriptures**, but that is the case. Since the God-ordained response to **liberalism** is found only in the Scriptures, it is necessary to come to a knowledge of that response and then make the proper use of it, if it is to be effective. Therefore, we shall in the following consider a number of factors which are pertinent. We begin with:

GOD’S WORD MUST BE TAUGHT IN ITS PURITY AND SIMPLICITY

The God-approved, saving faith, comes from the hearing of God’s word (Rom. 10:17). This active faith resists and condemns **liberalism** and its disrespect for God’s word. The essentiality of the true, unperverted gospel is pointed out in Gal.1:7-9, as the only source of salvation. A curse rests upon those who would **preach any other gospel**. The absolute necessity of adhering to the

teaching of Christ in order to have God's approval is spelled out by John when he wrote: "***Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son***" (2 Jno. 9). Peter declared, "***If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...***" (1 Pet. 4:11). When Jesus was tempted by the devil, the father of **liberalism**, in each of the three instances He used God's word in His defense by stating, "***It is written...***" (Matt. 4:1-11).

"Book, chapter and verse" preaching is desperately needed if **liberalism** is to be checked, because it exalts God's word and not the wishes and desires of men. This kind of preaching demands that we get **back to the Book** and rid ourselves of spiritual ignorance.

AN UNCOMPROMISING STAND FOR THE TRUTH

Once **Truth** is learned, it must be upheld in an uncompromising manner. This rules out upholding, encouraging or supporting error to any degree. It forbids the "closing of our eyes" and "stopping of our ears" with regard to that which is wrong. Paul would not give in for even "***an hour***" to those "***false brethren***" who would have brought him "***into bondage***" (Gal. 2:4-5).

Those who are willing to compromise God's Truth even "in a small way," sadly often find no stopping place. But in the first place, we have no right to **sell** the truth in any amount, but rather should always be "***buying the truth***" (Prov. 23:23). **Standing for the truth** forbids fellowshiping error as Paul makes clear in Ephesians 5:11, when he said: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." We are living in a climate where there is an alarming disrespect for the authority of God's word. Until this changes, things will only worsen.

FIGHT FOR THE TRUTH

If anything on this earth was ever worth **fighting for**, Truth is! And that is exactly the message in Jude 3, where the writer commands us to "***contend for the faith...***" That word "contend" means to "***contend as a combatant.***" In the first century Truth was precious and brethren stood by it, even in the face of severe persecution, even death! If we love God's Truth now, we cannot afford to do less. We cannot remain silent and allow Truth to suffer at the hands of our **liberal** brethren.

Enemies of Truth may use intimidation and accusations to try to dampen the spirit of the faithful. One who **fighters for truth** may well be labeled as a: troublemaker, nitpicker, or any number of other terms of ridicule. **Liberals** are the enemies of the Truth of God.

MARK THOSE WHO TEACH FALSE DOCTRINE

To "***mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them***" (Rom. 16:17), is another of God's ways of dealing with **liberalism**. Yet, few are they who are willing to accept God's way in this case. To "***mark***" the teachers of error is to direct attention to them. This cannot be done without making known who they are, and the best way to do this is to follow Paul's example and call their names (1 Tim. 1:10-20; 2 Tim.

17-18). This is a **Scriptural response to liberalism**. It is not an uncommon thing now, for brethren who claim to stand up for the truth, to give known false teachers the “silent treatment,” for one cause or another. I’m reminded of the story someone told about the teacher who asked the children in her class: “Why was Daniel not eaten when he was thrown into the lion’s den?” One little boy spoke up and said: “Because he was all backbone.” There is a great “dearth” nowadays with regard to the need for “backbone.” I often think of how our Lord must be saddened when we as His professed servants are unwilling to defend His cause to the fullest as we are commanded to do.

APPOINT ONLY QUALIFIED ELDERS

Elders who are true elders according to the Book are: “*apt to teach,*” “ *Holding fast the faithful word*” and are “*able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers*” (I Tim. 3; Titus 1). Such men are hard to find, but God’s word is compromised when brethren settle for less. Appointing men who are inept and unqualified is an affront to God and His instructions in this very important matter.

Elders who don’t know **liberalism** when it appears, due to their lack of knowledge, are a great hurt to the church. Some don’t keep abreast of what is going on within the church and are unable to safely guard the flock against deadly error. It is a sad fact that many so-called **elders** do not meet the Scriptural qualifications on a number of counts. They are often lacking in knowledge and remiss even in areas where their duties are clearly understood. Some are not even trustworthy. And, in their lust for power, they may become “*Lords over God’s heritage*” (I Pet. 5:3), rather than examples to the flock which they are to oversee.

COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM

When **liberalism** gains control of a congregation and prospects for bringing about a change are hopeless, the faithful must **come out from among the liberals**, or else run the risk of actually aiding them and becoming partakers with them. It some times becomes necessary that division come, in order that Truth may be upheld. In I. Cor. 11:19, Paul wrote, “*For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*” Division is not always a bad thing, as when it results in support of Truth, rather than compromise with error. Some times brethren have such a fear of “division” that they will remain in a situation where error rules, and eventually become contributors to that error. Who could deny that it would be better for 15 faithful members to separate themselves from 50 members in error rather than to remain with them and all become partakers of wrong and be condemned?

BEGIN ANEW A QUEST FOR TRUTH

It is becoming more and more common to find areas where several congregations exist, and yet not a single one is seriously trying to walk in “*the old paths.*” In some of these congregations there are at least a few who love truth. What options do they have? They can continue in a situation where the love of truth does not abide, running the risk of succumbing to the prevailing influence. In this case, if one continues to support the situation in a financially way, that one becomes a partaker of the evil. Another

option is for those who love Truth and the right way, to band together in a united effort to worship and serve God acceptably, preaching and teaching the true gospel and opposing every false way.

The latter option could mean a few people meeting in someone's home, and abandoned store building, or some place "across the tracks," as many brethren did when **liberalism** captured most of the brethren about the turn of the past century. It could mean the use of a "tent-making preacher," at least for a time, until there is an increase in number and support.

If such as the above is not done, it is simply a matter of time until there are whole counties and cities wherein not a single loyal and faithful congregation can be found. Call this being an **alarmist**" if you will, but that will not change the facts! There are areas today where **liberalism** took over a century ago and for the most part still prevails. I'm dead serious when I say the "Bible Belt" is becoming a mission area where there is an urgent need for the preaching of the pure, and unadulterated gospel of Christ.

A WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE

In order to "*stand fast in the faith*" (I Cor. 16:13), it is some times necessary to **sacrifice**. But true and faithful Christians are sacrificial people. This is easily understood when we consider the fact that the Christian system was built upon the sacrifice of our Savior. The apostle Paul mad a far-reaching demand of the Roman Christians when he said, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*" (Rom. 12:1).

In the first century faithful Christians some times made the ultimate sacrifice of life itself, as was commanded by our Lord of the church Smyrna (Rev. 2:10). The likelihood that we will face a like situation today is remote, but if we would be true to the Lord we must be willing to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to remain faithful. That could involve our friends, relatives, and weak and compromising brethren. There is no question but that we must be ready to sacrifice in the area of time, effort, and money. But that is not all, even our jobs, business and livelihood could be affected. The extent to which we are willing to **sacrifice** is a test of our loyalty to God and of our love for His Truth. **Liberalism** has made inroads in many cases simply because brethren were not willing to sacrifice for the cause of Truth. In view of the sacrifices which faithful Christians may be called upon to make, perhaps it would be in order to pose the following question: "Do Christians who are unwilling to sacrifice to the fullest have a Scriptural basis for entertaining a living hope of an eternal reward in heaven?"

CONCLUSION

We have set forth the foregoing in an effort to alert caring brethren as to the state of things relative to **liberalism**, and to offer some Scriptural ways of responding to that danger. We have done so with the realization that some may say we are just being **negative** and **overreacting**. But the observations we have made are based upon valid evidence relating to the past forty or more years. The New Testament is replete with warnings relative to the very conditions which exist within the church today. We would do well to heed those warnings, and take appropriate actions to guard against such dangers.

Let no one conclude that I believe every member of the church has become a **liberal**. Though it is a matter of fact that a great many have done so, let God be thanked for those brethren who still love the Truth and are striving with all their might to live by it. Upon these faithful brethren so much depends. In the years to come their influence can mean so much relative to the course which the church will take. But if that influence is fully felt for good, it will demand **action in speaking out for the truth**,

and opposing every false way. The all-sufficient inspired word of God will provide the faithful with all the needed instructions to **“Fight the good fight of faith”** (I Tim. 6:12).

- - - Walter W. Pigg

Editor’s Note:

The above article was originally run about seven years ago. We are running it again because we believe it to be just as timely now, or even more so, than when it was first printed.. Then, too, many of our readers have never read the article.

Another reason for a rerun of the article is that **The Threat of Liberalism** is growing worse day by day. From all across our country, and even from foreign countries, come messages of concern. For the well-being of faithful brethren and the Lord’s church in particular, there is an urgent need to uphold God’s word, and contend against the error which is wreaking havoc upon the cause of Christ.

Within the past seven years a number of things have come on the scene, which were scarcely known before, which show the increase of **Liberalism**. Evidence of liberalism is being seen in such things as: 1) The Andy Griffith, so-called Bible Study. 2) “Progressive worship,” where people sway and bend and raise and wave their arms, etc. 3). Drama teams, skits, etc. 4) Choirs and other special singing groups. 5) Praise teams and whatever that involves. 6) Support of Billy Graham campaign. 7) Entertainment in a variety of forms. 8. Denominational fellowship and with false brethren is more common than ever.

The above, which has come on the scene in recent times or become more common, speaks of reality. All indications are that things will get even worse. The response to this condition is being seen in a pernicious spirit of indifference. Brethren, if we love the Lord and His truth, as many of us claim, how can we allow this to be happening? Are we coming to be like the Laodiceans, whom the Lord said he would vomit out of his mouth? Brethren, we need to pray for the well-being of the cause of Christ, and do all within our power to support and uphold it against all evil.

Godly Repentance

Marvin L. Weir

One who desires to go to heaven **must** repent of his sins. Jesus ties repentance with forgiveness in saying, *“Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him”* (Lk. 17:3). To fail to repent is to fail to obtain forgiveness. Repentance is defined by *Thayer* as: “to change one’s mind (heart), that is, to repent; to change one’s mind (heart) for the better, to amend heartily with abhorrence of our past sins.

Many definitions and ideas regarding re-pentance are woefully inadequate. To assist us in understanding what godly repentance is, let us first study what does not constitute godly repentance.

First, godly repentance is **not** simply being sorry for our sins. The Bible teaches that there is a right kind of sorrow and a wrong kind of sorrow. The apostle Paul affirms this truth in saying to the Corinthian brethren: *“I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death”* (2 Cor. 7:9-10). Godly sorrow works or produces repentance because the person has a sincere desire to correct his sinful wrongdoing and live

a life that pleases God. Worldly sorrow produces only spiritual death because the motivation (whatever it may be) is not to please God by conforming to His will.

Second. Godly repentance is **not** simply remorse over being caught in a sinful act. One may be embarrassed and sorry for his family's sake that his sin is now known by the general public. He may also be sorry that he was not more careful so that he would not be caught. This type of worldly sorrow, however, is not godly sorrow that leads to genuine repentance.

Third. Godly repentance is **not** simply making a change in the congregation that one attends. God's Word has long taught that a person's sins will find him out (Num. 32:23). Many brethren today are confronted because of their sinful actions (or when their sins become known) simply make the decision to change congregations. Brethren, just because others do not know about our sins does not mean that those have been repented of! We may indeed hide our sins from our fellowman, but we cannot hide our sins from God (cf. Heb. 4:12-13).

Fourth. Godly repentance is **not** simply slipping back in to the services of the Lord's church. Sometimes brethren quit attending the services of the church are out of duty for months or years before deciding to begin attending again. There is surely no more public and known sin than that of forsaking the assembly of the saints (cf. Heb. 10:25).

One who is employed by some company does not walk away from his job one day only to return months or years later anticipating to resume his normal duties and to receive full salary while not saying one word about his absence. Why do we convince ourselves that standards for worldly organizations are **higher** than those standards for the Lord's church? One's confession needs to be as public as his sins if repentance is genuine (cf. James 5:16; I John 1:9).

Let us now focus on what godly repentance is. **First**, godly repentance is a change of mind about myself. I am concerned about my spiritual condition and desire to do what is godly and right. I understand that the sin I am committing will not be excused just because I am the one committing it. The sorrow for my wrongdoing will lead to a change of heart and purpose. **Second**, godly repentance is a change of mind about sin. No longer is sin a lighthearted matter but rather something that is hated and abhorred. When one is no longer tempting to justify his sinful actions he will see sin for what it is. Drunkenness (Gal. 5:19) will no longer be called a disease, homosexuality (I Cor. 6:9) will no longer be called an alternate lifestyle, and fornication (I Cor. 6:9) will no longer be winked at as one "sowing wild oats." **Third**, godly repentance is a change of mind leading to a change of conduct. It was Hosea who said, "They return, but not to him that is on high..." (Hosea 7:16). One may return to some duties or engage in some external exercises but if he has not truly returned to God all these other things are to no avail.

John the baptizer taught the people to "*bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance*" (Matt. 3:8). Jesus said that "*by their fruits ye shall know them*" (Matt. 7:20). The prodigal son is an outstanding example of one who repented. He extricated himself from the hog pen of sin and admitted his sinful situation was his fault. He returned to his father and said, "*Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of thy hired servants*" (Lk. 15:18-19).

Let us make sure our repentance from sin is **godly repentance!**

P. O. Box 975, Rowlett, TX 75030

From The Editor

From our readers we receive a great deal of response in the form of: 1) Articles to be considered for publication. 2) Questions concerning the teaching of God's word. 3) Articles or information from other publications. 4) Notes of compliment and criticism. These responses are appreciated.

We try to respond to most requests but in some cases we simply don't have time. Therefore, if our readers don't hear from us, we encourage them to bring to our attention and perhaps we can help.

When articles are sent for possible publications we offer the following suggestions: 1) Send material in manuscript form, that is typed double-spaced, with margins of at least an inch. 2) Never use all capital letters or color. 3) Divide material into paragraph, and indent the first line of the paragraph. 4). Give attention to punctuation, and spelling. Limit the number of exclamation marks and bold face type. 5) Give full name and address. 6) We prefer original articles. 7) We do not run articles, intentionally, by those who are known false teachers.

Observing the above suggestions is very helpful to us, saving us a lot of time. If an article is not well written, it may require more time than we have to make editorial changes. We cannot use all articles received, even though the article may be a good one. If your article is not used soon it may be used later.

IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?

Alton W. Fonville

I continue to be amazed at the ridicule which dedicated Christians receive when trying to walk with God and do His bidding. The young shepherd, David, withstood some harsh words uttered by his own older brothers, when he was thinking of killing Goliath because he had defied the armies of the living God. The older brothers tried in vain to deter David from his mission, but he answered with those famous words, **“Is There Not A Cause?”** (I Sam. 17:29). He then proceeded to let God be avenged through him, as discussed in I Samuel 17.

Today, we see similar tactics being used by some of our own, as well as outsiders. When the God of Heaven is being defied, and his word is held in contempt, that is sufficient “cause” for the faithful to go on the defensive. It is time to “speak up”: and “speak out” against those who openly defy God and treat His word “lightly.”

Do you remember the teaching of Jesus, regarding the kingdom of heaven, the church, as recorded in Matthew 22? The king had prepared a marriage feast and had invited the guests, but when it was time, they chose not to come and “made light of it,” and went their ways. The king was wroth and sent messengers to destroy those who had made light of his invitation, calling them “murderers.” Was there not a “cause”? And the story continued, inviting others to the feast. One of those who did not abide by the usual laws and customs, and went to the wedding feast unpre

pared, doing “his own thing,” not honoring the king. The king had the man bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness. Was there not a cause?

In the days of Samuel, God demonstrated His anger on “fifty thousand and threescore and ten men” (I Sam. 6:19), killing them because they took His word lightly and simply “looked into the ark of the covenant.” God had spoken about that many years earlier, but the people regarded it not, and paid the sacrifice with their lives (I Sam. 6). God’s word was true then and it is true today as well. Was there not a cause?

When God said to His people, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate ...” (2 Cor. 6:17), with regard to those who defy Him by not following His word, He meant it. We cannot fellowship the prevalent denominational teachings around us today. We must not agree with them for “an hour,” but need rather to speak out with love to those who espouse them, showing them the danger facing them if they continue in them. Our speech and actions should be clear and decisive and as distinctive as the New Testament writers. Faithful Christians should not be characterized by a mixed language — part from Christ and part from Ashdod.

Is There Not A Cause? Most certainly, when God’s word is being compromised on the right and on the left, and many of our brethren still ask, “What are you making such a big fuss about?”

337 Madison 4605, Saint Paul, AR 72760

MISCELLANEA

Planned Articles: 1) A discussion of the growing innovation known as “Lads to Leaders.” 2) The Rise and Fall of the Madison church of Christ. 3) An Update on The False Religion of Islam.

Address Changes: We greatly appreciate those who send us their change of address. This saves us both time and money.

Banner of Truth can be mailed in a bundle of 16 or less for only \$1.24. We will pay the postage. We only need someone to make sure the copies are passed out to those will read them.

B.O.T. Late. We still have intentions of catching up, but it seems hard to do. This March issue is several days late due to the fact that I spent several days doing physical work. I helped our son-in-law, Alan Adams, build a storage building on his place in Cantonment, FL. But that has been good for me. I just needed a little time away from my regular work. Though I have much help in getting BOT ready to mail, I do not have secretarial help. I spend many hours doing paper work and at the computer. Retired? Hardly! - - - *Editor*

Second Annual Banner of Truth Lectures

Murray, Kentucky, June 24-27, 002

Theme: Church Growth — As God Would Have It

Sponsored by: Dexter and Hickory Grove Churches of Christ

***Location: Curris Center, Murray State University, Chestnut St.
Theater, Third Floor***

Monday, June 24th

10:00 a.m. God Would Have His Church to Grow

Gilbert Gough

11:00 a.m. Church Growth Requires Leadership

Lindon Ferguson

Break for Lunch

1:30 p.m. Church Growth through “Progressive
Worship”

Freddie Clayton

2:30 p.m. Church Growth Through Scriptural
Fellowship

Ken Burlison

3:30 p.m. Church Growth Through Gospel
Meetings

Dean Buchanan

Evening Meal Break

7:00 p.m. Preaching the Whole Counsel of God
Virgil Hale

8:00 p.m. Growth Through Foreign Mission Work
Roger Campbell

Tuesday, June 25th

10:00 a.m. Church Growth Through Personal Work
Roger Campbell

11:00 a.m. Church Growth Through the Sincere
Milk of the Word
Gilbert Gough

Break for Lunch

1:30 p.m. Church Growth Through Writing
Alan Adams

2:30 p.m. Church Growth Through Entertainment
Freddie Clayton

3:30 p.m. The Lord’s Distinctive Church — Not
A Denomination
David Lemmons

Evening Meal Break

7:00 p.m. Church Growth Seminars
Dean Buchanan

8:00 p.m. Church Growth Through Special
Singing Groups
Richard Guill

Wednesday, June 26th

10:00 a.m. Church Growth Through Evangelism
David Lemmons

11:00 a.m. Church Growth And The Plague of
Indifference
Walter W. Pigg

Break for Lunch

1:30 p.m. Church Growth and “Lads to Leaders”

Virgil Hale

2:30 p.m. Our Schools and Church Growth

Richard Guill

3:30 p.m. Truth Presented in Love

Jimmy Bates

Evening Meal Break

7:00 p.m. Church Growth and Islam

Don Waggoner

8:00 p.m. Youth and Potential Church Growth

Alan Adams

Thursday, June 27th

10:00 a.m. Church Growth Through Scriptural
Worship

Tim Hester

11:00 a.m. The Home And Church Growth

Lenard Hogan

Break for Lunch

1:30 p.m. Prayer And Church Growth

??

2:30 p.m. Church Growth By Contending For
The Faith

Don Waggoner

3:30 p.m. Understanding God’s Word And
Church Growth

Jimmy Bates

Evening Meal Break

7:00 p.m. Training Men To Preach And Church
Growth

Ken Burlison

8:00 p.m. The Heavenly Reward — A Reason
For Church Growth

Lenard Hogan

The Second Annual *Banner of Truth* Lectures will include 28 lessons on a wide variety of subjects, with seven lessons each day. There will be four or five new speakers.

The theme of the lectures: “Church Growth — As God Would Have It To Be,” is a very timely subject. The Lord’s church is not experiencing numerical growth, as God would have it to be. There is overwhelming evidence that God intends for His church to grow, but there are conditions of acceptable growth. Some of the things being done now to attract numbers are not authorized by God’s word, but are works of men. God-approved growth involves quality as well as quantity. In some cases where numbers are increasing, spiritual growth is declining at a rapid rate.

In the next issue of *Banner of Truth* we will be providing information about lodging. The cost of motels is quite reasonable here in Murray.

Our brother, Jim Green will be making video and audio tapes of all the lectures.

We want our visitors to enjoy their stay in Murray, and to be greatly edified by the good lessons which will be presented. These lectures are not “Just for preachers,” but for anyone who loves God’s truth and wants to know more of it. This is too great an opportunity to miss!!! The church is suffering greatly from a lack of knowledge. The lectures will provide a great opportunity to learn from a number of well qualified speakers. No “new” truth will be presented, but we need the old.

We will provide contacts for further information in the next issue of BOT, but until then, you may call me at (270) 753-3675, or Tim Hester at (270) 767-0625. Do let us hear from you if we can help. – *Editor*

FELLOWHELPERS

Januray and February 2002

Lou Nell Elkins	50.00
L. R. Devore	5.00
Elizabeth Sublett	30.00
James M. Pitts	100.00
Robert M. Price	400.00
Lucile Krants	25.00
Kitty B. Wood	15.00
Carl E. Miller	5.00
Larry Pennington	50.00
Joe F. Travis	25.00
Anonymous	50.00
Josephine King	5.00
Virginia McCoy	120.00
Darlene Kirk	20.00
Mrs. John H. Brown	25.00
Anonymous	100.00
E. J. Oliver	20.00
Harold Gibson	20.00
Donald R. Shifflet	200.00
Jayne Massey	20.00
Maria Box	20.00
Andy Shanks	120.00
Royce Adams	360.00
Greel Plain church of Christ	50.00
Alhambra church of Christ	50.00
Holly Pond church of Christ	250.00

Maple Hill	500.00
Memorial Parkway church of Christ	100.00
Midway (Memory of Donna Curless)	50.00
Berea church of christ	100.00
Hornbeak church of Christ	200.00
Southaven church of Christ	75.00
West Road church of Christ	<u>200.00</u>
Total Jan. and Feb. contribution	3,360.00

***“That we may be fellowhelpers
to the truth” (3 John 8)***

The way our concerned brethren supply the necessary finances to carry on our work is indeed most encouraging! We are thankful for you as our *fellowhelpers* to *the truth*. - *Editor*

Banner of Truth Financial Report

January and February 2002

Balance on hand Jan. 1, 2002	13,215.30
Jan. and Feb. contribution	<u>3,360.00</u>
Total Funds Available	16,575.30

Jan. and Feb. expenses:

Mailing Banner of Truth	1,274.18
Negatives and developer	204.11
Misc. Supplies	100.17
Postage	85.00
Phone	9.77
Envelopes	19.16
Labels	52.62
Internet (six months)	<u>90.00</u>
Total Jan. and Feb. expenses	1,835.01

Total funds available	16,575.30
Total Jan. and Feb. expenses	<u>1,835.01</u>
Total on hand Feb. 28, 2002	14,740.29

Evil In The Name of Religion

It is a matter of history that much evil has been done in the name of religion. Islam had its beginning by the power of the sword. In recent years it has become evident that the evil of the Islamic religion was not limited to the early years of its beginning. The example of Sept. 11th is a case in point. The conflict in Palestine can be attributed to the Islamic religion and its goal of doing away with Israel. This is not without strong evidence.

The Roman Catholic Church has gotten a great deal of attention in recent times. Evil within the Catholic Church is not new. History records the terror of the Crusades, and much evil in centuries be-

fore that. The sexual sins that have come to light recently makes it clear that this religious organization has not been honest and forthright in dealing with evil. Yet, the Pope claims to be the “vicar” of Christ on earth. Can you imagine Christ upholding and approving the sin that has been taking place in the Catholic Church?

How can people who care about God and His will for man be a part of a religion which is characterized by evil, as are Islam and the Catholic Church? - *Ed.*

READERS' RESPONSE

“We hope you and your wife are doing well. I visited the preachers school in Pensacola, Florida and got acquainted with your son-in-law, Alan Adams. Fifty four years ago I received my discharge from the Navy at Pensacola. I was impressed with the school...- **Gene Johnson.**” - **MO.** (*Glad you got to visit. Though the school is not very large, it is growing and it offers an excellent program of learning. Ed.*).

“You have been sending a bundle of Banner of Truth to the congregation here. Frankly, I have a difficult time getting brethren to pick up and read literature. I have taken left-over copies with me to various lectureships and meetings, but I do not want to see any of them wasted through un-use. So please cut our bundle... By the way, I have enjoyed reading the exchange regarding “special singing.” Though I have heard numerous brethren seek to justify such, all such defenses fell far too short, in my estimation. I have just never been comfortable with that practice, and I heartily commend the practice’s examination in light of Scripture. Thanks again for a worthwhile publication... - **John H. Brown.**” - **KY.** (*I can well remember when the denominations used to be criticized by our brethren for their “choirs.” Well, now that we have our own choirs we don’t hear as much criticism. With some it is like the Christian Church and their instrumental music. “We like it and we are going to have it!” - Editor.*).

“We here at the Deer church of Christ very much enjoy the wonderful publication and work of the Lord that you and other other writers of BOT are doing! It is so refreshing to see solid, sound and scriptural material being written for people to read. It is very discouraging to see articles written by ‘members of the Lord’s church’ only to find out that it is nothing but a bunch of denominational garbage. We all need to be on our guard to fight off this ‘wile’ of the devil. With BOT we know that we are getting the truth, not a bunch of garbage! It is also sad to see people wanting their subscriptions canceled, it just makes you wonder if they have forsaken the Lord for some watered down, man made denominational junk that will lead them to hell. May God continue to bless you all in the wonderful task that you have been doing - **Kelly Woods.**” - **AR.** (*There cannot be too much literature if it upholds God’s truth. But a great deal of what is being written does not have the ring of distinctiveness which should characterize profitable writing. I’m simply appalled at the efforts to make of the Lord’s blood-bought church just another denomination among the hundreds which now exist. It makes one wonder just what motivates some of our own brethren. Some are becoming “enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil. 3:18). - Editor.*).

“Several months ago we moved, and I have really been missing Banner of Truth. It would be appreciated if you would begin sending BOT to my new address as soon as possible. If you have some back copies of the issues for the last six or eight months I would appreciate receiving them.

Enclosed is a contribution to help in the publication of BOT, and the great work you are doing. God bless you and your good work - **R. D. Lawson.**" - **FL.** (*We usually have some back copies and are happy to send them when people ask for them - Editor*).

"I have really appreciated you mailing your bulletin to me. As this time, I am spending a little too much time in sorting the many bulletins that I receive. As much as I appreciate getting your bulletin, I am going to ask that you take me off of your mailing list as this time - **Keith McNeely.** **AR.** (*We realize that BOT is not preferred reading for some, and we appreciate it when people let us know they no longer want to receive it - Editor*).

"Please add my name to your mailing list. May God bless your work in standing for sound doctrine - **Roger Genung.**" - **AR.** (*Happy to add your name. - Editor*).

"Enclosed is a small amount to help with the publication of your 'Banner of Truth.' Your articles are very informative and an encouragement to me. I especially appreciated the articles on the Muslim religion because of many of them are employed in my workplace. I look forward to the next issue of your publication - **Jayne Massey.**" - **TX.** (*We are encouraged by the interest shown in learning more about the Islamic religion. We need to know. Already, our lives here in America are being greatly affected. Many don't understand the evil nature of the Islamic religion. Thanks for your help for BOT. Tell others about the paper. - Editor*).

"I am told that we might be able to purchase certain editions of "**Banner of Truth**" by the bundle (16 per?). If so, we would like to purchase the two editions concerning 'Islam.' ... I believe there is a certain amount of ignorance among brethren concern the religion of Islam and how it compares to Christianity, the truth, John 8:32. My intention is to make available these copies of "**Banner of Truth**" so as to help acquaint the brethren through faithful disciples who use pure truth as a standard of comparison. Might you help me identify those appropriate editions and mail them to the above address. Please include the amount of payment due. thank you - **Bill Trees.**" **IA.** (*We don't charge for BOT, but any contribution is always appreciated, since that is the means by which we make the paper possible. Our supply is almost gone, but perhaps I can send a few. We've had many requests them. We plan an update on Islam soon - Editor*). See next page

"Please find enclosed five dollars toward the Lord's work. I would enjoy the monthly publication. I know I can't learn too much about the Lord's word. May God bless - **Josephine King.**" - **OH.** (*I would that all people felt as you do about learning God's word! Thanks for the money. We greatly appreciate every gift that is make to make our work possible - Editor*).

"We hope you and yours are doing well, and thank you for an excellent paper. We hope it can continue for a long, long time - **Arthur Grisham, for the West Road church of Christ.**" - **AR.** (*We thank the brethren there for their interest in the true Gospel of Christ, and for their help in our work. I look forward to publishing BOT as long as I'm able. I believe it is the most productive work that I've ever done. But at my age of 76 I'm finding it harder to keep up with my work! I need some good retired family to move to the area to be helpers with the paper. Give the brethren there our regards - Editor*).

"Since I've moved I'm sending my new address. I'm enclosing a check for Banner of Truth - **Mrs. Virginia F. Mccoy.**" - **OH.** (*Thanks for sending change of address. And, thanks for the generous contribution to help with our work - Editor*).

"I hope you and Naomi are keeping well. I'm just writing to let you know how much I am enjoying receiving Banner of Truth. I have especially found helpful your recent articles on Islam. Keep up the good work and may God continue to bless you - **Glen Tattersall.**" - **Tasmania.**

(Good to hear from you. We pray for the success of your efforts in that down-under country! - Editor).

“Refused. Return to Sender - **Bethany Church of Christ.” - KY. (BOT is not for everyone. - Editor).**

“Please send me back issues of B.O.T. Can’t thank you enough for B>O.T. - Mrs. Darlene Kirk.” - MI.

“Just a note to say ‘thank you’ for your treatment of the dangers of Islam in the Oct. and Nov. issues of Banner of Truth.’ I’m preparing lessons for our Duluth Lectures (May 18-22) on the topic of ‘World Religions vs. the Bible.’ I will deal with Islam and have found your material very helpful. With your permission, I will use several quotes from it...Keep up the good work - Rod Rutherford.” - GA. (Feel free to use it as desired. -Ed.)

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

Visit BOT on David Lemmons’ web at

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

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