

Banner of Truth

"The truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

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Are You Willing to Stand, See and Ask for The Old Paths, the Good Way, Where You May Find Rest for Your Soul?

There are many new paths in this world of sin, and most people are walking therein. This is so sad because only in the Lord's "old paths" can be found the remedy for soul-condemning sin.

Our subject for discussion is based on the words of the Lord as spoken by the Weeping Prophet, Jeremiah. For a ready reference, note the verse in its entirety:

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. (6:16)

Spoken by Jeremiah and rejected by the people, the Lord's pleading and authoritative statement is often referred to by preachers, teachers, and others; but, some of the outstanding and worthwhile lessons are often overlooked. We shall note a few of those lessons for our readers' consideration.

Before noting those lessons, we shall explain our usage of this well known Old Testament passage as it applies in principle to us who are living under the New Covenant, or Testament. The

apostle Paul said, "For whatsoever things were written afore time were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

It would be difficult to find an Old Testament passage which is of greater importance than this containing the words of Jeremiah. This is true due to the fact that in our time, walking in the old paths, as it applies in principle, is just as important as it was for people in Jeremiah's time.

The old paths of Jeremiah's day had reference to those things which God had approved in the past, and which things still had His approval; the people, then, still needed to walk therein to have God's approval and be the recipients of His promised blessings.

The old paths refer to us in principle today, in that the New Covenant came about two thousand years ago. It has not changed and will not change. But it is *old* in the sense that it has been in existence →

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for a long time. Just as the people in Jeremiah's time needed to look and "ask for the old paths," we need to look and ask for the Gospel of Christ as it was in the First Century when it was given. Just as Israel had turned away from the right way and needed to get back on the right paths, so we, the church, should do the same thing. Herein lie our "old paths"; we need to ask for them and walk in the "good way."

The first great lesson in the passage is found in the very beginning, a lesson with which every accountable person must come to terms.

I. "THUS SAITH THE LORD"

If one is to be a follower and worshipper of the Lord, what the Lord says is not just important, it is *all* important. There is no aspect of religion that is more important than that of authority. Christianity — true christianity — is the only God-ordained religion on earth, and what the Lord says is the only true authority. Any religion which does not derive its authority from the what the Lord says is a false religion, the

end of which is eternal destruction of the soul of man.

Space does not allow us to go into a detailed discussion of the pagan religions of the world. Our discussion, therefore, primarily involves those who identify themselves as "christians." According to a just issued report, this category includes about a third of the world's population. It should be noted that among those professing to be christians, there are almost endless difference as to what is believed and practiced. This, of course, goes back to the subject of authority. By whose authority do they teach and practice such a wide variety of things, which are often very contradictory and not in harmony with God's word?

As far as I know, about everyone who claims to be a Christian in the broad sense of the term, would say they look to the Lord as their authority in religion. But is this the truth? It cannot be, since truth does not contradict itself. Truth teaches the same thing to all people, regardless of whether they accept it. People typically only accept truth in part.

With so many claiming the Lord as their authority, why are there so many things which disprove it? For example, why do these religions have various guides which originated by uninspired men? Most of the religions have some source of authority other than God's word as recorded in the Bible — creeds, confessions of faith, disciplines and what have you. Everyone of these guides, sources of authority, contain more than the Bible or less than the Bible. If this were not so, then all could say, "We take God's word, as recorded in the Bible as our only source of authority." But, given the virtually daily increase of so-called Christian religions, we know this is not the way it is.

There is an increased rejection of God's word as the only authority for faith and practice within the Lord's church. Many of us well remember the time when most of our brethren required a "thus saith the Lord" as authority for our teaching and practice. It is not that way now. An increasing number of brethren, including elders and preachers, are running roughshod over God's inspired word as the only authority for living the christian life. Sadder still is the fact that few seem to care. Indifference has been

one of the greatest contributors to this sad state.

This wholesale veering from the only true authority in religion includes a number of things. True worship is being profaned by unscriptural innovations such as choruses, instrumental music, and things designed to entertain. The increasing role of women in the church is a violation of God's word. Various things are being promoted by many congregations as works of the church, which were never works of the church. These things are happening simply because people have lost respect for "thus saith the lord." This has opened the floodgates for pernicious liberalism to sweep over our brotherhood like the waters of a deadly deluge. More could be said, but we turn now to another point in the text.

II. "STAND YE IN THE WAYS, AND SEE"

The picture here is that of a traveler at the junction of a number of ways. He must make a choice as to which he will take. The choosing of a way is worthy of his most serious and thoughtful consideration, due to the fact that there are many ways which lead to the wrong place; destruction, rather than heavenly reward. Therefore, life's most important choice is involved.

When we think about the condition we face in our time, it is rather frightening. Just think of all the religious ways that are before men today. There are literally hundreds of religious groups which claim to be authorized by God; yet, God has approved only one way for ours and all times, the way of Christ.

There are ways today which condone and uphold all manner of things which God has condemned. This includes homosexuality, the sin which brought about the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and which is still a violation of God's will (Rom. 1:26-28; 1Cor. 6:9). There are man-made churches which exist without God's authority and allow many things contrary to God's will. We are reminded that "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). What *seems right* is not the basis for serving the Lord acceptably, rather than which the Lord says.

The Lord not only said, "Stand ye in the ways," but He also said "see." I have not yet figured out why it is that people generally need less evidence for what they

practice in religion than they need in any other area of life; yet, this is the most important area of one's entire life. When it comes to seeing that which is right religiously speaking, blindness often prevails where it does not do so in secular things.

It is often the case that people simply do not want to see. It is harder still to understand why people want to see that which brings condemnation rather than eternal life, but that it is the way it is. People do not change much with the passing of time. The prophet Isaiah speaks of a "rebellious people...which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits" (Isa. 30:9, 10). We see the very same thing today in those who do not want to hear the truth in its completeness. An example of this is the Banner of Truth lectures conducted for the past six years in Murray, Kentucky. The Seventh Annual Lectures will fall this year, June 25 — 28.

People from many places have traveled to enjoy these lectures; yet, the greater portion of members of the church right here in our area do not darken the door to hear any of the twenty-eight lessons which are delivered by capable people. They do not stay away because error is taught; thus, it must be because of the truth that is taught, or that people simply do not care about hearing.

Christ points out the cause for some not seeing. He spoke to them in parables "because they seeing see not and; and hearing they hear not" (Matt. 13:13). Speaking of the Pharisees, who did not want to see the truth, Christ said, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14). Even within the Lord's church today, we see the very same thing which characterized the Pharisees. Blind leaders are leading blind people. They are going to fall into the ditch of destruction, because they will not see for themselves.

People are not seeing today because it is impossible for them to see, but rather because they do not desire to see "the truth" which makes men "free" (Jno. 8:32) can be known. Paul calls attention to the fact that every scripture inspired of God "thoroughly furnish[es]" the man of God "unto all →

good works” (2Tim. 3:16-17). People can see if they want to see, and will be held accountable for choosing not to see.

Since God’s word is all-sufficient as a guide, and since people can “see” it, there is no reason why the wrong paths should be chosen. But the will or desire of man comes into play. In the words of Jeremiah it is expressed as follows:

III. “ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS”

One of the great problems today is the fact that people are not asking for the old paths. One can no more accidentally walk in the old paths, than they can live a christian life by accident. There must be a desire to know the truth, God’s way. Christ said, “If any will come after me...” (Matt. 16:24). In Jeremiah’s time, the people did not want to walk in the right way; that has not changed with a great many people of today.

The New Testament warns concerning those who would choose paths which God does not approve. Paul said, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith...” (1Tim. 4:1-3); and, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth...” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). When people willingly refuse the old paths, God will not forcibly deter them from going farther from Him. We know this from what Paul said with regard to those who “receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved.” With sobering words, Paul says, “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2Thess. 2:10-12).

The “old paths” represent God’s will, and asking of them emphasizes following God’s will. The old paths have reference to those ways that had been followed by God’s people in the past and which had God’s blessings. “Paths” — the plural — does not mean that God had different wills or truths for; rather it refers to different teachings of God’s law as it applied to various aspects of one’s life. In the very next statement, Inspiration refers to “the old paths” as “the good way,” using the singular. It is men of today who

say there are many ways to heaven, not God.

There was actually one way of pleasing the Lord when He spoke to Jeremiah, just as there is one way of pleasing the Lord today. The Psalmist said, “Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies” (Psa. 25:8-10). Christ makes it clear that there is just one way that we must follow to have God’s approval. He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jno. 14:6).

Just as Israel had strayed from “the old paths” and needed to ask for the “good way,” so do those who make up the Lord’s church today. We have strayed so far from christianity that came to the world in the First Century through the all-sufficient word of God. A majority has lost its way having rejected the “good way.” The desire for “the sincere milk of the word” (1Pet. 2:2) has waned and many of those who have been members of the church for decades are still “babes.” The writer of Hebrews speaks of those who should be teachers, yet they still needed the “first principles of the oracles of God,” though they had need of “meat.” On a milk diet, they were “unskillful in the word of righteousness” and still babes (Heb. 5:12-14). How apt is the above description of many congregations today?

There are a number of reasons why people should ask for the old paths, but one outstanding reason is expressed in the Lord’s words:

IV. “WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY”

One eternally costly problem of today is that many do not know what the “good way” is, or where it is found. In my time, people’s concept of good and evil has drastically changed. Many people determined *good* in terms of material things, or that which satisfies the lust of the flesh.

The good way seen by many promises nothing this side of eternity. This has been a problem with man from the very beginning. This perverted “good way” is only about satiating desires in this life. Consider the church at Laodicea. She was “rich and increased with goods” and had “need of nothing” (Rev. 3:15-17). †

Those brethren saw no need for anything in the world to come, as do so many today.

In just a few decades, our society's views have changed drastically relative to the concepts of good and evil. Because of a general belief in God's word, it used to be that most people had some moral guidelines, even if in many cases they did not profess any religion. Now that the influence of God is being banished from more and more areas of our society, moral guidelines are fast disappearing.

Much of this can be attributed to the political world in our present day. It is so sad when politicians make an appeal to people by promising that which is against God.

The Lord pronounced a series of "woes" upon various classes of people; one of which is "woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." (Isa. 5:20). Needless to say that those under the "woes" would pay a price, that of being lost if no repentance. Our actions in this life on earth are setting the stage for an eternal existence.

How well does the above woe apply to our society today? Just think of some of what is being called "good," though it is in direct conflict with the teaching of God's word. To a growing number of people abortion is good; homosexuality is good; sexual permissiveness and living together out of wedlock is good; lying is good; and we could go on and on with many things.

Though members of the church have not gone to the same extent in these things as our society in general, it is having its influence. A number of things which used to be viewed by Christians as evil are now matters of little concern.

It is good to "see" and ask for "the old paths," but this is not all that is involved. If one comes to know God's will, and what is necessary to please Him, action is still required. The Lord said of the good way:

V. "AND WALK THEREIN"

It is indeed good to know the Lord's will; and it is so sad that few know so little of it. But for those who know His will, there must also be the doing of it. Even though a considerable number of people have

come to know much of what is in the Bible, and given that such knowledge is of great value; yet, if there is no "walk[ing] therein" what has it profited a man? It is anecdotally said that Nikita Khrushchev committed much of the Bible to memory; yet, here was a person who did not even believe in God. There is no doubt but that Billy Graham knows much of God's word, yet when has he ever told people what God says to do to be saved?

Paul says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2Cor. 5:7). Walking by faith demands that we walk in accordance with God's word, the source of faith (Rom. 10:17).

Living according to God's will requires that kind of love which is manifested in action, not just by words. John says, "For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments..." (1 Jno. 5:3). Christ said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," and "If a man love me, he will keep my words..." (Jno. 14:15, 23).

It is not a selfish matter to look forward to what is in store for those who walk in the old paths. Much of God's word has to do with that very thing. There are also many warnings of the judgment that is to come if we fail to do so. The Lord variously describes the reward awaiting His faithful servants. In our passage, through Jeremiah says:

VI. "AND YE SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS"

Being a member of the Lord's blood-bought church is a great thing, but even more is required if one is to receive a crown of life. The apostle Paul should serve as a great example for us, in that he demonstrated his faith by his actions and looked forward to a great reward. "I," he said, "have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith..." (2Tim. 4:7). It was on this basis that he could say, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness..." (v. 8).

The great reward for walking in the old paths should motivate us to make this the very highest priority in life. In fact, Christ said we are to seek first "the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). We rightly sing, "Heaven will surely be worth it all."

There is much said about *rest* relative to the faithful Christian. Christ, in what we call the →

Universal Invitation, says, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). Rest is so appealing to one who is tired: This is true in the physical realm and it should have even a greater appeal in the spiritual realm. Having our Lord’s approval involves serving Him. A life of serving Him requires continuing efforts. Paul expressed it this way, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1Cor. 15:58). Then there is that great unending reward of rest at the end of the way.

The idea of *eternal rest* is a prominent subject in many places in God’s word. The many instances of rest in the Old Testament serve as a type of true rest; the antitype being the eternal rest in the home of the soul. One passage in the New Testament that stands out as being a great example of the great importance of rest is found in Hebrews 4:1-11.

God rested on the seventh day, having created the heavens and the earth in six days (v.4). Then writer continues to talk about rest saying, “For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (vv. 8-9). The rest given to Israel in Canaan was only a type of the heavenly rest. The rest of the Sabbath was also a type. John said, “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13).

Along with the promises of a rest, there are a number of warnings as to the danger of failing to enter that rest. Of those who worship the beast, John says, “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day or night...” (Rev. 14:11). The Spirit also warns, “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbeliever” (Heb. 4:11). So many of the Israelites fell short of the rest in Canaan; worse are the many of all times, including ours, who failed and are failing for the same reason.

No amount of earthly gain pursuing our lusts can compensate for the loss of the heavenly rest which

can be ours if we desire it above every thing else. The loving Savior raised a timeless question which should be forever before us in the way we live and in everything we do — “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall man give in exchange for his souls?” (Matt. 16:26).

As sad as it is, few people today are walking in the old paths today wherein is the good way. This is in spite of all that God and His Son have done for unworthy man. An everlasting sacrifice has been made for man, to enable him to be cleansed from soul-condemning sin. An all-sufficient revelation has been give to man to enable him to walk in the old paths, the good way.

In spite of all the goodness extended to unworthy man, today it is so much like it was in the days of Jeremiah. People’s response to a loving Lord is one of indifference, denial and outright rebellion. About so many today it could be truthfully said:

VI. “BUT THEY SAID, WE WILL NOT WALK THEREIN”

Time after time the Israelites showed this attitude. God would bring them into line, they would begin to prosper, but they would soon turn away; even to the point of engaging in idolatry, a sin which God hates, and will keep people from heaven.

We have seen and are seeing much of the same thing among God’s people today, the body, the church of Christ. Near the end of the first century John said, “many false prophets are gone out into the word” (1Jno. 4:1). They are still around; and consequently, in more recent times, we have seen great changes within the church. Back in the 1950s, we had the distinction of being the fastest growing religion in our country. But we are very far from that today. Why is this so? To a great degree it is due to the very same attitude of the Israelites in Jeremiah’s day. People are not going to “walk therein,” and they often do not fail to let it be known. All indications are that we have not seen the worst yet. If we would only awaken to reality.

A great portion of the book of Jeremiah is made up of warnings of what would happen to Israel for their failure to listen to God’s word, and their

sins. Time after time Jeremiah uses such expressions as: “Thus saith the Lord”; “The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord”; “Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh”; “And the Lord said”; and, “Then said the Lord unto me.” So, when the Lord said unto Jeremiah, “The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart” (14:14), it should have carried some weight. This should sound a warning with regard to false teachers in our day, when they proclaim things which God has not said. This great emphasis upon the fact that Jeremiah’s message was from the Lord, should have caused the people to listen, but it did not. We should be no less impressed today, than those in Jeremiah’s day, that the New Testament is God’s word.

Jeremiah was distinct in the way he expressed his feelings with regard to the wayward people. He said, “Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow” (14:17). He was also known for his perseverance. He continued to preach though with little result. The religion of Israel was at that time like much of today’s religion; that is, purely of an external nature. Lip service is given when there is little from the heart.

Israel did not like to hear the Lord’s word as spoken by Jeremiah, as it so often condemned the people for their actions. When they do not like what the word says, people sometimes take it out on those who proclaim it, rather than on the Author of the word, the Lord himself. When Samuel was displeased with Israel for wanting a king, “...the Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them” (1Sam. 8:7).

Though Israel was rejecting the Lord because they did not like what He was saying through Jeremiah, they sought vengeance against Jeremiah. In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the Lord, through Jeremiah said: “Thus saith the Lord; Stand in the court

of the Lord’s house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord’s house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word” (26:2). “When Jeremiah had made an end of his speaking all the Lord had commanded him...the priests and prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die” (26:8). They pursued this course when the priests and prophets “spake unto all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with our own ears” (26:11). When Jeremiah told the people to do with him as that which seemeth good, the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets: “This man is not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God” (v. 16). But that did not satisfy all.

Jeremiah was accused of “fall[ing] away to the Chaldeans” (37:13), and the princes “smote him, and put him in prison,” and was then put “into the dungeon” for many days (v. 16).

Today, when people stand up for the truth they may well be persecuted, as Paul says, “...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). Personal experience has shown that when they cannot prove things by the Bible, some are not beneath false witness or even outright lying.

Who is willing to ask for and walk in the old paths? Most of the religious world is saying, “We will not walk therein.” But my greatest concern is the number of our own brethren who are saying the same thing; and, they are demonstrating that they really mean this. If people are not willing to walk therein, then all manner of unscriptural innovations may be expected. And, that is exactly what we are seeing. More and more there is less and less that shows the distinctiveness of true christianity.

Brethren, we need to go back to the old paths of the first century. Just going back to the paths of fifty years ago, the church would take on a new look of respect for God’s word.

The old paths constitute the only good way where rest for our souls can be found. All other paths lead to eternal destruction. Even if nine out of ten follow those paths, the end will be the same. —Editor

The Influence of the Hickory Grove Congregation through Banner of Truth

About fourteen years ago my wife and I moved to our present location. I brought the Banner of Truth with me, and the Hickory Grove congregation became the sponsor of it. Since that time our circulation has increased from just a few hundred to nearly eight thousand. I have served as the Editor of the paper since its beginning, and our son-in-law, Alan Adams, serves as the Assistant Editor.

Through Banner of Truth, Hickory Grove has become known to nearly every state in the U.S. and in at least twelve foreign countries. Hickory Grove, a small country congregation can be thankful for reaching through the printed page people that would not have been reached otherwise.

Messages of appreciation have been received from just about every state in the U.S. and from each of the aforementioned foreign countries. In a number of instances the paper has been used as a teaching tool in Bible classes. To give some idea of the kind of responses we receive from readers, we are including a sizeable number, most of which are from this year of 2007. We receive numerous responses by e-mail, telephone and letters, all of which we cannot print. Some responses are too long and others may not be for publication.

Given such a glowing report, one might ask: "Do we receive any critical response?" Of course we do. Though well over ninety per cent of the responses we receive are positive, we do have a small number who desire to be removed from our mailing list because they disagree with the material we carry.

We invite people to respond to the material we carry, and if we received no negative response that would signify that something is wrong. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you," the Lord said. One purpose of the Banner of Truth is to combat error as Scripture teaches we must. That being the case, whereas we do not try to purposely provoke negative responses, we accept that they are inevitable.

It is strangely consistent that most who disagree with some of the material we carry in Banner of Truth seldom make any attempt to appeal to the Bible as the basis of their disagreement. At different times we have asked such critics to follow the teaching of Galatians 6:1, which says that those

who are spiritual are to restore those who are overtaken in a fault. We can make a mistake, and if we do we would count it a favor if it was called to our attention. When people criticize and do not offer any scriptural proof, we are led to think that something said in God's word disagrees with what they want.

We are periodically criticized for criticizing false teachers. It is as though the critic thinks he has a right to criticize others for doing the same thing he does. Some criticisms, upon examination, are actually responses to toes being stepped on. When people are guilty of upholding something which God's word does not approve, they some times resort to criticizing the one who speaks God's word with which they disagree. If one disagrees with God's word, then criticism should be leveled against the author of the word, and not the messenger of it. It is not all that uncommon for people to criticize those who call the names of false teachers like Paul did in a number of instances. To be consistent they should criticize Paul. Though no one would likely articulate such, they imply criticism of Paul and other inspired writers whenever they disagree with what God's word says. Bypassing God's word to do that which is forbidden is tantamount to being critical of God and His word.

If one is going to live a true Christian life, some criticism is to be expected. Paul says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Criticism is indeed persecution, which can some times hurt worse than physical persecution. When this happens to a faithful Christian, he must not allow this to deter him in serving the Lord; yet, sometimes people cannot take criticism and they allow it to weaken their resolve to serve the Lord faithfully.

SOME READERS' RESPONSES

As noted, we are carrying a number of readers' responses primarily from this year of 2007. It is not an exhaustive list, rather an array of interesting positive responses. Let us note —

"[I] recently obtained a copy of Banner of Truth at a congregation in Pikeville, TN. I really enjoyed reading the Sept. 2006 issue. I would like to start receiving Banner of Truth and also would like any or all back issues that

you may have. Thanks.” – **Preston Edmondson, TN.** (*We are happy to add your name to our mailing list, and we shall send some back copies. We have a variety them – Editor.*)

“We here at the Deer church of Christ really enjoy and appreciate Banner of Truth. Keep up the good work and keep standing for the truth, as it is all that can save. May God continue to bless your work! Please drop our mailing from 30 to 15, as we are small...” – **Deer church of Christ, AR.** (*We thank you for letting us know that you do not need as many copies as we have been sending.. We try to use the finances given in the very best manner possible, by cutting costs when it needs to be done. – Editor.*)

“Greetings in Christ! We hope this finds you and yours in good health in body and spirit. We appreciate your work for the Lord and His body, the church; and pray that you will be able to continue for many days to come. Our mailing address needs to be changed... We would also like to request that instead of just one copy per month, we receive a bundle of 20-25 copies each month. We would like to hand them out at our congregation... Thank you and may the Lord be with you!” – **Johnny & Mindy Arnold, MO.** (*Thanks so much for your prayers. About two years ago it looked like I would not be able to continue my work much longer. But thanks be to God, my health has improved. We will be glad to send you the bundle requested. It is by people like you that many of the names are added to our mailing list. Someone makes them acquainted with Banner of Truth and they wish to receive it. – Editor.*)

“Thank you for your interest in sending your bulletin. However, I choose not to receive them and would like for you to save the Lord’s money by no longer sending them.” – **AL.** (*We thank you for letting us know. – Editor.*)

“I am very happy and thankful to our good Lord above for you and all the brethren who have given your time and support through Banner of Truth. For you have made it possible by publishing it to readers like me and others throughout the world. I thank our heavenly Father for the letter I’ve written to you by which you did receive and your response back to me was very much appreciated. I’m receiving Banner of Truth every month, starting from December 2005. I would be grateful if you could be able

to send me some materials at the above address. I thank you for B.O.T. because it encourages me and edifies me in my faith in the Lord and to be prepared in season and out of season because the devil is out there! Thank you and grace and peace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. Your brother in Christ.” – **Micah Vevera, New Guinea.** (*We are thankful that Banner of Truth is worthwhile to you in serving the Lord. I do not have other materials to send, but perhaps someone who reads this will be able to help. If they will contact me I will give them your address. – Editor.*)

“I hope and pray that everything goes well with you and yours! Thank you for the December issue of BOT, about the “Leadership in Congregations Without Elders,” which I received this January 2007. Almost all the congregations here in our province in Pangasinan, Philippines have no elders and deacons. This will be a great help to us as leaders of the congregations on how to effectively and efficiently lead the congregations in the absence of elders and deacons. Please continue to send me the BOT publication. God bless us all in our efforts to serve Him faithfully!” – **Roberto Q. Indong, Philippines.** (*I’ve had the opportunity of preaching and working with the brethren in the Philippines on a number of occasions. My heart goes out to the brethren there. If my health permitted, I would be going back to work with those brethren. – Editor.*)

“If it is not any trouble, I would like to subscribe to Banner of Truth. My address is above. Thank you very much! God Bless.” – **Shane Carter, AL.** (*It is not any trouble. In fact, we look forward to requests to be added to our mailing list. – Editor.*)

“It was a pleasure to speak with you Saturday. Please place our names on your mailing list and also the names of our good friends... Thanks for such a great publication and may God bless you and Mrs. Pigg for your service to Him.” – **Shirley M. Mathis.** (*Thanks for sending the name of your good friends and for your request for BOT. – Editor.*)

“Please add me to your mailing list. If you have any extra copies since Sept. 2006, send one of each of them. Thank you.” – **James R. Smith, TN.**

“I am writing to inform you of a change of address. I also want to thank you for your courage to stand for the truth. May God bless you in your good works. →

I am sending a contribution to help with mailing costs.” – **Lyndell Henson, TN.** (*Thanks for letting us know of your change of address .This helps us save on our mailing cost. Also, thanks for the contribution to help with mailing costs. People like you make BOT possible. – Editor*).

“I have received the January issue, but this is not the Issue that I really need; although it looks to be another article that I have yet to read. The issue I was referring to is the November & December 2006, “Leadership in Congregations Without Elders.” Also please note that the web site BOT.LemmonsAid.net is not updated....It is article like the one I need copies that are most valuable with the error running the Bride of Christ.” – **Kenneth E. Greer, Jr., KS.** (*Bro. Lemmon’s web site has been updated, and I believe has BOT from 2000 up to the present. Brother Lemmons’ e-mail has been changed to: dlemmons@mchsi.com – Editor*).

“Hello my devoted Christian and families. I want to drop you all a sincere blessing and praise for all of you for such a wonderful and blessed publication, ‘Banner of Truth.’ I love reading Banner of truth and have been blessed in so many ways. Keep the truth coming and God bless you and yours. Please also send ‘Banner of Truth’ to a devoted Christian family and friend. Thank you so much for getting God’s love to so many. Take Care. ‘May God be in all our hearts for evermore,’ Amen.” – **Tommy Jones, TN.** (*Thanks for sending us the name of a friend to receive Banner of Truth. That helps our mailing list to interested persons grow. – Editor*).

“I would like to request for a change of address to send your Banner of Truth. I’ll be moving in a few days and my new address will be....I’ve been receiving your literature for years now and I don’t like to miss any issue of it. Thank you very much and God bless you always.” – **James Quitariorian, CA.** (*Thanks very much – Editor*).

“Dear Hickory Grove church of Christ. On behalf of the Ward Boulevard church of Christ, located in Wilson, NC, we wish you well. We would like to ask to be included in your mailing list for future issues of Banner of Truth. We do not have a building to meet in, but if we could receive a bundle of 20 issues, it would be very much appreciated....Thank you for your consideration and God bless you for this valuable work!” – **Mark Mitchell, NC.** (*We will gladly comply with your wishes. May the Lord richly bless your efforts in serving Him. – Editor*).

“I am Bernie Q. De Guzman, a member of the church of Christ in Dagupan, Philippines. I write to you asking a free copy of your Banner of Truth magazine. Please kindly send me a free copy of it. This will be used in my personal studies and also in my preaching. Your brother in Christ.” – **Bernie, Philippines.**

“Dear brothers, Glory be to the Father, I am thankful for the work you are doing in the kingdom of God. Thank you for the study material you have been sending to the church at Kalamindi church of Christ. They are great value to us here. I am kindly requesting you to add his brother’s name in your mailing list so that he may be able to help the congregation he is coming from.” – **Richard Randiek, Kenya, Africa.** (*The Hickory Grove church has made it possible through Banner of Truth for you and many others in Africa to have the material which is valuable to you. – Editor*).

“Dear brothers and sisters. A friend gave me a copy of Banner of Truth, Nov. 2004. Thank you for standing firmly on the word of God. So many are leaving God’s way. In many places people are not being taught what they need to hear; even some preachers and elders will not take a stand against the devil and his crowd. If it would be permitted, I would like to make copies of ‘When People Turn Away Their Ears From The truth,’ and give them to other people. May God continue to bless you.” – **Charles D. London, AL.** (*You sure hit the nail on the head in describing the present state of things. Please feel free to make copies of the article as you wish, and of any other from Banner of Truth. – Editor*).

“Please send you publication ‘Banner of Truth,’ to...Enclosed is a small contribution to help with your publication costs.” – **Phyllis Stromberg, VT.** (*Thanks for the name and the contribution – Editor*).

“A brother from America visited and I wrote him asking if he could help me with some materials. He sent me some materials and a Banner of Truth, Vol. 13, February 2004, ‘The Bible Significance of the Word Work.’ I read it and it really encouraged me with the work I am doing because some times I thought of giving up but our Lord is good that He is always helping me. I am interested to have a copy every month since its free, because I cannot afford to order books or materials to help me teach. Please, if you have some old copies of Banner of Truth that you don’t have need of or any others material which you think can help me, you can send it also to me. Thank you and may

A BLESSING IN DEATH

Our good and dear friend of many years, Jim Bailey of Middleton, TN, passed from this life April 12. Brother Jim struggled for a long time with terminal cancer. His good wife, Frankie, was continually at his bedside during his last days.

Jim Bailey was an outstanding Christian gentleman, who did much to encourage others along life's pathway. He served the Lord in sincerity and truth, and looked for that heavenly reward. He was very active in the realm of spiritual things. Last year, Jim and Frankie attended the Banner of Truth Lectures here in Murray. Though Jim's health was then rapidly failing, he wanted to attend the lectures one more time. I am thankful that he both did, and on one occasion even lead a song. Because he was a faithful Christian, and given the terrible pain he endured for months, I believe Jim's death was a blessing. Like Abel, through his influence, Jim Bailey "being dead yet speaketh."

More than two years ago brother Jim requested that I preach his funeral. He reiterated this request a number of times. A few months ago my wife and I visited with him and Frankie. We enjoyed a few hours of fellowship with them and a delicious meal. At this time Jim made a number of specific requests that he wanted me to carry out at his funeral, among which was the presentation of God's plan of salvation. He wanted this to be a final plea to his living friends.

While I was not permitted to speak during the service at the funeral home, I did have the opportunity to present a lesson at the graveside. I considered it an honor to be able to fulfill his dying request and Frankie's wish as best I could.

One of Jim's good deeds for the benefit of others was the purchase of 100 books, *Return to the Old Paths*, by V. Glenn McCoy. This book can be purchased at McCoy Publications, 22470 Mission Hills Lane, Yorba Linda, CA 92887.

God bless us in our efforts to advance His kingdom." – **Micah Vevera, New Guinea.** (*This is the first communication I had with this brother in New Guinea, who was teaching Religious Instructions two days each week in two Secondary Schools and one Primary School. – Editor.*)

"I recently came across your publication Banner of Truth. It contained some timely articles. I would very much appreciate receiving Banner of Truth on a regular basis." – **John Thompson, KY.**

"Dear Hickory Grove church of Christ. My name [is] Ryan Leatherman. I am currently incarcerated in Hondo, Texas....I am a member of the church. I was raised in the church of Christ and obeyed the gospel at age 13. I had fallen off for a while, but since then have rededicated myself. I go to the church of Christ service here at the unit, and I plan to keep living a life in Christ. I have [a] Christian sister that I correspond with that is a member of the church. She has sent me some old copies of your Banner of Truth publication, and I like what I read and believe I could learn from it too. I would like to be put on your mailing list so that I can receive your monthly publication. Any help that you can provide on this matter will be greatly appreciated. Thanks for your time..." – **Ryan Leatherman, TX.** (*We appreciate the change you've made. We are happy to add your name to our mailing list. –Editor.*)

"Dear Lloyd, I want to thank you for the good article in Banner of Truth, Vol. 16, Sept. 06, 'Why the tru[e] church of Christ does not use instrumental music in worship. Instruments of music were introduced in worship to please men, not God. Lloyd, like you wrote, the unauthorized use of instruments is sinful. Pray God will continue to bless you with health and a long life to preach the gospel..." – **Raymond T. Thomas.** (*This refers to an article in BOT by Lloyd Gale of Lebanon, TN. Lloyd will speak on our BOT lectures, June 25-28.- Editor.*)

EDITOR'S NOTE: As noted, this is only a partial listing of readers' responses. We will continue with more at a later date.

FELLOW-HELPERS

Nov./Dec. 2006, Jan., Feb., Mar. 2007

Barbara A. Kist	125.00
Anonymous	100.00
Phyllis Mitchell	115.00
James W. Smith	200.00
Robert M. Price	1,000.00
Cynthia McIntyre	150.00
Charles D. London	25.00
Phyllis L. Stromberg	100.00
Mrs. John H. Brown	100.00
Shirley Phillips	40.00
Jim & Jackie Patchell	50.00
Anonymous	200.00
Nancy A. French	50.00
V. Glenn McCoy	100.00
M/M H. Ballard	5.00
Randal Gruenwald	25.00
Earnest E. Armstrong	250.00
Alton W. Fonville	200.00
Mrs. Kenneth Pylant	50.00
Jimmie Condit	25.00
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Billy W. Prather	35.00
Anonymous	5.00
Anonymous	500.00
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J. F. Travis	25.00
Darrell Cunningham	200.00
Pam Clark	20.00
Charles Verkist	50.00
Lyndell Henson	20.00
Anonymous	2,500.00
Anonymous	50.00
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Shirley Mathis	50.00
Eva Davis Rains	100.00
Gary W. Price	200.00
Allen Rupert	50.00
Loraine Broach	15.00
Royce E. Adams	50.00
Betty Anderson	10.00
Saks church of Christ	300.00
Church of Christ, Damon Rd.	50.00
Crandull church of Christ	200.00
Kensett church of Christ	100.00
Pilot Oak church of Christ	25.00
Berea church of Christ	100.00
Pine Ridge church of Christ	250.00
Deer church of Christ	300.00
Total contribution	8,205.00

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

We sincerely appreciate those who make our work possible. With your help the word goes out to thousands of people in this country and in at least a dozen other countries of the world. Thank you for being our *fellow-helpers*. – Editor

Banner of Truth Financial Report

Nov./Dec. 2006, Jan., Feb., March 2007

Balance on hand Nov. 1, 2006	5,543.67
Contribution for above period	8,205.00
Total funds available	13,748.67
Total Expenses:	
Mailing BOT and stamps	3,883.02
Mailing labels	154.92
Plates, ink, fountain solution	284.37
Phone	30.00
Total Expenses	4,342.31
Total funds available	13,748.67
Less total expenses	<u>4,342.31</u>
Total funds on hand March 31, 2007	9,406.36

Necessary financial support for BOT has long encouraged us. Though there is not hint, much less promise of better service, we are now facing yet another increase in postage rates. However, it is still inexpensive to get the word out to so many people, when the benefits are considered. We sincerely believe that the printed page is still one of the most effective means of of teaching God’s word. Some time ago, when the postage rates to foreign countries just about tripled, one brother came through with a thousand dollar contribution to enable us to pay the six dollar fee for mailing a bundle of 15, thereby enabling us to continue this important foreign mailing.

As noted, the Hickory Grove congregation and her fellow-helpers are able to “go into” many countries by means of Banner of Truth. The most ideal means of reaching people in other countries is for individuals to go to the country in person, and if need be, learn the language. But not many of our brethren are willing to make that sacrifice. The next best method is, I believe, the use of the printed page, which people can study and have on hand for future reference.

May the Lord bless our supporters. —Editor

SCHEDULE FOR BOT LECTURES — JUNE 25-28, 2007

MONDAY, JUNE 25

10:00 a.m.	<i>The Need and Basis for Optimism within the Lord's Church</i>	Alan Adams
11:00 a.m.	<i>Fight To Lay Hold on Eternal Life</i>	Roger Scully
1:30 p.m.	<i>Power To Overcome Temptation</i>	Rick Knoll
2:30 p.m.	<i>Overcoming the Influence of Busybodies</i>	Garland Robinson
3:30 p.m.	<i>Always Abounding in the Work of the Lord</i>	Guyton Montgomery
7:00 p.m.	<i>He That Winneth Souls Is Wise</i>	Roger Campbell
8:00 p.m.	<i>God's Faithful People Will Be Saved</i>	Ken Burleson

TUESDAY, JUNE 26

10:00 a.m.	<i>Some Will Turn Away Their Ears from the Truth</i>	Roger Campbell
11:00 a.m.	<i>Being an Example of Believers</i>	Steve Baisden
1:30 p.m.	<i>Committing the Truth to Faithful Men</i>	Ken Burleson
2:30 p.m.	<i>Overcoming the Devil by God's Armor</i>	Caleb Campbell
3:30 p.m.	<i>The Blessings of True Unity in Christ</i>	Walter Pigg
7:00 p.m.	<i>A Crown Laid up for Me</i>	Garland Robinson
8:00 p.m.	<i>Overcoming Non-Contenders for the Faith</i>	Leon Cole

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27

10:00 a.m.	<i>A Rest for the People of God</i>	Leon Cole
11:00 a.m.	<i>Beware Ear Ticklers and the Tickled</i>	Jacob Campbell
1:30 p.m.	<i>The Eyes of the Lord Are over the Righteous</i>	Jeff Bates
2:30 p.m.	<i>False Prophets in the World</i>	Lloyd Gale
3:30 p.m.	<i>Loyalty to Christ, Not People or Places</i>	Richard Guill
7:00 p.m.	<i>The Lord Is Not Willing That We Perish</i>	Virgil Hale
8:00 p.m.	<i>I Know Whom I Have Believed</i>	Alan Adams

THURSDAY, JUNE 28

10:00 a.m.	<i>On the Right Hand, Eternal Life</i>	Robert Alexander
11:00 a.m.	<i>Food To Prevent Spiritual Starvation</i>	Rusty Stark
1:30 p.m.	<i>Continued Forgiveness by Walking in the Light</i>	Jimmy Bates
2:30 p.m.	<i>Beware the Influence of Lukewarmness</i>	Paul Curless
3:30 p.m.	<i>The Lord Is with Us When We Take His Word</i>	David Lemmons
7:00 p.m.	<i>Victory for the Overcomers</i>	Roger Scully
8:00 p.m.	<i>No Death, Sorrow, Crying or Pain in Heaven</i>	Lenard Hogan

“Among Whom Are Ye”

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name’s sake; among whom are ye also called to be Jesus Christ’s: To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:1-7)

Incidental statements speak volumes. Of course, let us hasten to add, nothing in the Bible is incidental in the sense of being trivial or meaningless. It all has purpose. We speak of an adjective here, a descriptive phrase there, that sort of thing; or, things which kind of fall in-between more well known passages of Scripture.

In Romans chapter one, Paul introduces himself and sets forth his divinely ordained “separat[ion] unto the Gospel of God.” He moves to note that this Gospel was “promised afore” and is about “[God’s] Son,” who, though born like all other men—and in His case, through the lineage of David—was yet, “declared to be the Son of God...by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:1-4).

Of this “Son of God,” Paul says it was “through [Him] we received grace and apostleship unto obedience of [or, obedience to the, KJV] faith among all the nations for His name’s sake; among whom are ye also called...” (vv. 5,6). It is this particular phrase, “among whom are ye,” with which we are concerned. In this age of I’m-OK-You’re-OK ecumenism, Paul’s use of this qualifier would be deemed downright divisive, intolerant, and exclusive.

The pronoun “whom” refers to “all nations, and

the preposition “among” carries the meaning: as compared with. In other words, within, yet out of, this class of all nations, there is a smaller class with marks or features which set it apart from the rest. Come to think of it, that is precisely the meaning of *evkkhlhsi*, a [ekkleisia]: An assembly or group of people within the larger group of all men, yet distinct from it; consequently, a group of people who “live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world” (Titus 2:12), but are distinct from it (cf. I Corinthians 5:10; Romans 12:2).

There must have been conditions or means by which some in Rome became set apart from their compatriots; a line, at point at which they became part of that group “among” all the nations. Since Paul said his job as an apostle was that of bringing about “obedience of faith among all the nations,” that must have something to do with when the grand separation took place. At what point may it be said that the obedience of which Paul speaks has taken place? We soon find out.

In chapter six we are told that the Roman christians some time in the past “became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto [they] were delivered [thus] being made free from sin” (Rom. 6:17-18). “Form” is from *tu,poj* [tupos] which here refers to a pattern, or model; in other words, what we call the plan of salvation. The first few verses of this chapter describe beautifully this “formula or scheme.” They had “died to sin,” inasmuch as they had been “buried...with [Christ] through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so [they] also might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:2-4). “A person is not completely dead to sin till he is separated from it, and that separation takes place in baptism” [Whiteside, *Commentary on Romans*, p. 129]. These were they who were “called Jesus Christ’s... beloved of God, called saints” (1:6, 7). Such, and only such, are those “among” all the nations who constitute the church of Christ, “God’s elect, holy and beloved” (Col. 3:12).

—AA

A Christ-Centered Life?

For one who has been “raised together with Christ” (Colossians 3:1-2), what he “seek[s]” and the object of his “mind” are “the things above where Christ is seated on the right hand of God.” There is for him a sense of disinterest in the things “upon the earth.” This person’s “life” is “hid with Christ in God” (v. 3); in fact, to this person “Christ is our life” (v. 4). Okay, so what then, does all this mean in practical terms? What about me, the way I live, and the things I believe and say? How do these things manifest in me a Christ-centered life? or, Is this just another of a thousand liberal clichés, the saying of which is designed to make one feel good, but has no objective, no rule, and no fruit?

From verses 5 through 17 of Colossians 3, Paul describes for us a sure enough Christ-centered life. It is a —

PUT OFF LIFE (VV. 5-11). Sometimes we speak of being “put off” by something in the sense of being indignant or aggravated, but here Paul talks in terms of the human will that is being “renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him” (10) being brought to bear in the process of “putting to death” (5) “things” in which he “once walked” when he “lived in.” A Christ-centered life clearly involves a moral house cleaning whereby we “put to death,” “put away,” and “put off” things “*the sake of* which cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience” (6).

There are people— “christians” — who have no problem with such things as “fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire.” You will find them watching sexually provocative movies and listening to music of the same stripe. They will be proudly out on the beach or at the pool showing their wares and checking out the same of others. They will be right out there on the dance floor engaged in movement and caress reserved only for the honorable bed of marriage (Heb. 13:4). Some of these same people yet make practice of “covetousness ...anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, shameful [dirty speech] and lying.” Yet, you can find some of these same people clamoring about Christ and Christ-centered things.

Then again, we should note that the Christ-centered life is a,

PUT ON LIFE. And here we do not mean fake or phony. Verses 12-14 tell us what must adorn the life of the christian, particularly as relates to how we deal with other people. No christian is fully dressed until such time as he has “put on” the garments of “God’s elect, holy and beloved”: “heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing ...forgiving.” Upon, and drawing all these garments together, is the “bond,” or belt of “love.” Churlish, grudge-bearing, cocky, Every-Man-For-Himself, Let-Sleeping-Dogs-Lie people are not yet serious about a Christ-centered life. But, let’s finally notice that this Christ-centered life is a,

PRINCIPLED LIFE. Paul gives us, in verses 15, 16, and 17 sweeping principles to which one must acquiesce and by which one must govern his life: Verse 15, “the peace of Christ”; verse 16, “the word of Christ”; and, verse 17, “the name of Christ.

Life so often requires an arbitrator or umpire. Knowing when, where, and upon what one must be willing to stand and fight regardless of the consequences is not easy. So, Paul says, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.” “Rule” comes from *brabeu*,w [brahbeuo] which has the root idea of “umpire, arbitrate.”

Disputes on the playing field of life are to be settled by the “peace of Christ.” But, note that Paul says it is the “peace of Christ to the which also ye were called in one body.” This is the “one body” into which Jew and Gentile have been “reconcile[d]” (Ephesians 2:16). It is the “one body” which is entered in the one way: “by one spirit baptized into one body whether Jews, Greek, bond or free” (I Corinthians 12:13). It is a non-negotiated peace based on the “gospel of peace” (Romans 10:15), and one based on an objective “unity of the Spirit” (Ephesians 4:3) which unity is built upon the concepts of: “one body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father...” (vv. 4-6). It is a peace worth fighting for (II Timothy 4:7). People who promote denominational →

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Bible Classes 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

religions, organizations, doctrines and practices; who join the Promise Keepers and the activities of the denominations: These people are not interested in allowing the “peace of Christ,” as manifested through the “one body” to “rule” their “hearts” and therefore their actions.

What of Christians who do not bend over backward to find a way to maintain peace with their brethren? Who find a provocation and a cause around every corner? Who harbor ill feelings and nurse grudges? Not by any imaginable definition can it be said that the “peace of Christ rule[s] in [their] hearts.”

Closely akin to this point, is the need to “let the word of Christ dwell” in us. Then, and only then, are we in a position to be “in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.”

Finally, the most pervasive of all the principles which govern the Christ-centered life is that of verse 17: “Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” It is sad that this classic Scripture is often extracted from its setting and used exclusively to what Christians do in a worship assembly. Whereas it certainly has that application, seen within the Divine parameters wherein it was placed, it is meant to be the standard by which every attitude, thought, word, and action are to be governed.

The totality of the Christ-centered life is to be governed by the authority of Jesus as expressed through His New Testament; which is why the same apostle speaks of “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (I Corinthians 10:3-6).

The “life [that is] hid with Christ in God” is a PUT OFF, a PUT ON, and a PRINCIPLED life. This is the Christ-centered life for which we must strive. —AA

FOR YOUR ADDRESS BOOK

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