

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

MAY A CHRISTIAN REMAIN FAITHFUL TO GOD WHILE A MEMBER OF A CONGREGATION THAT ROUTINELY PRACTICES ERROR, REFUSING TO REPENT OF THE SAME?

Danny Douglas

Recently, a faithful sister in Christ who lives in a northern state where churches of Christ are few, was disturbed because a young preacher student in another state told her that she was forsaking the assembling of the saints by not continuing to assemble with a congregation where false doctrine is being taught. She had been worshipping with this congregation, quite a distance from her home, until false doctrine was openly taught. One of the brethren began teaching the congregation to, “pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon them.” Also, another brother led a public prayer for “the Holy Spirit to come upon them.” To her credit, this faithful sister confronted the preacher for his false doctrine. Yet, none of the men were willing to stand up and oppose him! She decided that she could not stay in a congregation where error was being upheld. There is no faithful congregation in her town, or within a reasonable distance from her home. Therefore, she now worships alone in her home. Yet, according to this young brother, she is forsaking the assembling of the saints for worshipping alone and not continuing to assemble with the wayward congregation.

Indeed, normally it is sinful to neglect the public assembling of the saints, as the Book of Hebrews warns:

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is...” (Heb. 10:25). And, inspiration commends those who continue “**stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers**” (Acts 2:42). However, nowhere in the Bible do we find Christians commended for being a part of a congregation that opposes any truth and upholds error (Jude 3). The apostle Paul wrote that the true church of Christ is: “**the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**” (1 Tim. 3:15).

Is this conscientious Christian lady, with strong convictions for the truth, guilty of sin for refusing to be a member of a congregation that is teaching and practicing error? Or, is she simply doing the only thing she can do to faithfully worship and serve God? Another question to ask is this, is it sinful for this sister to continue to be a member of a congregation that refuses to correct error once it has been called to their attention? How can she scripturally worship with them? How can she bid God speed to them in their error? As well as the other acts of worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), this sister would be communing with them in the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 10:16), and supporting them in the contribution. After all, “**giving and receiving**” is a form of fellowship. Paul said of the church at Philippi that they “**had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving**” (Phi. 4:15, *ASV*–1901).

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David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher
dpbcftf@gmail.com

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Editorial...

WHO CONTROLS YOUR LIFE, THE DEVIL OR GOD?

The truth Peter stated in 1 Peter 5:8 continues to be as needful and relevant today as when it was written. Peter wrote to Christians saying: **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”** (1 Pet. 5:8). Although Satan **“walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”** and will until the end of time, God has provided a way for Christians to escape his clutches. Regarding that fact, James wrote, **“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”** (Jam. 4:7). Today, Satan has no power to possess people unless we permit him to do it. Regarding Satan’s manner of possessing or controlling people today, Paul wrote,

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it (1 Cor. 10:13).

In exercising his power to destroy us, God has limited Satan’s power, or influence, or impact on us. He cannot directly and immediately possess people against their will. Even in his attack on Job, God limited Satan’s power over Job—God prohibited him from taking Job’s life.

The foregoing being said, the Bible teaches a difference between Satan’s work through people who are demon possessed against their wills to the end that the demons control them, and the manner whereby Satan works to control people today.

WHAT ARE DEMONS OR UNCLEAN SPIRITS?

Before we continue to answer the question that serves as the title of this piece, an attempt to explain what demons or unclean spirits are is in order. Although it is an interesting and somewhat lengthy study, a complete study of demons/unclean spirits is not intended or called for here. Suffice to say that one of the more plausible explanations of what they are comes from the Jews, some of whom thought they were spirits of dead wicked men who were permitted to leave the Hadean world to wander in the earth, possessing people as described in the New Testament.*

In His earthly ministry, Christ cast such spirits out of people possessed by them. Notice the following account of Jesus casting out the demons in the land of the Gadarenes. The demons talked and exercised themselves by controlling the man they possessed (Mark 5:1-20; Mat. 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-29). In casting them out of the man, Jesus proved His power over evil in the spirit world. Upon their request, our Lord permitted the demons to enter into a swine herd, and

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SOME ATTEMPTS TO DEFEND REMAINING A MEMBER OF A CHURCH THAT “ABIDETH NOT IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST”

If it is the case that a faithful saint is not to bid God speed to a teacher who **“transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ,”** would this principle not hold true of an entire congregation that **“transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ”**? In answer to this question, let us consider the injunction and warning from God, delivered by the apostle John:

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. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

In an attempt to defend assembling with a congregation that upholds false doctrine, the point is often made that there are no perfect congregations, and the church at Corinth is given as an example. It is true that Paul did not command the faithful saints at Corinth to depart from the congregation, although there were sins there (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 3:3; 5:1-2). However, he did give them instruction as to how to deal with them. He commanded them, **“in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,”** to correct their errors (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 5:3-5). In fact, they did repent of these things, as he later wrote to them:

Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter (2 Cor. 7:9-11).

Herein lies the distinction between a congregation where a faithful saint may continue to worship God acceptably, and one where he or she may not do so. One is a faithful congregation and the other is not!

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FAITHFUL AND THE UNFAITHFUL

There is a great difference between a congregation that has problems, but is willing to listen to God’s Word and deal with them accordingly, and one that continues to teach and practice error, disregarding what the Word of God teaches. The congregation that is striving to grow stronger and to overcome sin is a faithful congregation. However, one that simply overlooks sin and does not address it according to the

Scriptures is not a faithful congregation.

This principle is also seen in the children of God who are striving to obey God’s Word, for when they sin they give all diligence to make things right by repentance and confession of their sin(s) (cf. 1 John 1:7-9; 2:1-3). Yet, there are members of the body of Christ who either live in willful sin or simply dismiss a transgression of which they are guilty without Scriptural efforts to correct it. The former is an example of faithful saints who are in fellowship with God and have the blood of Christ actively working in their behalf (1 John 1:5-7). The latter is an example of an unfaithful member who is outside of fellowship with God and thus, denied the cleansing blood of Christ (1 John 1:6-7). He is guilty of **“the sin unto death,”** a sin an erring church member will not confess (1 John 1:9; 5:16).

The same is true of preachers and elders. When a sound preacher becomes mindful of error in the church, he will teach on the matter and rebuke it before the Lord’s people (2 Tim. 4:1-2). Remember the declaration of the prophet Isaiah regarding the same: **“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins”** (Isa. 58:1). In like manner, faithful elders will not simply let the preacher “take all the heat,” but will stand up against the sin(s) themselves. Paul declares that the following is the work of a true elder: **“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers”** (Tit. 1:9). However, this aspect of being an elder is often ignored when considering the work and qualifications of elders! Nonetheless, it is an essential work that elders must do to please the Lord, and that they must do to properly tend, feed, oversee, and watch out for the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:1-3; Acts 20:28-32; Heb. 13:17). Faithful brethren will rise up and deal with “sin in the camp” whenever it arises, even if it involves an elder: **“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear”** (1 Tim. 5:20). Those who are faithful to God will not stand by and let evil, like a raging fire, engulf the congregation, but will stand against it, as God’s Word demands!

On the one hand, one may stay and work with a congregation that respects the authority of Christ and strives to overcome its shortcomings. On the other hand, one must not tarry among a group of people who persist in having their way over God’s way. If one remains in such a people for an extended period of time, he/she will reap the bitter fruits of the evil, leavening influence that Paul warned about: **“Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?”** (1 Cor. 5:6; cf. Gal. 5:9).

MAY A FAITHFUL SAINT WORSHIP ALONE ON THE LORD’S DAY?

With the tide of apostasy continuing to rise throughout the Lord’s church today with no faithful congregations in many places, it has become necessary for many faithful

exactly what the Holy Spirit through the prophet Zechariah wrote concerning the cessation of miracles and demon possession. Of course, this was long before Christ came to earth and before the church was established. If we can determine when miracles ended, we can also know when demon possession ended. Whatever else the Bible says concerning demon possession it must be seen in the light of Zechariah 13:2—both miracles and demon possession ended at the same time.

WHAT POWER DOES SATAN HAVE TO DESTROY US AND HOW IT WORKS

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in His marvelous redemptive work on earth solved the sin problem for mankind. In so doing, He also limited Satan's power to destroy us. Indeed, the devil continues to work today, always seeking to destroy men, but he does this by lies and not through a direct possession of one's human body or through an evil spirit. Satan's lies take various forms—false religious doctrines, false philosophies, deceitful works of various kinds, dishonest people, and so on (1 Tim. 4:1, 2; Eph. 4:14). The devil always appeals to us in his efforts to get us to sin through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride or vain glory of life (1 John 2:16). This is what he did successfully with Eve in the Garden of Eden and attempted the same with Jesus but was unsuccessful (Gen. 3:1-7; Mat. 4:1ff). Without a proper knowledge of the Bible and our willingness to always obey God regardless of the cost to us, we will not recognize Satan's efforts to get us to sin and we will fall for his lies.

We must remember that when the devil takes control of one by causing that person to sin, he does not do so directly and against the person's will. This is what Paul taught when he wrote to the church at Rome about the work of Satan to destroy us. **“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”** (Rom. 6:16). As Jesus taught, **“By their fruits you shall know them”** (Mat. 7:20). Those who belong to Satan are those who by their own free will do his bidding on earth! Satan's servant may be highly respected mayors of cities, presidents of nations, prime ministers, monarchs, teachers, family members, members of His church, your friends, etc, but they are Satan's servants—under his control, having believed and obeyed a lie(s).

On the basis of one's proper study and understanding of the Bible, God through His Son's gospel comes into our lives as we are obedient to His will, whose will is found only in the New Testament of His Son (Heb. 4:12; 5: 8, 9; Jam. 1:25; Eph. 6:17; Luke 8:11; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; John 12:48). Therein, God has promised through the apostle John, **“If a man love me, he will keep my Words: and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him”** (John 14:23). We know we love God only when our love for Him leads us to obey Him—in doing what He said, in the way He said it, and for the reason(s) He said it (Ecc. 12:13, 14; 2 John 8-11). On the other hand, if through

our lusts we invite the devil into our lives by believing and obeying his lies, regardless of the form they take, rather than believing and obeying the gospel, we are under the control of Satan. But in either case, by our own free will, we permit either God (through our obedience to the truth—John 8:31, 32; 17:17), or Satan (by believing and obeying a lie(s)—2 The. 2:10-12; Rom. 1:25) to control us.

However, the devil can be rejected because we retain our free will. We reject Satan by turning to the Word of God, understanding it, believing it, and obeying it. This is far different from the demon possession that was destroyed by the miraculous power of Jesus, His apostles, and those brethren who had received miraculous gifts through the imposition of apostolic hands. With the completion of the New Testament of Christ, the death of the apostles of Christ, and those on whom they laid their hands to impart miraculous gifts, miracles ceased, and with their cessation demon possession also terminated. Thus, it came to pass as Zechariah said long before the fact, **“And I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land”** (Zec. 13:2).

Since the first Pentecost day following the ascension of Christ to heaven, God has located His power to save mankind from sin in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16). Thus, the power of God to save people is to be preached to the whole creation (Mark 16:15). There are no demons to possess anyone as the Bible records at one time they did. However, God expects us to use our time on earth to find Him, learn His Son's gospel, believe, and obey it, living faithful to Him during our sojourn on earth, no matter the sacrifices we must make to do so (John 12:48; 2 The. 1:6-10; Heb. 5:9; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10). Indeed, He is not far from any of us and He wants to be found (Acts 17:26-28; Mat. 6:33; 7:7).

The only way Satan can cause men to sin today is by getting them to believe and obey lies. Thus, man must not only cooperate with God to be saved, but he must also cooperate with Satan to be lost—he must will himself to obey God or will himself to obey Satan. The person truly seeking God will not only love God with all he has and is (Mat 22:37), but he will also love God's truth, abiding continually therein (1 John 2:21), hating all things contrary thereto (Psa. 119:128; John 8:31, 32; 14:15; 17:17). We close with these marvelous words of the Psalmist and the writer of Proverbs respectively, **“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path”** (119:105), and **“For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life”** (6:23).

END NOTE

*<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/dibbuk-dybbuk>, Accessed May 5, 2022)

—David P. Brown, Editor

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Foy E. Wallace, Jr

“Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number. Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? ... Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?” (Jer. 2:32-37).

Mankind is eternally prone to forget. We forget the things that should be remembered and we remember the things that should be forgotten. And the tendency is to drift away from those things that have anchored us to the right and shielded us from the wrong. Politically, there is a definite trend away from our true and tried constitution. Socially, there is a casting down of sacred standards. Religiously, the drift away from the Bible has turned into a tide. Things once sacred are being forgotten and abandoned. Once upon a time a divorced person would hardly be admitted into respectable society; but to marry and remarry several times is now the surest and quickest way to be galvanized into social notoriety and public attention. Once a cigarette-smoking, liquor-drinking woman would have been scorned; today in public places, hotel lobbies, restaurant, drug stores, and streets, we behold our women with cigarette in one hand and the liquor glass in the other. We can but pity the next generation. It is time to pray, “God save our children.”

Remember—that is a word of frequent mention in the Bible. Moses said to the children of Israel when he brought them out of Egypt—remember. Through forty years of wilderness wanderings he lifted up his voice of tearful pleading against their departures, but they were forgetful, and drifted. God raised up prophet after prophet to call them back through all their national life—yet they wandered. And today God calls upon the church to remember.

THE GADDING BRIDE

In the Old Testament, Israel was God’s bride. God loved and cherished Israel—but Israel forgot God and became an unfaithful bride. Jeremiah rebuked her infidelity. **“Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?”** he said. **“Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love?”** he asked. One of the most forbidding things a woman can do is to gad about—go around from one place to another, in pursuit of pleasure or entertainment. Everybody knows that a gadding, skylarking woman is bound to lose interest in her husband and her home, and is not satisfied with interests and affection of her husband; she trims her way to seek love in new adventures. Beware of the gadding bride! She is up to no good thing. So it is with the Church. Has the church gone gadding—left God for worldly things? As Israel was God’s bride in the Old Testament, the church is Christ’s bride in the New Testament. Paul says, for Christ, **“I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have**

espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2). Jeremiah charged that God’s bride had forgotten Him. Can the maid forget her ornaments? Never did. Does a flapper forget her vanity case? Does a bride forget her attire? Who ever heard of a woman, no matter how long married, who has forgotten her wedding dress. She may want to forget the man she married, but she does not want to forget the dress she married in. When does the church forget her attire—in fact, what is the attire of the church? Why, friends, the attire of the church consists of those characteristics that make a scriptural New Testament church. The church forgets her attire when she, by gradual departure, abandons these New Testament characteristics. Let us name them.

DIVINE ORGANIZATION

We are living in a world of organizations. In religion, they are called denominations. But in the New Testament the church is the one and only divine body. Christ is the Head and all the saved in the aggregate, those who have been baptized, who have obeyed the gospel, are the members. The church is referred to in the New Testament in two senses: first, the whole church, composed of all the saved on earth—**“Upon this rock I will build my church”** (Mat. 16:18); second, the local church, composed of all the saved in a certain place—**“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth”** (1 Cor. 1:2). Now, a denomination cannot qualify for either of these definitions. A denomination has been properly defined to be a religious organization smaller than the whole church, but larger than the local church. Now, is that not correct? No denomination claims to have in its fold all the saved. They tell us that there are saved people in all the denominations. Well, then, the denomination is smaller than the whole church. But the denomination is made up of all the local churches of its particular faith and order. One Methodist church would not be called the Methodist denomination. It is rather made up of all the local Methodist churches tied into the General Conference. The Presbyterian denomination is likewise made up of all Presbyterian churches tied into the synod or General Assembly. The Catholic ecclesiastical order is made up of all Catholic churches the world over tied into the Vatican. And the Baptist fraternity is made up of all such churches of like faith and order holding affiliation with the Association. Thus a denomination is larger than the local church and smaller than the whole church; and since the New Testament presents the church only in the whole sense or the local sense, and the denomination is not the church in either sense, it must follow that the denomination is not the church in any sense. It is both too large and too small to be

scriptural. The church is not a denomination—they are human organizations unknown in the New Testament. They are **“plants which the heavenly father hath not planted”** and they shall be “rooted up.”

A preacher was heard to say one time that there is more than one church because the Bible mentioned “the seven churches of Asia.” Can you imagine a preacher that ignorant? Who does not know, even a mere tyro in scripture knowledge, that the seven churches of Asia were but congregations of the same faith and order, one each in of the seven different cities of Asia that were named. Yet, friends, there are preachers, yes, actually, preachers (and they are still running loose) who would have people believe the seven churches were seven denominations.

I rode through a mountain town in Tennessee some time ago and observed a large placard in the windows of the stores announcing, a “unity meeting” with the slogan printed in large letters: “JOIN THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE AND BE BAPTIZED AS YOU PLEASE.” And that in the name of religion! Join the church of your choice—as though God has neither church nor choice! Be baptized as you please—as though Jesus Christ never said a word on the how or what of baptism! Friends, such as that is religious profanity. It is a rebellious declaration of independence against the revealed will of God. Yet it is the spirit of denominationalism. The church is the divine organization founded by Jesus Christ. Denominations are human organizations founded by men. The man who wants to be a Catholic needs the Catechism; if a Mormon, the Book of Mormon; if a Presbyterian, the Thirty Nine Articles; if a Methodist, the Discipline; if a Baptist, the Standard Manual of Baptist Churches. But the man who wants to be only a Christian needs only the New Testament. Let us remember the “bride’s attire” in the matter of organizations—there is only one in the New Testament.

SOUND DOCTRINE

There is a light, flimsy sentiment that somebody put into circulation, that it makes no difference what one believes just so he thinks it is all right—just so his heart is right. It’s about as rational as saying that it makes no difference what disease one has so long as his health is good! It is not even rational, much less scriptural. According to that, let one be a Mohammedan in Turkey, a Lutheran in Germany, a Catholic in Italy, a Protestant in America—anything according to country or time. What a religion! Yet that is the essence of Protestantism—it is the definition of nothing. Orthodox Protestantism is nothing.

Jesus said **“Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”** It takes the truth to make men free; and more than that—it takes the knowledge of the truth, for **“ye shall know the truth.”** Then it takes the belief of the truth, and the love of the truth, and obedience to the truth. Friends, error will not do—it cannot save. That is why we condemn it so stoutly. A brother said to me, one time, that we should

supply the principles of salesmanship in preaching (he was a salesman) and never “knock” or “pan” the other fellow’s product, for instance an automobile or a refrigerator, but rather sell the particular one we represented. So he thought we should not condemn other doctrines and things—but just preach the gospel! But he loses his illustration—cause the other automobile will run, the other refrigerator will refrigerate and the other stove will cook—but a false doctrine and a human church cannot save. The illustration breaks down. Paul told Timothy to **“reprove, rebuke, exhort”**—two-thirds of what Timothy was commanded to preach was negative—against what is wrong. Reprove error and rebuke the one who teaches it, is the divine charge, and it takes a preacher with more than a jellyfish’s backbone to do it.

Sound doctrine means that it takes the same thing to make a Christian today that it took in the New Testament. Jesus said **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”** (Mark 16:15); and Peter said, **“Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins”** (Acts 2:38); and Luke said of those who **“gladly received the word”** and **“were baptized”** that they were added to the church (Acts 2:41). Man obeys, God adds. **“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”** (Acts 2:47). Do you ask if one cannot be saved out of the church? I reply, not unless he can be saved when he shouldn’t be—for all who **“should be saved”** were added to the church. But only those who receive the word and are baptized are added (Acts 2:41). God adds only those who should be saved; but He adds only those who are baptized; therefore only those who are baptized should be saved. Don’t blame me with that, friends, for I did not write the second chapter of Acts. The Holy Spirit had that done.

No man can be in Christ and out of the church, for they are one (Eph. 5:31-33). No man can be saved out of Christ (Acts 4:12). It follows, therefore, that no one can be saved out of the church. **“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”** Friends, Christ and the church are one, and you should not advertise how little you think of His body, the church, by the manner in which you ignore it. Christ and the church! You cannot have one without the other. Now, that is doctrine—sound doctrine—and it is a part of the bride’s attire which we should not forget.

PURE WORSHIP

Ordinances of worship are as divine as items of doctrine. The church is God’s temple and He has not appointed me an interior decorator of it—I must accept it as He designed it. The simple ordinances of worship prescribed by the Lord for His worship are: (1) The assembly of the first day of the week; (2) Edification by preaching, teaching, exhortation; (3) The Lord’s supper; (4) Prayers; (5) Giving—the contribution; (6) Singing. Vocal music alone characterized the worship of the New Testament church. It is a well known

fact, to all informed on the subject, that instrumental music among those who claimed to be Christians, was introduced by Pope Vitalian in the year A.D. 670. Martin Luther called the organ in worship “an ensign of Baal”—a sign of Satan. John Wesley said that he had no objection to it in Methodist chapels provided it would be “neither heard nor seen.” John Calvin (Presbyterian) said that it was no more suitable than burning incense, and other things of the law, and that “the Catholics foolishly borrowed it from the Jews.” Yes—Calvin was right on that. The Catholics did borrow it from the Jews, and the Protestants borrowed it from the Catholics, and the Christian Church (who went out from us) borrowed it from the Protestants—and the New Testament Church never had it. It does not belong to the bride’s attire, and we are not at liberty to add either an item of worship or a codicil of doctrine to the divine pattern. May we pause here, friends, to ask if the church has gone gadding? Is she trimming her way to seek love in things the Lord has not commanded? Let us remember the bride’s attire in worship.

NAME AND LIFE

The name of the bride is important. The church is Christ’s, why call it after another? We have heard so much of men, their movements and their names, their churches and their creeds, that the world must have begun to wonder whether Jesus Christ ever had a church or not. Obviously, the church should not be called after any man or thing—but after Christ Himself. Christ said: **“Upon this rock I will build**

my church”—and John, the Baptist, was dead when He said it. John, the Baptist, not only never built a church, but he was not even in the church. Herod took off his head before Jesus told the disciples that He would build it. Why name the church for John? Whose name should a bride wear? Ah, friends, don’t forget that the church belongs to Christ—it is His bride; let us not forget her attire.

But wearing the name of Christ, the Head of the church, brings the solemn responsibility of a life consistent with the relation. What man wants an impure bride? No wonder Paul said that Christ is jealous of the chastity of His church. And Paul in similar vein exhorts us to **“adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, in all things.”** God has sanctified the church and cleansed it **“with the washing of water by the word”** that it might be presented to His Son **“a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”** So let us remember the bride’s attire in the dignity of the Christian’s life. The church is as dear to Christ as the apple of His eye. May her character remain unsullied; may she shine with pristine glory until He comes to transport us from earth to heaven where **“the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”** Friends, will you be among the number then and there? If so, you must be among the number here and now. Linger no longer!

—Deceased