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Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

All The Words Of This Life

Charles Pogue

Because of the preaching and the signs performed by the apostles that resulted in more believers being added to the Lord, the high priest was filled with indignation and put them in prison. He could not hold them there. An angel of the Lord opened the doors at night, brought them out, and told them words that too many people today would say, "That's crazy!" What were they told? **"Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life"** (Acts 5:14-20).

The apostles were to go into the temple and preach the very message that got them imprisoned in the first place. In addition to that, catch this, they were to speak all of the words of this life. Leave nothing out. We know that one can sometimes get by with men if he just tells part of what needs to be said, but that will not get one by with God.

The church is inundated today with so called Gospel preachers who refuse to preach all of the truth when there are fewer consequences for them than what the apostles suffered for preaching every word of this life. These modern men fit Jesus' description of the hireling (John 10:12,13). If these preached all of the truth, they reason, someone would be offended. What is worse, they could lose that high paying position with that large congregation that hired them to compromise the truth in the first place. The apostles were told to speak all the words of this life, which preaching could have very easily put them back into prison where they had been.

Many "preachers" today like to avoid the things brethren really need. In most congregations today, you are not likely to hear a sermon on God's law of fellowship. You

are not likely to hear a warning that we should not fellowship the congregation across town or in the next town by sending our children to participate in their youth activities, or urging our brethren to participate in their area-wide singings, or their evangelistic efforts. This is the case because that congregation believes and teaches the error that all of life is worship, or they practice fellowship that is contrary to the teaching of 2 John 9-10, or who knows what other errors.

These men will not preach on certain sins that are rampant in the congregation. If they were to do that, many of the members would leave, and there would not be enough left to contribute sufficiently to pay their salaries. They must be of the mind-set that taking a cut in pay is far worse than being thrown into prison.

When Paul called the Ephesian elders to him from Miletus, he had much to say to them. One of the points he made was, **"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"** (Acts 20:26, 27). One of the reasons it is vital to preach all of the counsel of God is that if there is one thing left out, it might be the very thing a certain member needs to keep him/her out of the eternal fires of hell.

For all those who preach or teach, let them all be mindful of the angel's instruction to the apostles, **"Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life."**

— 1509 E. Bowie Street
Beeville, TX 78102

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
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Editorial...

A STUDY OF REPENTANCE

Paul wrote, “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Cor. 7:10). Godly sorrow is not repentance, but it works repentance. No one has ever repented of any sin but that first of all that person possessed sorrow toward God for his sins against Him, which Godly sorrow worked repentance.

The actual repentance is the breaking down of man’s stubborn will, the seat of all sin and rebellion against God. It is Godly sorrow in the sinner that works to change the sinner’s will. It turns the person in need of salvation from doing as he pleases into one who desires for the rest of his life and above all else to do as God pleases.

The proof of one’s repentance (the point one becomes dead to a life of sin or separated from the practice of sin) is seen in the reformation of ones life brought about because of repentance. It is the fruit of repentance, but not repentance itself. As John the Immerser said, “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Mat. 3:8). The word “meet” means “suitable.” Thus, when one repents, the proof of one’s repentance is seen in the fruit of one’s reformed life. As Jesus said, “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Mat. 7:20). Some say one cannot know what a person is by the way he lives, but Jesus said we could. Thus, one ceases his/her unscriptural marriage, unscriptural worship, and anything else that is unscriptural and contrary to the will of Jesus when he repents (Col. 3:17).

What creates Godly sorrow in a sinner? It is the gospel of Christ. In the glad tidings of Christ, there are two aspects of it, and only two, that are designed to create in the heart (the inward man) of the sinner sorrow toward God for his sins against Him. The first that we notice is that particular part of the Gospel that reveals to the sinner the eternal consequences of dying guilty of sin—consigned by the judge of all the earth to exist in hell, eternally separated from God in the torments of the lake which burns with fire and brimstone that is the second death (Mat. 11:20-24; Rev. 21:8; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19-21; 2 The. 1:6-9). The second is the teaching of the gospel concerning the great goodness of God toward undeserving and rebellious mankind (John 3:16; Rom. 2:4; 5:8; Jam. 1:17). If the fear of going to hell and/or the great goodness of God will not create sorrow in one toward God for one’s sins against Him, then no repentance will take place. That person will be lost in a devil’s hell when his life is over. In other words, such a person is beyond salvation. Thus, where there is no Godly sorrow for one’s sins against God, there is no repentance, and without repentance no one can be saved (2 Pet. 3:9; Acts. 17:30).

If one sins after becoming a member of the church, God has provided a second law of pardon. It is comprised of repentance, confession of one’s sin(s), and prayer to God to be forgiven of sin(s) (1 John 1:7-10; James 5:16; and Acts 8:22).

—David P. Brown, Editor

The Unity Movement At Babel

Danny Douglas

And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth (Gen. 11:4-9).

On a plain in the land of Shinar (Gen. 11:2) the people started a "unity movement." Instead of multiplying and spreading throughout the earth as God had commanded them (Gen. 9:7), they decided to set out with their own purpose. Adam Clarke aptly observed:

Being therefore strictly united in all things, coming to the fertile plains of Shinar they proposed to settle themselves there, instead of spreading themselves over all the countries of the earth, according to the design of God...

The "unity movement" at Babel has its modern day counterpart in the community church movement and others who are caught up in "unity-in-diversity" efforts, seeking to unify while ignoring the doctrine of Christ (cf. 2 John 9). They were "unified" in their efforts to do their own thing in defiance of the will of the living God! Unity without God is no good. Atheists and humanists may unify in their efforts to denounce faith in God. Muslim terrorists unify in their efforts to destroy innocent human lives. The Watch Tower Society goes out in unison to spread their false doctrines. Those at Babel were unified, but they were also displeasing to God. It was not Divine unity! God destroyed their efforts, just as one day He will root up every thing that He has not authorized (cf. Mat. 15:13; 7:21-23).

The people at Babel had the numbers. However, this did not make them right! In the heart of Houston, Texas, Joel Osteen proclaims his enticing message to thousands every week in the enormous facility which houses "Lakewood Church." Yet, they are all lost! God is no more pleased with Osteen's false doctrines and his multitudes than He was with the wicked world of Noah's day (Gen. 6:1-13). Many wayward congregations, which are now located where faithful churches of Christ once met, are growing in number. They are no longer the Lord's church. This is the age of the "mega

church," when large community churches number into the hundreds or even thousands. Many people reason, "We have a large crowd. We must be doing something right!" They have forgotten the words of Jesus:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Mat. 7:13-14).

The people at Babel wanted to make name for themselves. They wanted to do things their way instead of God's way. Many preachers and congregations want to be renowned. They want a big name. They want to do things their way instead of the Lord's way. They want mechanical instrumental music and special singing groups in the worship, but this is not God's way (cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). They want entertain themselves and call it worshipping God, rather than worshipping God in spirit and in truth (cf. John 4:22-24). They want women in leadership roles in the church, but again, this is not God's way (cf. 1 Tim. 2:8-14). They want to have joint services with denominations, or pulpit exchanges with sectarian preachers, but this is not the Lord's way (cf. 2 John 9-11). They want to have an environment where a religiously mixed married couple can both feel accepted and not be offended. They want a place where unscripturally "married" couples can find comfort in their adulterous unions. All of this is wrong. It is sinful to seek to comfort those in sin by compromising the faith! Their hearts need to be pricked so that they might repent, obey the Lord, and be saved! (cf. Acts 2:36-38; 2 Cor. 7:10; Heb. 5:8-9).

The people at Babel wanted to build a tower "**whose top may reach unto heaven.**" However, they were not going to reach heaven. Those in the "unity movement" are attempting the impossible, seeking a path to God that is not based on the doctrine of Christ. We cannot have fellowship with God apart from abiding in the doctrine of Christ, as John declared: "**Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son**" (2 John 9). Their attitude is not like that of Jesus, Who prayed to the Father: "**not my will, but thine be done**" (Luke 22:42). Their attitude is self-willed and despises "**dominion**" (i.e., authority). Jude describes them: "**Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities**" (Jude 8). Their many ways are ways of confusion and sure paths to eternal destruction (Rev. 21:8).

—704 Azalea Dr.
Mt. Pleasant, TN 38474

DEVIATIONS FROM THE TRUTH

Roelf L. Ruffner

“O I want to see Him, look upon His face!”

I have often wondered what it would be like to experience some remarkable event in history. I was not in the military and have not experienced combat. I shook the hand of one President, Gerald R. Ford. I once heard Senator Hubert Humphrey speak as well as then Governor Ronald Reagan. But one event I do not want to miss is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Master. Will I be alive when He returns in His glory? I hope so. **“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen”** (Rev. 1:7). **“He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”** (Rev. 22:20).

You do not hear or read much in this world about the Lord’s return. Some refer to it mockingly with a cartoon of a crackpot carrying a sign. Others speak of it as if Jesus will return to set up a millennial kingdom on earth (cf. John 18:36,37; Luke 17:20,21). Then there are a few who claim He has already returned. The majority do not care. The Holy Bible teaches none of this. To the church of Christ in Thessalonica Paul the apostle wrote,

and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed (2 The. 1:7-10).

What would you (and I) do if the Lord returned at this very moment? He has promised that He will return someday. He will return to find humanity in states of either joy or terror, disappointment, and fear. Joy will be reserved for those prepared for His return. Terror, disappointment, and fear will be reserved for those unprepared for our Lord’s second coming. What about many who thought they were prepared for His coming, but had not and were not living in obedience to Him. Of them Jesus said,

Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ (Mat. 7:22, 23).

I want to know that joy, do you? When Jesus returns

it will be to judge all who have ever lived on earth and to reward the faithful (Acts 17:30, 31). It will be sudden with no opportunity for sinners to obey the gospel and be saved from their sins, no time for anyone to repent, and no pardon for sins available. The gentle, loving Savior who gave us a lifetime of opportunity to obey His Gospel will be replaced by the Judge of all (2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15). The patient Redeemer who forgave the repenting Christian more than “seventy times seven” will forgive no more (Mat. 18:21-22). The angry Author of the Truth (John 8:31,32; 17:17) who saw that Truth twisted and replaced by false doctrine, all done in His name, will restrain Himself no more (2 The. 2:6-10). **“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”** (Heb. 10:31).

Perhaps you are one of many who have never heard about the Lord’s Second Coming. Perhaps you do not believe in God or Jesus Christ. Maybe you are mired in some false doctrine or man-made religious dogma (Mat. 15:9). Please examine the many passages in the Holy Bible concerning the Second Coming with an open mind (Mat. 13:23). See what it says about salvation from the wrath to come (1 The. 1:10). Salvation comes to the believer who has repented of his sins, confessed Christ to be the only Begotten Son of God, and is immersed in water by the authority of Christ into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to obtain the remission of his sins. It is in the watery grave of baptism (baptized into Jesus’ death) that one contacts the cleansing blood of the Lamb (Heb. 11:6; 9:14; Rom. 10:17; Acts 2:38;



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17:30; 22:16; Rom. 6:3,4; Mat 28:18-20). Be prepared for the sound of the trumpet of God (cf. 1 Cor. 14:8; 15:22; 1 The. 4:16) when the Son of God will return in the clouds for judgment; His feet never touching the ground (cf. Acts 1:9-11).

Perhaps you are an erring child of God. Have you repented of your sin(s), asking God to forgive you and been restored to your brethren (James 5:16)? Would you meet Him today with joy, terror, and disappointment? **“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame”** (Rev. 16:15).

Once Billy, Always Billy

I read an article in a pentecostal-charismatic magazine the other day which extolled the virtues of that “wise evangelist” Billy Graham. The writer set the tone of the article by writing, “Once saved, always saved? It is the question that haunts Christian circles as believers discuss just how holy Jesus Christ is compared to us dirty sinners. Some argue that a quick one-time prayer will guarantee you admission into heavenly fire insurance, if you will. Others maintain you must live a life of perfect piety that proves your relationship with Him.” Besides this being Calvinistic (“once saved, always saved” and “us dirty sinners”) it presents a false dichotomy regarding salvation. Both extremes of their theological straw man are false. Biblical salvation is not the “quick-prayerism” of the Baptists or the proving of one’s salvation by the “perfect piety” of the Holiness Movement.

Then, in the article the writer points to an answer the false teacher Billy Graham gave recently to a question concerning repentance: “If we repent of our sins (like the Bible says we’re supposed to do), does this mean that if we ever commit another sin, we’ll lose our salvation? I worry about this.” The 97 year old “preacher to the Presidents” answers in the usual Billy Graham way by mixing truth with religious error. He states that it is the devil’s oldest trick to make the Christian think that they will lose their salvation if they sin. True! And he reminds the questioner that Jesus died for our sins – all of them. Agreed! Then he adds, “Don’t trust yourself or your own goodness for your salvation—for you and I can never be good enough. Instead, trust Christ and what He has already done for you.” While true, what faithful preacher of the Gospel has said otherwise? But then the clincher comes, “By His death and resurrection, He purchased your salvation—and now He offers it to you as a free gift. By a simple prayer of faith, ask Christ to come into your life and save you—and He will.” Did you catch it? As Billy has done for the last 80+ years he thrusts an anti-Biblical statement in the midst of truth. Where in the pages of the New Testament was anyone saved by a “simple prayer of faith;” also known as the “sinner’s prayer?” What would Billy have said to that penitent sinner Saul of Tarsus who prayed and fasted for three days and nights in Damascus pleading to the God

of his fathers for forgiveness and salvation. Did Jesus send him a Baptist preacher who led him in that “simple prayer of faith?” No! Rather He sent a humble disciple named Ananias who commanded the believing penitent Saul, **“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 22:16).

Billy never mentions repentance of sins, confession of Jesus to be God’s Son, and baptism for the remission of sins as necessary for salvation. He only mentions some nebulous “simple prayer of faith.” I do not trust Billy for my salvation, but I do fully trust Christ and the word of God. Jesus said, **“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”** (Mark 16:16). He also said that one must confess Him as the Son of God in order to be saved (Mat. 10:32). The Apostle Peter in the first Gospel sermon said to some grieving, guilt ridden Jews, **“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”** (Acts 2:38).

If I had been asked to answer this questioner’s inquiry I would have explained to her a Christian may not go to Heaven if they sin and do not repent of that sin. I would point out to her what Jesus told the Christians in Smyrna who were about to be killed for their faith, **“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”** (Rev. 2:10). If the doctrine of “once saved, always saved” is true why did Jesus warn His brethren to remain faithful until they died?

I would go on and explain to them from the Bible about God’s wonderful plan of salvation: Hear the word (Rom. 10:17), believe that word (John 8:24), repent of sins (Acts 17:30), confess Jesus to be God’s Son (Rom. 10:9,10) and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). None of these steps alone saves one. All of them require obedience (Even a person’s faith in Christ!). Sadly Billy would never admit the foregoing steps in the plan of salvation. Why? Because he is a false teacher who pedals religious error.

Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:17,18).

(<https://www.charismanews.com/culture/66653-billy-graham-answers-one-of-the-most-debated-points-in-christian-theology>? Accessed August 8, 2017).

Take Thought!

And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ (Luke 12:19,20)

Jesus often spoke in parables, earthly stories with a

heavenly or spiritual meaning. They are found in the treasure chest we call the Gospels. **“I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old”** (Psa.78:2).

His goal in these parables was to cause us to think upon our own lives. Even though some of us may live to be one hundred years old, what is that compared to eternity? Yet young and old live their lives with no thought of their eternal destiny—either Heaven or Hell.

In the Parable of the Rich Fool the rich man was not thinking beyond his own desires. He wanted to accumulate more and more. His elusive goal was the fleeting realm of satisfaction. Billions today follow the fool’s goal—“If only I could...” They strive and strive and never see where they are heading.

The rich fool was caught in a pathetic spiritual mess when his time was up. Just when he thought he was “happy” his life was ended. When will our time be up? Will it be today or tonight or 50 years from today? However long we live on this earth the scripture say, **“And it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”** (Heb. 9:27).

There are two sure things in our future:

1) The Lord will return; then the judgment, or;

2) We will die and our souls taken to Hades to await the judgment.

Either way, the judgment day will come for all of us (2 Cor. 5:10).

The Lord may return today or 1,000 years hence. Even our troubled times are no indication of the eminency or the reluctance of His Second Coming. **“For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a**

thief in the night” (2 The. 5:2).

It does not matter whether we die or the Lord returns, it will be a same: the end of our physical existence and beginning of eternity. **“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it”** (Ecc.12:7).

However, what if I knew today was the last day of my life? Would I do anything differently? Now is the hour for us to reform our ways. Now is the day to choose that “narrow gate” and the “difficult way” (Mat. 7:13,14) which leads to eternal life. Let us live so as to be able to say with the apostle Paul, **“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith”** (2 Tim. 4:6,7).

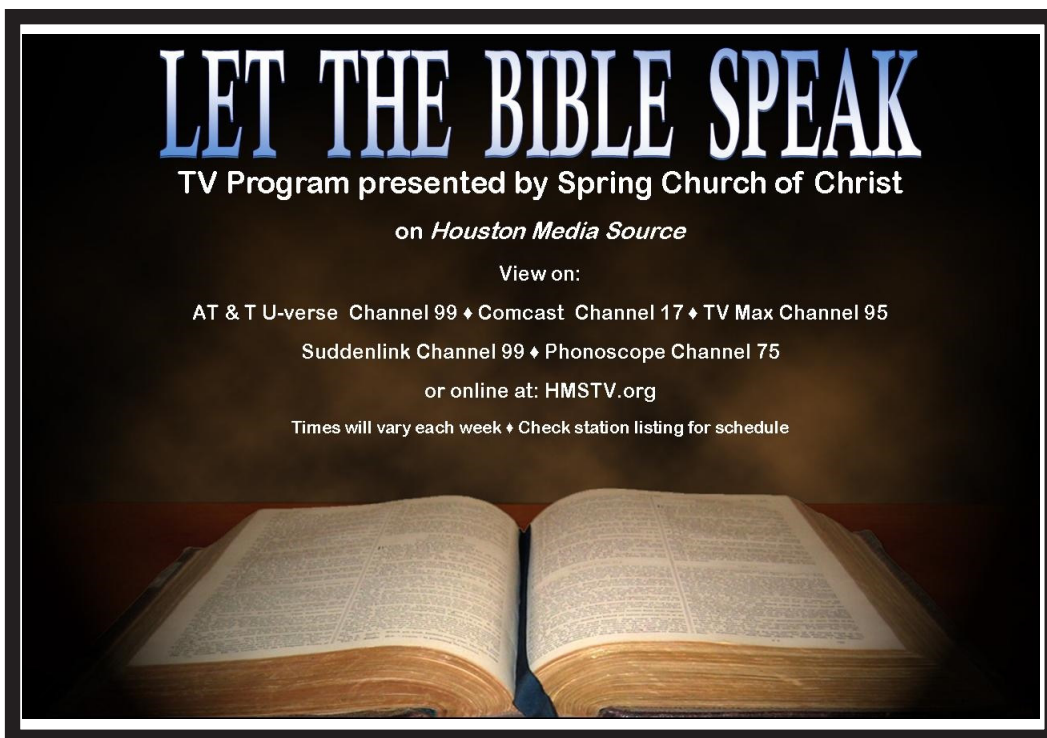
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Moses E. Lard, Editor, wrote:

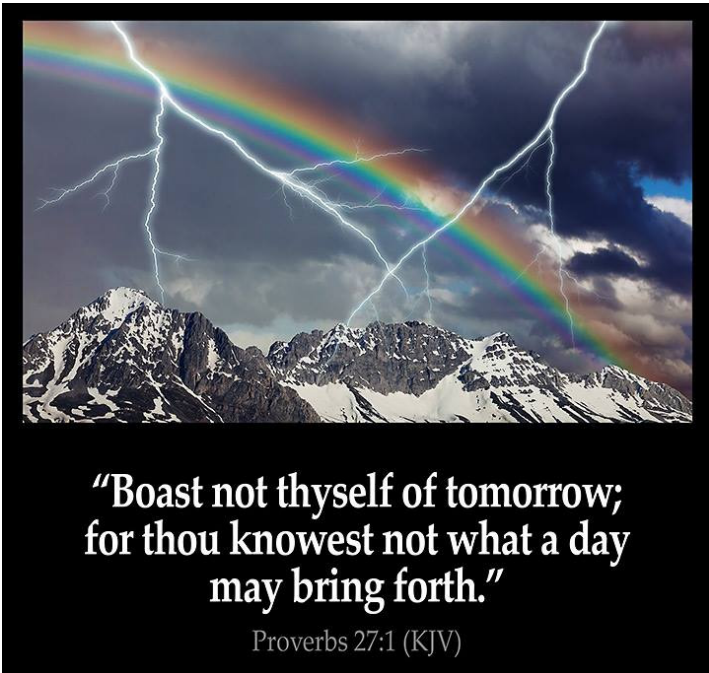
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—Lard’s Quarterly, October, 1867, p. 368.



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Helena—Mountain View Church of Christ, 1400 Joslyn Street, Helena, Mt. 59601, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Matt Bidmead (406) 461-9199.

-Oklahoma-

Elk City—Northeast Church of Christ, 616 N. Locust Ave., Mailing address P.O. Box 267, Elk City, OK 73648-0267, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m. Wed., 7:00 p.m. Jerry and Nathan Brewer, evangelists. The church building is one block east of North Van Buren, on East Avenue C in Elk City, Oklahoma . Facebook : www.facebook.com/nechurchofchristecok. Phone: (580) 225-4395

Porum—Church of Christ, 8 miles South of I-40 at Hwy 2, Warner exit. Sun. 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. Allen Lawson, evangelist, email: allenlawson@earth-comm.com.

-South Carolina-

Belvedere (Greater Augusta, Georgia Area)—Church of Christ, 535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841, www.belvederechurchofchrist.org; e-mail belvecoc@gmail.com, (803) 442-6388, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m.,

Texas-

Denton area—Northpoint Church of Christ, 4224 N. I-35 (Greenway Plaza, just north of Cracker Barrel). Mailing address: 4224 N. I-35, Denton, TX 76207. E-mail: northpointcoc@hotmail.com. Website: www.northpointcoc.com. Sunday: 9:30, 10:30, 1:00; Wednesday 7:00. Contact: Dub McClish: (940) 218-2892; dubmcllish@gmail.com.

Houston area—Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, (281) 353-2707. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, evangelist. Home of the Spring *Contending for the Faith* Lectures. www.churchesofchrist.com.

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. Huntsville, TX 77320. Sun. 9 a. m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (936) 438-8202.

Richwood—1600 Brazosport, Richwood, TX. Sun. 9:30; 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (979) 265-4256.

San Antonio/Sequin Area—Nockenut Church of Christ, 2559 FM 1681, Stockdale, TX 78160, Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., nktchurchofchrist.org