

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

LEAVE IT TO DEAVER (PART 2)

Gary W. Summers

The Israelites had great expectations at the time Jesus arrived, although they did not know how everything would fit together. They anticipated a king (2 Sam. 7:12-13; Ps. 110:1), but few (if any) anticipated that the kingdom would be spiritual. They expected “**that prophet**” like unto Moses (Deut. 18:15-19). The seed of woman was still going to bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). And the third promise that God made to Abraham had yet to be fulfilled.

God stated this third promise in two different ways on various occasions. Its first pronouncement was: “**And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed**” (Gen. 12:3). In Genesis 22:18 God said: “**In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed....**” To Isaac and Jacob were those words repeated (Gen. 26:4; 28:14). After Jesus died on the cross, was buried, arose again, and ascended into heaven, Paul referenced this verse:

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” (Gal. 3:8).

Notice that Paul continues to explain this promise made to Abraham and that it is the promise referred to by Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:39) and the promise Paul mentioned in Acts 13:32. Consider Galatians 3:13-14:

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we

might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The promise is not that of receiving the Holy Spirit (a subject left behind after verses 1-5); rather it refers to what the Spirit had promised—salvation to the heirs of Abraham—whether Jew or Gentile! Paul examines this subject further, concluding with the great text in Galatians 3:26-29.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

This is the promise to which Peter refers in Acts 2:39, which dovetails perfectly with the text of Galatians 3. It is also the promise of salvation to which Paul refers in Acts 13:32 and 38. Therefore, when Peter says that if they repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, they shall receive, in fact, salvation—the gift of the Holy Spirit—for that promise is to them, their children, and those who are far off—even as many as the Lord God should call.

Brother Warren used to teach that, in interpreting Scripture, we not only consider a verse but both the immediate and remote texts of the Bible. We have done so in examining Acts 2:38. The promise of salvation (and all the spiritual blessings that come through Christ) fit the text and harmonize with all remote texts. Certainly, it carries fewer problems than Peter

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Editorial...

The excellent article immediately following my comments was written by the late Thomas B. Warren. It was his editorial for the May, 1958 issue of what was then a new journal, *The Spiritual Sword*. At that time the “anti” cooperation/orphan home/helping non-saints out of the church treasury/kitchen in the building controversy was at its peak. Along with brother Warren, the late brethren E. R. Harper, Guy N. Woods, Roy C. Deaver, Gus Nichols, G. K. Wallace, Sterl Watson, W. L. Totty, to name some, rose up to meet this error. Sadly, at that time there were other church members (elders, preachers, and others) who did not believe these “anti” errors, but who did not desire to come to the forefront of the battle and oppose them. To quote the old gospel hymn—“In the fight for the right” they were *not* about “to dare and do”. Some did not desire to take a public stand for fear it would cost them their jobs, financial support, friends and/or their families. Others held the false view that brother Warren addresses in the following article—*ignore the error and it will go away, or leave it alone and it will die out*.

Fifty-eight years have come and gone since Warren’s article originally appeared. *The Spiritual Sword* ceased publication, only to be revived by brother Warren not many years later. It was then revived to address the false doctrines of an ever growing *liberalism* (doctrines that loose men from what God in the Bible has bound on them). Brother Warren did a great job in selecting, studying, and refuting the errors that continue to greatly trouble the church.

Although the issues today in the church and nation for the most part pertain to liberalism rather than “anti-ism”, the church continues to have those members who think that *error will die out if it is ignored*. That being the case, brother Warren’s article is as needed today, if not more, than when it was originally published in 1958.

The liberals have to one extent or the other captured the schools of higher education operated by the brethren. The sentiment that set up the colleges (now universities) to accept liberal false teaching is working in the preacher training schools and schools of Biblical studies to the point that today they are about where the colleges were 40 years ago. (Some such as Sunset in Lubock, TX are much more to the left of Truth than are others.) These preacher training schools are no longer willing to stand for the Truth, the whole Truth, and

nothing but the Truth of God's Word while militantly opposing all error in and out of the church as they once did. With each day that passes, they, along with the congregations whose work they are (one of them operates under a board as do the universities), become more and more like their spiritually adulterous higher education sisters—all about money, numbers, and their secular sisters. Where in times past, at all costs they upheld all Bible Truth and aggressively opposed, exposed, and refuted all error as they proclaimed the Gospel to a world drowning in sin, they now follow a policy of seeing how closely they can walk with the world/denominations and continue to represent themselves as faithful to God.

Their students are being "trained" to pick and choose what errors they will oppose and what errors they will arbitrarily ignore. They demand that their students and alumni be faithful to them or suffer the consequences of being "blackballed" by their alma matters. The guideline for deciding what and who to ignore and what and who to oppose is measured by: *Does opposing a certain*

error promote and support the school, or does it not? If opposing the error will be good for the school it will be opposed, but if not, it will be ignored. Any student, alumnus, or anyone else who opposes such an error is anathema as far as the school is concerned—and ***the school expects everyone to follow their lead in such matters.*** The Bible ceases to be the final standard in determining what and who to support and/or oppose.

All of the aforementioned being stated, where are the schools when it comes to teaching and training men to militantly oppose any and all error and those who propagate it. They are basically developing good humor men who are about as militant toward the devil and his henchman as a cold wet noodle.

Thus with the previous comments before us, we commend the late brother Warren's fifty-three year old article to you. It is as relevant today as it was the day it was written. All one has to do is apply it to the issues troubling the church today.

—DPB, Editor



Will Error "Die Out" If "Left Alone"?

Thomas B. Warren

There are those among us who, even though they believe church cooperation and orphan homes to be right, have an erroneous idea of what to do about opposition to these matters: they believe that if such error is "left alone" (with nothing being said about it) it will "die out" of its own accord.

Do They Accept this Theory on Other Matters?

It is to be wondered: do these men accept this theory on other matters? If their house were on fire, would they expect the fire to "die out" if they just "left it alone"? (As Brother Jack Meyer pointed out: the fire will "die out" when the house is burned to the ground!) (2) If a rattlesnake were in their home, would they just "let it alone" expecting it to "die out" of its own accord? (3) If they were suddenly stricken with pneumonia, would they "let it alone" while expecting it to "die-out" of its own accord? (4) Do they expect atheism; agnosticism, and modernism in general to "die out" while they "let it alone" and do not "stir it up"? (5) Do they expect the doctrine of salvation by faith only to "die out" if they will just "say nothing about it"? (6) Do they expect Catholicism

and Protestantism to be drastically wounded by their tactic of "letting it alone"? (7) Do they expect worldliness in the church (dancing, drinking, fornication, immodest apparel, etc.) to "die out" if they will only be careful not to "say anything about it"?

What of the Answers to These Questions?

If the above questions are to be rightly answered with "Yes" then will someone please tell this editor why we are preaching at all! If we preach God's Word at all, there is something that is not going to be "left alone"! If one doctrine will "die out" if "left alone", why will not all false doctrines "die out" if "left alone"? If such is true, we all should immediately stop preaching so that there) will be a soon end to all error!

On the other hand, if the above questions are to be rightly answered with, "No", then why will not brethren apply that same reasoning to the questions of orphan homes and church cooperation? Someone, at some time said something about like this: "Evil grows and spreads because good men do nothing." Think of the good men among us who

have done almost nothing in fighting this destructive hobby which has divided churches, alienated brethren, and shackled brethren with its human creeds. May God help them to awaken!

What Does the Bible Say on These Matters?

“For I know that after my departing grievous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:29, 30).

“For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, ...” (Titus 1:10, 11).

“... I resisted him to the face, ... I said unto Cephas before them all ...” (Gal. 2:11-14).

“... because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberly which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour” (Gal. 2:4, 5).

“Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest may also be in fear” (1 Tim. 5:20).

“... mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye

learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent” (Rom. 16:17, 18).

Application of Passages

As relates to the present controversy, the previous passages have at least the application: *error must be met*. We cannot be pleasing to God by adopting an “ostrich” attitude, expecting the error to “die out” if we only “let it alone”. Bible teaching shows such an attitude to be a wrong one.

What the Lord Needs: *Soldiers!*

Paul said: “**FIGHT the good FIGHT of the faith...**” (1 Timothy 6:12). Further, he said, “**Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus**” (2 Timothy 2:3). The Lord needs MEN and CHURCHES who will dare to stand up and be counted ON THE SIDE OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS in spite of the hardships which one may have to suffer at the hands of the exponents of error! My brother, what about you?

We can thank the Lord that this movement has been met and turned back. Let us now stand together and complete the job.



He Died Thinking

Foy Smith

A story was told recently about a fight between a game rooster and an Owl. It was amusing to me and made me think of many things other than the point the speaker was making on that occasion. The two birds were placed in a circle and the respective owners stood by to cheer their bird on to victory. The rooster circled the owl and the owl just turned, robot like, to keep an eye on the rooster without making any indication of putting up a fight himself. The owner of the rooster asked, “What’s he doing now?” “Oh, he’s thinking.” The rooster made another thrust or two and when the same question was asked for a second time regarding the owl’s behavior the owner again replied, “He’s still thinking.” Suddenly the rooster lunged, threw his steel covered spur, it glistened in the sunlight for a second and shot straight through the owl’s head. The bird quivered a time or two and was dead. Now the moral of the story is: “HE DIED THINKING!”

There are some preachers and brethren in the brotherhood today who have been thinking for a good many years. Ask them where they stand on some present-day issues and they will reply, “Oh, we’re still thinking.” They’ve been thinking for eight or ten years and the only thing we can get

out of them is that they’re still “thinking” things over.

Now thinking is good but it looks to me like they should have reached some decision in eight or ten years of “thinking”. Could it be that they intend to see where the biggest pile of chips fall and fall that way themselves later on? some no doubt are waiting for that to happen. Then they’re going to make up their minds, after victory is won, and talk about how “we whipped that bunch!”

Now it might happen that way. At least they hope it will. On the other hand they could be like the owl. *They could die thinking*. It is time for everyone to make up his mind about troublesome issues. Not that he has to make up his mind as to just how some things must be executed that are in the realm of judgment, but a decision either for a group that are intent upon destroying the church or against against them. Now everyone can go that far and make up his mind to that extent.

Some “thinking” is really not thinking at all—it is a cover up, a political “putoff” hoping that the majority will make up their minds for them sooner or later. If I have to die thinking I want to know **how** I’m thinking and **what** I’m thinking about. I also want others to know the **what** and **how** of my thinking. —**Deceased**

[Brother Warren placed bro. Smith’s article after his editorial in that 1958 issue of *The Spiritual Sword*. Does anyone wonder why he did?—Editor]

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allegedly telling the people they would receive a spiritual gift, and it is miles ahead of Deaver's explanation that the apostle was promising them a gift "without accompanying miraculous power but with non-miraculous spiritual power." Remember that Mac did not think the salvation explanation was even worthy of consideration since he had advanced the only four possibilities that could possibly explain **"the gift of the Holy Spirit."** Leave it to Deaver to overrate his own thoroughness.

Objections to the Meaning of Salvation

We will consider his second objection first. He says that if the **"gift of the Holy Spirit"** is salvation, then it must either be salvation from past sins or salvation in heaven. But it cannot be salvation in heaven, he avers, because "neither Peter nor any other preacher could guarantee heaven to any obedient believer unless the obedient believer died immediately following his baptism" (35). While this observation is true, it does not mean that heaven was excluded from their thinking. Being saved from one's past sins is necessary to go to heaven—and probably the motive for obedience to the Gospel. Surely, the 3,000 knew that more was necessary than being baptized, since **"they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine..."** (Acts 2:42).

If Deaver were entirely right about his second objection against Peter referring to heaven, then what could possibly be his criticism of **"the gift of the Holy Spirit"** referring to salvation from past sins? He claims that it would be "needless repetition." He writes:

Does anyone still in control of his mental powers think that the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to say, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the remission of your sins" (35)?

This writer will have to plead guilty. Has Mac read Joshua 13:1 lately? "Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the Lord said to him: 'You are old, advanced in years....'"

To paraphrase Mac: "Does anyone still in control of his mental powers think that the Holy Spirit inspired Joshua to write that he was old, advanced in years and then have the Lord repeat the same thing to him?" Leave it to Deaver to think he knows God so well that he knows how God would or would not write.

Parallelisms

In all of his years of study, has Mac never noticed the Holy Spirit's use of parallelisms, which amounts to saying the same thing in different words? One has only to read as far as Genesis 4:23-24:

**Then Lamech said to his wives:
Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
O wives of Lamech, listen to my speech!
For I have killed a man for wounding me,
Even a young man for hurting me.
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Then Lamech seventy-seven fold.**

Notice that Adah and Zillah are the wives of Lamech and that **"hear my voice"** is equivalent to listen to my speech. Wounding and hurting are equivalent; young man amplifies man.

Parallelisms are generally found in the poetic books but obviously may be found in any book of the Bible. The type under discussion here is called Synonymous Parallelism. Despite Mac's protest of "needless repetition," the Holy Spirit chose to use many parallelisms to communicate the same idea in different words. A few are provided below.

**"God has delivered me to the ungodly,
And turned me over to the hands of the wicked"**
(Job 16:11).

**"Oh, praise the Lord, all you Gentiles!
Laud Him, all you people"** (Ps. 117:1!)

**"A fool's lips enter into contention,
and his mouth calls for blows"** (Pr. 18:6).

"Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by injustice" (Jer. 22:13).

**The earth is violently broken,
The earth is split open,
The earth is shaken exceedingly** (Isa. 24:19).

"Does anyone still in control of his mental powers think that the Holy Spirit inspired Isaiah to say the same thing three times in a row?" These parallelisms could be multiplied several times over from the poetic and prophetic books, but someone might point out, "All these examples are from the Old Testament, and maybe the Hebrews wrote that way, but what about the New Testament?"

One of the standard works on Bible interpretation is D. R. Dungan's *Hermeneutics*, published originally in the second half of the 19th century, although many editions have followed. He was cited earlier with respect to "metonymy of the subject." He lists Genesis 4:23-24 and many other parallelisms from the Old Testament, but he also mentions Mary's praise of God from Luke 1:46-55, after which he makes the following comment: "A careful reading of this address will cause any one to see the parallel lines and rhythm in the heart wrought to the highest tension with love for and praise for God" (334).

Would that "anyone" include Mac Deaver? Even in non-poetic passages the New Testament includes parallelisms also. What about 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20? **"Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies."** The second sentence is at least one way the Spirit could be quenched, although there could be other ways. The next two verses comprise an antithetical parallelism: **"Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil"** (1 Thess. 5:21-22).

One might anticipate Mac saying, "While all of this is true, it is irrelevant. It does not prove that **'the gift of the Holy Spirit'** is salvation." This statement is true; this information does not prove the case, but it certainly allows for it to be the case.

Luke and Acts 2

It would be appropriate to ask if Luke had ever used parallelisms when recording the facts of history. The answer is that he did—and not far from Acts 2:38-39. Although separated by six verses, Luke writes that **“the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. They were all amazed and marveled...”** (2:6). Later he records: **“So they were all amazed and perplexed, ‘What could this mean?’”** (2:12). Although these bits of information are not in the style of a parallelism, they do repeat the same information that had already been provided. Was Luke unnecessarily redundant?

But consider Acts 3:14-15: **“But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.”**

The people had denied Jesus, to whom Luke refers as the Holy and Just One. Antithetical to that, the people embraced someone else, whose character was the opposite of holy and just; he was a murderer. Peter puts in one more antithetical twist and contrasts a taker of life with the Prince of Life. They killed the latter but asked for the former. The first and third descriptions are parallel with an opposite in between. But why use three descriptions to refer to Jesus—two in the same sentence? Jesus is the Holy One and the Just, as well as the Prince of Life. All three are accurate and refer to the same Person, but they bring out different aspects of His character.

Likewise, when Peter says, **“for the forgiveness of sins,”** and also identifies it as **“the gift of the Holy Spirit,”** he is merely emphasizing different truths about that salvation. Using different descriptions to refer to the same entity is not uncommon but frequent in writing. For that reason we find such expressions in poetry, prophecy, and everyday speech. The use of synonyms or equivalent expressions simply keeps our speaking and writing from becoming boringly repetitious. Peter refers to salvation and its attendant blessings as **“the forgiveness of sins,” “the gift of the Holy Spirit,”** and **“the promise.”**

Speaking of Acts 3, Peter arrives at a point in his sermon where he feels compelled to tell those listening how they ought to respond to the Truth that they had killed the Prince of Life. **“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come upon you from the presence of the Lord”** (3:19).

The word translated **“repent”** is the same word that is used in Acts 2:38. Many are surprised to see **“be converted”** for **“be baptized.”** The two words are not the same or even related. To be converted is to turn from one side to the other. Jesus said that He spoke in parables so that certain Jews would hear but not understand, **“lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them”** (Mark 4:12). This is the way Peter also uses the word. The Jews needed to give up their hardness of heart and turn fully to Jesus. In doing so, they would be baptized, since the apostle had already preached it

that way. The fact that 3,000 people were baptized in the city of Jerusalem could hardly have gone unnoticed.

Those who were scattered in the persecution after the death of Stephen went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4). **“And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord”** (Acts 11:21). This description of conversion is also found in Acts 15:19. Again, turning to the Lord or being converted, of necessity includes baptism—especially since the purpose for being converted is **“that your sins may be blotted out.”** Probably, we are all in agreement on this point. But one more example is instructive. As Jesus told Saul of Tarsus what He expected of him before his sins were washed away, He included that Saul was to go the Gentiles— **“to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me”** (Acts 26:18).

The word translated **“turn”** is the same word as **“be converted”** in Acts 3:19 [1994]. When people turn from darkness to light, they receive forgiveness of sins, which comes through baptism. Paul says that he preached that message—that all should **“repent, turn [1994] to God, and do works befitting repentance”** (Acts 26:20).

The purpose of bringing these facts to light is to note that in Acts 3:19, the people needed to repent (as on Pentecost), and being converted corresponds to being baptized (not that they are identical but the former includes the latter). So, what corresponds to receiving **“the gift of the Holy Spirit”**? The answer is—**“times of refreshing”** that come **“from the presence of the Lord.”** As has been our thesis all along, these times of refreshing (**“the gift of the Holy Spirit”**) refer to salvation and all that comes with it, such as the inheritance mentioned in Acts 26:18 (cf. Gal. 3:29).

Unlike the Day of Pentecost, no emphasis on the Holy Spirit is present to confuse the reader. No one on this day would confuse **“times of refreshing”** with a gift “without accompanying miraculous power but with non-miraculous spiritual power.” Mac’s objection to **“the gift of the Spirit”** being salvation does not hold. In fact, his analysis is little more than a quibble. He could not have thought through what he was writing very thoroughly, or he would not have mocked the fact that the Spirit can indeed use similar expressions to communicate the same thought. He will need to make a more serious effort to undermine this view when the entirety of the New Testament corroborates it. He undoubtedly will make a reply. *Leave it to Deaver!*

—5410 Lake Howell Road
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*If they only measured the distance, some people
would be amazed how little they had
traveled when they came to their wits’ end.*

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—David P. Brown, Editor

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DOES ANYONE KNOW WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE MAN WHO WROTE THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES?

THE SIN OF COWARDICE

Garland Elkins

“And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is faithful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren’s heart faint as well as his heart.” (Deut. 20:8). There is a very interesting story in connection with this verse. Instructions were given to the priests and officers about the preparation for a battle. The officers were to go among the soldiers and talk with them, and if they found there any man who was a coward, they were to send the cowards home lest they exert a bad influence on the other soldiers, lest their cowardice spread throughout the army and defeat result. Gideon, at a later time was instructed to send all cowards home before he went to battle. **“Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand”** (Jud. 7:3). These two cases show what God thinks of cowards. He not only considers such a one useless in a fight but a positive hindrance and a dangerous person to have in an army. Someone has said, *A coward is like a rotten apple in a barrel; it not only is of no value, but it starts the other apples to rotting.*

The Coward--A Discourager

I have read of a soldier in the army being court-martialed’ for acting as a discourager. He struck no blows for the enemy. He was not’ disloyal to his country. But he was a discourager. It was a critical time. The welfare of the country was at stake. Instead of encouraging the men on whom the defence depended and seeking to make them stronger and braver, he made them less courageous by putting faintness in their hearts. The court-martial judged it a crime to speak discouraging words at such a time.

It is sad but true in most every community there are people who are continually committing this same crime. Fortunate indeed is the home that does not contain one or more such members in it. Happy is the congregation which does not have one or more such members in its membership. Blessed indeed is the community which does not contain such citizens.

If there were fewer of these hinderers in the world, it would be easier to keep heart. When the heathen learned that Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, they did everything within their power to hinder the work.

But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it (Neh. 4:7,8).

The one talent man failed at least partially because he did not have faith in himself. He was unsure of himself and of his abilities. He could not do as much as the five and two talent men, therefore he did nothing. He said, **“And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine”** (Mt. 25:25). His lord did not consider his cowardice a valid reason for his failure. In fact his

lord described him as **“wicked and slothful”** and **“unprofitable.”**

His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked

and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 25:26-30).

I have read that at some points in the Alps the guides warn tourists not to talk, or sing, or even whisper, lest the reverberation of their words in the air start an avalanche on the mountains and bring it down upon the villages. And likewise there are men and women who are carrying such heavy loads of duty, sorrow, illness, bereavement, etc., that the slightest addition to their weight would crush them. They are building against great odds. They are holding on against great pressures with the hope of overcoming ultimately. They do not need a discourager to dishearten them. They need a word of cheer and encouragement to help them along the way. Let

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us carefully avoid being guilty of the sin of hindering. Let us not commit the crime of cowardice. Let us not fall under the condemnation of being a discourager.

Courage Can Be Cultivated

Many people who are naturally fearful have overcome their fear and have forced themselves to stand bravely for the truth. God exhorted Joshua to have courage as he was about to take the mantle of leadership of the nation of Israel, which Moses had worn so well. God said to him,

Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Jos. 1:6-9).

Courage puts heart into others. If cowardice is contagious, so also is courage. We are fighting with Christ, the great Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). We have not rea-

son to fear, He has never lost a battle. We have an armor that will prove a sure and adequate defence.

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, an having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel (Eph. 6:10-19).

Let us cultivate courage, and by putting courage into our own hearts we shall also put courage into the hearts of others. **“For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline”** (2 Tim. 1:7).

[*The Getwell Reminder*, Sept. 20, 1979, Vol. 20, No. 38]



THE NEED FOR COURAGE

Courage is defined as: “The attitude or response of facing and dealing with anything recognized as dangerous, difficult, or painful, instead of withdrawing from it; the quality of being fearless or brave; valor; pluck.” Courage is that quality which enables one to encounter danger, risk, criticism, or to face difficulties without turning back. The quality of courage is necessary in order for one to become a Christian, and it just as indispensable in living the Christian life. It is an outgrowth of faith, and supplements it: **“In your faith supply virtue”** (2 Pet. 1:5). Virtue means “general moral goodness; right action and thinking; uprightness; rectitude; morality.” One of the reasons our word “virtue” is used as a synonym for purity as of a virgin is that it takes strength of character to maintain chastity. Courage has been required in all ages. Though the masses have often shown a deplorable lack of courage, there have been noble souls in all ages which have possessed this priceless treasure.

Courage In The Patriarchal Age

Abel was a courageous follower of God (Gen. 4:1-8). Even though Cain killed him, courageous Abel exerts tre-

mendous influence for good even until now, and will continue to do so as long as time continues.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh (Heb. 11:4).

Abraham is another good example of a courageous follower of God during the patriarchal age. The Holy Spirit highly compliments him for his courageous obedience.

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Heb. 11:8-10).

Moses is another eloquent example of a courageous obedient servant. The Lord commanded him to return to Egypt and he went. **“And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian,**

Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life.” (Ex. 4:19). He demonstrated tremendous faith and courage in all of his decisions and actions.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; that they were not afraid of the king’s commandment. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting, the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. By faith he kept the pass-over, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn, should not touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up (Heb. 11:43-29),

Courage In The Mosaic Age

The Mosaic age also abounds with men of courage. It was courage born of faith which enabled Elijah to oppose Ahab, Jezebel and the four hundred and fifty false prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:18-22). This is the high courage demonstrated by David as he ran to meet Goliath (1 Sam. 17:45). It was courage born of faith which fortified Moses as he went before Pharaoh. It was this same courage produced by faith in and love for God which enabled the Hebrew Children to obey God even though they were cast into the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:16-18). Daniel demonstrated great courage in the face of the threat of being cast into the den of lions. Time and space fails us to tell of Joshua, Gideon, Samuel and a host of other examples of strength and faith under the Mosaic dispensation.

Courage In The Christian Age

The names of Peter, James, and John, Stephen, and Paul, Antipas, and multitudes of others are examples of strength and faith. Paul, and many others who faced death rather than give up faith in a crucified and resurrected Savior all convince us of their great courage. Jesus is the greatest example of it. He, the innocent, **“resisted unto blood, striv-**

ing against sin” (Heb. 12:4).

Courage Is Needed To Live The Christian Life

It takes courage to renounce all and follow Jesus; yet this is required. **“So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple”** (Lk. 14:33). It requires courage to resist temptation; yet this can be done. **“There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it”** (1 Cor. 10:13). Courage is demanded to add the Christian graces, one of which is courage or virtue (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

Courage Is Needed In The Hour Of Death

All of us possess a strong desire to live. Of Jesus it is written: **“And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt”** (Mt. 26:39). Our Lord prayed and wept before His death, but He also obeyed.

Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation; named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 4:7-9).

Heroic courage has been seen in all ages; it is necessary now both to live and to die. Let us all follow the Lord so faithfully that we can say with the peerless apostle Paul:

According to my earnest expectation and hope, that, in nothing shall I be put to shame, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Phil. 1:20,21).

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**—3950 Forest Hill-Irene Road
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[**EDITORIAL COMMENT:** Over thirty years ago I reprinted the preceding excellent articles in the church bulletin where I then preached. Recently I came across them and decided to print them in *CFTF* with my remarks to follow. As I read through them again a feeling of sadness came over me. That sadness was not because of the subjects addressed therein, or the approach taken in addressing them, or any misuse of the Scriptures, or the logic they employed, or the conclusions reached, *but because of the change in the one who wrote them—Garland Elkins.* As the years have come and gone the articles’ author and his MSOP co-laborers, et al., have ceased to objectively, consistently, and without respect of persons apply the articles’ meaning and message to all circumstances, situations, and people to which and to whom they apply.

The preceding being the case, I ask him and his fellow travelers a question put by Paul to the Galatians, **“You did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”** (Gal. 5:7). *They have lost sight of the fact that Truth is the beginning of all things with God—certainly that includes salvation, faithfulness, the unity of believers, and who Christians Scripturally should, and who they should not fellowship* (John 8: 31, 32; 17:17). The horse on which their error has boldly ridden out into the church is their compromise of the Truth in order to fellowship unrepentant false teachers—such as Dave Miller, Stan Crowley, those who fellowship and defend them. Of course this includes anyone else who extends fellowship to those not in fellowship with God. However, the very thing that causes them to compromise the Truth so they may fellowship these unrepentant brethren has opened the door for the same to happen over and over again. With honesty and objectivity such people need to reread these articles and take a big dose of the spiritual healing medicine found therein. But if they will not do so let us remember that Jesus said of such people, **“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch”** (Mt. 15:14)—DPB]

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

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)

The foregoing Scripture is one of the most abused, misused, and wrested passages in the Bible—especially John’s inspired expression in verse nine, “**the doctrine of Christ**”. That being the case, we want to study it for the purpose of determining the absolute Truth of it.

The late false teacher Carl Ketcherside contended that the expression “**doctrine of Christ**” pertains to *the doctrine about Christ, not the doctrine that Jesus authored*. For some time now a number of liberal false teachers in the church (*change agents* who by their false doctrines seek to loose brethren from what God in the Bible has bound on them) have continued to espouse and press Ketcherside’s view on the definition of “**the doctrine of Christ**”. The question for us to answer is: Are Ketcherside and his doctrinal friends correct in believing that this expression means *the doctrine about or concerning Christ*?

The English expression “**the doctrine of Christ**” translates the following transliterated Greek expression *tei didachei tou Christou*. What did John desire for the recipients of his letter (those who understood, spoke, wrote, and read Greek) to understand when they read or heard what he wrote to them? Surely as an inspired apostle of Christ who was writing part of his Savior and Lord’s last Will and Testament could say of his inspired writings what the apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians concerning his letter to them: “**Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ**” (Eph. 3, 4). If we have a correct English translation of the Greek New Testament, we can understand it. If we do not do so, it is not God’s fault, but our own.

Tou Christou is in the genitive case. It is the case of genus or kind—the case that specifies (See pp. 493-501 of A. T. Robertson’s *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament In the Light of Historical Research*). However, the question that concerns us is this: *in what way does it specify?* If *tou Christou* means the doctrine *about* Christ it must be in what Greek grammarians call the “objective genitive” case. However, if it is the doctrine that is *from* Jesus, or what *He authored*, it is in the “subjective genitive” case.

The liberals want *tou Christou* to be in the “objective

genitive”. This is the case because they do not think one *must* be compliant with all New Testament obligations (if they believe there are any obligations in the New Testament for one to discharge) before fellowship can exist between all those who assent to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. Of course, the problem even the liberal runs into with this kind of thinking is this—what particulars must one believe about Christ before fellowship can exist between one and God and those who assent to the fact that Jesus is God’s Son and others who are of the same persuasion. Usually they reduce this belief to the bare essentials concerning Jesus—His eternal Deity, Virgin birth, His sinless life, etc. However, as to what a liberal holds that one *must* believe about Christ in order for fellowship to exist between those who acknowledge Jesus’ existence in history (past time and space) depends upon with which liberal one is dealing at the time. Rest assured they do not know where to draw the line concerning who is in fellowship with God and, thus, who it is they can fellowship. Further, the same thing may be said regarding how much genuine concern any of them have about the matter.

The genitive case can be used with a noun that precedes it. In 2 John 9 the noun is *didachei* rendered *doctrine* in English. Connected with a noun or substantive, the genitive case can denote possession, describe, or define (Ibid, A. T. Robertson). It also finds usage in what is called “subjective” and “objective” genitive.

Dana and Mantey inform us that, “We have the subjective genitive when the noun in the genitive *produces* the action, being therefore related as the subject to the verbal idea of the noun modified” (*A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 78).

Regarding the objective genitive, the same men tell us that, “We have this construction when the noun in the genitive receives the action, being thus related as object to the verbal idea contained in the noun modified” (Ibid, 78, 79).

Now back to 2 John 9 and the expression “**the doctrine of Christ**” (*tei didachei tou Christou*). *Did Jesus produce the action of the noun “teaching”—subjective, or is He the object of the teaching—objective?* In answering this ques-

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tion, we begin by referencing several Greek authorities and commentators.

Joseph Henry Thayer in his Greek Lexicon states that “The doctrine which has God, Christ, the Lord, for its author and supporter: John 7:17; Acts 13:12; 2 John 9...” (p. 144).

In his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, **A. T. Robertson** writes: “**And abideth not in the teaching of Christ** which is the standard of Christian teaching as the walk of Christ is the standard for the Christian’s walk. (I Jno. 2:6; Jno. 7:16-19.)”

Robertson goes on to say:

these gnostics claim to be the progressive, the advanced thinkers, and were anxious to relegate Christ to the past in their onward march.” (Page 254.) Furthermore he writes: “**If anyone cometh and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house and give him no greeting.**” But here the point turns on the stranger bringing into the house, or trying to do so. This is heretical and harmful teaching which seems to be after the salutation is over. The usual greeting to a house is given in Luke 10:5. This, he says, can very well be understood of the peril of allowing these gnostic propagandists to spread their pernicious teaching (compare Mormans or Bolsheviks) in home and church usually meeting in the home.

Commenting upon the phrase, “**partaketh in his evil works,**” Robertson writes:

“Associate the instrumental case with Koinonei, as in I Timothy 5: 22, common verb from Koinonos (partner) is to be born in mind that the churches often met in private homes. (Rom. 14:5; Col. 4:15), and if these traveling deceivers were allowed to spread their doctrine in these homes and sent along with the endorsement as Apollos was from Ephesus to Corinth, (Acts 18:27) there was no way of escaping the responsibility of the harm wrought by these propagandists of evil.” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*).

The late professor of New Testament Criticism, Union Theological Seminary, New York, **Marvin Vincent** states: “Of Christ. Not the teaching concerning Christ, but the teaching of Christ Himself and of His apostles. See Heb. 2:3. So according to New Testament usage. See John 18:19; Acts 2:42; Rev. 2:14, 15” (*Word Studies in the New Testament*).

Coeditor of Westcott and Hort’s Greek Testament, **Brooke Foss Westcott** wrote:

in the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine which Christ brought, and which He brought first in His own person, and then

through his followers (Heb. 2:3). This sense seems better than the doctrine of (concerning) the Christ, and the usage of the New Testament is uniformly in favor of it (Rev. 2:14, 15; In. 18:19; Acts 2:42, *The Epistles of St. John*).

One of the original members of the English Revised Version committee 1881, **Henry Alford** states:

And not abiding in the doctrine of Christ (i.e. in Christ’s doctrine) ... that truth which Christ Himself taught. This is far more likely than that the genitive should be objective ... “and thus we have the personal genitive after didache wherever it occurs in the New Testament ... (*The Greek Testament*, Revised by Everett F. Harrison).

Johann Edward Huther writes:

tou christou is not the objective (Sander, Ebrard, etc.) but the subjective genitive (Duesterdieck, Ewald, Braune); the doctrine which, proceeding from Christ, was proclaimed by the apostles (*Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James and John*, edited by H.A.W. Meyer).

Concerning 2 John 9, **A. E. Cook** wrote:

There is nothing in the context or the usage of the New Testament to suggest that *tou christou* should be regarded as an objective genitive, the writer meaning by the phrase ‘the apostolic teaching about Christ’. Such an interpretation would seem to be the outcome of preconceived notions of what the author ought to have meant rather than of what his words indicate. Cf. Jn. 18:19; 7:16; Mt. 7:28; Mk. 4:2; Li. 4:32; Acts 2:42; Rev. 2:14, 15. The ‘teaching’ no doubt includes the continuation of Christ’s work by His apostles, but it begins in the work of Christ Himself (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Johannine Epistles*).

Alfred Plummer declared: “*tou christou*. The doctrine which He taught (John xviii. 19; Rev. ii. 14,15), rather than the doctrine which teaches about Him” (*The Epistles of St. John*).

Commenting on *Kerygma* (preaching), **Gerhard Friedrich** wrote of the: “preaching of Jesus Christ” in Rom. 16:25. He states that it referenced the message Jesus preached. He concluded: “Hence the preaching of Jesus Christ can only mean the message which Jesus Christ proclaimed” (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 3, p. 716).

In examining the word *didache*, **Karl Rengstorf** concludes that the New Testament usage of it references the whole of Jesus’ teaching in form and content. To illustrate his point he shows that Mt 16:12 “has in view the whole of what the Pharisees and Sadducees teach.” He then points out that Acts 2:42 pertains to “the whole of what the apostles were teaching.” He then points out that “the same is true of the Johannine literature...” As an example of the same he cites 2 John 9ff (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. II, p. 164).

John Peter Lange states:

...The Genitive is subjective. Agreeable to constant usage, it

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cannot be the Genitive of the object. It is the doctrine which Christ Himself brought and taught and caused to be propagated by His apostles. But, of course, the principal part of its contents, is Christology (*Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*).

R.C.H. Lenski says:

didachee = ‘doctrine’ (A.V. is correct); ‘teaching’ (R.V.) would be didaskalia. ‘Of Christ’ is the subjective genitive: the doctrine Christ taught and still teaches through His apostles. John 1:18 (*The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude*, p. 568).

J. R. W. Stott writes:

The Christian seeks to abide not only in Christ but in the doctrine of Christ. At first sight this phrase, literally ‘the doctrine of Christ’ (N. E. B.) might be taken as meaning ‘the teaching which recognizes Jesus as the Christ’ (Smith), and this would suit the context well. But the ‘usage of the New Testament’ (Westcott, Brooke) requires that the genitive be interpreted not as objective, ‘the teaching about Christ,’ but as subjective, ‘Christ’s teaching.’ This no doubt includes what Christ continued to teach through the apostles (Cf. Acts 1:1; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:3). Such authoritative apostolic doctrine is equivalent to what in his First Epistle John called ‘what you heard from the beginning’ (2:24 RSV; Cf. 2:7; 3:11; Jn. 8:31; 2 Tim. 3:14 and 2 Jn. 5, 2). The Christian’s development is not progress beyond Christ’s teaching, whether direct or through the apostles as recorded in the New Testament, but a progressive understanding of it (*The Epistles of John*).

W.E. Vine informs us that:

The significance of the word rightly rendered ‘goeth onward,’ (**transgresseth** in KJV—DPB) is not that of progress itself but an advance in teaching that goes beyond the teaching of Christ; that is to say, not only the teaching concerning the person of Christ, but that which He gave and commanded His followers to teach (*The Collected Writings of W.E. Vine*).

Guy N. Woods informs us that,

The ‘teaching of Christ’ here is not teaching about Christ, or teaching which is Christian in substance or nature; it is the teaching which Christ did personally and through those whom he inspired. It is the teaching of Christ, because he is, in the final analysis, its author, and from him it issued. It is thus an infallible standard, and no deviation from it is possible without apostasy (*A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude*).

THE SUBJECTIVE GENITIVE IN OTHER NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES

Numerous are the New Testament passages where the subjective genitive occurs with “doctrine” or equivalent words to it. To follow are several of these passages. *Kerygma* (preaching) exists with the subjective genitive in “the preaching of Jonas” (Matt. 12:41). In Rom. 16:25 and 1 Cor. 2:4 Paul writes of “**my gospel**”—literally “the gospel of me”. He writes to the Corinthians of “**our preaching**”—again, literally “the preaching of us” (1 Cor. 15:14). *Didas-*

kalia (doctrine) also appears with the subjective genitive in Col 2:22: “**doctrines of men**”. It is the same in Paul’s warning to Timothy about those who depart from the faith by listening to and believing “**doctrines of devils**” (1 Tim. 4:1), and when he references “**My doctrine**” in 2 Tim. 3:10. The following verses containing *didache* appear with the subjective genitive—Matt. 7:28; 22:32; Mark. 1:22; 4:2; 11:18; 12:38; Lk. 4:32; John 18:19. Also, consider that doctrine appears with the subjective genitive in “**doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees**” (Matt. 16:12); “**My doctrine**” (John 7:16); “**the apostles’ doctrine**” (Acts 2:42); “**your doctrine**” (Acts 5:28), “**the doctrine of the Lord**” (Acts 13:12); “**the doctrine of Balaam**” (Rev. 2:14), and “**the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes**” (Rev. 2:15).

In view of the usage of the subjective genitive with the word doctrine in the preceding verses and the comments from some of the foremost Greek scholars about the genitive (subjective and objective), we ask on what legitimate grounds would one honestly contend that “**the doctrine of Christ**” in 2 John 9 is **not** the doctrine taught by Christ and his apostles? However, we understand why those who seek fellowship and unity beyond the authority of the New Testament (Col. 3:17) refuse to believe that “*the doctrine of Christ*” in 2 John 9 means anything other than the doctrine *that is about Christ*. They want to fellowship people who are not in fellowship with God and they cannot do that if they admit that “**the doctrine of Christ**” in 2 John 9 *means the doctrine Christ and His apostles taught* (Jude 3; John 12:48; James 1:25).

—David P. Brown, Editor

*It is sad to see the wicked behaviour
of so many about us; but it is even more
disheartening to see them unashamed.*

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Who Sets The Terms And Limits Of Fellowship?

Harrell Davidson

The original word for fellowship is “joint participation.” Another word that describes fellowship is “partners” (cf. Luke 5:7, 10). These disciples were partners in the occupation of fishing, but we are not talking about fishing. We are talking about what the word fellowship means and how it is used in the Scriptures. The church in Jerusalem **“...continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”** (Acts 2:42).

If we can ascertain what the apostles’ doctrine was/is, we will know the answer the question posed above. Jesus said, **“For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels”** (Luke 9:26). Jesus said, **“My words.”**

Were the words He spoke His own? No they were not! Jesus plainly said, **“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me”** (John 17:8). Now, please notice with me the following. The apostles’ words or teaching and the words or teaching of Christ was received by Christ from God the Father. They were not His words in that they originated with Him, but the very Words of God – the words God gave Him. Therefore, the apostles’ doctrine was the doctrine of Christ which was the doctrine that God gave Him and He to the apostles. Anyone who can see through a ladder can see this.

Let us back up to Acts 2:42 and ask, was one not following the apostles’ doctrine in fellowship with them? A resounding “no!” Okay, was one not following the apostles’ doctrine in fellowship with Christ? Again the answer is “no.”

We ask again, was one who was not following the apostles’ doctrine (teaching) and the doctrine (teaching) of Christ, in fellowship with God? Again, the answer is absolutely “no!” Since the saved were added to the church (cf. Acts 2:47), those who did not obey the apostles doctrine would not be in the church, would they? “No!” There were no saved ones outside the body of Christ. One may ask, what if one had obeyed the Gospel and was added to the church but followed not in the doctrine of the apostles, Christ and God, are they in fellowship with the faithful in the Lord’s church? “No!”

Did not Paul and other inspired writers warn the church about fellowship practices? Of course they did! Consider Paul’s letter to the Ephesians when he commanded, **“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”** (Eph. 5:11). We wish to ask, was this Paul’s doctrine alone? No, it was the doctrine of Christ. Was it the doctrine of Christ alone? No, it was the doctrine of God. What is/are **“works of darkness?”** This is any work or practice that is not authorized in God’s eternal Word. How, then, can we fellowship those who do not follow the teachings of Christ?

What about those who bid God speed to one who does not abide in the teachings of Christ (cf. 2 John 9-11)? The Scriptures say that such a one does not have either the Father or the Son? Someone might say, “Brother so and so does not believe the error nor does he teach the error of the false teacher. Why he only speaks on the same programs with the false teacher.” God says in essence that such a one has left God behind.

—506 N. Seventh St.
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SOBERING SOUNDS

HOW PLEASANT IT IS

Charles Pogue

The Psalmist penned the familiar words, **“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity”** (Psa. 133:1). Unity produces pleasant feelings for both the intellect and the emotion. Unity provides us with a sense of strength, and makes it possible to perform tasks that would be otherwise far more difficult, if not impossible. It is no wonder that Jesus prayed for the sanctification and unity that comes only through God’ Truth (John 17:17-21). That very unity was realized on the day of Pentecost, when about three thousand repented and were baptized for the remission of their sins. That they realized the pleasantry of the kind of

unity of which the psalmist wrote is manifest in Acts 2:44, **“And all that believed were together...”** Consequently, they were of one accord and ate their bread with gladness and singleness of heart (v. 46).

In contrast to the pleasantry resulting from unity, sowing discord among brethren is one of the seven things that are an abomination to God (Prov. 6:16-19). We can understand why that is so, because we have all at one time or another experienced the stress, worry, and tension that results from a breach. Strife between spouses, parents and children, or just friends is as unpleasant a thing of which the human

heart can imagine and the life can experience.

I once had a brother say to me about another brother, “He isn’t happy unless he is involved in controversy.” The brother insisted that the targeted brother thrived on the same. *The accusation was as ridiculous as it was false.* Friends, if a person sought division among brethren, because it made him happy and caused him to thrive, he would not be a faithful child of God. Good brethren do not get involved in controversy where error is concerned because they thrive on it, but to keep the command to **“earnestly contend for the faith”** (Jude 3). Anyone who asserts they enjoy, desire, and want division is at best guilty of a false judgment, or at worse on the wrong side of the issue that disrupted the pleasantness of unity and yielded division.

Division among brethren is hard. Withdrawal of fellowship is harder on those who must withdraw than it is upon the withdrawn from brother or brethren. It is sad when the person or persons who have been withdrawn from do not understand that, and hurl their barbed accusations at those who are interested in nothing more than restoring the severed unity upon the only basis it can be—the Word of the Lord!

For two people to no longer be able to participate together, and have the closeness of mind and purpose that once existed, because one of them has begun to walk disorderly, results in a broken heart. It is not the heart of the one that has swerved from the Truth whose heart is broken, but the one who must say, “Here is your sin, you must repent of it, or our fellowship must be disrupted,” who has the broken heart. The other, more than likely, is just angry. That is not very pleasant either, so as far as the once close relationship is concerned, no one wins. Anyone who has been scripturally withdrawn from and who thinks otherwise is wrong.

It is always the one who is in the right who suffers the most. If an individual is improperly withdrawn from, then he has the broken heart. Take notice. When withdrawal of fellowship is done properly, the persons withholding their fellowship show compassion. If withdrawal of fellowship is done without scriptural basis, there is often no compassion, just harsh, bitter, and reckless allegations

Who is the most hated man in the Bible? Surely, it was Jesus. Jesus said the world hated Him because He testified of it, that its works were evil (John 7:7). Then in John 8:40, He said, **“But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.”** Was it pleasant for Jesus that the world rejected the Word He spoke of the Father? Did He thrive on the controversy that resulted from the ignorance and blindness of His own people? Certainly not! But He was the one in the right, and the one hurt the most.

Luke records these sad words: **“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the**

things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes” (Luke 19:41, 42). Matthew records Jesus saying:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not (Matt. 23:37).

Jesus came to His own, but they did not receive Him (John 1:11). The Lord pleaded with His own; He showed them their error with a thus saith the Lord, yet their continued disobedience broke His heart: *and they killed Him.*

Division is not pleasant and it always hurts those who are in the right the most. Whether it is over a point of Truth, methodology, pride, or insistence that one have his own way, when fellowship is severed and division exists, it is nothing over which the faithful rejoice, but weep.

Here may be the saddest thing of all: sometimes just a simple admission of, “I did wrong” is all it takes for unity to be restored. Yet, the haughty spirit stands in the way. How anyone can claim to stand against anything taught in error, defend the one who taught or teaches it, and yet say, “I did nothing wrong of which I need to repent,” is as incredible as it is mysterious. Then when it becomes apparent that the defense of one error leads to fellowship with those embroiled in some other error, one just wants to sit down and cry. While they redraw their circle to include a larger and larger contingent of false teachers, and false teacher defending crowds, they hurl their accusations that those who rebuke them are binding where God has not. How strange, that until they defended that first false teacher, they bound the same things, and that, not by their own human standards, but by sound reasoning from the Word of God.

Division, even when it is necessary, is unpleasant. It is most unpleasant to those who stand for the Truth and must withhold their fellowship from those who no longer do. Division hurts, and it hurts those who are in the right more than those who are in the wrong. Do not believe it? Just ask Jesus; He was nailed to a tree at Calvary’s brow and for all time proved that it is true.

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