

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



# THE LENEXA EDIFIER



John 8:32

"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"

MAY 3, 2015

## CONFRONTING FALSE DOCTRINE (4)

Jim Stauffer

In the three previous articles on this subject we have addressed, the difficulty of receiving criticism for your stand for the truth. We understand the person who will stand for the truth is the one who believes it is truly the word of God. False teachers are difficult to identify because they present themselves as part of God's flock when in reality they are ravening wolves. We then focused on how Christ and the apostles handled false teachers when they walked the earth. Jesus taught us to identify them by a close comparison of their deeds to the will of God as revealed by the Spirit. He also pointed to the depth of the problem as an issue of the heart by saying, *they worship me with their lips but their heart is far from me*. We warned of the danger to us from those who would *wrest the scriptures* and advised it is our responsibility to have, *received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so*.

In our last article we dealt with our personal responsibility by addressing our need for regular study to be prepared for false teachers. We must accept our role as those who are, *to contend earnestly for the faith*. We are the ones who must *prove the spirits*. We do this when we *sanctify in our hearts Christ as Lord*, and fear only God who has the power to destroy both body and soul in hell. We trust the One who has promised never to forsake us. In so doing we will save both ourselves and those that hear us. And, after all, salvation is what we seek.

I mention all these principles of the previous articles to prepare us for the task at hand. A disregard for the God of heaven in nothing new. Consider the physical and emotional challenge Elijah faced in his confrontation with the prophets of Baal. (1 Kgs. 18) Jesus was born into a world of Roman pantheism, the mythological gods of the Greeks and the attendant idolatry, as well as the Pharisaism of the Jews. All these ideas and practices originated in the hearts of man, not God. Such worldly influence comes from Satan, himself. (1 John 4:5; 2 Cor. 11:13-15)

Apostasy is usually a gradual thing. It is harder to recognize error when it creeps in incrementally. How do

you think the Catholic Church gained the look it has today? Peter, a married man, became the first in a line of celibate bishops over the universal church? It was a gradual increase of the role of elders that took hundreds of years to get to a full fledged Pope as is presented to us today. If Peter was the Pope, Paul was one notch higher when he was forced to chastise him for his sinful action toward Gentile brethren. (Gal. 2) This apostasy succeeded because faithful men became unfaithful by remaining silent as the majority or the powerful moved on. That is the very issue addressed in these articles. Accept the criticism of men by standing for the truth of God.

Current denominationalism (a plurality of churches all teaching different doctrines) as opposed to THE CHURCH Jesus died to purchase (Acts 20:28; Mat. 16:18), result from a misguided effort to address such error. The intent may have been noble, but the process was flawed. Several men who are now recorded in history as stalwarts of the faith pointed out errors they recognized and separated themselves from that particular error of the Catholic Church. The flaw is in recognizing an institution filled with error they tried to reform it rather than go back to the Bible and practice simply and accurately what the church of Jesus Christ did under the leadership of Peter, Paul and the other apostles.

As we have alluded to in the previous articles, there is a foundation we must prepare in ourselves. the wise man said, *Prov. 23:23 Buy the truth, and sell it not; Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding*. Jesus said, *John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth*. Once we are grounded in the truth of God's word we will be prepared to confront false teachers by having put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:10ff)

Due to the failure of men to stand firm in such truth, we see a religious world captivated by such errors as Calvinism which glorifies the men who were its first and foremost advocates, Augustine and Calvin. We have churches teaching Christ will return to the earth and reign on a throne in Jerusalem for 1000 years. This results from those who are attracted to the fantasy of

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their personal interpretation of prophecy and its fulfillment rather than the explanations of those prophecies offered by the Holy Spirit in scripture. We have churches whose worship is a form of entertainment where the quality of the musical performances tickle the ears of men instead of pleasing God by *making melody with your heart to the Lord*. We have churches whose primary work is to feed poor people of the world to sustain physical life rather than to feed the souls of men what is needed for eternal life. It is difficult to reject the precepts of men for this very reason. They appeal to us. We can individually devote ourselves to these worthwhile things. It is good to care for the needs of our fellow man. The Lord's church, however, is charged with upholding the truth and serving the spiritual needs of all mankind. **(1 Tim. 3:15)**

There is an amazing component to the possession of the truth of God's word. When one has studied diligently he realizes what he has in the precious item a man would sell all his possessions to own. It does not create in one an arrogant or proud attitude, but rather the feeling of being rich and wanting to share with others.

We see men in the world become wealthy and then turn to philanthropy. They have more than enough for themselves and decide to share their blessings with others. This is especially true of God's word. We have something others do not. We want to share it with them and the beauty is it does not diminish our supply when we do. It is unlimited and actually grows in us when we share it.

We know Jesus is *the way, the truth and the life*. **(John 14:6)** We realize, *neither is there any other name under heaven that is given among men, wherein we must be saved*. **(Acts 4:12)** So, as we carry this word to a world that is divided by the precepts of men let us speak as Paul pleaded. **Col. 4:6** *Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one*. Let us recognize the process. The word of God produces true believers. **Acts 17:11** *Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men, not a few.*

## Why I Pray

**I pray because I believe God listens.** *"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us"* **(1 John 5:14).**

**I pray because God has told me that He cares and is able to help.** *"Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you"* **(1 Pet. 5:7; see also Luke 12:6-7; Heb. 4:16).**

**I pray because I lack wisdom.** *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him"* **(James 1:5).**

**I pray because my Savior said I ought to pray.** *"Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to*

*pray and not lose heart"* **(Luke 18:1).**

**I pray because I'm thankful for all the good things God has given.** *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"* **(Phil. 4:6; see also Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:16-18).**

**I pray because I need pardon.** *"My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"* **(1 John 2:1; see also Acts 8:22; Ps. 51:1-9).**

**I pray because I adore and love my Father.** *"In this manner, therefore, pray: 'Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name'"* **(Matt. 6:9).**

**I pray because I've read so many accounts of people who prayed to God with great results.** *"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit"* **(James 5:17-18).** *"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much"* **(James 5:16).**

**I pray because of Paul's exhortation.** *"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior"* **(1 Tim. 2:1-3).**

**I pray because I believe God has the ability to grant even more than I'm able to think and ask.** *"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen"* **(Eph. 3:14-21).**

*by Warren Berkley*

## Why "Liberal" and "Conservative" Churches of Christ?

During the past three decades many have asked this question. Some sincere brethren who have been caught up in one stream or another never fully understood, and many who were too young before have now grown to adulthood wondering why. It is therefore a good question worthy of repeated investigation. Labels of "liberal" and "institutional" versus "anti" and "conservative" have been used by some as a prejudicial tool to halt further investigation. Labels used as prejudicial clubs are to be

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condemned; yet the terms "liberal" and "conservative" are proper when used as adjectives to describe a difference in attitude toward Bible authority, and consequently, a difference in practices. As the years go by, the attitude underlying the division becomes more apparent. We are not separated because one group believes in benevolence and the other does not, nor because of jealousy and envy. We have divided over a basic attitude toward the Bible. A liberal attitude justifies any activity that seems to be a "good work" under the concept, "We do a lot of things for which we have no Bible authority." A conservative attitude makes a plea to have Bible authority (either generic or specific) for all we do - therefore refraining from involving the church in activities alien to that of the church in the New Testament.

Briefly, the walls of innovations which have divided us are built in three areas:

**WHO?** Who is to do the work of the church? The church? Or a human institution? The church has a God-given work to do, and the Lord made the church sufficient to do its own work. Within the framework of elders and deacons, a local church is the only organization necessary to fulfill its mission of evangelism, edification, and benevolence (**Eph. 3:10-11; 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 3:15**). However, a wedge was driven when some began to reason that the church may build and maintain a separate institution - a different WHO to do the work of the church. This separate institution is human in origin and control. It is not a church nor governed by the church - yet it receives financial maintenance from the church. Human institutions so arranged (such as benevolent homes, hospitals, colleges or missionary societies) may be doing a good work. But when they become leeches on the church, they deny its independence and all-sufficiency and make a "fund-raising house" of God's church.

**HOW?** How is the work of the church to be overseen? On a local basis with separate, autonomous congregations? Or may several local churches work as a unit through a sponsoring eldership? The organization of the New Testament church was local in nature, with elders limited to oversight of the work of the flock among them (**Acts 14:23; 1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28**). We are divided by those who promote "brotherhood works" through a plan of inter-congregational effort with centralized oversight - an unscriptural HOW.

**WHAT?** What is the mission of the church? Spiritual, or also social? It is in this area that the loose attitude toward the Scriptures is becoming more apparent. Though wholesome activities are needed for all, the Lord died for a higher and holier mission than food, fun, and frolic. Let the church be free to spend its energy and resources in spiritual purposes (**1 Pet. 2:5; Rom. 14:17**) and let the home be busy in providing social needs (**1 Cor. 11:22,34**).

*by Robert Harkrider*

## GRIEF

We can be encouraged that when we suffer, God cares about us. And when we have the mind or attitude of Christ, we are going to share in the burdens and sorrows of others. Paul said: *"And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it"* (**1 Corinthians 12:26**). We "weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice" (**Romans 12:15**).

There can be a blessing in grief. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about their loved ones who had already departed this life. He said: *"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope"* (**1 Thessalonians 4:13**).

Yes, we are saddened in the loss of our loved ones; but we rejoice when they have the hope of Christ. It is that hope that takes some of the heartache away. We can be encouraged by the hope Christ provides. It is a mistake to think that we do not grieve when we lose a loved one. Grieving helps us cope with our loss. In fact, it is contrary to who Christians are supposed to be—people who care about and identify with others. Different people respond in different ways; yet, the grieving process is normal and natural; it is a part of who we are. Yet, we remember that it is Christ who understands and provides comfort in time of loss. We all remember **John 11:35**: *"Jesus wept."* Our Lord is touched by our losses and sadness; He understands.

Paul wrote with great emotion about some of the problems he experienced as he went about preaching the word of God. He needed the Lord's care and concern. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God"* (**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**). Even in his own trials, Paul was concerned about others. We can learn that even though we may be hurting, we can still reach out to others with our love and concern.

Our own experiences help us better understand what others are going through. While death is a great trauma, there are other concerns that people have. Many live in fear; fear can be painful. Adverse circumstances (family, financial, health) can produce fear. Often anger and bitterness accompany the fears that some live with. The "why me" question has been asked by millions. Many people are consumed by guilt; their souls are tormented by their past actions; they have difficulty making things right or cannot seem to ever forgive themselves.

Loneliness is a way of life for many. If you don't believe that, go visit a nursing home. You will find many folks who are eager simply for a warm smile and greeting.

What can we do to help, either those who grieve the loss of a loved one, or those who seem overwhelmed by life's problems? A good place to start is by applying Jesus' words. *"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."* This is the first and great commandment. *"And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

*Randy Harshbarger*



**Eph. 2:19** *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

**1Pet. 2:9** *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

**Psa. 1:1** *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

## **HOURS OF WORSHIP**

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

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**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

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## **NEWS AND NOTES:**

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

IRENE HURD, MARY CZIRR, JAN PATRICK. GRANT CLOTHIER IS AT O.P. REHAB CENTER 75TH AND METCALF. JESSIE GIBSON IS AT HOME RECUPERATING. J.R. DANIEL IS AT SWEET LIFE ASSISTED LIVING, 12000 LAMAR

OUR BIBLE CLASS ON SUNDAY IS THE STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN - WITH RON PECK. WEDNESDAY OUR STUDY IS THE SUBJECT OF PREMILLENNIALISM.

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON: HOW MAN DECEIVES HIMSELF



## ***What Must I Do To Be Saved?***

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10