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UPEND THE DOWNTREND!

By David R. Archer

If Will Rogers were alive today, would he still say, "All I know is what I read in the papers"? Not likely. Add both radio and television . . . also add porno magazines and music. Ole Will would have something to say, rest assured, and it very likely would burn the hide. Since we have become so cosmopolitan and sophisticated, we are seeing anything and everything.

The recent announcement that the Bible is going to be **condensed** is a case in point of our present condition. If we go back fifty years in time, would anyone propose to condense the Bible? Not likely. In today's world the idea of making a condensation of God's word will probably not even make a stir. With just a bit of clever promotion it may even be a best seller!

New versions of the Bible have been introduced regularly for the past twenty years at the rate of about one each year. It has been claimed that most of these new versions were put on the market to update the language to fit present needs. If such be the case, few would oppose an effort to improve the understanding of scriptures. Translations for just such purposes have been made in the past, clear back to the third century. But new versions have often done **more** than update the language, and for this it is appropriate to note that there have been several cases where the **meaning** of the text has been changed. This has caused an uproar at times, and justifiably so, for it is well known that God's wrath is promised to those who mishandle His word in any way. One of the most expressive examples of such wrath is by the apostle Paul which shows condemnation, saying, "For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (Rom. 1:25).

Every effort will be made, rest assured, that our fears will be put to rest as the first edition of the condensed Bible rolls off the press. There will be much sales

talk and everything possible will be done to prevent a cool reception of this new Bible. More money is at stake here than most of us would even visualize. Do not be deluded. The Bible is not a story book or a novel in any normal sense of the word. Would anyone think seriously about shortening something else we hold dear the **Declaration of Independence**? Obviously to do so would be an affront to those who carefully weighed each word in its final draft. And if such a change were to be made, what might those say who gave their lives for it? The point is that this **Declaration** is something most of us hold to be sacred and dear. Even more so is this true of the Bible. Consider this:

The Lord said to Jeremiah, "all the words that I commanded you to speak to them. Do not omit one word!" (Jer. 26:2).

TREND TOWARD INFORMALITY

Recent trends in all walks of our society are clearly toward a more casual and informal attitude toward many types of activity. In religion we now notice this in several ways. There is less and less straight teaching of scriptures and more reliance on philosophizing and allegories. There is still some emphasis on religion and worship, but more effort is made toward stimulating the **imagination** than of keeping the **commandments!** A popular concept in several religious circles is, "If it feels alright, then it is alright." Obviously such a belief puts God in subjection to man's feelings . . . or rather it **tries** to. God understands man and that he has feelings, but not to the point of overturning what has been written in the scriptures. The Bible has this to say: There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death" (Prov. 14:12).

In spite of the laxity of the present time, there are yet some voices crying out to bring God's teachings to a faltering mankind. It is still possible to hear "Voices crying out in this wilderness," teaching about the wrath that will come to those who would either **add to** or **take**

away from God's word. This is one of the **very foundations** of God's word, appearing in several places (Rev. 22:18, 19; Deut. 4:2 and 12:32; Prov. 30:6). There needs to be more teaching of this subject if the present trend is to be reversed.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

One specific example of the trend toward laxity in religion is the decreasing frequency in which many groups observe the Lord's Supper. With many groups it is observed once each quarter, while some only observe it once a year! Did this de-emphasis come from scripture? Obviously not. It is clearly to be observed "upon the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7). This same phrase is shown in connection with the contribution (I Cor. 16:1, 2), and in principle the same idea is used about the Jews keeping the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8). The Jews could understand that keeping the Sabbath meant **each and every one**, which was, of course, once a week.

There are now only a handful of groups who make a weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. No one takes the trouble to deny that it was observed each week by the early church for hundreds of years. People today expect the **same salvation** as those people in the New Testament, so does it follow that they can expect the **same benefits** if they neglect the same responsibilities as those of the earlier times? The answer is, clearly not. It is such a beautiful and meaningful memorial to Christ that it seems disrespectful to willfully reduce the frequency of its observance.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

In some ways the music issue follows the same pattern as with the deemphasis of the Lord's Supper. In New Testament times we see the term **singing** used again and again in connection with Christian's worship (Acts 16:25; Eph. 5:19, 20; Col. 3:16). History shows that singing was exclusively the music of Christian worship

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FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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EDITOR Mike Pace
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Can One Prove that the Lord's Supper Must Be Observed Every Sunday?

By James Meadows

Some say that God has left the time of observing the Lord's Supper in the realm of human judgement. If God has done this, then it is the only memorial in which he has so acted (cf. Exodus 12:3, Leviticus 23:15-16). By advancing step by step it is easy to establish what God has revealed about when the Lord's Supper is to be observed.

to "not forsake the assembly. . . ." (Hebrews 10:25).

SECOND, the early church assembled on a stated day which was called "the first day of the week." (I Corinthians 16:1,2). The church at Troas came together upon the first day of the week to "break bread." (Acts 20:7). The first day of the week is "the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10). It was on this day that Christ was raised from the dead (Mark 16:9); Pentecost was celebrated (Acts 2:1; Leviticus 23:15,16); the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4); the church was established (Acts 2:1-47); and the gospel was fully preached as a fact (Acts 2:1-47. "It is fitting that the 'Church of the Lord' (Acts 20:28 ASV) should assemble around the 'Lord's table' (I Corinthians 10:20, 21), to eat the 'Lord's Supper' (I Corinthians 11:20), upon the 'Lord's day' (Revelation 1:10)." (Gus Nichols)

THIRD, the early church met upon the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper. A stated purpose of the saints assembling upon the first day of the week was to observe the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42, 20:7). The Corinthians came together on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1, 2) to observe the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:20). The church at Corinth came together (I Corinthians 14:23); they came together on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:2); they came together to observe the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:20). Since every week has a first day, then the early church assembled every first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper.

CONTRIBUTIONS	
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UPEND THE DOWNTREND

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until 606 A.D. Our use today of the term "a capella" to mean vocal music had its beginning as a Latin term. Literally, a capella was "of the chapel." When Latin was a living language, the church was still young and singing was the kind of music that people of those times felt was acceptable to God.

Instruments of music were not lacking or unknown in New Testament times. They were known then and even back to much earlier times. They are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament and were used to some degree by the Jews in worship. The early church had its disagreements about circumcision, and about certain other practices that a few Jewish Christians tried to bring in, but instrumental music was not one of them. As late as 1250 A.D., Thomas Aquinas, an outstanding scholar in the ranks of Roman Catholicism, said: "Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps or psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize."

Many religious groups which grew out of the Protestant Reformation made a point of having singing as their only music in worship for a time. One-by-one, many had added instrumental music by about 1800. Nearly all had gone to the instrument by 1900. Today only the churches of Christ and the Greek Orthodox Church are the remaining hold-outs for vocal music, "the music of the chapel." The Greek church has held exclusively to singing since their beginning in ancient times. If anyone knows what "psallo" in the New Testament Greek means, they should.

OUR PLEA FOR UNITY

We try to avoid frequent references or harping on just a few scriptures which

FIRST, the early church assembled. Paul said to the Corinthians, "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place." (I Corinthians 14:23). Paul and Barnabus assembled a whole year with the church at Antioch (Acts 11:26). The Hebrew writer admonishes Christians

serve to mark us apart from others. We stress faith, and grace, and love. We try to follow all of the scriptures in our personal relationship to Christ and God. But when we open our eyes and see the instances of "adding to" or "taking away" from God's commands, we feel it is clearly a matter of duty to speak out. One can look back in history to see other times when God's people were in error, and it then became somebody's unpleasant task and duty to speak up. For example, Israel stoned the prophets of old, and later condemned Jesus because of what they were teaching. This is not the time for sweetness and flowers when such a need for unity exists.

The plea remains that we try to reconcile our differences. Our community would be much better off if we who profess Christ were as one. This is what Paul wanted the Corinthians to do: "I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you . . ." (I Cor. 1:10). We know that a getting together in thought will be hard. Religion is a personal thing and very dear to each of us. Nevertheless, we know it is possible if we go about it in the right way. Most of us agree that all things are possible with God. So let us work, study, and pray that we may come together in unison that Christ's purpose for mankind would flourish here and now.

TRIPLE AAA (AN ARROGANT AIR)

By Bill Graddy

The affluency of the past has given many a false sense of security. The trust we have placed in this materialism has brought about AN ARROGANT AIR - a feeling of independence. Some obviously do not even need God! This self-reliance has yielded the fruit of lack of respect and rebellion for laws, the home, school, and the church. In the home this has been translated into each member of the family going his own separate way. The home for many is nothing more than a "filling station", a place to refuel and go again. This air of arrogance has carried over into the school, and today, the lack of discipline is the number one problem in education. This interruption is costing the nation much in drugs, crimes and adult education programs are in their second and third attempts to educate the drop-outs. The church has not escaped this "fatness". (Deut. 31:20). The lack of respect and rebellion toward the elders reflects an air of arrogance that comes from an inflated and exalted position of self (Prov. 6:16-19). Members pout, rebel and run off to other congregations because of: (1) their lack of scriptural depth and application of the Word; (2) the affluent things they have such as money, time, and mobility to go to the congregations of their choice; and (3) the arrogant air they have that their wealth will give them a security wherever they attend and whatever they do (I Tim. 6:17). We observe AAA in scholarship. Men tampering with the Word of God have given us over 350 versions of the Bible. Paradoxically, it is in our "own" schools. We cannot come to the unity of the faith on such simple subjects as marriage, divorce and remarriage.

We are primarily interested in observing our topic from the viewpoint of the church. The AAA is the tap root of most congregational problems. Affluent members attend church. They come as if it were to be entertained. They need social acceptance and social stability. Rarely will they word a prayer, pass the emblems or teach a class. Generally they are late arrivers, sit on the back pews, and rarely attend Bible classes. These people are easily offended, often complaining of the "coldness" of the members. The preacher can "step on their toes" with the slightest miscue. However, these people are generally authorities on the physical things such as the building, parking lots, and physical beauty. They will contribute and

even pledge to give to these projects. Brethren, do we cater to this affluency?

This AAA is seen in the superficial and shallow Christians. They participate, teach a class occasionally, and help in general as long as things are going their way. They think of themselves as having some influence and power to "hold things together." They know in the back of their minds with little provocation they will rebel and threaten to leave realizing they have the clout (material things) to attend elsewhere. What percent of the congregation does this represent? (I Tim. 6:17; II Tim. 3:1-4)

Affluency can be an asset. Men can retain their balance with their money and use it for the Lord! Abraham was a rich man indeed and he was called the friend of God. (Isa. 41:8). These men can "grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord" and become teachers, deacons, and elders.

The crucial test is we must not allow our possessions to possess us. (Luke 12:15.) This delicate and dainty achievement will depend upon our daily Bible study and reverence toward God. The dedicated and faithful members of the church have achieved this "balance of power" and keep the church operating. Of course, they are known as the faithful few.

Pride (AAA) goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Prov. 6:16) Brethren, we are not to think too highly of ourselves. (Rom. 12:3). "Be not highminded." (Rom. 11:20). AN ARROGANT AIR comes from a heart that is filled with pride and highmindedness. Brethren, let us rid ourselves of this false air and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt us in due time (I Peter 5:6), and get about the business of saving souls! Such exalted position of self keeps us from seeing men in need and sinners in a lost condition.

The Chameleon Plague

By Aven Hook

We all know what a chameleon is. Webster, in the Vest Pocket Dictionary, identifies a Chameleon as "a lizard that can change its color." Now let me introduce you to the "Chameleon Plague." It is nothing like the "Black Plague". I had never thought much about a person being able to change his or her color. I have never really thought about what makes a person a certain color. I have always tried to see the person as the person really is. So when a college student that I admire was visiting, and referred to a certain person as a Chameleon, it caught my attention.

Here is how it happened. I was visiting with a college student that I knew had sat in a particular teacher's class. This teacher has a great following and my respect. I have always wanted to sit in one of his classes and still hope to in the future. I asked the young Christian, "How do you like the teacher and his class?" Without a hint of hesitation the reply was, "he is a chameleon."

As we know a chameleon changes his color to match his environment and there by conceals his position. He hides his position in this manner because he has no

other defense. The idea of a teacher being a chameleon conveys the same type ability. The teacher colors his teaching to fit the atmosphere where he is. And, most often, he does so because he has no other defense. We should always be prepared to "give defense for the hope that is in us" (I Peter 3:15). Now that hope should be based upon a common salvation (Jude 3) and we should be proud of that hope (Acts 4:29-31).

When preachers and elders joke about certain people the comment is often, "he can preach it either way." The statement refers to the fact the person can change his position, or, has no position. Therefore, we find that person compromising the gospel because he teaches what his audience wants to hear. I find this term a little more fitting of a person who changes colors. For indeed there are "Chameleon Teachers".

In many things it is not important what we believe or teach, but when it comes to God's Word, it is. Brethren, I submit we may be in the midst of a Chameleon Plague. Isn't it about time we immunize (II Tim. 2:15, 3:15-16).

The Instruction Book

*I want the whole wide world to know,
How Jesus died because he loved me so.
He came to earth and gave his life,
To save us from a world of strife.*

*He sent us the instruction book,
So pick it up and take a look.
Study the Bible with an open mind,
If a home in heaven you hope to find.*

*He tells us baptism washes away our sins,
So if heaven we want to enter in,
We must live right from day to day,
The New Testament shows us the way.*

*Do not live by things you've heard,
Study the Bible and go by His Word.
If you do the things he tells you to,
To heaven He will welcome you.*

*So keep your light trimmed and burning,
If for Jesus you are yearning.
It would be sad upon that final day,
If He would say go the other way.*

*His decision will be final and just,
So following his word is a must.*

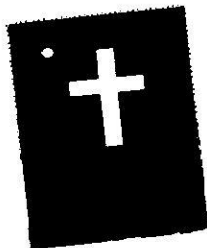
*So that upon that judgment day,
He will look at you and say:
Come on in you faithful one,
I like the work that you have done.*

*However my life long or short,
that doesn't matter at all;
If my light is still burning,
When I get my final call.*

*When my journey here is over,
I hope to hear God say:
Your light is still shining,
As it was yesterday.*

By Glenda Smith

A Memorial to Dorothy Jean Huddle"



How to Become a Christian

The most important question ever asked is: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Then, the **HOW** become equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we must have faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:2). This faith comes by the hearing of the word of God. (Rom. 10:17). "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6). With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, we must repent of sins. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30). In repentance, we turn from sin, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord. (Matt 3:8, Luke 13:

3). With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*" (Rom. 10:9-10). Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27). Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26).

BECOME A CHRISTIAN