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Are You Practicing Church Discipline?

It is my belief that the Church of Christ follows the teachings of God closer than any other religious organization in the world today.

We teach that one has to be baptized for the remission of sins to complete his obedience. We teach that there is only one church. We teach that it is wrong to dance, drink and smoke, but what about our teaching when it pertains to church discipline? If it is right to teach all these things, isn't it equally right to teach that the church should discipline its members?

It is my opinion that too many elders and preachers are afraid to deal with this subject as they should because they are afraid they might hurt someone's feelings. Brethren, if we have this attitude, we had better close our doors and quit calling ourselves the Lord's church. If we intend to practice what we preach, why do we always leave off the subject of church discipline?

It is hard for me to believe that any church can exist for long without having to administer some sort of church discipline; yet, how many can you name that have done this lately?

Brethren, I believe that we should be courageous enough to stand up for the truth and practice what the Bible teaches. Elders, start teaching this in your Bible school program. Preachers, start preaching this from the pulpit and let's speak where the Bible speaks, and keep silent where the Bible is silent.

We here at the South Curry Street church are in the process of teaching this in our Bible school and four sermons have been preached by brother Chrales W. Leonard. Many have responded when the invitation has been extended. Those that have not been faithful to the Lord and have not made things right will be dealt with as is needed.

So brethren, I challenge you to get involved with teaching and practicing the whole gospel and not just part of it.

Bill Burris

Authority in Religion

No. 1

Much is spoken and written concerning the division and confusion in the religious world today. Some ask WHY these conditions exist? Others think that it does not matter one way or the other. Still others reason that this is God's way of pleasing ALL the people. But where do we read that God ever changed His will to please man? Yes, the conclusion of millions is that a person FIRST determines the KIND of religion he wants and then proceeds to "shop" for it much as he would for a new car. Then when he finds the religion which conforms to his opinion, he "joins" it. So if he is pleased why would God not be? After all who is "getting religion" him or God? Of course the religious "leaders" in the world are responsible for this attitude. For if they did not teach it the average man would never think of anything so foreign to God's word.

The reason for this division could be summed up in many forms and shades, but here we are interested in the "root" of the trouble. If you find and destroy the "root" of the tree of division, the tree will die. To only "cut the branches" is to invite it to spring out again. The "root" then is a lack of respect for the authority of God and Christ. Man does not realize that God is the object of his worship and it is HIS prerogative to command the KIND of worship, and obedience which he WILL, or WILL NOT accept. That is God who accepts and rewards. That he ONLY blesses the obedient, Matt. 7:21. The disobedient shall be punished by God, II Thess. 1:7-9. Jesus Christ NOW has ALL authority "in heaven and on earth," Matt. 28:18. This leaves man NO authority in religious matters. And it is a wise man who knows and accepts this truth! Jesus has all authority and man's only prerogative is to either accept or reject this authority. It is not within man's power to CHANGE God's commands. To TRY to do so constitutes VAIN worship, Matt. 15:8-9, and NO man wants his worship to be vain. True worship is not able to engage in than vain worship, so if we worship God why not be sure that our worship is accepted and rewarded of God?

While the apostles lived the inspired truth of God was in the inspired man, the apostles and other writers of the Bible.

(Continued on Page 3)

What Doth Hinder Me to be Baptized?

"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." (Acts 8:36-37). Let us know notice what hinders some today in being baptized.

1. Lack of Faith. Luke 7:30 tells us "the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him." But we also read that these Jews did not believe. For the same reason many are not baptized today.

2. Lack of Understanding. Many have been taught that baptism is not essential to salvation. They believe baptism is to be a church ordinance and optional. The Lord said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16)

3. Fear of What Others May Say. "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43). Many still do!

4. Procrastination. "A more convenient season" has been the theme song of many a hell-bound soul! From Felix unto this modern day, men have been looking for a convenient time to repent - a convenient time to quit serving satan and obey God. But alas, the time is never convenient. Many are going to their graves hopelessly lost because they heeded not the advice: "Now is the accepted time" (2 Cor. 6:2).

5. Bad Example of Church Members. The church is composed of imperfect human beings, saved by the grace of God. Remember, Christ is our example, not some ungodly church member! You just can't afford to refuse baptism because of a few hypocrites.

In baptism God forgives our sins and we are saved by the blood of Christ. "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16).

—Bobby Key

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The Resurrection Of Jesus Christ

Most people would say that it is improbable or impossible that a man could die and rise from that death in three days. However, we are not talking about just any man, but about a certain man. Jesus is the great "I am", not the great "I was". As a sign on a dormitory door at Harding College put it, "My God is still alive, Sorry about yours." This series of articles will give the reasons why you should believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this article we will look at the first piece of evidence that this is a true and historical event.

The first reason for this belief comes from the words of Peter. "David... both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day." (Acts 2:29) Peter says, "David's tomb is not empty." And the converse is true for Jesus. His tomb is empty. On Sunday morning Mary Magdelene, Mary, Salome, and some other women were going to the tomb of Jesus with spices. They wondered how they were going to move the stone from the entrance, but when they arrived it had already been moved. Someone has suggested that the stone was not moved to let Jesus out but to let the disciples in. This is probably true. The women spoke with an angel, but most important for now, they saw that the tomb was empty. One of them told Peter and John who ran to the tomb immediately. John arrived first, but Peter was the first to go in. "Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed." (John 20:8)

Even with this evidence some people are skeptical. They think the disciples dreamed up the resurrection idea in their mind and then they went out and preached the empty tomb idea without really checking on it. The apostles and the women were prejudice toward Jesus, I will admit. However, we know from another source that the tomb was really empty, and this source was not prejudiced in favor of Jesus. In Matthew 28:11-13 we read, "some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sum of money to the soldiers and said, 'Tell people, "His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep."'" "Now if the tomb still contained Jesus' body, the Jewish leaders would have opened the tomb and let everyone in the city see it. They would make a mockery of the apostles' preaching in this manner. Christianity would have been exposed as a lie and would have died within a few

Christian Commitment

The Christian life should be one that is completely given over to Christ and His will. It is very easy for people to become so concerned with the affairs of this world that they forget this. But the truly committed person will live Christ in all his daily activities, even though he may not consciously say, "I am living for Christ" before he does something. The truly committed person has caught an attitude that automatically makes him measure everything on the basis of whether it would be well pleasing to his Lord. Far, far too many feel that they can put on Christ and take him off at their own whim and fancy. One cannot fulfill the commitment he makes when he becomes a citizen of the Kingdom, by looking for loopholes, or a day off. Living a true life of commitment requires twenty four hours per day, seven days a week. When one is buried with Him in baptism into death, he is to arise to walk in a new kind of life; one in which he no longer wants his own way, but in which he wants Christ to have His with him. If he tenaciously holds on to the past, or wants to cling to things even remotely questionable, he has not been fully converted to Christ.

The day one decides God knows best in ALL THINGS and that His will is plain enough to be understood, and right enough to be lived, then the whole being will be committed to Him. The idea that man's wisdom is supreme, that salvation can come through man's knowledge must be abandoned. God's word must be seen as the light of truth, which all must follow. When the realization comes that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," that salvation is to be had only in Christ, that it is "in him we live, and move, and have our being," then one is prepared to walk the pathway that Jesus trod, the pathway that leads to what Paul described by quoting Isaiah, "Things which eye saw not, and heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man."

RNC

weeks. However, they could not do this, since the body was not there. The best they could do was to start the lie you read about above.

I heard a story that a Muslim was mocking a Christian, because we do not have the tomb of our prophet with us today like they do. The Christian replied, "But there is a difference. Your prophet is in his tomb, but our prophet is not in his tomb." Therefore, the first reason for believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the empty tomb.

Steve Williams

"Lord, Forgive Me for Lying"

By Robert F. Howard

"Oh, Lord, I didn't really mean to lie, but now I realize that I have not only lied to man, but to Thee. I was only searching for an excuse to justify my indifference... but I lied! I lied about being sick on Sunday morning, for I went visiting Sunday afternoon.

Oh, Lord, I lied about my work keeping me tied down, for I go to everything else I want to except to church services.

Oh, Lord, I lied about my contribution, for I spent ten times as much as I give to Thee for shows, tobacco, sports, recreation, and downright foolishness.

Oh, Lord, I lied about not having clothes good enough to wear to worship, for I go to much larger gatherings in public.

Oh, Lord, I lied when I said, 'No one spoke to me at church, for I spoke to no one and left the building too quickly'.

Oh, Lord, I lied when I said no one cared if we were absent, for a number have called and tried to get us to come back to church.

Oh, Lord, forgive me of the sin of lying, for all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. (Revelation 21:8) Amen."

Wise sayings often fall on barren ground, but a kind work is never cast aside.

People seldom improve when they have no other model but themselves to copy.

—Selected

Bus Evangelism For Every Church

This is a question which needs to be answered honestly in our day. I personally do not believe that all high school students should be forced to attend college, and also I do not believe that church bus evangelism is for every congregation. There are some reasons why it should not be tried. I sincerely believe the following are considerations that must be dealt with in answering the question in regard to an evangelistic bus ministry.

1. Bus evangelism will not work if the preacher does not believe in and is involved in the work of bus evangelism.
2. Bus evangelism is not for churches who do not want to have large, often doubled Sunday schools and worship attendance. Many people resist the change brought about by rapid growth and are not prepared to deal with the problems that go with the same.
3. Bus evangelism is not for churches that do not love children. This ministry is geared to reach children, many of whom are not church-oriented, who are ill-dressed and ill-behaved.
4. Bus evangelism is not for churches who do not believe that the Bible must be taught, the gospel believed and obeyed before people can be saved.
5. Bus evangelism is not for churches who believe that their mission work is something outside the framework of the community in which they live to which they are obligated. Foreign mission work will only grow and increase as greater evangelism and local efforts are promoted.
6. Bus evangelism is not for churches who do not have evangelism at the heart of their church program. It is a fact that there are many religious people today that are not evangelistically oriented. I believe that the mandate of our times is to seek and save the lost. This should be our philosophy and every effort and work should center in and around this idea.

In my limited experience with church bus programs I have seen scores of people reached. It is a wonderful way for us to fulfill the Lord's will in this day. Without prayer and dedication through disappointment and often heartbreak the program will not succeed but once you prove your determination to keep on you will succeed because quitters never win and winners never quit.

Albert G. Lemmons

Drink Yourself Silly

"Ever wonder why some people get silly when they drink? A research team at the University of South Carolina Medical School has an answer: alcohol induces senility by a process known as 'blood sludging.'"

"Alcohol, even in moderation, speeds up the destruction of nerve cells and initiates senility earlier in the life of any drinking man—or woman," reports Dr. Melvin H. Kniseley, head of the South Carolina research team.

"Alcohol, Dr. Kniseley explains, forms an adhesive substance in the blood which cuts off blood cells from their oxygen supply. The trapped cells eventually die, affecting the heart, liver and brain. As more nerve cells are destroyed, senility sets in.

"There is no such thing as an innocent cocktail," warns Dr. Kniseley, who has himself given up alcohol altogether as a result of his findings. The process of sludging is detectable after the smallest amounts of alcohol are imbibed.

Blood sludging also occurs in other diseases, such as cancer, arthritis and malaria. With their new-found knowledge of how to induce it, the South Carolina team is now trying to reverse the process.

"What we're trying to do now," explains Dr. Raymond C. Pennington, a member of the research team, "is to examine the chemistry of sludging and find ways to neutralize it." (Lloyd Shearer, PARADE MAGAZINE, Sept. 12, 1971.)

Although the report of one team of doctors on this matter may not be conclusive, the findings of this research team should cause some of my brethren to feel less comfortable in their efforts to defend "social drinking." We always have among us those who assert that "a few beers in the privacy of your own home" or "a cocktail at a social gathering" are harmless and not forbidden by God. Perhaps such brethren will read this article and rethink the matter. Look again at a couple of statements by the doctors:

1. "Alcohol, even in moderation, speeds up the destruction of nerve cells and initiates senility earlier in the life of any drinking man—or woman."

2. "There is no such thing as an innocent cocktail." (Underscoring mine.)

Furthermore, we are told that Dr. Kniseley "has himself given up alcohol altogether as a result of his findings." At least the doctor believes in his research

strongly enough to practice what he preaches.

The last paragraph of the article offers the possibility of "neutralizing" the sludging process, and such a prospect is conderful to contemplate: we could "cure" those who have already been affected.

However, I am slightly unsettled by this thought: if such a cure is found, will not the American public, with its gargantuan appetite for liquor, be content to remedy the effect of sludging, rather than prevent it? After all, prevention would mean giving up alcohol, and how could we possibly do that? Surely, it would be better to have our booze and drink it too.

In the light of all that we know and are yet learning about alcohol, it seems to me that the stand of American society on this matter, relative to drug use, is stupid and hypocritical. Brethren, let us have no such thinking among us.

J.D.T.

Authority in Religion (Cont.)

But when the Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus, when he returned to heaven, He (the Holy Spirit) guided these writers in to "all truth" and caused them to remember ALL things Jesus had said to them, John 14:26 & 16:13. Jesus did many things which are not written in the Bible, but enough is written that we might believe and be saved John 20:30-21. So if we believe on Christ, live the Christian life and are saved in heaven, what else can we want or need? Then today Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, and he ONLY saved those who "obey HIM", Heb. 5:8-9. His authority was revealed to the inspired writers of the New Testament, they recorded and "confirmed" it (Heb. 2:14) and today it needs no further confirmation.

Continued
Glynn V. Purdy

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The Abominable Seven

A loving God can hate. The Bible says so. Of course God hates sin, every sin, but Solomon has drawn up a special list of seven which are an abomination to our Maker.

1. *A Proud Look.* Lofty eyes serve as an indicator of a haughty heart. Pride, which would vie with God and nudge Him off His throne, is at the very bottom of the well of sin. Lord Elton said, "The Devil is doubtless perfectly content to see us becoming brace or chaste or generous or goodtempered, provided that we remain proud."

2. *A Lying Tongue.* Holmes has observed that "sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all." This sin is so serious that it brought immediate death in the early church to Ananias and Sapphira. To a *God of truth, the perversion of truth* is no small matter.

3. *Hands That Shed Innocent Blood.* Blood is here used as a word-symbol for death. Life belongs to God. He gives it. If one sheds innocent blood, he joins hands with Judas, who confessed to this sin (Matthew 27:4), and with Satan, who "was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44).

4. *A Heart That Deviseth Wicked Imaginations.* Instead of using one's intellectual abilities for the cause of righteousness, the pursuit of peace and the progress of mankind, the sinner revels in thoughts of iniquity, manufactures mischief and turns his heart (mind) into a workshop for the Devil.

5. *Feet That Are Swift in Running To Mischief.* This is a case where sin is sought out and swiftly entered into. As soon as the heart plans the evil, the feet are eager to work the plan.

6. *A False Witness That Speaketh Lies.* Of the seven things God hates, two of them pertain to lying. Here is a plain violation of the Ninth Command, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Someone has observed that the man who speaks lies under oath "defies his Maker, perverts justice, wrongs the innocent, releases the guilty, is disloyal to his country and outrages his own conscience."

7. *He That Soweth Discord Among Brethren.* God's delight is in concord, not discord. And those who stir up brethren through malice, gossip, slander and evil surmises are singled out for Divine displeasure. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." And our text says, "Cursed are the mischief makers."

Watch out for THE ABOMINABLE SEVEN. They spell trouble.

John Gipson
Little Rock, Arkansas

How to Succeed by Trying

John D. Gipson
Little Rock, Ark.

"Seeth thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings" (Prov. 22:29)

Now to be very frank, success doesn't come without effort. The "what does it matter" attitude will never accomplish anything worthwhile. So, down with casualness! Down with non-chalance! Ban the slogans: "take it easy," "relax" and "don't get excited."

"Let the sluggard go to the ant, consider her ways, and become wise" (Prov. 6:6). Benjamin Franklin said, "Industry needs no wish." And Abraham Lincoln said, "The leading rule for a man of every calling is diligence: never put off until tomorrow what you can do today." Success is not to be found at the end of a lackadaisical stroll. Diligence is demanded! Emerson said of Napoleon: "Having decided what was to be done he did that with might and main. He put all his strength. He risked everything and spared nothing—neither ammunition, nor money, nor troops, nor generals, nor himself." This dauntless spirit of resolution will ensure steady progress.

The price men pay to achieve is never cheap. As a young man Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote, "The fact is, I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns most ardently for it, and every earthly thought centers in it." Now do you think he was just lucky? Was greatness thrust upon him? Of course not! His success was clearly the result of diligence.

Do you desire temporal rewards? Then listen! Solomon says, "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich" (Prov. 10:4).

So you seek spiritual success? Then make it your whole concern. The apostle Paul said, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14). And in the process he etched his name in history and Heaven. Hear the intense words of Jesus: "Strive to enter by the narrow door." Do not delude yourself, it will require effort. Thus, Halford E. Loeckock advises us to keep the word "strain" in our working vocabulary and adds, "The great danger of the Christian life is not atheism or agnosticism. It is somnambulism (sleep walking)."

You can succeed—but have to want to!

Have You Been Buried with Christ in Baptism? (Rom. 6:3-5)

We all rejoice when any come forward to be baptized into Jesus, confess faults, rededicate an unfruitful life, or identify with the local congregation. But so often the common usage of words become hackneyed and near meaningless—"Were there any responses Sunday?" Just what do we mean by responses?

Can you imagine a dialogue such as this: "Last Lord's Day we saw the greatest number of responses in the history of this congregation, and not one person came down the aisle. Brother 'A' was so moved by the sermon that he went home following worship and closing his door, got down on his knees and prayed as never before. Brother 'B' was so moved by the entire service that he got on the phone calling every absentee in the membership. Brother 'C' was so pricked by conscience that before eating his noon meal, he went straight to his brother with whom he had had harsh words, asked his forgiveness, and together they prayed and then went out to lunch together."

Sister 'D' during the morning prayer silently asked God to help her worship Him with a newness of spirit, and the entire worship service was such an inspiration that brethren didn't want to rush home but rather warmly embraced one another and discussed the morning lesson. Heaven's responses continue for Sunday evening attendance has equaled that of Sunday morning and mid-week service has fantastically grown beyond the fondest expectations."

"But greatest of all—the entire community is talking about that friendly church where spiritual vitality has seized the entire membership and people hasten to be among them—for Jesus is there!" These are responses!!!!

—Selected

1/25/51
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