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The Importance of Bible Doctrine

There is much confusion in the minds of people today concerning doctrine. One often hears the expression by many of the famous radio preachers that they are non-doctrinal. They make much over the fact they stress faith and non doctrine. This leaves the impression that doctrine is not necessary, and should even be avoided. Is this attitude in keeping with the teachings of the Bible? I think the Bible teaches beyond a shadow of doubt that it is not in harmony with this way of thinking.

Many will ask the question, what is doctrine? The dictionary defines doctrine as a principle, view, or set of opinions maintained or taught by a person or set of persons. The word doctrine is mentioned less than a dozen times in the Old Testament, but is found about fifty times in the New Testament. It is found for the first time in the New Testament in Matt. 7:28, where we are told that the people were astonished at the doctrine of Jesus after he had completed the sermon on the mount. Christ taught doctrine.

In Matt. 16:12 Jesus warns against thy doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. In Matt. 15:9 our Saviour states that many would worship him in vain, because they would teach for doctrine the commandments of men. In the time of our Saviour there were other doctrines which opposed the doctrines of our Lord. This still exists today and on a greater scale than ever before. Even those who claim to stress faith and leave off doctrine are guilty of teaching a doctrine when they make this claim, for they are teaching their opinion and that becomes a doctrine and is of men.

What then should be our attitude toward doctrine? In Acts 2 we learn of about three thousand people, who after they had answered the first gospel invitation, and were baptized, continued steadfast in the apostles doctrine, and in fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers.

The doctrines of Christ and the inspired apostles become the word of God. The Holy Spirit furnished the inspiration to the apostles and their

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Facts We Need to Know

1. Every one needs to be saved;
In Romans 3-10; As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one.

Romans 3-23; For all have sinned and fell short of the glory of God.

Romans 6-23; For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. Christ died for every one;

John 3-16; For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Romans 5-8; But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

I Corinthians 15-1,2,3,4; Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he arose again the third day according to the scriptures.

3. You must accept Christ to be saved;

Acts 4-12; Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

The new Testament gives the following in teaching how to be saved:

A. You must believe in Christ as the son of God.

John 20-31; But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Acts 16-31; And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and all thy house.

Mark 16-16; He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believed not shall be damned.

B. You must be sincere and repent of your sins:

Luke 13-3; I tell you, nay; but, except you repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Acts 2-38; Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

C. You must confess Jesus Christ before men;

Matt. 10-32; Whosoever therefore shall confess us before men, him will I confess also before my father which is in heaven.

Rom. 10-10; For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

D. You must be baptized into Christ.

Acts 10-38; And he commended them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

(This form of baptism in immersion in water, a burial, being put under)

Rom. 6-3,4; Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were Baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into his death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Baptism of a penitent believer is", in order to have your sins forgiven").

Gal. 3-27; For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

I Peter 3-23; Peter says as Noah was saved "after the true likeness;" we are saved through baptism." Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Which in like manner, we do the same in baptism)

John 3-5; Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of the water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (A penitent believer that has been baptized for the remission of sins has accepted Christ and has God's promise that he is saved from past sins.)

Acts 22-16; And now why tarriest then? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. (Praying to him in faith that he will answer as we live by his word).

E. You can be just a Christian:

On the day of pentecost after Peter had concluded the first gospel sermon, they then received his word, believed those words, were baptized and were added to the church about three thousands souls. (Acts 2-41,47) These saved Christians belonged to no religious

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The Importance of Bible (Cont.)

teachings was actually from Heaven. Many in the christian world today will not accept all the teachings of the inspired men.

Both Christ and the apostles taught and commanded baptism but many men today teach that it is not necessary. How many today observe the Lord's supper each Sunday? The Bible teaches that christians in New Testament days observed it on the first day of the week and not on the first day of a week, just as the Jews were commanded under the law to keep the Sabbath and not a Sabbath. Many other teachings of the apostles are laid aside by the many doctrines being taught today.

We today have no choice in matters pertaining to doctrine. We are commanded to keep the doctrines as taught by Christ and the apostles and to avoid all others, because they would have to be the doctrines of men that Jesus warned against. Because men have not heeded the teachings of Christ on this matter we have the confusion and division that is now so evident.

First Fruits and Leftovers

"Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures." (Jas. 1:18). In Israel the giving of the first fruits constituted an acknowledgement that the land and all its fruits were a gift of God. The concept involved nothing less than an acknowledgment of God's control of the universe and of one's life. To give the first fruits to something else was considered an affirmation of the existence of another God.

Under Christ, we are the first fruits—we belong to God. (Jas. 1:18). Not simply what we have, but our total life belongs to God. To give the first fruits of time, money, energy, or intellect to something else is to acknowledge the existence of another God. That fact suggests these conclusions.

1. There is no relationship between first fruits and leftovers. Our attitude is incredibly casual when we offer the leftovers of time or money to the Lord, and juggle our budget or schedule as though it were a water bill or a car payment. No amount of leftovers will take the place of first fruits.

2. God's ownership of our first fruits is a non negotiable matter.

3. The Biblical concept, of free well giving is pictured in God giving His son. It has no kinship with those who want to use it as a haven to keep more for themselves, or to use Sundays for self-centered indulgence.

4. Our commitment to God must be the finest we have! We cannot give the blind, the sick, the lame, no-comfortable twenty dollar gift when we ought to be managing a challenging fifty dollar gift. No convenient thirty Sundays a year when we ought to be worshipping with the saints fifty-two Sundays a year!

5. There is not the remotest possibility of reconciling individual prosperity and corporate poverty. If you are committed to Jesus Christ, if you are a member of the body of Christ, you cannot separate your well being and the church's well being. It is spiritually unethical to live as though prosperous and give as if in poverty.

6. Commitments made to God involve the sacredness of life itself—God's ownership. They are to be met first. A casual or manipulative attitude toward them is unjustifiable and intolerable!

May all of us who are in the covenant relationship of this congregation resolve that from this day forward the first fruits are God's! They will not be used in any other way. We will have no other gods before Jehovah!

Wesley Reagan

Obey Him That Have the Rule

It seems that Paul's admonition to obey the elders who have the watchcare of souls (Heb. 13:17) goes largely unheeded in many congregations today. Worldly minded and rebellious members pay not much more heed to the admonitions of elders than they do to the preaching of the Word. The balance which God holds in His hand contains the one side instructions for the shepherds to watch for souls — and on the other side the admonition to obey the shepherds' rule. Elders have not the power of the state; they cannot enforce their rule except by prayerful admonition, entreaty, and finally in extreme cases, the invoking of church discipline, so that the recalcitrant and sinning member may be made ashamed and induced to repent. (I Cor. 5; II Cor. 2:4-11)

Elders are the "undershepherds" of Jesus Christ (I Pet. 5:1-4) Jesus being the "chief shepherd". Therefore, they do not legislate or make laws for the church, but rule rather according to the divine instructions already laid down by Christ and his chosen Spirit filled apostolic instructors in the revealed word of truth. No person dares to speak a word contrary to or in addition to this body of divine truth. If they could there would be no stopping place, no safeguards. The elders in the "Christian Churches" could justify their missionary societies, instruments of music, open membership, pie suppers, and women preachers and song directors!! Instead of "book, chapter and verse" all they would need to say is: "The elders authorized us to do it."

Elders who love God won't dare tamper with His word. They respect it too much and know that their responsibility is not to change it but to enforce it. This is why true elders of God's church are to honored and respected so highly, especially those who "labor in word and doctrine." (I Tim. 5:17) They "watch for souls" therefore we should listen, consider, respect, and obey their instructions and admonitions in the Lord. They have a charge to keep and we could make it a lot easier and more pleasant for them by giving them a bit more cooperation as they direct us with a "thus saith the Lord" in the benevolent fulfillment of their duties.

WPJ

--TEACHING THE WAY--

Before your child has come to seven,
Teach him well the way to heaven.
Better still the truth will thrive,
If he knows it when he's five;
Best of all if at your knee,
He learns it when he's only three.

Paradoxes in the Bible

H. Leo Boles said a paradox is "truth standing on its head to attract attention to some principle." Webster's says a paradox is "a statement that seems contradictory, absurd, etc. but may be true in fact." The Bible is full of paradoxes. At first glance they may often seem self-contradictory or at least unusual, but in reality they exhibit some divine truth.

In the teachings of Jesus we have many paradoxes. For example, he said, "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:14) Or "many that are first will be last, and the last first." (Matt. 19:30) Paul taught a paradox when he said, "my power is made perfect in weakness." (II Cor. 12:7-9) In a similar way the writer to the Hebrews said they "won strength out of weakness." (Heb. 11:34) Surely the opposite is sometimes true. Sometimes our strengths become our weaknesses if we let them lead us into a proud, secure, self-sufficient feeling. Each of these quotations demonstrate paradoxical truth.

As one examines the life of Jesus, many paradoxes are obvious, especially in relation to the cross. (see The Vindicator XXXI, No. 4, April, 1964, p.1) For example, Jesus came into this world that we might enter heaven. (I Tim. 1:15) He was born in the flesh that we might be born of the Spirit. He was born of woman that we might be born of God. (Gal. 4:4) He became the Son of man that we might become sons of God. He accepted poverty that we might become rich. (II Cor. 8:9) He was rejected by men that we might be accepted by God. (Is. 53:3) He became the man of sorrows so we might be able to rejoice. He was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God. (II Cor. 5:21) He was put to death that we might be made alive. Finally, he was cursed on earth so we might be blessed in heaven. (Gal. 3:13)

We have two interesting statements which were meant as insults and condemnations of Jesus, but their meanings took a different turn from what the original speakers intended. In John 11:49-50 Caiaphas the high priest said, "it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish." By this he meant the death of Jesus would prevent a split among the people of the nation and prevent a civil war if things got out of hand. However, John said this was a prophecy. We can now see that what Caiaphas meant and what the Lord taught through that statement are as far apart as East and West. Another unusual case is the statement in Matt. 27:25. Here the crowd tells Pilate, "His blood be on

HEAVEN

A California preacher announced he would preach about "Heaven" the next Sunday. During the week, he received the following letter from an old man who was very ill:

"Next Sunday you are to talk about "Heaven." I am interested in that land, because I have held a clear title to a bit of property there for over 55 years. I did not buy it. It was given to me without money and without price. But the donor purchased it for me at a tremendous sacrifice. I am not holding it for speculation, since the title is not transferable. It is not a vacant lot. For more than half a century, I have been sending material out of which the greatest architect and builder of the universe has been building a home for me, which will never need to be repaired because it will suit me perfectly, individually, and will never grow old.

"Termites can never undermine its foundations for they rest upon the Rock of Ages. Fire cannot destroy it. Floods cannot wash it away. No locks or bolts will ever be placed upon its doors, or no vicious person can ever enter that land where my dwelling stands, now almost completed and already ready for me to enter and abide in peace eternally, without fear of being ejected. There is a valley of deep shadows between the place where I live in California and that to which I shall journey in a very short time. I cannot reach my home in that City of God without passing through that dark valley of shadows. But I am not afraid, because the best Friend that I ever had went through the same valley long, long ago and drove away all its gloom. He has stuck by me through thick and thin since we first became acquainted 55 years ago, and I hold His promise in printed form, never to forsake nor to leave me alone. He will be with me as I walk through the valley of the shadows, and I shall not lose my way when He is with me.

"I hope to hear your sermon on Heaven next Sunday from my home in Los Angeles, California, but I have no assurance that I shall be able to do so. My ticket to Heaven has no date marked for the journey—no return coupon—and no permit for baggage. Yes, I am ready to go and I may not be here while you are talking next Sunday, but I shall meet you there some day."

Lubbock, Texas
(submitted by Mae Cannon)

us and our children!" As we look back and think in terms of the atonement, this is impossible. The blood of Jesus can not be upon anyone who rebels against him and denies him. It can only be upon those who live in humble submission to him.

By Steve Williams

Youth Loses LSD Struggle

A week ago, Crag D. Gardner, a handsome 19-year-old postal worker, got up early. He went to work for a few hours, visited his mother briefly, then went to his apartment and made a tape recording.

Then he drove from Salt Lake City to a remote area of Wyoming and, the county coroner ruled, shot himself.

The tape recording was found by a roommate and played at Craig's funeral—a rambling touching account of a young man's struggle with the drug LSD.

His parents released a portion of the tape Saturday, saying it might alert others who use drugs.

"We hope to God it will help somebody else," said his mother, Mrs. William Blain of Salt Lake City.

Here is what her son said in his last hours:

"I can't think . . . can't think . . . can't think.

"well, about all I have to say is—actually, the real reason is that I really don't know—(pause) I'll tell you one thing Dave, (his roommate) and anyone else who's listening, you can really get messed up on that stuff.

"You might hear about it sooner or later, Mom—I'm sorry, Mom, Dad and Bill—I'm sorry that your little boy has turned into an LSD addict.

"It's bad news—it really is. I didn't think it was when I was first taking it, but I've been getting pretty stoned lately, and you just don't know what's real and what isn't real. You really don't.

"HAD TO FIND OUT"

All I can say is, I had to find out myself—kind of a poor excuse, you know—but I really shouldn't have taken any dope at all—any acid (LSD)—and I shouldn't really have started off with any grass.

"Marijuana, either. Of course, grass isn't bad—it's the acid that got me so.

"Tell you one thing—after you take so much of that stuff, you just don't know where you're at sometimes

"I mean, I don't think I am, but what I've heard is that a person who thinks he's insane . . . or something would never admit it to himself

"I had enough problems of my own without even taking LSD to keep my mind bent. Well, actually what acid does is it intensifies everything to a great extent. This probably is what it did to me

"All I know is I'm going to be in one fix when I have to face the Big Man up in Heaven. I'm not saying that with disrespect for the Big Man. I'm just saying it because I felt like saying it. And it says in the Bible that he who kills himself will not be resurrected. Well, this is the great

(Continued on Page 4)

Your Future Relationship

YOU MUST ACKNOWLEDGE HIM AS YOUR LORD

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father". This you may do NOW to your OWN Salvation, Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10, but if you WAIT until the judgment, you will STILL DO IT, but it will be to your condemnation, Matt. 25:31-45. WHICH WILL IT BE WITH YOU? Phil. 2:9-11.

JESUS WILL COME AGAIN AND YOU MUST MEET HIM, PREPARED OR NOT

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven", Acts 1:11. "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.", Rev. 1:7. Will you rejoice at his coming, or be among those who "wail". That of course depends on whether you OBEY HIM—OR NOT, while on earth!

WHEN HE COMES YOU WILL BE RAISED FROM THE DEAD, READY OR NOT

"Marvel not at this; the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation", John 5:28-29. AS YOU DIE, SO SHALL YOU BE AT THE RESURRECTION! "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad", II Cor. 5:10.

CHRIST WILL JUDGE YOU

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him", John 5:22-23. HAVE YOU HONORED THE SON BY OBEYING HIM? Heb. 5:8-9. This is really the only way you can honor him you know! Do you plan to obey Him, but are looking for a convenient season. It will never come my friend! TODAY IS THE DAY OF SALVATION FOR YOU! WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT IT?

JESUS WILL REWARD THE OBEDIENT AND PUNISH THE DISOBEDIENT

"For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; the dead in Christ shall rise first; (we are BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST, Rom. 6:3-4) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words", I Thess. 4:16-17. HE WILL PUNISH THE DISOBEDIENT! "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power", II Thess. 1:7-9. SEEING THAT THESE THINGS ARE TRUE, SHOULD YOU NOT BEGIN AT ONCE TO PREPARE TO MEET YOUR LORD? YOU MAY NEVER SEE THAT FUTURE DATE YOU ARE WAITING FOR, SO MAKE PLANS NOW, OBEY THE GOSPEL!

Glynn V. Purdy

What About You?

Many years ago a group of people decided to have a great feast. Each one was to bring a bottle of his finest wine and pour it into a large barrel. One man said, "I will pour in a bottle of water and no one will know the difference."

But, behold the day of the feast came and wine was to be served but only water flowed forth, for all had the same idea!

This is the truth of the Lord's work. Some think, "I will give a little and others will not know."

Others think the same thing, and the work suffers. People think, "I will not be missed," and many are absent from the services, and for the same reason many are absent for visitation. They feel possibly that others will be there and they will not be missed.

While it is true that others have responsibility, let us not forget that we have our own. That Christian obligations are PERSONAL and we must fulfill our OWN obligations in order to be well pleasing unto God.

WHAT ABOUT YOU? Can the Lord depend upon YOU to carry YOUR share of the work?

Facts We Need (Cont.)

sect, part, or demonation. They were just Christians. They did not have to be voted on, or any other kind of ceremony had to be administered. When people hear the word of God, believe it, repent of past sins, confess the name of Christ before men or man kind, and are baptized, they are then added to the church that Christ bought with his own blood. When we do the things outlined in the New Testament, we are not members of any social or religious club. We are not bound by any ecclesiastical authority higher than the local congregation, with elders and deacons as the leaders after the New Testament pattern. We plead for unity of all believers in Christ, in keeping with the prayer in (John 17-21)

When any person obeys from the heart the teachings of the New Testament, the Lord adds that person to his body which is the church, Christ has promised to guard and guide that person if You walk in the light as he is in the light and his blood cleanseth us from all sin. (I John 1-7). In doing these things you shall receive the crown of righteousness which the Lord shall give in that day (II Timothy 4-8) At his second coming, he will render engence to them that know not God, and to those that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. II Tesselonians 1-8.

These are some facts that all should know and be ready to defend with book chapter and verse, and thus saith the Lord. "Behold, now is the day of salvation". Jason Y. Frizzell

Youth Loses (Cont.)

punishment that I'm bestowing upon myself, not only physically, but, for what I've read, I'm going to be suffering eternally for this.

"I have thought it over many times and there really isn't anything to live for. I don't think there is. And I really don't think anyone could convince me that there is—not me, anyway . . ."

Then he drove to Wyoming and killed himself.

Due to the fact that LSD and other drugs are such a problem, especially among the young, we thought this worthy of your consideration. Please read it carefully.

J. W. Stewart
Mammoth Springs, Arkansas