

Why I Left . . .

Baptist Church

Catholic Church

Christian Church

Institutional
Church of Christ

Jehovah's Witness

Lutheran Church

Methodist Church

Pentecostal Church

Table of Contents

Why I Left the Baptist Church	1
Why I Left the Catholic Church	25
Why I Left the Christian Church	31
Why I Left The Christian Church	32
Why I Left the "Institutional Position" (Institutional Church of Christ)	34
Why I Left the Jehovah's Witnesses Organization	39
Why We Left Lutheranism	43
Why I Left the Methodist Church	51
Why I Left the Methodist Church	53
Why I Left the Pentecostal Church	55

Why I Left the Baptist Church

By Grover Stevens

No Animosity for Baptists

I would like to say in the beginning that I have no animosity whatsoever against Baptists. Personally, I have no reason for leaving the Baptist church, but quite to the contrary, if personal reasons counted, I would never have left the Baptist Church, because personality is in their favor. Especially is this true of the congregation of which I was a member in Phillips, Texas. I believe that the Baptists are, for the most part, splendid people. I believe that most of them are honest and sincere. I believe that, if there are Baptists here tonight, most of them want the truth, and will consider the things that are said honestly and open-minded. However, some times, out of a sense of loyalty to that which we have become members of, we are prone to cast aside lightly any charges that might be made against us. I sincerely hope that that will not be the way you will do tonight. I beg you to hear what I have to say, study it carefully with an open Bible in hand, then, out of honesty to your own soul and to God Almighty, to embrace all that you find to be in harmony with the Bible. Believe it, not because I said it, but because you found it in the word of God. That is the only thing any of us would have you believe--the Bible, the word of God. In spite of all the accusations made to the contrary, we still preach only the Bible. Such expressions are idle, I suppose, in view of the fact that all "churches" claim the same thing. We know that *all* of them do not preach "only the Bible" for they are *many* and the Bible is *one*. The Bible does not teach contradictory doctrines. The Baptists hold the Bible up and say, "We preach the Bible." That is what we do.

So, what have I gained by telling you that we take the Bible and nothing but the Bible? Nothing, I suppose. I will just have to prove to you that we do actually stand on the Bible and nothing else, and that the Baptists do not. If they did, I never would have left them. I want you to consider the things that are said as honestly as you know how, tonight.

When I came into this world, I found it divided religiously. When I was old enough to notice things, I found a church on every hand. Here was one and there was another, all claiming to preach the Bible, yet wearing different names and teaching different doctrines. This sentiment prevailed, "It doesn't make any difference what church you are a member of, or what you believe, just so long as you are honest and sincere about it." Having grown up in an atmosphere like that, most of us just seem to accept it as the truth--as axiomatic, but it isn't. The Bible doesn't teach that. If so, where? Nevertheless, that is what we heard every day. Another thought akin to this is that everyone ought to go to church; everyone ought to be a member of some church. These things are preached by all denominational preachers. Hence, the general conception in religious circles, and the basis for all resentment toward the church of Christ, because we deny it.

Baptists Preach Some Truth

I do not believe that everything they say is a falsehood or a lie. I believe that they preach a lot of truth. The part that they preach that is true, I am glad to accept, but the things they preach which are not the truth

made me leave them. Let me illustrate my point. You will recall that in the Garden of Eden the devil preached truth along with a lie. He said, "Thou shalt not surely die." That is false doctrine. He also said, "For God doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." That is the truth. This made the lie more deceptive. Did Adam and Eve sin when they believed and obeyed that? Why, certainly they did. It was half a truth and half a lie. If you say, "Well, I only stand for the things that are the truth," then I will reply, "Maybe that was what Adam and Eve thought too." "We'll just stand for half of it, and we'll tell the Lord that we did not believe the other half." But it led them into error and condemnation just the same. Hence, what truth the Baptist Church preaches is perverted by the false. Then, too, they many times preach more against sin, moral sin or immorality, than gospel preachers do. I do not mean to say that we do not preach against immorality, but that they preach on it almost altogether, and we spend some time preaching doctrine and pointing out false doctrines. And we need to do that.

Upon attending the Baptist Church, one hears the Baptist preach against sin, and recognize the fact that he is a sinner-- that he is lost. Then being convicted of sin, and desiring to be saved and do what is right, we join the Baptist Church, or some other church. A person convicted of sin is ready to do anything he is commanded. For example, when I first became a member of the church of Christ, I wished that the Lord had left baptism out of the Bible. I said to myself, "Everything that the church of Christ teaches is fine, and I believe that most of the people in the denominations believe exactly what the church teaches, but when they come to baptism, they just seem to resent that. If the Lord had just left baptism out, then everything would be all right." I have learned since that wasn't the trouble. People do not mind being baptized when they are convicted of sin. People wanting to obey God do not mind being baptized. They do not mind doing anything that God commands them to do. It is a matter of surrendering whole-heartedly one's own will to God's will. When that's done his attitude is simply, "Lord, whatever you want me to do, I'm willing to do it." Many, not realizing this, go on in rebellion against God, believing all the while that they are pleasing to Him. Hence, we join some church because we are convicted of sin, realize that we are lost, and because we believe that it is the right thing to do. That is the reason I joined the Baptist Church.

Early Experience

I attended Sunday School at the Baptist Church in Caddo, Oklahoma, when I was a little fellow. After we moved to Texas, I didn't go much, if at all. By and by my mother started attending the church of Christ at Banger, Texas,, so I began attending Bible study there. I attended there several months and was impressed with the way they studied the Bible. Then I took pneumonia and was out for about six weeks, so I lost interest and did not go back. After some time, I was encouraged by some of my friends to go to Sunday School at the Baptist Church. I became regular in attendance and made 100 in Sunday School right along. Our class was good to win the Banner. Those of you who know the Baptist grading system know that I had to stay for church to make 100. It wasn't long until I began to realize that I was lost and in sin, and needed to be saved. I wanted to be saved, so one Sunday night when the preacher was making propositions with folks, he invited any who knew that they were lost and "desired the prayers of the church" to hold up their hand. I knew that I was lost, so at this suggestion I raised my hand. It was difficult at first. It took all the strength I had to make that arm move, but after I got it started it wasn't so hard. As I held my hand up my face burned and my heart came up to my throat. When the preacher said, "God bless you,

son," my face burned more and I was very self-conscious. Afterwards, several came to me and told me how proud they were of me and encouraged me. Then I felt more confident and was proud of myself. Of course, my Sunday School teacher and a few others encouraged me to join the church. I talked to my mother about it and was persuaded to wait awhile. She felt that I was being persuaded and didn't realize what I was doing. After some time I began to visit the Methodist Sunday School and church occasionally with a friend who was a Methodist. Finally, I quit attending at all.

A little over a year later I made a speech at the Annual Boy Scout Father and Son Banquet. After the Banquet the Methodist preacher came by and asked me if I went to Sunday School or church anywhere. I told him that I didn't, so he urged me to come to the Methodist Church. Later the Baptist preacher approached me and was equally as urgent in his invitation as the Methodist preacher. (They had changed preachers at both places since the incident mentioned before). After some delay I began attending the Baptist Church. It wasn't long until I was under conviction again. I remembered the time before, so the Sunday morning I went up during the invitation and asked the preacher to pray for me. I felt just as I had before. I spent the afternoon trying to decide what to do. Late in the afternoon, some time before B. T. U. was to begin, I gathered up a change of clothes and went to the church building to see the preacher. He was in the auditorium talking with one of the men. I asked him if he would baptize me that night. He asked me, "Are you saved, Grover?" I said, "Well, I don't know; I guess I am." He took me into his office where we talked quite a while. When he heard of my former experience, he told me that I had been saved back then. I accepted that, for I remembered how I had felt after they had prayed for me. That night I confessed that "God for Christ's sake has saved me from my sins, and I want to join the Baptist Church." Upon hearing that confession, they voted to receive me, and I was baptized into the Baptist Church that night. It was April 24, 1938.

Zeal in the Baptist Church

I took a personal interest in the work. I worked diligently. I was instrumental in leading several people to what I honestly thought was Christ, and they joined the Baptist Church. I was given a Sunday School class, made the assistant director of the B. T. U., and was licensed to preach. I preached once a month for a little congregation in Sanford, Texas, about twenty miles out, and filled in for our local preacher when he was away.

I had been preaching and working for some time, and nothing had challenged my attention pertaining to Baptist Doctrine. Then, one day my mother and oldest brother who had been attending the church of Christ, told me how the church of Christ preached the Bible. They urged me to attend a meeting starting in a few days. What I had heard about the church of Christ was told with contempt, so I had learned to feel that way toward them--at least, a little. However, I made up my mind that I would attend the meeting, listen to what was said and accept all that I could. I was determined to "give the devil his due." I wanted to learn what was taught whether I believed it or not.

A. G. Hobbs, Jr., was doing the preaching. Brother Hobbs is a very plain preacher. He is very kind, but he never leaves a doubt as to what he is talking about. I went home and looked up some of the scriptures and found them right there. On many points I would say, "You know, I believe he is right about that," but

on others, "Now, he just missed it there. If I could show him a few things in that connection, he'd see differently." I know that many of you will feel that way toward me before this lesson is over. You will think, "I wish I could tell him something." I wish you could, too, because I would like to remove every objection so that you could see your way to obey the truth. I learned that when I offered my objections to his position, that it was even more evident that he was right. That's the reason that the denominational preachers "don't believe in arguing." They do believe in arguing their side of it, but they don't believe in allowing a gospel preacher to examine their side. Suffice it to say that if I cannot sustain every point in this or any other lesson, I will apologize for it and retract it. Isn't that fair? I wish I knew everything that will come into your mind tonight, and I had the time to reply to it. I will do the best that I can out of a consciousness of what turned over in my mind as I listened to these things being presented. Maybe I can deal with the most of your objections.

My Attention Challenged

The first thing that challenged my attention as I listened to Brother Hobbs was that there was just one church. I suppose there is nothing in the Bible more plainly taught, yet more disavowed. The Bible says that the church is the body of Christ (Eph 1:22, 23). It says, "There is one body" (Eph. 4:4). The church is the body; there is one body; therefore, there is one church. Along with other proofs, I saw that there was just one church. Which one? So I began to study.

Other things challenged my attention as I studied. I wondered about God calling all preachers to preach. Does God call all preachers, then cause them to preach conflicting doctrines? Does God call Baptist preachers to preach, and then cause them to preach that immersion is the only kind of baptism, that only ordained Baptist preachers have the authority to baptize, the impossibility of apostasy, the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit, and numerous other things? Then does God call a Methodist preacher to preach that sprinkling is baptism, and that you can fall from grace? Does God call both of them to preach these contradictory doctrines? John 17:20-23 and I Cor. 1:10-13 teach that he does not.

Why belong to a church? I told you that people, when convicted of sin will join one church or another, even though they do not know what it teaches or stands for. It is a church; they tell the story of Christ, and they were convicted of sin there, so they become members of it without questioning, or even knowing anything about its doctrines. When somebody criticizes it, they resent it. Why? Because the criticism was true or not true? NO, we just don't like for people to criticize the church we are members of. Because of a sense of loyalty, we resent it. That is human nature. We must overcome feelings like that and be ready to face facts.

Why become a member of a church? Because of parents, friends, relatives? Because of a nice building? Because it is conveniently located? Because they do a lot of good works? Because they teach some truth? Are these reasons we become members? For the most part, yes. The large majority of the people in the denominations join them without knowing what they teach, or stand for, hence they could not have joined because of their doctrine. I would say that 85 per cent or 90 per cent of the people in the Baptist Church do not know what the Baptist Church teaches. Some people say, "I know that they teach such and such a thing, but I don't believe it." Now look, first, you are a member of something that you do not even know

what it teaches, and second, you are supporting a doctrine that you do not believe. If I were supporting a doctrine that I didn't believe, you'd call me a hypocrite.

The Sixty-Four Dollar Question

Now, here is the sixty-four dollar question. On the preceding basis, I want to know why you do not join all the churches in town? You have heard that question before, but I want you to consider it again. Why not join the Methodist, the Baptist, the Presbyterian and the Adventist? I have friends in all of them. They all teach some truth. They all do many good works, they raise the fallen and they do benevolences. There are good people in all. They stand for morality. The reasons we give for belonging to one church could be given as reasons for belonging to all; so, why not join all of them? I'll tell you why. It would make me a hypocrite to be a member of more than one church. If you are a member of the Baptist Church, and you go next Sunday and join the Methodist Church, and then the following Sunday join the Presbyterian, folks will begin to say that you are not sincere, or that you are "not all there." At a place where I was preaching once, there was a family that joined every church in town during the big meetings. The town and the churches were considerate--they just overlooked it. Their name is a synonym for being "a little off." Hence, joining all churches will give you a reputation for being a hypocrite or insane.

If it will make you a hypocrite for belonging to the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church at the same time-- then why? Is it because of the good people in it? No. Is it because of the truth or the good they teach? No. Is it because they do a lot of good works? No. What is it then? The conflicting doctrines! The Baptist Church stands for immersion only, impossibility of apostasy and close communion. The Methodist Church stands for open communion, sprinkling for baptism and the possibility of apostasy--just the opposite. We are told that it is all right for one person to stand for Baptist doctrine, and another person to stand for Methodist doctrine. But it is not all right for one to stand for both the Methodist and Baptist Doctrines at the same time. To do so will bring the charge of hypocrisy or insanity upon you. If it will make me a hypocrite to belong to more than one because of the contradictory doctrines, then answer this question: *Is Jesus Christ a member of all churches? Is he?* Is Jesus Christ a member of the Baptist Church? If so, is he a member of the Methodist Church, too? Is he a member of both of them tonight--now? Is the Son of God standing for Baptist Doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy now, and at the same time over in the Methodist Church, is he standing for the possibility of apostasy? Is he doing that tonight? And if it will make me a hypocrite to do it, WHAT DOES IT MAKE THE SON OF GOD? IS HE A HYPOCRITE? Does he endorse all conflicting doctrines? Is Jesus Christ a member of the Baptist Church, the Methodist, the Presbyterian, the Episcopal, the Adventists, the Mormons, and all of the different churches? Is he a member of all of them?

There is a good question in the Bible along this line, I Cor. 1:13. "Is Christ divided?" Just three words, "Is Christ divided?" The apostle Paul asked the question in condemning division. What is the answer to it? Will you answer it? Is Christ divided? The answer is in the question. It is a rhetorical question. "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" It was after considering things like these that I began to see that something was wrong--that the Baptist Church is not altogether the New Testament Church. Then I would try to justify the Baptist Church by looking to all the good they did, and the splendid people I had learned to love. I couldn't stand the thought of facing my friends and

what they would have to say. It never occurred to me to rejoice in the truth and tell others who did not know it. I guess I realized that they would not be glad to learn it.

I remember one day that one of the Baptist Deacons came to me in the store. We went back to the wareroom where we could be alone. He said "Grover, I heard that you are about to join the 'Campbellites'." There was that tone of contempt in his voice. He made it sound like that was the worst thing in the world. I stammered a little and said, "No, I have been attending their meeting, but I am not about to join." He said, "Well, I knew that you had better sense than to be led off by that bunch." I told him that they really knew and preached the Bible. He explained their ease in handling the Bible by telling me that the "Campbellites" only have ten sermons which they memorize and preach everywhere they go. He told me that the church was started by Alexander Campbell, that it was the most narrow-minded and bigoted bunch of people in the world, and they thought everybody was going to hell that didn't belong to their church. When he finished he left such a stigma that I thought, "Well, surely a fellow would be insane who would go with that group."

That helped for a while, as it eased my conscience to disregard what I had learned. It, very likely, was responsible for my not obeying the gospel before the meeting closed. However, the day the meeting closed, Sunday, that afternoon Brother Hobbs came to see me. He took my Bible, sat down beside me, and as I asked questions, he turned in the Bible and had me read the answers. When I didn't ask a question he had plenty of things to show me. We'll notice some of them in just a moment. He offered to talk to me in the presence of the Baptist preacher, or to talk to the Baptist preacher in my presence. He asked me to invite the Baptist preacher to meet with him or Brother Thomas McDonald, the local preacher for the church of Christ in my home town. I didn't want to ask him because I knew that he wouldn't. He took my Church Manual and showed me where Baptist Doctrine contradicts the Bible. I saw the truth very plainly. That night he insisted that I come and hear him. I made every excuse I could but he wouldn't hear them. I told him that I had a part on the B. T. U. program and couldn't get to Borger in time after that. We got out at 8:00 and his services started at 8:00. I thought that would end it, but it didn't. The only reason I could think of for not wanting to go is that I hated to face the Baptists and explain my absence from church which they would surely notice. Brother Hobbs said, "I'll be in front of the Baptist Church at 8:00 o'clock and take you to town." He preached on church history that night. He explained the origin of denominations and showed how the church of Christ stands for New Testament Christianity free from all denominations. When the invitation was extended I wanted to go. As I thought on what I should do, and what my friends in the Baptist Church would say, my head just whirled. I managed to stay in my seat, however.

The meeting ended and I settled down to a long, hard study of things all by myself. I read the New Testament through and underlined the passages on baptism, the Holy Spirit, the plan of salvation, apostasy, etc. I copied each verse into a notebook on a sheet for each subject. When I had them all I studied them together. The more I studied, the more I realized that the Baptists were wrong, and the more it bothered me. I couldn't keep my mind on my work. I couldn't sleep. Phillips is a big oil field, and there is a big torch that burns day and night. I lay in bed and watched that torch and the lighted sky. The clouds reflected the red from its flames. I would be there, sometimes till daylight, thinking, praying, studying, and wishing that something would happen. I prayed for the Lord to guide me. I asked the Lord to show me his will, the way He would have me go.

I struggled on, until time for the Southern Baptist Convention which met that year in Oklahoma City; then, I decided to go to the convention and forget about the church of Christ. Here I was, successful in forgetting my troubles and getting better established in the Baptist Church. I went with the local preacher and registered as a delegate. I returned, feeling much better, but not for long. Every time that I read my Bible I noticed those passages which I had marked. I still had my notebook, too. It wasn't long until I found myself spending sleepless nights again. I begged the Lord to show me what he would have me do. I prayed, "Thy will be done." This continued for nearly three months. Then one Sunday afternoon as I was studying and thinking, it suddenly dawned on me that the Bible is God's way of revealing his will to us. I realized that I had been praying, "Thy will be done," and as honestly and earnestly as I knew how, but that subconsciously I had been holding out on the Lord in my desire to remain a Baptist. **MY WHOLE STRUGGLE WAS REBELLION TO WHAT GOD WAS TELLING ME TO DO.** The Lord was trying to guide me through the light of His word, but it didn't shine in the direction I wanted it to. Most of our struggles between right and wrong is not what is right and what is wrong, but surrendering our desires for what we want, to what we know is right. The Bible is God's way of telling us His will. He is doing everything He can to guide us by the Bible. When we refuse that, we "have not God." (II John 9).

After considerable study and prayer that afternoon, I gathered up my clothes and went to services at the church of Christ. When they offered the invitation, I went forward, confessed my faith in Jesus Christ and was baptized into him the same hour of the night.

The truth is what made me leave the Baptist Church. I now invite your attention to some of those truths. My first point is the most fundamental, and is the ultimate conclusion of every point I shall make.

The Baptist Church is Not the New Testament Church

The Baptist Church is not the church you read about in the Bible. Baptist preachers, and all other preachers, take the Bible and read the word "church," but they do not comment on it. They leave the impression that it refers to "their" church. The Baptist preacher will read a passage with the word "church" in it, and apply it to the Baptist Church. The Methodist preacher will read the same passage and apply it to the Methodist Church. The Presbyterian preacher will read the same passage and apply it to the Presbyterian Church. It cannot refer to all of them. If these passages refer to the Baptist Church, they cannot refer to the Methodist, because they are two different institutions. To which one does it refer then? I am affirming that out of the 112 times that the word "church" is used in the New Testament, not one time does it refer to the Baptist Church, or to any other denomination. It talks about "the church," "the church of God," "the church of the first-born," "the churches of Christ," etc., but most of the time it just says "the church."

Which church? Which one is it? When the Bible uses the word "church" it refers to just one. Now, which one is it?

Church the "Called Out"

First, the word "church" means "called out." "Called out" of what? What does it mean? The Baptists teach that you can be a Christian--you can be saved, and not be a member of any church, including the Baptist. Let us see. The word "ecclesia" translated "church" refers to the "called out" --to that body of people that have been called out of the world, out of sin, into Christ. That is the meaning and significance of the word "church" in the New Testament. It does not mean denomination. It does not have reference to the Baptist Church, not the Methodist, nor any of the rest of them. It simply means "the called out." The point is this: if you can be saved without being a member of any church, then it follows that you can be saved without being "called out" or a member of the "called out." You have to be called out of the world into Christ to be saved. The same thing that calls you out, that redeems you, makes you a member of the church or "called out"; don't you see? The Baptists do not use it that way. They talk about a person being saved and in Christ before he is a member of the church, and without being a member of any church.

I want to illustrate this point by substituting the terms "called out" and "redeemed" for church in a passage of scripture or two. Acts 2:47 says "the Lord added to the *church* daily such as should be saved." The Lord added to the "*called out*" daily such as should be saved. Now, see this body of people over here that are in sin and in the world, and the Lord added to this other body over here, the "called out," "such as should be saved." All of those who were saved were called out of the world into Christ. The process of saving and *calling out* are the same. "The Lord added to the *saved* daily such as should be saved." The Lord added to the redeemed daily such as should be saved.

In Acts 8:1 we read, "And at that time there was a great persecution against the *church* which was at Jerusalem." Now watch it, "At that time there was a great persecution against the *called out* which was at Jerusalem," "a great persecution against the *redeemed* which was at Jerusalem," "against the *saved* which was at Jerusalem." Do you see that? I do not see how you could miss it.

Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the *church* of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The *called out* of God "which he hath purchased with his own blood," "the *saved* of God," "the *redeemed* of God." The church is the redeemed, the saved, the called out. This is the significance of the word "church," and is a far cry from the meaning Baptists give it. Remember, they claim that a person can be saved, redeemed, belong to God and not be a member of the Baptist Church. The church is the Kingdom of God, the body of Christ, the family of God. When viewing the church as to its relationship to the world, it is the "called out"--called out of the world--the church. When viewing the church as to its government, it is a kingdom, the Kingdom of God. As to its organization it is the body of Christ. With reference to its relationship to each other, it is the family of God. Don't you see that the church in the New Testament is not and could not be the Baptist Church?

"Church" Never Refers to Baptist Church

If the word "church" never refers to the Baptist Church, then the Baptist Church is eliminated from the Bible. You know, of course, that the expressions "Baptist Church," "Baptist Churches," "Baptists," or "a

Baptist" are not to be found in the Bible. We have now shown that the word "church" never refers to the Baptist Church. Inasmuch as the Baptists admit that you can be a member of the New Testament Church, the kingdom of God, before and without being a member of the Baptist Church, then it follows that *the Baptist Church and the New Testament church are two different institutions, entered at two different times, by two different processes.* That is exactly it. This is according to the Baptists, themselves. Therefore the Baptist Church cannot be the New Testament Church.

Do I have to be a member of the Baptist Church to be saved? The Baptists say "no." If they should say "yes," then all the Methodists, Presbyterians, etc., would be going to hell because they are not Baptists. They say that they would not be that "narrow-minded." On page 17 of this little book, *Church Manual for Baptist Churches* by J. M. Pendleton, and published by the Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, Tennessee, we read, "persons wishing to unite with a church give an account of the dealings of God with their souls, and state the 'reason of the hope that is in them'; whereupon, if, in the judgment of the church they 'have passed from death unto life,' they are by vote of the church recognized as candidates for baptism, with the understanding that when they are baptized they are entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership." This simply says that a person desiring to join the Baptist Church must tell that he is saved. The Baptist Church then votes to determine whether the church thinks he is saved or not. They, deciding that he is, receive him into the church after baptism. Hence, he must confess that he is saved, that he is a member of the kingdom of God already, and then he joins the Baptist Church. This being true, then it follows that a person can be a member of the kingdom of God, or body of Christ, or New Testament Church, before, and without belonging to the Baptist Church.

Two Different Processes of Salvation

You had to confess that you were saved before you could join the Baptist Church. When I asked the Baptist preacher if he would baptize me, he asked, "Are you saved, Grover? We want saved people in our church." Then, at services that night I confessed that "God, for Christ's sake, has saved me from my sins" and I went to join the Baptist Church. I was visiting a Baptist Church one time and saw them do it this way: The preacher asked, "Do you believe that you were lost and that you are now saved for Christ's sake?" The reply was "yes." "Do you desire to join the Baptist Church?" "Yes," again. "You have heard the statement, what is your pleasure?" Then they took the vote. Once more I say that this proves, according to Baptists, that a person can be a member of the kingdom of God (saved) before and without being a member of the Baptist Church. *Hence, to be a Christian, to be saved, and a member of the kingdom of God, or the church you read about in the Bible is one thing, and to be a Baptist is another.* Friends, the conclusion is inevitable. **THE BAPTIST CHURCH AND THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH ARE TWO DIFFERENT PROCESSES.** This argument alone should show every honest person why you can't afford to be a Baptist.

The "Visible and Invisible" Churches

Baptists teach that the church is used in two senses, a visible sense and an invisible sense. They claim that when you are saved, God adds you to His church, the New Testament Church, which is the invisible

church. If you are regenerated, you are saved; God knows it, and you know it, but nobody else should pass judgment on you--that is, nobody except the Baptists; they vote it, you know. That makes you a member of the kingdom of God or the New Testament Church, which is the *invisible church*--to them. Then, you can go to the Baptist Church, relate your experience (tell them you are saved), let them vote on it to decide if you really are, then by baptism you become a member of the Baptist Church which is a *visible church*. They claim that all denominations are *visible churches*. They look upon the church of Christ as being just another "visible church" or denomination. That is the reason they think we are so narrow; that is, because they look at us as a church through *their* denominational, narrow, and erroneous conception of what the church is. They will say, "I think there are saved people in the church of Christ. I think their doctrine is wrong, but I think there are saved people in 'their' church." Again, "I disagree with the Methodists, but I think there are saved people in the Methodist Church." This is because they think of a person being saved in the "invisible church" and then joining a "visible" one. This would be all right if the Bible taught it, but it doesn't.

Friends, the New Testament Church was a visible church. The Jerusalem church was a visible church. It met for worship every Lord's day, yet *was no denomination*. The church at Corinth met upon the first day of the week, sang, prayed, had preaching, took the Lord's Supper, and contributed of their means, yet it was no denomination. Paul called it, "the church of God" and "the body of Christ." (1 Cor. 1:2; I Cor. 12:27).

What Makes a Denomination?

I want to use an old illustration: Suppose that three denominations, the Baptists, Methodists and the Presbyterians have a union meeting. In the course of the meeting 400 people are saved. Understand that I disagree with them on the way that they think they are saved, but we are waiving that point just now, in order to make another. These 400 persons, being saved, are members of the New Testament church, the Kingdom of God. When the meeting closes, they are told to "join the church of your choice." Suppose that 100 go into the Baptist Church another hundred go into the Methodist, and a third hundred join the Presbyterians. What made the first 100 Baptists? Now look, they were saved to begin with, already Christians, members of the Lord's church, then they joined the Baptist Church which made them Baptists. What was it that made them Baptists?! It was *the doctrines peculiar to the Baptist Church*. The doctrines that differentiate and distinguish the Baptist Church from the Methodist and all others. These doctrines are given in this Church Manual. If a Baptist Church didn't measure up *to this doctrine*, then it would not be a Baptist Church, but some other kind. Hence, *Christians plus the peculiarities of the Baptist Church make Baptists*. Christians (saved) plus the Methodist Discipline, the doctrines peculiar to the Methodist Church, make them Methodists. It is always Christian first, plus the creed containing the doctrine peculiar to the particular denomination that makes them members of the second church, the denomination. Two Churches? Why not? You are members of the Lord's church when you are saved--church number one; then you join some denomination--church number two. Hence, *to be a Baptist is something in addition to being a Christian, and belonging to something in addition to the New Testament church*. Where does the Bible teach us to join some denomination, the second church? The Bible teaches, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

How Not to be a Sectarian

But, what about the other 100? Suppose they couldn't make up their mind which church to join. As they study about it, it suddenly dawns on them, "we are saved aren't we? Our sins have been forgiven, haven't they? We are members of the New Testament church, are we not?" O, yes. "We are members of the Kingdom of God, aren't we?" Yes, "Well, suppose that we select a place, meet there upon the first day of the week according to the New Testament and worship God, and never join a denomination." Can they do that? If not, why not? Would that make them a denomination? If so, which one? They didn't join any denomination. They said, "We just want to be Christians, and Christians only."

This is exactly what the church of Christ pleads for. We ask people to be just a member of the New Testament church, and not of any denomination. I preach that a person must belong to the New Testament church to be saved. So do the denominations. I preach that a person does *not have to belong to any denomination to be saved*. Every one of them teach the same. When I teach the same thing that they do, they do not like it. Of course, they teach that you do not have to belong to any denomination to be saved, but that you ought to belong to one; and I teach that you do not have to belong to any denomination to be saved and that **YOU OUGHT NOT BELONG TO ANY because the Lord did not build them**. Yes, we are pleading with people to be a member only of the Lord's church, the New Testament church, the kingdom of God, and *NOT to be members of any denomination*. Be a Christian, and a Christian only.

Dividing the Kingdom of God

Before I leave this point, I want to examine their claims from another angle. Baptists claim to be building up the kingdom of God when they, through their preaching, lead people to be saved. (I do not agree that they are saved, because, Baptists teach the wrong plan of salvation. We will notice that in a moment, but we are speaking in Baptist terms in order to make the point.) They claim that their greatest concern is simply to get folks "saved," then invited them to join the Baptist Church or some other denomination, for *they are DIVIDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD*. *When they lead you to be saved, that makes you a member of the kingdom of God. Then, when they encourage or allow you to join a denomination, that divides the kingdom of God into various denominations, draws you off, and fences you in*. The very name *denomination means divided*. *Denomination and denominator* came from the same root word which means *divide*. Division is condemned. (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:14). Division is carnal, and to be carnal I sinful. Hence for a Christian to be a member of the Baptist Church, or any other denomination, is to divide the kingdom of God, and therefore a sin. Let me plead with you, friends, to leave the Baptist Church as I have done, and be a member only of the Lord's Family, the New Testament Church.

Who is it that is Narrow?

Just here, I want to call attention to this charge of being *narrow*. Usually, about all the enemies of the church of Christ can say against us is "they are narrow minded." *Narrow* means *limited*, or *circumscribed*. We just noticed how the Baptists make Christians (?), members of the kingdom of God, then teach and encourage them to separate themselves from others in the kingdom of God by joining the Baptist Church,

thus *limiting* and *circumscribing* themselves from all others whom they claim are members of the kingdom of God, too. Who is it that is narrow?!

Have you ever wondered just *why* we are called "narrow minded"? It is NOT *because we point out and condemn error, because all preachers do that*. The Baptists condemn the Methodists for sprinkling and infant membership, and the Methodists do not get mad and call them narrow-minded. Then too, the Methodists condemn the Baptist doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy, or once saved always saved, and the Baptists do not get mad and accuse the Methodists of being narrow-minded and bigoted. Yet, when I condemn the Methodists for sprinkling, and the Baptists for "once saved always saved," no more than they do themselves, they both get together and charge me of being narrow-minded. Why? I think I know why. When the Baptist preacher finishes condemning sprinkling, he tells them that it doesn't make any difference what you believe anyhow, and the Methodist preacher does likewise. But, when I get through pointing out that the Bible does not teach sprinkling for baptism, infant membership in the church, "once saved always saved", etc., and instead of telling the audience that it doesn't make any difference anyhow, I plead with them to accept and obey the truth, the word of God, and turn from these false doctrines. This is why I am branded "narrow-minded," and it amounts to this: *A denominational preacher will preach for an hour and "wind up" by saying that it doesn't matter whether you believe what he has been preaching or not. This makes him BROAD-MINDED. But after I have preached for an hour, I "wind up" by pleading with you to accept it because it is the truth. This makes me NARROW-MINDED.* Isn't that the reason others are considered broad-minded and we are considered narrow-minded? I wonder what Jesus thinks, do you? Let's see, Mark 16:15-16 says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED." This is a never-failing test for gospel preaching. When a preacher says that you do not have to believe what he preaches to be saved, he *is not preaching the gospel*, for Jesus said, "Go preach the gospel, *he that believeth not shall be damned.*"

The Baptist Church is Unscriptural in Name

We have already said that the expression "Baptist Church" is not found in the Bible. John the Baptist, it is reasoned, baptized Christ and others, and since he was sent from God, that made Christ and all others Baptists. Well, that made Baptists before they ever had a Baptist Church. Did you ever hear of a Baptist that was not a member of the Baptist Church? Yet, they admit themselves that the Baptist Church was not established until the ordaining of the twelve. John was not called *Baptist* in the same sense that people are called *Baptist* today. The expression "Baptist" is found only 15 times in the Bible. Every time it is "*John the Baptist.*" Mark 6:14 says, "John the Baptizer." The Greek is "John, he who baptizes" or "the man who baptizes." There is the passage that tells why John was called "the Baptist"--because he baptized people. This distinguished him from all other Johns. Do you know that in the book of John you cannot find the word "Baptist"? The Apostle John never called John the Baptist, "the Baptist." It is only found 15 times in the Bible, and every time "John THE Baptist." *The followers of Jesus Christ were never called Baptists. The followers of John were never called Baptists.* Is it not peculiar that if John's baptizing folks made Baptists, out of them that not one was ever referred to as a Baptist, then or thereafter? Not one time is anyone ever called Baptist in the Bible, except John.

Human names are condemned. (1 Cor. 1:12). "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Again in 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." Look at it, "*There is none other name.*" Is it all right to use other names? Listen again, "*There is none other name.*" Among human names (those not found in the Bible) I can think of none greater than that of *Paul*. Yet, if I were to present a check for my soul's salvation in the name of Paul at the judgment bar of God, he would have to say, "Not in the name of Paul, not in the name of Apollos, not in the name of Cephas, nor in the name of John the Baptist, for *salvation is in none other name than Jesus Christ.*" *This is the only "name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."* This name exalts Christ. This is the name that we in the church of Christ are pleading for. Other names, or additional names, are sinful. Wear the name of Christ and none other. (Phil. 2:9-11).

The Baptist Church is Unscriptural in Worship

They call Sunday the Sabbath day. Ex. 20:10 says, "Six days labor, but the *seventh is the Sabbath.*" That would make Saturday the Sabbath day. In Acts 20:7 we learn that the disciples came together to break bread upon *the first day of the week*. Baptists teach that people ought to keep THE Ten commandments. one of which commands the keeping of the seventh day, Sabbath. Yet, they will meet on *Sunday*, the *Lord's day* (Rev. 1:10), and teach that Sunday is the Sabbath day. This confuses the people. It confused me while I was a Baptist. The truth of the matter is, Sunday is not the Sabbath, nor is it the Christian Sabbath, but the Lord's Day. The old Law, the Sabbath included, has been "fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17-18), "done away" (Ex. 34:27-33; II Cor. 3:6-14; Rom. 7:1-7), "nailed to the cross" (Col. 2:14-16).

Baptists use mechanical instruments of music in their worship. I think a good bit has been said about that in other lessons, so just suffice it to say that the New Testament Church did not use mechanical instruments of music. David used them, but neither Jesus nor his disciples ever did. That is as good an argument as is needed. They had it to use, but did not use it. That is reason enough for not using it.

Baptists set aside the Lord's Supper and say that it makes it too common to take it every Lord's Day. The same passage that says for us to come together, says also for us to partake of the Lord's Supper. (Acts 20:7). They come together every first day of the week, they take a collection every first day of the week, and they have preaching . . . but to take the Lord's Supper every first day of the week makes it too common. Why is it not too common to *give* every first day of the week? Why is it not too common to *come together* every first day of the week? Why is it not too common to *have preaching* every first day of the week? They read in I Cor. 11:25, where Christ is quoted as having said, "this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me," and conclude that they are left at liberty to take it when they are pleased to do so. The Bible plainly states, "upon the first day of the week . . ." (Acts 20:7). Every week has a first day. When God told the children of Israel "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," they understood that they were to keep *every* Sabbath holy. Just so with us in regard to the Lord's Supper. The Lord said "Do this in memory of me," so we meet every first day of the week to remember the Christ in that humble and simple way, by keeping the Lord's Supper.

They have unscriptural means of raising money. In the first place, they teach tithing. The Jews gave a tithe, but we are taught to "lay by in store as we have been prospered (1 Cor. 16:2), and as we "purpose in our heart" (II Cor. 9:7), which will "prove the sincerity of our love" (II Cor. 8:8). Baptists will build an elaborate building, then go around begging the business men in town to pay for it. They want the bank to discount the notes. Various schemes and practices similar to these have given churches in general a "black eye." One can hardly get a bank to loan a church any money at all, because if they foreclose on a note it causes ill will toward the bank, and if they don't, they must suffer the loss. They just do not want to fool with it. Begging and hijacking business men and professional men to pay church debts is certainly not following the scriptures. Then, too, they will use carnivals, suppers and other means of amusement to raise the money to support their churches. Let "every one of you lay by him in store" to support the cause of Christ and the work of the church.

The Baptist Church is Wrong in their Plan of Salvation

They teach that a person is saved by prayer. I could tell several incidents in which people were saved by prayer, according to the Baptists. One Sunday night three boys, who were alien sinners, a preacher, and I, all engaged in prayer until the boys arose and confessed that they were saved.

An alien sinner is not saved by prayer. John 9:31 says, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a *worshipper* of God and *doeth his will*, him he heareth." It is God's will that we "obey the gospel" (II Thess. 1:8). The gospel commands us to be baptized into Christ "for the remission of sins." (Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:38). We have not done God's will until we have been baptized into Christ. Hear Isaiah, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear." (Isa. 59:2). We are to pray for the lost, that's true (Rom. 10:1), but the gospel, not prayer, "is the power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1:16).

Paul says in II Cor. 5:11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Some people try to persuade God to save the sinner, but Paul persuaded the sinner to obey God. God is willing to save all who will obey. (II Peter 3:9; Titus 2:11; I Tim. 2:4; Heb. 5:9). "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have OBEYED from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you, being THEN made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Romans 6:17-18).

Baptists think that the "new birth" is a mysterious, mystical, operation performed by the Holy Spirit which produces some undescrivable sensation to the flesh. They do not know how it happened, but they do know that a change has been made and their heart tells them that the change is of such a nature as to have come from God. Their pet passage is John 3:8, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." In the first place, this would be carnal--a sensation to the flesh. A spiritual birth is of the spirit, not of the flesh. In the second place, the passage doesn't teach any such idea. It says, "*so is everyone*" not "so is the new birth," but "*so is everyone* that is born of the Spirit." MacKnight translates this passage, "The Spirit breathes where he pleases, and you hear the report of him, but know not whence he comes, or whither he goes; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." We must hear the "report or Voice" of the Spirit--the inspired word of God. I John 5:1 says, "whosoever *believeth* is born of God." I John 4:7 says,

"every one that *loveth* is born of God." I John 2:29 says, "everyone that doeth *righteousness* is born of him." We must take *all* that the Bible says. John 3:5 is plain enough, "except a man be born of *water* and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." But if you have trouble with it and the others just mentioned, then the thing to do is to find some examples of how people were "born again" in the Bible. Nobody would question the fact that the people of Acts 2 were born again. After hearing Peter's sermon, they were pricked in their hearts (hence, believed, v. 37). Upon asking what to do, they were told to "repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Verse 38). Then in verse 41, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Again, (Gal. 3:26-27), "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Notice that they were "children of God," therefore had been "born" into the family of God, but they were children of God by faith--by faith where--by faith in *Christ*. But, they were baptized into Christ, and thus "put on Christ." Hence, they were "born again" (made children of God) by *faith* and *baptism*.

Baptists teach that sinners are saved by faith only. They say, "All you have to do is believe, and He will save you." Article 5 of their Declaration of Faith, page 48, says that justification is "solely through faith." James says just the opposite, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and *not by faith only*." (James 2:24). Their doctrine of faith only breaks down on the chief rulers of John 12:42-43. "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." Were the chief rulers saved? If you say "yes," then you disagree with the Apostle John for he says, "every spirit that *confesseth not* that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is *not of God*." (1 John 4:3). If you say they did not believe, then you disagree with the Apostle John again, for he says they "*believed on Him*." Sometimes Baptists try to dodge the force of this argument by saying they believed *on*, not *in* Him. The Greek is "eis," *the strongest expression in this respect in the Greek language*.

Many times they refer to Paul's statement to the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved," and argue that inasmuch as Paul did not mention baptism that it is not a part of the plan of salvation. According to this logic, we could eliminate *repentance*, *love* and *confession*, because they are not mentioned either. And did you notice that Paul said, "Believe *on* the Lord Jesus." Besides that, where do these go? "For by GRACE are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8). "For we are saved by HOPE" (Rom. 8:24). "Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the GOSPEL which I preached unto you, by which also ye are saved" (1 Cor. 15:1-2). "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted WORD, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). "The like figure whereunto even BAPTISM doth also now save us" (1 Peter 3:21). So, we see that we are not saved by *faith only* (James 2:24), but by grace, hope, the gospel, the word, and baptism also. But these are all made possible by Jesus (Matt. 1:21). Paul told the Philippian Jailor "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved"--but do not stop here, let us read on--verse 32 reads' "*And they spake unto him the word of the Lord*, and to all that were in his house, and he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straight-way." Since faith is the first step taken toward salvation, Paul told the jailor to "believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved," but when they "spake unto him the word of the Lord," he was baptized the same hour of the night, since the word of the Lord says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Therefore, we are not

saved by faith only, but by "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).

Baptists make the wrong confession. They say "confess your sins," but Christ says in Matt. 10:32, "Whosoever therefore shall confess ME before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." The confession is not made in baptism. Consider, (Rom. 10:9), "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." The eunuch did not confess his sins, but did confess "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Who ever heard a Baptist preacher ask anyone to confess "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" Sometimes Baptists confess "that God, for Christ's sake, has pardoned my sins." This is the confession that I made and I have heard a number of others make the same confession. *This confession contradicts every verse in the Bible that speaks of baptism and salvation.* The Bible says we are made free AFTER we have obeyed the gospel (Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18).

Baptists do not Administer Bible Baptism

John's baptism is out of date. In Acts 19:1-5 we find where Paul rebaptized twelve men who had received John's baptism. Aquila and Priscilla took a preacher who knew "only the baptism of John" and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." (Acts 18:24-26).

Baptists baptize people whom they claim already have received the remission of sins. "There is an actual, a real remission of sins when we believe in Christ--there is a declarative, formal, symbolic remission in baptism." (Baptist Church Manual, p. 13).

The Bible plainly states that baptism is FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, (Acts 2:38), or to wash away sins (Acts 22:16).

Baptists do not baptize a person into Christ, but rather, *into the Baptist Church*. They say any such person is in Christ *before* baptism. Hear Paul, "For as many of you as have been BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27) .

Baptist baptism must be on a confession that one is already saved. Bible baptism puts a person into Christ where salvation is. (1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:3; II Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4; II Tim. 2:10).

Inasmuch as Christian baptism is "for the remission of sins," or to "wash away sins," and to get "into Christ," or "put on Christ," and Baptists do not administer Christian baptism, as has just been pointed out, then it follows that those who obeyed the Baptist plan of Salvation have missed the Lord's plan of Salvation, and *they are therefore not members of the New Testament Church, the Body of Christ, have not had their sins remitted, and are not saved.*

Many will say, "Oh but I know I'm saved." "Well, how do you know it?" "Oh, I just know it. I feel like I am." "What makes you feel like you are saved?" "Because I'm saved," they will say. Saved because they feel good, and feel good because they are saved. Such people prefer their feelings to anything the Bible says. I am not opposed to a person's feeling good about being a Christian, but I am opposed to a person

claiming to be a Christian just because he feels good. Feelings are based on faith. Hence the Catholic *feels* like the Priest forgave his sins--he feels forgiven, but he isn't; but *he feels forgiven because he BELIEVES that the Priest can forgive his sins. I felt just as saved as you do, when I was in the Baptist Church. I had just as much feelings as any of them, and can tell just as good an "experience," but I finally learned that feelings were the result of what I believed. If you believe that something is going to go wrong, you will feel nervous as long as you believe that. When the children are out late, if you believe that they are all right, you will feel good; but if you believe that something is wrong, you will worry, fret, and maybe cry. I feel saved because I believe that I am saved. You ask, "Why do you believe that you are saved?" Because I John 2:3 says, "hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." I know that I am saved, and I feel like I'm saved because the Lord said that if I would obey his commands, then I would be saved. I have done that, therefore I know that I have the promise of God. Baptists would have this verse read, "hereby we do know that we know him, if we feel like it." If you will study the scriptures with an open mind rather than through your feelings, you will then begin to feel different. You will feel that you should turn from the human organization, the Baptist Church, and obey the gospel of Christ because the Bible teaches you to do that. Don't follow your feelings. FOLLOW THE BIBLE. FOLLOW CHRIST.*

The Baptist Church is Unscriptural in Organization

The Baptist Church has a minister whom they call "Pastor," and deacons, but no elders. The truth of the matter is this, pastors, bishops, presbyters, and elders are all the same and take the oversight of the flock. The deacons are servants of the church. The preacher is a minister or evangelist, not "the pastor" of a congregation.

Baptist preachers call themselves and have themselves called, "Reverend." (There are a few exceptions to this, but very few). This word is used *one* time in the entire Bible and then in connection with the name of God. (Psalm 111:9). When you see the man you believe on a par with God, call him "reverend." This also violates the principle laid down by our Savior in Matthew 23:5-12.

The Baptist Church is Unscriptural in Doctrine

They are wrong, first, in having a man-made doctrine at all. "This Declaration of Faith was framed many years ago by J. Newton Brown, D. D." (Baptist Church Manual, foot note, p. 43). Christ says in Matt. 15:9, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

The Baptist doctrine contradicts the Bible in reason. Ask a Baptist preacher, "What is the Baptist Doctrine?" It is "what a church believes the Bible to teach." (Baptist Church Manual, p. 41). I have pointed out that it is the distinctive features of the Baptist Church that make it Baptist instead of some other kind of Church. Now ask, "Must I believe the Bible to be saved?" Answer, "Yes." "Must I believe Baptist Doctrine to be saved?" Answer, "No." Then, if I must believe the Bible to be saved, and must not believe Baptist Doctrine to be saved, then it follows that Baptist Doctrine is not Bible Doctrine. Jesus told the apostles to go preach the gospel and said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." When any preacher preaches things that you do not have to believe to be saved, you may rest assured that he is not preaching

"the gospel," because you do have to believe "the gospel" to be saved. If a person can be saved without belonging to the Baptist Church and without believing Baptist Doctrine (that which is peculiar to Baptists), then why does the Baptist Church exist, and by whose authority? Baptists say they exist to save people, but how can this be, when a person can be saved and never hear of the Baptist Church? Friends, think about that seriously.

Baptist Doctrine contradicts the Bible in fact. "We believe that the salvation of sinners is WHOLLY of grace." (Baptist Church Manual, Article IV of the *Declaration of Faith*, p. 47). We are saved by HOPE, (Rom. 8:24), and Peter said BAPTISM saves us, (1 Peter 3:21). If this is true, then we are not saved WHOLLY or ENTIRELY by grace, but by hope and baptism also. Then this article of faith is false.

In Article V on page 48, the Declaration of Faith declares that "justification, the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life . . . are SOLELY THROUGH FAITH." In the first place, this article of faith contradicts Article IV. How can salvation be WHOLLY of grace and at the same time SOLELY through faith? We have pointed out that we are saved by grace, faith, hope, the gospel, the word, repentance, confession, baptism, etc., but the expression "solely through faith" excludes everything except faith. The Bible certainly does not teach this. James 2:24 again, "*not by faith only*," therefore, this article contradicts Article IV and also the Word of God.

Their doctrine of apostasy is false. "We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end." (Article XI, p. 54). This is the doctrine of "once saved, always saved" and if a person "falls from grace," then they claim that he was not saved to start with. Consider II Peter 2:4, "For if God spared not the *angels that sinned*, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Are these "real believers" more steadfast than angels?

Is it possible that Paul could be a cast-away? Paul thinks so, hear him, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, *I myself should be a castaway.*" (1 Cor. 9:27). Was Paul a "real believer?" Paul said, "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

Again, "Whosoever of you are justified by the law, *ye are fallen from grace.*" (Gal. 5:4). We are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8). Therefore, people can fall from that which saved them.

Many Baptists do not believe this doctrine, but as long as they are Baptists they stand for it just the same.

Baptists Support a Democracy, Not a Kingdom

The essentials of a kingdom are: a king, law, and subjects over which he rules. The king makes the laws, enforces the laws, and passes judgment on violators of the law. Officers are filled by appointment of the king. Since Christ has all authority in heaven and in earth and has been crowned "King of kings," He makes the laws; He will judge all violators of His laws in the day of judgment.

A democracy is that form of government in which the subjects by *vote* make the laws and elect their

officers. I challenge you to compare the Baptist Church with these two forms of government.

"The government of a church (the Baptist Church) is with its members. The churches must say . . . whether music shall be led by choirs, with the aid of instruments or not, etc., etc." (Baptist Church Manual, p. 39). This very plainly shows that the Baptist Church is *democratic* in its nature, but Christ established a *kingdom*.

In John 4:24 we learn that we must worship God "in spirit and in truth." In John 17:17 Jesus said, "thy word is truth." In Rom. 10:17 we read that "faith comes by hearing the word of God." Our worship, then, to be "in truth" must be *as the truth directs*. In Leviticus 10:1-2 we have an example of two boys, Nadab and Abihu, worshiping God, but because they did so in a "strange" way "which he commanded them *not*," the Lord took their lives. Again in I Chron. 15:13-15, David says, in reference to the method of bearing the ark of the covenant, ". . . God made a breach upon us, *for that we sought him not after the due order*." Jer. 10:23 tells us "that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," and in Isa. 55:8-9, the Lord says, "my ways are not your ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways." God *will not tolerate* PRESUMPTION. We, simply mortal men, cannot worship God any way WE see fit, but must "seek Him after the due order." Remember, Jesus said, "In vain they do worship *me*, teaching for doctrines the commandments (that is, following the precepts) of men." (Matt. 15:9). Which are you following, God or men?

Baptists take Christ's place in adding to the church. The scriptures say "the LORD added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47). But Baptists VOTE to receive people into the church. There is not one place in the Bible that teaches us to vote to receive people into the church, nor to put them out, either.

Baptists talk about "Opening the doors of the church." No man, whether he be the Pope of Rome, or a Baptist preacher, can "open the doors" *of* the Lord's Church. Those doors were opened by the Apostle Peter in the long ago, and they stand ajar to this good time, and shall ever be open until the trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall announce that time is no more. This is just more evidence that the Baptist Church is a human, man-made church. For if the, can "open and close the doors" then it is *of* men and not of God. They cannot open, nor close the doors of the New Testament Church.

Baptists take the authority to change the great commission. Christ said in Mark 16:15, 16, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" Baptists teach, "he that believeth and is NOT baptized is saved already because of his faith." Thus, they promise the sinner salvation SHORT of the conditions upon which God promises it. Therefore, Baptists are standing on the promises and assurance of Baptist preachers and NOT ON THE PROMISES OF GOD. Which do you prefer to believe, Baptists or Christ?

Indeed, this is the real issue--who is king? Who is head? Who has all authority? In whom do you believe? Let me illustrate. Many times the church of Christ is accused of "believing in water." No, we do not believe in baptism as such, but in Jesus Christ. We practice baptism for the remission of sins, because Christ, in whom we believe, and who is our King and God, commanded it. To refuse His command, or the purpose for which He gave it, is nothing short of rejecting Jesus Christ--"we will not, that he should reign over us"--

at least in this respect. To simply follow Christ when you like it, is *not* to follow Him at all. You are your own King in such a case. That sets yourself above Jesus Christ, above His word. You sit in judgment over His Word, accept what you like and reject the rest if it is different from your feelings. Friends, such is not Christianity, but religious anarchy. You do not have a right to "believe as you please," to choose the way you like to serve Him, but simply to humbly submit to Him who is Kind and Love, and is the creator of heaven and earth, and before whom we must all stand in a little while.

Let me plead with you to renounce all denominational affiliations and humbly submit to Christ as Lord of lords, and King of kings. While we sing, just step out from your seat and come forward, confess your faith in Jesus as Lord, as you humbly repent of every sin, and be baptized for the remission of sin.

Addenda

As a reaction to Brother Stevens' visit to Fort Worth, and the lecture and tract which he distributed on the theme, "Why I Left The Baptist Church," a Baptist preacher of the community wrote the following letter to Brother Stevens. His reply also follows:

Fort Worth, Texas
November 12, 1948
Mr. Grover Stevens
Charlotte, Tennessee

Dear sir:

I just finished your booklet on "Why I Left The Baptist Church," and after reading it and seeing what you believe, I would say the church left you.

In the first place all Christians ought to believe the word of God and be able to give it out without fear or favor. (II Tim. 2:15).

You stated that Paul baptized 12 of John's disciples. But Paul said in I Cor. 1:14 that he baptized none but Crispus and Gaius, verse 16, also the household of Stephanas. You say that baptism is part of the gospel. Verse 17 Paul plainly states he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

Eph 2:8. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works (baptism) lest any man should boast. Why didn't you give all the scripture? In I Peter 3:21 you failed again. Why didn't you give all of the verse? "Not putting away the filth of the flesh by the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." And not by baptism.

You said believers could fall from Grace and gave Gal. 5:4 as your scripture. All Bible students know that Paul was teaching them if they were justified by the Law, Christ is become of none effect. Just like you teach you are saved by baptism, and if you are, Christ is none effect, you are fallen from grace, as some of the Galatians were.

I know that he "that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Just like "He that buys a ticket and gets on a train and sits down shall go to his destination," and I know also "He that buys a ticket (if he sits down or not) will arrive." No, you didn't leave the Baptist Church. (The church left you.)

When Christ said in John 10:28--what did He mean when He said, "I give unto them *eternal life* and they *shall never perish*"? Read I Peter 1:3-9. 1 Pet. 1:5 tells us that we are kept by the power of God. We don't and can't keep ourselves. You said in your booklet that Judas fell by transgression. John 17:12 tells us that he was the son of perdition that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Jesus said he was a devil from the beginning. Remember II Tim. 2:15.

You said God did not hear sinners' prayer when they pray. Luke 18:13 says God does hear sinners. Verse 14, "He went down justified." (And he was not baptized).

Mr. Stevens, answer this question: If a man can so sin as to be eternally lost after he is saved, is that man a lost believer or a lost unbeliever, and if he is lost, do you baptize him again, and if you don't baptize him again you don't believe what you preach.

Dear Brother, take the whole Bible plus nothing and minus nothing and stand on it, and you would be a good *Baptist*.

Yours in His Name,

BAPTIST PREACHER.

P. S. When I have time I will inform you on many more scriptures. Read Leviticus 17:11. It is the blood and not the water that makes atonement for the soul.

Charlotte, Tennessee
November 15, 1948

Baptist Preacher
Fort Worth, Texas

Dear

Your letter of November 12th reached me today, which I am glad to receive and to have the opportunity of discussing the points of my tract with which you disagree. I admire your conviction which prompted you to write, and shall be very happy to discuss our differences. Judging from the introduction to your letter, you are an honest man and want to be governed by the Bible rather than sentiment. I would like for you to bear this in mind, that I do not have any hard feelings toward the Baptist Church nor Baptist people. I

believe they are doctrinally wrong, and because I love them, I hope to teach them the truth. In order to make my reply as short as possible, my replies will have to be brief, but I assure you the kindest feelings prompted them. Now to your objections:

Paul did not say that he baptized none but Crispus and Gaius, etc., but "I baptized none of you (Corinthians), but Crispus and Gaius, etc." (1 Cor. 1:14). However, even if Paul did not do the baptizing with his own hands, the fact still remains that 12 who had received "John's baptism" were rebaptized (Acts 19:1-7).

If baptism is no part of the gospel, then making Baptists is no part of the gospel for one must be baptized to be a Baptist. Inasmuch as Paul pronounced a curse on all who preach "any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you" (Gal. 1:8), and since making Baptists is no part of the gospel, then it follows that all who make Baptists are accursed. If not, why not?

Your reasoning on I Cor. 1:17 is faulty. You say: "Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel, but Christ did not send Paul to baptize, therefore, baptism is no part of the gospel. This is erroneous. Here is the syllogism given and the correct conclusion drawn: Christ sent Paul to *preach* the gospel, but Christ did not send Paul to baptize, therefore "to baptize" (a verb, hence the act of baptizing) is no part of "to preach" (the act of preaching). They are two different acts. Paul preached baptism (Acts 18:8; I Cor. 12:13; Acts 16:14, 15; 30-34; Acts 19:1-5; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:26, 27; Col. 2:12). This is the gospel that Paul preached, which he certified was "by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12), and pronounced a curse on all who preach "any other gospel" (Gal. 1:8, 9).

You next quote Eph. 2:8, 9, and say "not of works (baptism)". In John 6:29 we read "this is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Hence, according to your own argument salvation is not of faith because it is "not *of* works" and faith is a work, therefore it is not of faith. Then too, there is more room to "boast" of faith than of baptism. Furthermore, baptism belongs to God's righteousness and not to man's (Rom. 10:1-3). Baptism is "the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:9).

I am surprised at your statement on I Peter 3:21. You say, ". . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And not by baptism." Peter says, ". . . baptism doth also *NOW* save us," but you say "not by baptism"--the same as saying "baptism doth also *NOT* save us." You seem to think that the rest of the passage changes the meaning of the part that I quote. No, my friend, the passage still says, ". . . baptism doth also now save us." Do you believe that, Mr.....? Or do you believe "baptism doth also *NOT* save us?" Which do you believe? And from what does baptism save us, Mr.....?

Can a person fall from something he doesn't have, Mr.? We are saved by grace, yet the Galatians had "fallen from grace," therefore it follows that a person can fall from that which saved him (Eph. 2:8; Gal. 5:4).

You next try to eliminate baptism from Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," by giving a parallel (?) sentence. "He that buys a ticket and gets on a train and sits down shall go to his destination." Thus you make "buying a ticket" stand for faith, and "sitting down" stand for baptism. What about "getting on the train," Mr.? If we make "buying a ticket" stand for faith, and "getting on the train"

stand for baptism, and "destination" stand for salvation, your own illustration will refute your position. However, I think that you meant to make "getting on the train" stand for faith, and "sitting down" stand for baptism, and "destination" stand for salvation. You then reason that a person does not have to "sit down" (be baptized) to reach his "destination" (salvation). No, according to Baptist doctrine he wouldn't have time to "sit down" for the minute he "got on the train" (believed) he arrived at his destination (salvation). Not only that, but since one can travel other ways than by "getting on a train," it would follow that one does not have to "believe" (get on the train) to be saved. But enough of that. You say, "I know also, He that buys a ticket (if he sits down or not) still arrives." That is as much as saying, "I know also, He that believeth (if he is baptized or not) is still saved." Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," but you say, "He that believeth and is not baptized shall be saved." That is why I left the Baptist Church,

Next, you want to know about John 10:28. In the first place the Lord is talking about sheep who follow him. What about those who quit following, Mr.....? We have eternal life in the sense that we have Jesus Christ (1 John 1:2; 5:12). But having Christ depends on our "abiding in the doctrine of Christ" (II John 9). "They shall never perish" was said of sheep following the Lord. That a "brother" can "perish" is evident from I Cor. 8:11.

You want me to read I Peter 1:3-9 with emphasis on verse 5, which reads, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." First, notice that we are kept "through faith." I Tim. 5:12 says that some have "damnation because they cast off their first faith." You say, "We don't and can't keep ourselves." Jude says, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (verse 21). Now back to I Peter 1:5. Notice next that the salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time. But according to Baptist doctrine it has already been revealed. Then I Peter 1:9, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." But according to Baptists one receives the salvation of his soul in the beginning of his faith.

It was Peter who said that "Judas by *transgression* fell," Mr.....(Acts 1:25). Judas himself said, "I have sinned." (Matt. 27:4). Was Judas a free moral agent, Mr.....? If so, he betrayed the Lord by choice, and if not, then God is responsible for the act.

The Publican in Luke 18:13, Mr....., was *a* Jew and therefore a child of God under the law. Nobody but the Jews were allowed in the temple.

It is possible for a believer to quit believing (1 Tim. 5:12; 4:1). Will there be unbelievers in heaven, Mr.? The Bible tells us of believers who are lost (John 12:42, 43). Hence the answer to your question is, it is possible for a man to be a lost believer (John 12:42, 43), and it is also possible for a believer who was saved to quit believing (1 Tim. 5:12).

No, I do not baptize "him" again, and I believe and practice what I preach, too. I preach that baptism is for the remission of *alien* sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

How could I take the whole Bible plus nothing and minus nothing and be something that is not even mentioned in the Bible? Nobody can follow the Bible and nothing else and be a Baptist, nor a member of the Baptist Church, for it is nowhere found in the Bible. That is the reason I left the Baptist

Church.

I believe in the blood of Christ, Mr. How do we contact the blood of Christ? Rom. 6:3 says that we are baptized into His death. Christ's blood was shed in his death (John 19:34). Hence, we contact the blood of Christ and get the benefit of it when we are "baptized into his death."

Mr....., it is my sincere prayer that you will open your eyes to the truth and leave the Baptist Church which is nowhere to be found in the Bible, and turn to the Lord and His Church. We must both stand before our Maker and give an account, therefore, with a view to the judgment before God, let us be honest with our own souls for their salvation's sake. I shall be very happy to hear from you as often as you can write.

In Christian Love,
GROVER STEVENS

Why I Left the Catholic Church

By David J. Riggs

Following are my notes on a sermon that I preached shortly after I was converted from the Catholic Church back in 1962. It was the first sermon that I preached.

Introduction:

In this lesson I want to state some of the reasons I left the Catholic Church. I do not wish to state any of the personal experiences I had as result of leaving. I will mention, though, that I came from a large, devout Catholic family of twelve children. I attended Trinity High School in Louisville, Kentucky. At the time of my intense Scriptural study, I had two brothers who were enrolled in Catholic seminaries studying to be priests. I also want to state I did not leave the Catholic Church because of some evil that I had done or that was done to me. I left the Catholic Church because I came to believe that it was contrary to the Bible. This I will endeavor to show in this study.

The first reason I left is because the Catholics do not have the right attitude toward the truth.

To illustrate what I mean by this, I will explain the difference in the two sides. Those with the right attitude toward the truth are always willing to test what they teach with others. They invite those of opposite views to work together for truth and unity. They appreciate when those who differ with them point out where they think they are wrong. They have everything thoroughly tested, studying arguments both for and against, looking at both sides of the question.

Those with the wrong attitude toward the truth are not willing to test what they teach in fair and open discussion, privately or publicly. They do not invite others to point out where they think they are wrong, and do not appreciate when others try to do so. They won't allow their members to hear both sides of an issue, and especially they don't want them to examine opposing arguments.

Hopefully, one can now understand what I mean when I said the Catholics do not have the right attitude toward the truth. Catholics are not allowed, and especially are not encouraged to hear both sides regarding truth and error. They are not to read books which differ from their doctrine. Thus, they are encouraged by the clergy to be closed minded to anything which differs from Catholicism. We ask, "Why don't Catholic officials encourage their members to examine opposing Scriptural teaching?" False teachers have learned that when truth and error are examined side by side, some begin to see the truth. False teachers are afraid of being exposed and of losing their members.

The next reason I left is because the Bible only is the all sufficient guide to salvation, but the Catholic Church teaches that it is not.

The Catholic **Catechism For Adults** on page 52 says, "Can you learn to save your soul just by reading the Bible? No, because certain things in the Bible can be misunderstood, and because the Bible does not have everything God taught." Notice that the first part of their answer to "Can you learn to save your soul just by reading the Bible?" is, "No..." However, their own translations of the Bible teaches the opposite. All Scriptural quotations that I will be giving are from Catholic translations. 2 Tim. 3:15-17 says, "And because from thy infancy thou hast known the holy scriptures, which can instruct thee to salvation, by faith which is Christ Jesus. All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work." Thus, the apostle Paul by the inspiration of God, says to Timothy "thou hast known the holy scriptures, which can instruct thee to salvation" and make you "perfect, furnished to every good work."

Rom. 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and to the Greek. James 1:21 says, "...With meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save you souls." Consequently, the word contained in the Bible is able to save our souls.

The next part of the answer in the Catechism to the question, "Can you learn to save your soul just by the Bible?" is, "No, because certain things in the Bible can be misunderstood..." They are implying that the Bible cannot be understood. John A. O'Brien, the Catholic author of the book, "**The Faith of Millions**," is much more expressive when he says on page 152, "The Bible is not a clear and intelligible guide to all..." The book, "**The Faith of Millions**" was given to me before my conversion by my older brother Norman who was at the time a student at St. Meinrad Seminary, St. Meinrad, Indiana.

The apostle Paul said we can understand what he wrote. "If yet, you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me towards you: how that, according to revelation, the mystery has been made known to me, as I have written above in few words; as you reading, may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." (Eph. 3:2-4). Paul said the mystery had been made know to him by the revelation of God. He then showed that he was writing it e.g., "as I have written above in few words" (in the chapters prior to this) and "as you reading, may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." In other words, when we read what he wrote, we can understand what he understood. Paul also said, "For we write nothing to you that you do not read and understand" (2 Cor. 1:13) and "Therefore do not become foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). Thus, the inspired writers taught that we most certainly can understand the Scriptures.

The last part of the answer given in the Catechism to the question, "Can you learn to save your soul just by reading the Bible?" was "No...because the Bible does not have everything God taught." **The Faith of Millions**, on pages 153-154 says, "The Bible does not contain all the teaching of the Christian religion, nor does it formulate all the duties of its members." The Scriptures contain everything that is necessary to equip the man of God for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). There is not a solitary good work that the Christian can do which is not provided in the Scriptures. The Scriptural proof they give for the Bible not containing everything God taught, is John 20:30. It says, "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples,

which are not written in this book." (See **Catechism For Adults**, p. 10).

In John 20:30, John simply said that Jesus did many other signs (miracles) which he did record. Notice, though, what John says in the next verse, "...But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." Thus, the apostle clearly shows that he wrote sufficient things to produce the faith which brings life in the name of Jesus. Life in the name of Jesus refers to eternal life and it is obtained by belief in the things written by the inspired writers.

We freely admit that the Scriptures do not contain everything Jesus did. John said, "There are, however, many other things that Jesus did; but if every one of these would be written, not even the world itself, I think, could hold the books that would have to be written." (John 21:25). Although we do not have everything Jesus did, we do have every **necessary** thing. We have enough to give us life in His name.

Catholic officials follow up their claim (that we cannot understand the Bible) by stating that one can get the true meaning only from the Catholic Church. The **Catechism For Adults** on page 10 says, "How can you get the true meaning of the Bible? You can get it only from God's official interpreter, the Catholic Church." The Catholics have no passages which mention an official interpreter and, thus, they try to support their claim through human logic and reasoning. Anytime men do such, it amounts to nothing more than human philosophy rather than Scriptural proof. The Bible says, "Let God be true, but every man a liar..." (Rom. 3:4). It also warns, "See to it that no one deceives you by philosophy and vain deceit, according to human traditions, according to the elements of the world and not according to Christ." (Col. 2:8).

The doctrine of the "infallible interpreter" implies that God did not make Himself clear. It implies that God gave us a revelation that still needs revealing. Did God fail in His attempt to give man a revelation? Do the Catholic officials want us to believe they can express God's will more clearly than God Himself? We believe that God made the mind of man and is fully capable of addressing man in words which man can understand.

The third reason I left is because Christ did not make his church infallible as the Catholic Church teaches.

The Catholic writers try to teach that the church could never go into error and is preserved from error. The **Catechism For Adults** on page 56 says, "Why can't the Catholic Church ever teach error? Because Jesus promised to be always with His Church to protect it from error." The book, "**My Catholic Faith**" which is based heavily on materials from the Baltimore Catechism, was given to me by my father not long after I was converted. I think his intentions were that somehow it would cause me to return to the Catholic Church. It says on page 144, "Jesus Christ promised to preserve the Church from error." On page 145, it says, "Jesus Christ commanded all men to listen to and obey the Church, under pain of damnation. If His Church can teach error then He is responsible for the error, by commanding all to obey." On page 54 the **Catechism For Adults** says, "Does everyone have to obey the Catholic Church? Yes, because she alone has the authority of Jesus to rule and to teach." It is easy to see that Catholics have the authority in the

wrong place. The authority is not in the body, but in the Head (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The ruling is not in the kingdom, but in the King (Heb. 7:1-2; Rev. 1:5-6). The authority is not in the church, but in Christ (Matt. 28:18; 1 Pet. 3:22). The church is not the Savior, but simply the body of the saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:22-24).

There are many passages in the New Testament which reveal that the church would not be preserved from error. Acts 20:17, 28-30; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:3-4; 2 Thess. 2:3-11. We see from these passages that there was to come a great falling away from the truth. In Acts chapter twenty we learn that perverse things would come from the bishops of the church. Peter said (2 Pet. 2) that false teachers would arise among you (working from within) and there would be **many** who would follow them. Paul tell us (2 Thess. 2) that the apostasy was already underway, "for the mystery of iniquity is already at work..." (Verse 7). It started in Paul's day and was to continue until the second coming of Christ. He added, "...Whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath of his mouth and will destroy with the brightness of his coming." (Verse 8).

We cannot harmonize that which the inspired apostles said (there shall arise false teachers among you) with that which the Catholic writers say (shall be preserved from error). Furthermore, we call your attention to the fact that the characteristics of the departing group are identical with those of the Catholic Church. Everyone knows that the Catholic Church has forbidden its people to eat meat on Friday and at the present it forbids some from marriage. Also, the only way for the wicked one to last from Paul's day to the second coming of Christ is to have a continual succession. It could not be some wicked person of the past because he will not be here for the Lord to slay when He comes. Furthermore, it could not be ones in the future because their iniquity would not have started in Paul's day. It must, therefore, be a continual succession from the beginning until now. The Catholic Church is the only group which perfectly fits the apostles' description of the great apostasy.

The seven short epistles to seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation reveal the relationship the church sustains to Christ (See Rev. chapters 2 and 3; see especially 2:1-5, 12-14, 18-20; 3:1-3, 14-15). Those verses plainly reveal that when a church continues in Christ's word, it keeps its identity as His church, but when it fails to abide in His word, it is not longer regarded as His church. Also, they reveal that Christ did not establish His church as one that could never fall into error, because some of those churches went into error. Someone might say that the passages in Revelation referred to the various parishes or congregations rather than the whole church. It is true that the verses were speaking of local churches; nevertheless, the same principle that applied to them relates to the whole church. The Lord does not have a rule for one congregation which is not equally applicable to all. If one church is rejected for embracing error, all others who likewise embrace error are rejected. The early churches had to earnestly contend for the faith, and to continually be on guard against error arising from within. The doctrine of an "infallible church" causes the Catholic Church to fail in this. The Catholic Church is a church which neither recognizes nor corrects its errors.

A fourth reason I left was because Christ did not make Peter a Pope.

In the books of men, the following titles are commonly used with reference to a man: "Pope," "Holy Father,"

"Vicar of Christ," "Sovereign Pontiff." All of these are titles that rightly belong only to the Lord Jesus Christ and to God the Father. There is not a single instance in the Scriptures where any of the above titles are applied to a man. The term, "Holy Father" is used only once in the entire Bible, and it is used by Jesus in addressing God the Father. (John 17:11). Among the above titles is the bold assertion that the Pope is the "Vicar of Christ." A "vicar" is "One serving as a substitute or agent; one authorized to perform the functions of another in higher office." (Webster). When one searches the Bible from cover to cover, he finds only one passage which gives an indication of a vicar of Christ or God. It is 2 Thess. 2:3-4 and is worded as follows: "Let no one deceive you in any way, for the day of the Lord will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and is exalted above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he sits in the temple of God and gives himself out as if he were God."

Some religionists today advocate that man is saved by faith only. However, there is only one passage in the entire Bible that has the words "faith" and "only" together and it says, "not by faith only" (James 2:24). The Catholics today speak of the Pope as vicar, taking the place of God (Christ Himself is God, Matt. 1:23; John 1:1), yet there is only one passage in the entire Bible which speaks of a man doing such and it calls him "the man of sin."

James Cardinal Gibbons, a Catholic Archbishop said, "Jesus our Lord, founded but one Church, which He was pleased to build on Peter. Therefore, any church that does not recognize Peter as its foundation stone is not the Church of Christ, and therefore cannot stand, for it is not the work of God." (**The Faith of Our Fathers**, p. 82). The apostle Paul said, "For other foundation no one can lay, but that which has been laid, which is Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 3:11). There is no other foundation but Christ! Therefore, any church which does not recognize Christ alone as the foundation stone cannot be the church of Christ.

Catholic writers often speak of "the primacy of Peter" and "the primacy of the Pope." However, Col. 1:18, speaking of Christ, says, "And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he may hold the primacy..." Thus, with reference to the authority in the church, the Lord Jesus Christ holds the primacy in **all things**. This leaves nothing for the Pope!

Catholics claim that the Pope is the visible head of the church. The Catholic book **Answer Wisely**, by Martin J. Scott says on p. 49, "The pope, therefore, as vicar of Christ, is the visible head of Christ's kingdom on earth, the Church, of which Christ Himself is the invisible head." The book **Father Smith Instructs Jackson**, by John F. Noll and Lester J. Fallon, on page 42 says, "According to the will of Christ, all its members profess the same faith, have the same worship and Sacraments, and are united under the one and same visible head, the Pope." Catholic officials always use the word "visible" no doubt thinking that it removes the thought of the Pope standing in opposition to the headship of Christ, and removes the apparent problem of having a church with two heads. Nonetheless, the Scriptures nowhere teach the idea of a visible and invisible head. Jesus said, "All authority **in heaven and on earth** has been given to me." (Matt. 28:18; Emp. mine D.R.). Luke 17:20-21 says, "And on being asked by the Pharisees, 'When is the kingdom of God coming?' he answered and said to them, The kingdom of God comes unawares. Neither will they say, 'Behold, here it is,' or 'Behold, there it is.' For behold the kingdom of God is within you." The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom and therefore needs only a spiritual head or king.

Eph. 5:23-25 shows that Christ is the only head of the church. "Let wives be subject to their husbands as to the Lord; because a husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the Church, being himself savior of the body. But just as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things." Consequently, the wife is subject to her husband as the church is to Christ. Just as the wife is subject to only one head--her husband, the church is subject to only one head--Christ. Just as the husband does not send a substitute to rule over his wife, Christ does not authorize a substitute to rule over His bride, the church.

Catholics often use the expression, "One fold and one shepherd" to sustain the doctrine of the papacy. (See **Catechism For Adults**, p. 59). They teach that the "one shepherd" is the Pope and the "one fold" represents the Catholic Church. Hear what Jesus said about it: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep...I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, even as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." (John 10:11, 14-16). Jesus is that one good shepherd. If one can understand that one and one equals two, he can understand this. If one is subject to Christ as the one shepherd--that's one. If one is subject to the Pope as the one Shepherd--that's two!

The church is often compared to the human body in the Scriptures. The members of the church are represented as the various parts of the body. Christ is always said to be the head. (See 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16). Our question is: "What part of the body is the Pope?" Also, "How does one get the idea of a sub-head into the body?"

One of the greatest arguments against the primacy of Peter is the fact that the apostles had an argument among themselves as to which of them should be the greatest. Luke 22:24-26 says, "Now there arose a dispute among them, which of them was reputed to be the greatest. But he said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and they who exercise authority over them are called Benefactors. But not so with you. On the contrary, let him who is greatest among you become as the youngest, and him who is chief as the servant.'" The very fact that the apostles had an argument among themselves shows they did not understand that Peter was to be prince. Also, the occasion of the argument was the night of the betrayal--the last night of the Lord's earthly ministry--and yet the apostles still did not understand that Christ had given Peter a position of primacy. The Lord settled the argument, not by stating that He had already made Peter head, but by declaring that the Gentiles have their heads, "But not so with you." Thus, Jesus very plainly taught that no one would occupy any such place as a Benefactor (or Pope) to exercise authority over the others.

Conclusion:

There are other reasons why I left the Catholic Church. I have simply tried to list some of the ones that made the greatest impression on me at the time of my conversion. I hope and pray that these things will be of some benefit to those who are making an honest inquiry regarding truth. I beseech and invite all my Catholic friends and relatives to examine these things in the light of God's holy Word. May God be with you in your endeavors to serve Him.

Why I Left the Christian Church

By Floyd Decker

In 1930, Floyd Decker heard J. Petty Ezell preach on the differences between the Christian Church and the church you can read about in the Bible. Moved by a love for the truth, Floyd Decker left the Christian Church. In 1944, he wrote an article titled "Why I Left The Christian Church." It was first published in a paper called, "**UNITY FORUM.**" In his article brother Decker mentioned the following thirteen reasons for breaking ties with the Christian Church.

1. The Christian Church has women counselors, Directors and Lecturers; the church of Christ does not (1 Tim. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 14:34).
2. The Christian Church has Educational Directors, Associate Ministers and Youth Directors; the church of Christ has elders, deacons, evangelists and teachers (Eph. 4:11; Phil. 1:1).
3. The Christian Church has Missionary, Benevolent and Educational Organizations to execute the work of the church; the church of Christ does not (Eph. 4:4; Eph. 3:10, 21).
4. The Christian Church celebrates days of heathen worship, such as Easter, Mother's Day and Christmas; the church of Christ does not (Gal. 4:10).
5. The Christian Church fellowships various denominations in their activities, leaving the impression that all are brethren; the church of Christ does not (2 Jn. 9-11; Gal. 1:6-10).
6. The Christian Church seeks to get crowds with Youth Meetings, Campaigns for Christ, Rallies, Drives and Promotions; the church of Christ does not (Rom. 1:16; Rev. 22:18-19).
7. The Christian Church emphasizes society and the physical man by appealing to the carnal nature with church carnivals, bands, plays, choruses, dramatics, church kitchens, church camps, and elaborate fellowship halls; the church of Christ does not (1 Cor. 10:7; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 11:22, 34).
8. The Christian Church elevates its preachers above the rest of the members by using such titles as Pastor, Superintendent, President and Doctor; the church of Christ does not (Matt. 23:5-12).
9. The Christian Church misuses the name "Christian," which is a noun, by speaking of "Christian nations," "Christian schools," and "Christian Churches." The church of Christ does not (Acts 11:26).
10. The Christian Church takes up collections at services other than on the first day of the week, and uses unscriptural means such as suppers, property rentals and special collections to raise money for the church; the church of Christ does not (1 Cor. 16:1- 2).
11. The Christian Church owns and operates Publishing Houses, Radio Stations, Hospitals, and other Benevolent Societies; churches of Christ build nothing but churches (Eph. 3:21).
12. The Christian Church owns, supports and operates schools for secular education, through theological schools; the church of Christ does not (1 Tim. 3:15).
13. The Christian Church has a compromising spirit, will not defend its doctrines, is nothing but a man-made denomination, has no regard for the authority of the Bible, bases its practice on the silence of the Scriptures, and appeals to the traditions of the elders rather than go to the simple unadulterated gospel of Christ. The Christian Church is not a part of the New Testament church and should not be regarded as a friend of Christ nor of the truth.

Why I Left The Christian Church

By Terry Sanders

I was born and raised in Southern Indiana to a good home although my parents never attended any church after I was about 6 years old. In the summer time I would walk to the Methodist Church and attend Sunday School with some school mates. This sporadic exposure to religion ceased when I was about 11 years old. I did not attend any church of any kind until adulthood. As best as I remember I did acknowledge the existence of a "Supreme Being" and that was about it. A good time was first and foremost in my mind. I was playing softball and took an interest in one of my teammate's sister. She and I started dating and became serious with plans for marriage. I was off work from March-June 1976 due to knee surgery (old baseball injury). Martha, my fiancée, would pick me up and take me with her to church - - The Christian Church in Shoals, Indiana. This was a very conservative Christian Church. Attendance on Sunday morning would be about 200 in a town of 800. I attended with her nearly every Sunday morning. We were married in November of 1976. I was baptized in December of 1977. Martha was expecting our first child in 1978. I was now teaching the largest adult Bible Class on Sunday morning (45-50), subbing for the preacher, serving as President of a Men's Fellowship, leading singing and serving as a deacon.

I thought I was pretty knowledgeable on the Bible. I thought that some books from the Gospel Advocate Bookstore would be better than those from Christian Standard. My eyes began to see things I had never seen before. I was soon studying like a drowning man. I began questioning the preacher and elders about different things. I do not know how many times I was told "It doesn't matter."

I believe that this attitude of "It doesn't matter" did more than anything to cause me to leave the Christian Church. Keep in mind that his attitude was not in the direction of opinion, but was directed toward the Scriptures. "What about instrumental music?" (rf. Eph. 5:19) "It doesn't matter." "What about church dinners?" (rf. 1 Cor. 11:22) "It doesn't matter." "What about fellowshiping denominations?" (2 Jn. 9) "It doesn't matter." Nearly every matter was handled in this fashion. This attitude brought me much anguish. Here I was, becoming more and more involved with the word only to find out that my then brethren had little use for it! Finally, on November 11, 1980, I resigned from all capacities and membership of the Christian Church.

I had been having some conversations with a 2nd cousin who was a member of the church of Christ in Loogootee, Indiana. He gave me a tract containing the material written in 1944 by the late Floyd Decker on "Why I Left The Christian Church." I could see so many similarities in what brother Decker wrote and what I was experiencing myself. This tract had a profound influence upon me. This same cousin and I attended one night of a Gospel Meeting at Mt. Union. I heard acappella singing in a church service for the first time. The preacher, John Paul Edwards, preached on "The Mind Of Christ," and called out a great many passages in his sermon. This calling out of so many passages was very welcome to me, but there was something else I heard that night. When a passage was called, I knew that the majority turned in their Bibles and read it. How did I know this? I could hear the pages being turned! Yes, it was overwhelmingly audible in that little building. To say the least, I was impressed since this was so different to what I was accustomed to at the Christian Church.

As I attended services at Loogootee, I began to hear the Bible used in Bible Study and in sermons. I remember the first time I heard a lesson on "How To Establish Bible Authority." I was overcome! This was what I knew was right. That day I overheard some members complaining about hearing "that same old sermon again!" I nearly wept as I realized that I had never heard anything like it and that it was likely preached for my benefit! When I asked question, the answers were not "It doesn't matter," but "The Bible says" I knew that this was as it should be.

As I now had some foundation with which to build upon, I studied a great many things. It was "as though scales had been lifted from my eyes." I spent all my spare time reading and studying. Soon the subject of my own salvation came to the forefront of my thoughts. Why was I baptized? What were my reasons? My honest answers were: 1) To please my wife; 2) To "get the preacher off my back" since he was pressuring me to be baptized. (He had developed the view that he had sinned by performing the wedding ceremony for Martha and me. This sin could be alleviated by my baptism). Neither of these "reasons" were even a 42nd cousin to anything in the Bible. I had not complied with Acts 2:38! I determined to do so and was baptized for the remission of sins on January 4, 1981.

I began leading singing immediately. Soon I was teaching a class and brethren encouraged me to preach. The person who encouraged me the most in serving the Lord was sister Io Crim (passed away in 1989). A few of us at Loogootee decided to start a work in Shoals where we lived. After a while we were successful in seeing three other families and a few individuals leave the Christian Church and take a stand for truth. Today this church thrives. My son-in-law, Sean Sullivan, preaches for them. I preached by appointment from 1981 until 1990 when left secular employment to preach full-time.

As I pen these words, I have reflected upon these events of the last twenty years. There have been highs and lows as there are in all aspects of life. All in all as I meditate about taking a stand for truth and the works that were done in years gone by, I am persuaded that I have no fear to stand in judgment for them. It does matter what the Scriptures say (Jn. 12:48). It is the truth that sets free (Jn. 8:32). The gospel of Christ is where that truth is found (Jn. 6:68). There really was no other choice to be made.

Why I Left the "Institutional Position"
(Why I Left the Institutional Church of Christ)
By Wayne Goforth

Background

As I was growing up in Memphis, TN, my parents made a claim to Methodism, but never attended. I took a correspondence course from a church of Christ when I was 15, and was baptized thereafter at the nearest church of Christ, which was institutional. I never heard of church orphan homes or the like, and simply wanted to be baptized to be a Christian only. It was not long before I wanted to preach. I began speaking on Wednesday nights, taught Bible classes, etc. while 17-18 years old. When the regular preacher left rather abruptly, I "filled in" for weeks, until a regular man was found. I attended and graduated from Memphis School of Preaching, and was taught some pretty conservative basics there..they cried against the liberals, showed how to establish authority. They only mentioned "anti's" though in prejudiced ways. Various instructors stated repeatedly "an anti will lie, cheat and steal to prove a point. Don't ever believe an anti on anything." One said that anti's usually meet in houses because they are usually too small and poor to afford a building, and that they were usually just a bunch of old cranks who didn't want to do anything anyway, so this doctrine gave them the excuse they were looking for. They said anti-ism was the answer the Pharisees were looking for when they said "it is Corban" and therefore could not help their parents. They talked about one cup, no Bible class, orphan homes, etc., and lumped all together as "anti." No one knew what an "anti" was exactly , but we knew we did not want to be one because that was bad. We were told no one ever made the "anti arguments" until about 1955, so this was a new doctrine and therefore could not be true.

I then went to Freed-Hardeman College, and quickly saw what liberalism was in MSOP we were taught that the liberals were in the minority, but at F-HC I saw it was the majority. And yet, F-HC is one of the more conservative of their schools. Most churches where these teachers preached had the church softball teams, family life centers, various social gospel programs, etc. I met my wife to be there (first day of class in fact) and we married while in college. We decided that we wanted to be missionaries to the Navajo reservation of Arizona.

The Sponsoring Church made us Uneasy

Being ignorant of the institutional machinery, I assumed that all we were to do was to raise support and go. I asked our professor of missions how to start, and he said we needed a "sponsoring church." Hmmmm...never heard of it, but it was a church, so I figured it was ok, after all it was a church doing it and we were the "true church". Well, we found a congregation who offered to act as such, and for 8 months I went from church to church every Sunday, with slide projector in hand, asking churches to send my support to the sponsoring church. The elders of the sponsoring church had never been to Arizona...were 1,500 miles away from it! The sponsoring church was 15 years old, while the Navajo church was 25 years old...its just that they could not afford to pay the preacher. The sponsoring church elders constantly told us that when we got to the reservation, we were to do this and that, they even told us we had to use KJV of Bible only (many of the Navajo spoke only broken English!). From Tennessee, the elders talked about possibly even moving the meeting place without once having talked to the Navajo members. We were

informed that once a "game plan" had been drawn up by the sponsoring church for the Arizona work, we were to never "circumvent their plan." Which, they told me meant that once they had reached a decision about what the church in Arizona was to do, we were not to change anything ("even if found harmful") until the elders at the sponsoring church approved of it first. (You see, it is not unusual for the sponsoring church to support the "mission work" rather than the "missionary." The sponsoring church is often the one who searches for, hires and fires the evangelist). They would tell us things we were and were not to tell our "supporting churches", saying "We are your elders, not them," because they were the sponsoring church, while the other churches merely sent money. Well, after 8 months, we resigned from that. I did not know what the answer was, but I knew the sponsoring church was breaking the autonomy of the local church.

The realm of an eldership's oversight is only over the local congregation they serve, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2.

Just so happened, I read a book called "Steps to the Mission Field", published by Firm Foundation, in which a mission team (institutional) went to Brazil and had what was reported to be the greatest growth rate outside of the NT. They attributed part of it to the fact that the church in Brazil was self supporting from the start. That only the evangelists received outside support, per the biblical example, Phil. 4:15-16. After reading it, I said "That's it! That's how it is to be done!" But I did not know of any churches doing it that way, and knew from experience that the first question in raising support was "who is your sponsoring church?"

The Mis-Representations made me Suspicious

Once leaving my full-time fund raising for missions, I advertised in the Gospel Advocate as being available as a youth or pulpit minister. A preacher saw it and responded telling me who he was, that he too had been where I was, and wanted to ask me where was my authority for being a "youth minister." I asked one of my teachers at F-HC if he knew this brother, and he told me yes, he was an anti! That was all I needed to hear! I wrote him back and told him why I believed in multiple cups and why I believed it scriptural to use Bible study aids, and to have Bible classes. To my shock, he wrote back in agreement! He asked again where was my authority for youth ministers. Well, I was shocked. That's what I thought the issues were all about. That's what they told us at MSOP anyway. Had I been deceived?

By this time, I had "located" at a rather conservative minded institutional church in Missouri. In fact, it had not been too many years before that this congregation had been an old line Ketcherside church (One cup, no women teachers, etc.). Seems Carl preached one of his first lessons there when he was 14. They only stopped using the one cup when one brother had what some thought to be lip cancer! By now they were supporting an orphan home and a couple of "missionaries" with a small amount. We took a barrel of canned goods each month to the home as well.

As I got settled in to my new work, and had more time to correspond, I asked this "anti" who wrote me, what the issues were about. He spoke of the errors of the sponsoring church, benevolence, social gospel, etc. I agreed right off with him concerning the sponsoring church (having been involved with one and witnessing the destruction of autonomy) and about the social gospel, but the orphan homes and benevolence issues took some study. I seriously disagreed with him, even calling him a "pip-squeak, green

horn anti" at one point. I had been so filled with prejudism of the thoughts of little hungry orphans on a church door step for so long, the scriptures just were not able to get through! For over 1 ½ years, my wife and I studied and talked, and even sometimes disagreed with each other about the issues daily.

As I studied, I realized these were not new issues, in spite of what they had taught us! The questions of church cooperation were discussed and disagreed upon during the restoration movement. They were later hashed out in the pages of the Gospel Advocate in the 1920Æs and 1930Æs again...more misrepresentation. Then, upon purchasing a copy of a church directory that listed type of church (non-institutional, mainline, etc.) and size, I was able to see that instead of anti churches drying up on the vine , as my teachers had expressed, they were actually growing, and in many parts of the country these churches actually were in the majority (Alabama, Florida, parts of Kentucky, etc.). I was disappointed in my brethren.

I ordered debate books on the issues and read them. I would read one chapter and say "he's got the truth on it" then in the next chapter of the debate I would say "No, he's got the truth on it." It was frustrating not knowing what to preach on this for that long. I would call many of my old friends and ask them to study it with me, or to explain it to me, no one wanted to. The only ones willing to talk about it was the "anti's." I wondered why no one would study with me if we had the truth? Finally I called Guy N. Woods at Gospel Advocate, and explained that I was confused, that it seemed that the anti's were doing a better job presenting their case than our brethren had, and asked him what he suggested. Well, he just sounded upset and said "So you wanna be an anti huh? If an anti ever had a logical point I never heard it." I further explained that I did not want to be one, but simply wanted to know how to answer the arguments. He suggested I buy Warrens book on Orphan Homes and Cooperation. I knew Warren was real logical on marriage, divorce and remarriage, Christian evidences, etc. so I figured this would settle it...I went through that book with a fine tooth comb, highlighted, marked, etc..and saw he was wrong from the very first premise! Well, that did it, I knew we were wrong.

The Practices Opened my Eyes

During that 1 ½ year search, many things began to open my eyes. The church gave a check to an atheist in the community when his house burned, though he never requested it. They argued "The Bible says do good to all men." We had been taught in the school of preaching that church benevolence is limited in some degrees, ie..."If a man worketh not, neither shall he eat" so was it possible it was further limited to believers only? As I began to study, I found all New Testament examples of collective church benevolence was to Christians (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37, 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25-27; 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Tim. 5:3-16).

Then, the church in the town next to us was supporting "Medical missionaries." I had never heard of those before. They were nurses and dentists being supported by and overseen in their medical work to go to Africa. I called the director of my old school of preaching and asked him if he knew about this stuff, and why wasn't that the social gospel they had taught us against, and his reply was "Well, its benevolence isn't it?" I asked in disbelief "It is?" He said "Yes I think so" then asking one of the other instructors in his office, "Brother Curry, don't they say the Christian hospitals are benevolence?" With hearing an affirmative response in the background, bro. Cates then related that yes, they were indeed cases of benevolence. This was the same school that taught us you had to have a direct command, approved example, or necessary inference for everything. They could see it as it applied to the instrument and missionary society, but not

when it affected their pets. It's all a matter of whose ox is being goaded. I then called Garland Elkins, a very conservative institutional preacher, who made this observation that became somewhat of a turning point for me. Brother Elkins said, "Such would be commendable for individuals, but is not the work of the church." He was one of the first to teach me that there was a difference in what the church collective could do, and what individual saints could do in the realm of benevolence! Here he was selling out Roy Deavers' argument that "whatever the individual could do as a Christian, the church collective could do, because the church is made up of individual saints." He actually disarmed one of the institutionals' biggest arguments!

The argument runs that whatever the individual **MUST** do as a Christian, the church collectively can do, because the church is made up of individual Christians.

However, 1 Tim. 5:16 reveals there is often a separate work for individuals from the collective church.

Wanting to Be Right Made us Stand

Finally, when we could stand it no longer, I began taking each of the elders aside one by one, and asked them if they knew how our missionaries were being supported. They assumed it was going straight to the evangelist. When I drew my circles and showed each of them the sponsoring church arrangement, they all stated it was wrong. They were shocked when I told them that the men we were supporting had their checks being funneled through another church. They said they would talk about it among themselves and get back with me. In the meantime, Curtis Cates, director of my old school of preaching was holding a meeting across town. The elders went to talk to him about this. His reply was "Well, he's turned anti on you, you'd better get rid of him." So, the next week, these elders came in my office and told me they would not be able to tolerate what I was believing. I asked them, "I thought you said we would study it?" No one said anything for a few minutes, until one exclaimed, "It's not open to study...you're dismissed." We were living in the preachers house next door...the elders told me that they did not want me back at services for someone might ask questions, and that if I told anyone I was fired they would kick us out of the house. Here they claimed I was "taking all the love out of the church" yet they were putting me on the street? They could support an atheist but not me? I was shattered.

Conclusion

That was in 1986, I left and have never looked back. Yes, conservative brethren may be divided over and argue over many issues, but I am happy to be associated with brethren who are that concerned with being right.

In the past 10 years now after leaving, the liberals have gone farther than many of them are willing to go. These old school institutionals are themselves beginning to be called "anti's" by many of their peers. They are called "neo-anti's" and "anti's who refuse to go all the way." The new line of liberals are wanting (and some have) women preachers and elders. Gymnasiums, drug treatment centers, etc. Those I associated with are denouncing this as liberalism, not being able to see they opened the flood gates for it. You cannot open the flood gates with one hand, and try to stem the tide with the other. This will most likely be the last generation of conservative-institutionals, those we have a chance of reaching, because we have a common understanding of authority. The new line up do not understand the nature and need of authority, and thus

we have no common ground with them.

Why I Left the Jehovah's Witnesses Organization

By Leon Kennedy

I have left a human religious organization, but I have not left Jesus Christ. I am just a Christian now, a member of Christ's church. Jesus is my Savior, who is the only Savior of mankind (Luke 2:11). I would like to sincerely say that I have no personal hard feelings against the Jehovah's Witnesses. Many are very dedicated to their religion. Yet, several of them teach one way and live another! As a child of God (Eph. 5:1), I respect their right to believe in the Bible as they choose and to work out their own salvation. God respects the right of our own free will.

However, I realize we will be held accountable for what we believe and practice, according to God's Word. We must be honest and earnest enough to make our calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10). This means we must be willing to change when we see we are wrong, in light of God's truth. I hope this article might help those who have been lead astray by their erroneous teaching.

Some Things I Saw Wrong With The Beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses:

1. Wrong Source of Authority. The greatest contributor to religious division, I think, is the lack of complete respect for God's Word. It must be the only religious authority by which men should live to please God. We can go to heaven only if we abide in Christ's pure Word (John 8:31-32), which means we must only obey God's will as revealed in the Bible (Matt. 7:21). Lawlessness (going outside God's law) is condemned, even by seemingly sincere religious folk (Matt. 7:22-23). At a dedication baptism of the Jehovah's Witnesses, I wondered by the Witnesses seem to put more trust in humanly written Watchtower publications of tracts, pamphlets and books, than in God's Word. The Word alone is powerful enough to convict and convert the sinner. "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12 NASB). God's Word alone is sufficient to guide and sanctify the Christian. Jesus prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17 NASB). The Witnesses believe in the Watchtower because they erroneously think that it is the faithful servant who gives food to the other servants in Matthew 24:45-47: "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions." Jesus had been speaking about His return, which would be unexpected. To illustrate the need to be ready and busy doing your duty in the meantime, Jesus uses an illustration of two servants, one faithful and the other one evil and lazy. All Jesus is teaching here is that each servant of His should be busy doing his assigned work. Faithful discharge of your duty is rewarded with a higher place of responsibility. The evil servant is unconcerned and slothful in view of His master's return. He is caught unawares and is punished for slacking off. So, there is no religious organization over others in this verse. That is reading too much into the Bible.

2. Denial of the New Birth. The Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe what the Bible says about being born again. "Jesus answered and said to him, `Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'" (John 3:3 NASB). The new birth is "of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5). It is

a spiritual birth of a spiritual seed (1 Pet. 1:23) revealed by the Spirit, which happens when a penitent believer is immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins. In spite of what the Bible says at Acts 22:16, they do not believe baptism washes away sins (Make All Things Sure, p. 30). The old man of sin is buried in a watery grave, and the new babe in Christ emerges from the water (Romans 6:4). We must be born again, or regenerated by God, to live above a life of habitual sin. The apostle John tells Christians, "No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). This applies to all who would be true Christians.

3. Denial of the Godhead. They deny the full Deity of Jesus, as well as the personality and Deity of the Spirit. "Never was there a more deceptive doctrine advanced than that of the trinity. It could only have originated in one mind and that of the mind of Satan" (Reconciliation, p.101). Concerning the Son of God, they say, "When Jesus was on the earth, he was a perfect man, nothing more and nothing less...Jesus was not God the Son" (Reconciliation, p.111, 113). Although I know that the Bible says Jesus was fully human like us (Heb. 2:17), I also read Paul's statement that He was also fully God: "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9). Jesus was the agent that brought all created things into being, so He could not have been a created being (Col. 1:15-17; Jn. 1:2-3). Jesus accepted worship, which a mere man should not do, because such is reserved for Deity alone (Matt.14:23; Jn. 5:23; Rev.22:8-9). Jesus claimed the divine designation, I AM, from Exodus 3:14 of Jehovah God for Himself (Jn. 8:58). He also claimed to be one in essence and nature with the Father (John 10:30). The Jews understood the meaning of this claim to Deity. They accused Jesus of blasphemy and said, "You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God" (Jn. 10:33). Thomas, when he saw Jesus in His resurrected glory, exclaimed, "My Lord and My God!" (Jn. 20:28). Jesus is part of the Godhead or one divine family, because we are baptized into the Name (singular) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). The Jehovah's Witnesses also say that the Holy Spirit is merely "God's active force" (The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life, p. 24). "The holy spirit is not a person and is therefore not one of the gods of the trinity" (Reconciliation, p. 115). Yet, I read in my Bible that Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit by the masculine personal pronoun "he," not "it" (Jn. 16:13-16). He has the traits of personality because He has a mind (1 Cor. 2:10-11), and He can be lied to (Acts 5:3), blasphemed against (Mt. 12:31), grieved (Eph. 4:30) and insulted (Heb. 10:29). He also shows He is a person because He speaks (Jn. 15:26), intercedes (Rom. 8:26), wills (1 Cor. 12:11) and loves (Rom. 15:30). The Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). He is eternal (Heb. 9:14), all knowing (1 Cor. 2:10-11), all present (Psa. 139:7), all wise (Isa. 40:13) and all-powerful (Gen. 1:2; Lk. 1:35). He is equally associated with the Father and the Son in the Godhead (1 Cor. 12:13; Matt. 28:19).

4. Denial of Christ's Bodily Resurrection. They say, "Jesus was put to death in the flesh and was resurrected an invisible spirit creature" (Let God Be True, p. 138); and also, "Somewhere Jehovah miraculously preserved that body" (Deliverance, p. 170). They compare Jesus' body with the body of Moses, whose body was buried no man knows where (The Truth Shall Make You Free, p. 264). Yet, I read Jesus' promise concerning His physical body: "Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.... He was speaking of the temple of His body" (Jn. 2:19,21). The Jehovah's Witnesses make Jesus a liar concerning His prophecy about His bodily resurrection. The angel at the empty tomb told the women disciples, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He said to you'" (Mk. 16:6-7). Jesus appeared in His physical body, which had been transformed, to

His disciples (Lk. 24:37-43). His body bore the physical marks of crucifixion (Jn. 20:25,27). The disciples were qualified to be eyewitnesses to the resurrection (Acts 10:40-41). Denial of Jesus' bodily resurrection is denying a fundamental fact of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-6).

5. Denial of Hell. They also deny the reality of hell as a place of eternal punishment, because they say such a place would make God too cruel. "The doctrine of eternal torment in hell is another one of Satan's vicious lies" (Enemies, p. 127). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned us about the danger of hell, if we take God's place of judgment in angrily calling a brother a fool (Matt. 5:22). He spoke of the coming baptism of fire, which is the fate of those who reject Him (Luke 3:16). He also says, "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him [Jehovah God] who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). This punishment will exist just as long as the reward of the faithful, which is eternal (Matt. 25:46). Impenitent wrong doers and the self-righteous will be cast into hell, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8:12; 13:42).

6. Confusion of Physical and Spiritual Death. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the apostle Paul is talking about a physical, not spiritual, death in Romans 6:7: "for he who has died is freed from sin." They think that when you physically die as a sinner, you have paid the penalty for your sins. Therefore, you will not be judged by the sins you have committed in this life, but you will only be judged by what you do during the millennium. However, this verse is talking about a new Christian who has died (has been separated from) the old, sinful life. Jesus taught that dying in your sins carries the penalty of spiritual death in hell. In Matthew's account of the Judgment Day, Jesus condemns those who failed to help others (Matt. 25:41-46). He sentences them with these words: "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels'...And these will go away into eternal punishment" (Matt. 25:41, 46). The spiritual punishment of Hell is called "the second death" (Rev. 20:14).

7. A Lack of Benevolence. In my experience, they are not benevolent to help others. Practically all their money goes to support the Watchtower. This is one main reason I left that organization, because of their lack of benevolence, even towards a fellow member. Such goes against clear Bible teaching. The apostle John asks an extremely important question, "But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 John 3:17). All people who claim to be in Christ must put on Christ. Paul states, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head" (Romans 12:20). This is probably one of the most difficult verses in the Bible for a Christian to live by, but we must try! Jesus taught us, in the parable of the Good Samaritan that our neighbor is anyone that I can help at his point of need (Luke 10:30-37). We should never grow weary of doing good, helpful things for others. This includes our enemies and even our brethren! If the Bible commands us to love and help an enemy, how much more we should love and help our brethren. We should be filled with love and mercy, especially toward each other. Each of us has our individual obligation to fulfill, and not pay lip-service to, Galatians 6:10: "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

8. Binding Human Rules. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that when a member of that organization is dating, they should always have a chaperon on the date, no matter how spiritually mature he or she may be. I was told that I could not sit next to another single woman in the assembly, unless we were dating.

Another told me that I had to be married to the woman I wanted to sit by at assembly! When Christians are mature, other Christians should trust them. Paul had been entrusted with the gospel (Titus 1:3). What does dating have to do with being entrusted with the gospel? If God trusted Paul enough with such a precious thing as the gospel, should we not be trusting enough of other mature Christians that they will behave as such in private or public? Happily, as true Christians, we know that God and His word never changes (Mal. 3:6; Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:23). Because of the opinions of men, there are too many errors and contradictions in this organization. Instead of looking to the teachings and traditions of men, we must look to our unchanging God who bestows every good gift to us (Ja. 1:17). The truth of Christ is the only standard of faith and practice (Jn. 12:48). It alone can make us free from sin and error. Human doctrines cannot make us free (Jn. 8:31-32). We must look to and be faithful to Jesus, and not to the movements of men. "Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand" (Romans 14:4).

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Why We Left Lutheranism

By Claude A. Guild

Martin Luther said: "I pray you leave my name alone and not to call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine: I have not been crucified for any one...How does it then benefit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of Christ? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions; away with all of them; and let us call ourselves only Christians, after Him from whom our doctrine comes." (Life of Luther, by Michelet, p. 262). "Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." (Rom. 10:1,2).

It is with deepest love and tenderness toward those who still remain in Lutheranism that I publish this book. I know their sincerity and honesty. Still I learned that I was honestly mistaken. Most of my friends in the Lutheran church are honest and making an effort to gain heaven but do lack a knowledge of their doctrine and the teachings of the Bible. Most Lutherans read for the minister, learn by memory the articles of the catechism before the day of confirmation, but have never laid the Bible side by side with the catechism and made a careful comparison.

I am not a Lutheran today; a host of friends and all of my immediate family are with me, away from the catechism. We make a comparison in this book between the teaching of the Bible and the Lutheran church. Listed here are reasons why I gave up Lutheranism and why I cannot be a Lutheran today.

1. Foundation Human not Divine

First, may I say, I gave up Lutheranism because I learned it had a human foundation. The student of the Bible and history never read or heard of a Lutheran church before the days of a man by the name of Martin Luther. In fact, the Lutheran church dates back to the eve of "All Saints Day, Oct. 31, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the cathedral door of the Wittenberg church and fled for his life. The blow he struck the Catholic church that day led to the beginning of the reformation movement and the origin of another church, the Lutheran church.

This institution, contrary to the wishes of Martin Luther, wears his name. It is a known fact he is the founder of the church. Since he founded it and it wears his name, he being a human being, makes the foundation of the Lutheran church human.

I looked at the Bible! There I read Ephesians 1:22,23, "...And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." I learned that Christ is the head of the New Testament church. Jesus declared He was the founder of it. "Upon this rock I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18). Paul, the Apostle, says Christ is the foundation of the church. "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (I Corinthians 3:11).

If, 1500 years before Lutheranism, Jesus said He would build His church, and Paul said He was head and foundation of the church, what right does Luther or his followers have to build a church and stake its claim on Divinity? The truth about it is, Christ is still head and foundation of the church and not Luther.

2. Unscriptural Name

When God's word was preached in New Testament times it made sinners Christians. "And that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). And Agrippa said to Paul, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." And Paul said, "I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26:28-29). "But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (I Peter 4:16). The word of God believed and obeyed did not make people Lutherans. It is imperative then, that it takes something in addition to the word of God to make Lutherans.

The followers of Luther have accepted his name for the church, the Lutheran Church, because they have subscribed to his doctrine, his catechism. The catechism was written by him in the year 1529. It has continuously been accepted by the church. But let me say, if you were to destroy all the catechisms, you would forever lose sight of the name "Lutheran." Since it was not a Bible name, and because Paul said, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17), I cannot be a Lutheran.

3. They Walk By a Man-made Creed

Like most Lutheran children, I was schooled from the catechism. My mother was zealous to see all her children confirmed. To meet the question asked by the minister before the congregation on the day of the confirmation, you must know the articles in the catechism. We were taught that the catechism would explain the Bible and make it possible for us to understand the Bible. Mr. W.E. Schramm says so: "It is intended as a help to study and understand the Bible. It is a systematic arrangement of Bible teachings. Because these doctrines are presented in groups, they are easy to lay hold of, and thus the word of study simplified." ("What Lutherans Believe," The Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, Ohio, p. 14). In the same book My Schramm says, "To aid in the study of God's Word, many Christians make use of a smaller handbook called a Catechism" (W. L. B. p. 13).

In investigating the Bible I found inspired men saying the Bible was all-sufficient and complete. "Every scripture of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:16,17).

To take the position Lutherans take, as expressed by Mr. Schramm, that we need Dr. Martin Luther's catechism to understand the Bible, challenges the intelligence of God. Think of it! God is the author of the Bible. Still it is necessary for a man by the name of Luther to explain what God wanted to explain. Too, God says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God" (II Timothy 2:15). If God intended for the

command "to study" to have an aid, He would have legislated thus. But, be it remembered, God's commands need no crutch or cane to aid them. If they were needed He would have told us so. I could not subscribe to the Bible and to the catechism, hence another reason why I left the Lutheran church.

4. Upholds Denominationalism

The Lutherans teach there is "one church" but that it is made up of various communions - Methodist, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, etc. "The word 'church' is commonly used to designate the various divisions in the communion of saints. We speak of the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church, and a host of others. In a book entitled, 'The Religious Forces of the United States', an official of our government has listed forty-two general Christian denominations besides a number of smaller independent bodies. Yet, strictly speaking, there is not that number of Christian churches. THESE FIGURES INDICATE RATHER THE DENOMINATIONAL GROUPS INTO WHICH THE ONE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS DIVIDED...These different denominations exist because of differences in their doctrines" (W. L. B. by Schramm, p. 114).

Lutherans would have the church of the Lord divided into various denominations but when I consult Paul, the Apostle, see what he says: "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing **and that there be no divisions among you;** but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos: and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" (I Corinthians 1:10-13).

During the time of inspired men there were no institutions such as the Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic and Presbyterian churches. In fact, there were none of the denominations of today. The church you read about in the Bible is the Lord's church.

The word "church" is used in two senses in the Bible; the universal and the local sense (Matthew 16:16 and I Corinthians 1:2). In speaking of the "called out" in every nation the word church was used meaning the church universally. If a writer referred to the church in a given community it meant the local congregation. Never can we read of different denominations, having different founders, doctrines and creeds.

To believe in denominationalism would be to make "sport" of Jesus' prayer in John 17:20,21: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be ONE; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou didst send me." Jesus prayed for oneness. Paul said, "There is one body" (Ephesians 4:4). He declared the body was the church (Ephesians 1:22).

Attention must be drawn to inspiration again when Paul declared, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned;

and turn away from them" (Romans 16:17). The attitude that we can have different doctrines is contrary to Truth. Christ said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18) not churches. He said "there is one fold," not folds (John 10:16). Paul said, "there is one faith," not "the faith of your choice." (Ephesians 4:5).

5. Misapply and Violate the 10 Commandments

The Lutheran church teaches we are to keep the ten commandments today. It doesn't matter if you are a Jew or Gentile, the ten commandments are binding on you in this age. "What is the moral law?" Answer: "The moral law is that law which sets forth our duties to God and man, as briefly comprehended in the ten commandments" (Questions & Answers No. 21, Luther's Small Catechism) "The moral law alone is binding on all men." (Answer No. 21, L.S.C.)

The ten commandments were "written and engraven in stones," they are done away. "But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which glory was passing away: how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory? For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth. For if that which passeth away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is in glory. (II Corinthians 3:7-11).

The ten commandments are called a covenant and the covenant is abolished. "And he declared unto you his covenant which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." (Deuteronomy 4:13). "But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, That I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt...In that he saith, A new covenant he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away" (Hebrews 8:6-13). "...Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out that way, nailing it to the cross; having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's" (Colossians 2:14-17).

Question: If the ten commandments are binding today, why don't Lutherans keep the sabbath, the 7th day, as the day of rest? Without divine authority they have called Sunday the sabbath and worship on Sunday. There is no passage in all the Bible that would warrant the change - Sunday for the Sabbath.

When I make a comparison between the catechism and the Bible I find they teach we must keep the commandments but like the Catholics they leave completely out of their catechism the second commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto me a graven image" (Exodus 20:4). To make up for the one they

leave out, they divide number ten into two parts and call it nine and ten. (See L. S. C. pp. 43-44).

This is the most serious part of all of it. They leave out one commandment and never keep the Sabbath commandment. They conclude the commandments thus: "God threatens to punish all those who transgress these commandments. We should, therefore, dread his displeasure, and not act contrarily to these commandments. 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments?'" (L. S. C. pp. 44-45) When I learned they violated the ten commandments, left one out and even bound on us a law that was abolished, I could not longer be a Lutheran.

6. The Mode of Baptism is Non-essential

"We recognize any mode of Baptism in which water is applied in the name of the Triune God, whether it be by immersion or pouring or sprinkling." (Mr. Schramm, W. L. B. p. 136).

The mode of baptism and especially sprinkling was the one paramount doctrine that continuously disturbed us. If sprinkling was to be "applied in the name of Triune God," there must be some passage of scripture for it. We searched the Bible from lid to lid and never found "modes of baptism" mentioned nor did we read about baptism by sprinkling and pouring. However, we did find that Christ was baptized "in" Jordan and "came up out of the water" (Mark 1:9-10). Christ called baptism "a birth" (John 3:5). Those baptized "went down into the water" and "came up out of the water" (Acts 8:36-39).

We never became wholly dissatisfied with sprinkling until we read Romans 6:4-5. "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father we might also walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him (King James Version says "planted") in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Too, we could no longer believe there might be a choice of three modes of baptism when Paul said, "there is one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5).

After many days of anxiety and searching, having found nothing in the Bible that would teach sprinkling, we decided that it wasn't baptism at all. We found a gospel preacher and were baptized-"buried"-for the remission of our sins. This I would plead with every Lutheran to do.

7. Infant Baptism

Mr. Schramm states the Lutheran position well: "The baptismal command includes children. The command reads: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19, R. V.). Since children are part of every nation, they are evidently among the ones to be discipled and baptized." (W. L. B. p. 139) It would have been informing if Mr. Schramm had stated what it would have taken to make a disciple. It adds light on the subject if we read the King James Version: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," (Matthew 28:19). Mark gives the

great commission thus: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). From Matthew and Mark we learn that two prerequisites of discipleship are "being taught" and "believing." In Acts 2:38 another prerequisite is given - "Repent and be baptized." Hence, to be scripturally baptized one must be old enough to be taught, he must believe and repent of his sins. Surely babies at the age of eight days are not old enough to be taught, to accept Christ or repent. Again, we cannot be Lutherans and believe in infant baptism.

Lutherans teach baptism takes the place of circumcision in the Old Testament. "In the Old Testament, circumcision was the sacrament of initiation. It was administered to the boy babies when they were eight days of age. If God could make a covenant with a baby in the Old Testament, certainly He can and does do the same thing in this new dispensation. Accordingly, we conclude that since baptism has taken the place of circumcision, babies should be baptized" (W. L. B. p. 141). This like a lot of other vital issues isn't a question of what God could and should do, but what He has willed to do! If God didn't legislate baptism in the place of circumcision we act without divine authority when we baptize babies. This question has never been answered by Lutheran ministers: If baptism takes the place of circumcision, and they say it does, only boy babies were circumcised; why do the Lutherans baptize the girl babies?

8. Inherited Damnation

The Lutherans teach that every baby born into this world inherits the guilt of Adam's sin and is wholly depraved when conceived. "Original sin is the depravity which is born in us; it is the inclination to evil which we and all men have inherited from our parents. Ever since the fall of Adam, all men who are naturally begotten are conceived and born in sin" (W. L. B. p. 65). We suffer today from Adam's sin, but there is not passage in the Bible that would teach that we inherit the guilt of Adam's transgression. Jesus said, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14).

Can the Lutherans tell us if the guilt of Adam's sin comes from the fleshly or spiritual make-up of our foreparents? If they should say, "the flesh", it would necessarily make Jesus a sinner because "he became flesh" and was born of flesh (John 1:14; II Corinthians 5:16; Colossians 1:22). If our original sin is from foreparent's spirit, it would make God a sinner because "He is the Father of our spirits" (Hebrews 12:9).

Men who teach inherited sin can never successfully do so when folks have read the inspired statement from Ezekiel the prophet. "The soul that sinneth it shall die; THE SON SHALL NOT BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHER, NEITHER SHALL THE FATHER BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THE SON; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:20). Sin is transgression of the law (I John 3:4). Until babies are old enough to know the law and transgress the same, there is not transgression and they are children of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:14).

9. Misinformed Us On the Lord's Supper

The Lutherans teach the doctrine of consubstantiation; that with and under the bread is the body and with and under the cup is the blood. Let us read again from Mr. Schramm: **The Roman Catholic View:** "The Church of Rome teaches that in this sacrament the communicate receives only the body and blood of the savior. They believe that when the priest consecrates the earthly elements in the Lord's supper, they cease to be bread and wine and by a sort of miracle are changed into the body and blood of Christ."

The Lutheran View: "We Lutherans insist that both the bread and wine and the body and blood of Jesus are received by every communicant at the Lord's Supper." (W. L. B. p. 149) "With and under the bread, with and under the cup, is the real body and blood of the Lord" (L. S. C. pp. 137-140).

The reason Catholics and Lutherans teach that the real body and blood of the Lord appears in the supper is because Jesus said, "this is my body," "this is my blood." (Matthew 26:26-28) If Jesus meant that it literally became His body and blood, what did Jesus mean in John 10:9, "I am the door?" Did He mean He was made out of two-by-fours and one-by-twelves? Most assuredly not! What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the true vine," that He was literally planted and leafed out in the Spring? It would have to mean this if the other is literal in regard to the Lord's supper.

The truth about it is, though the Catholics teach "transubstantiation" and say it actually becomes His body and blood, though the Lutherans teach "consubstantiation" and make a sandwich out of it and say, "with and under" both have failed to see the figure of speech, personification. Jesus simply personified His body and blood in the bread and cup, as He did Himself in John 10 and John 15. The Lutheran church is divided on this very issue and we were never able to see their teaching on it, in the light of these other passages.

10. Confession to the Pastor

Absolution of sins, or forgiveness of sins comes to the disciple of Luther when he confesses his sins before the pastor and receives forgiveness for the same, as though God Himself had forgiven him: **"What is Confession? Answer.** Confession consists of two parts: the one is, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution or forgiveness through the pastor as of God himself, in no wise doubting, but firmly believing that our sins are thus forgiven before God in heaven" (L. S. C. p. 79).

There is no substitute with God. There is no satisfaction in confession sins before anyone, to pardon you, but God. There is one who will pardon us. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). "There is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5). John said, "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, (not the pastor) Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1).

Friend of mine, Jesus purchased the "church of the Lord" with His blood, (Acts 20:28). I just can't be

persuaded to believe, no matter how hard I try, that He meant the "Lutheran church" when He said "church of the Lord." Jesus has only one body which is His church (Ephesians 1:22). If you will read your Bible you will learn that you must believe in Jesus Christ (John 8:24), repent of your sins (Luke 13:3), and be baptized (buried) into Christ, for the remission of sins (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:4; Acts 2:38). You will be added to the church of Jesus Christ, not a human institution (Acts 2:47). Just be a Christian (I Peter 4:16). To do less than this, or to join some human denomination is acting without divine authority (II John 9).

Our thanks eternally will go to Brother J.C. Bailey, Radville, Sask., an humble gospel preacher, who lead us into the church of Christ, and out of a human church (a denomination) where we had fears and endless questions in our minds. We subscribe to no creed but the Bible now and are a happy people. We are anxious to see others become just Christians and Christians only. This is our humble prayer for you.

Why I Left the Methodist Church

By Raymond A. Howard

Like many, or I might say most, I played church for a number of years. I only went because my friends did or it was the right things to do. After I married, my wife is probably the reason I went to begin with (I realized the man is the head of the house, but so many times the woman takes the lead in going to church). She had always gone to the Methodist church, so I went with her (sometimes), then our attendance got more regular and we began to learn of things going on in the Methodist church. The National Council of Churches was the topic of discussion at that time - some were for and some were against - I was against. A group had pulled away a few years back who called themselves "Southern Methodist", and one of these was located in Muscle Shoals. We visited this group and liked what we heard. There was more Bible preached there than we had heard in a while. It was only a short time until one of these churches was located in the Petersville area of Florence. We thought now we had at last found what we wanted, so we moved our "letter" to Trinity Southern Methodist Church. After making this move I was also baptized by immersion because I was not happy with the sprinkling I got in the United Methodist church.

Things were going just fine until I became a Steward and Trustee. The only reason I can figure that I was made a steward was that I was twenty-one years old, for I was not qualified in any other way! As I continued to study the Bible, I noticed that a man in "authority" must be tried (I Tim. 3:10), but every time we had a new man to come (novice or not) he was made a trustee and a steward. I wondered about this. Then I began to teach the adult class (although I hardly knew what book followed the other in the Bible), I began to think about some other things: (1) I thought my wife and I left the United Methodist because of a man-made organization, and now in the Southern Methodist we had a Conference and had to pay \$5.00 per member per year to belong. I asked why - the answer I got was, "Where else could we get preachers?" I accepted this at the time. (2) Then, as I would talk to members of the church of Christ, they would get me to thinking. They would ask, "Do you take the Lord's Supper every first day of the week?" I would answer, "No, we do not". I asked why - and I was told that it might take some of the importance away from it by doing it so often. I wondered if we prayed every day - or without ceasing - would it cause prayer to become unimportant! (3) In my class I began to teach first and second Timothy, and I wondered where our elders were! I was told that after a man studied for a while and the conference thought he should be one, then he was made one, but the men who were made elders were the preachers. I did not see it that way. We began to try to decide who had the authority. Some said a democratic vote was the way. The preacher said this was true to a certain point, but that he would have the last say. My question, after studying first and second Timothy, was "Why were the elders to be preachers only?"

We had a problem so we had a meeting to settle it and had to call the president of the Conference in. I did not feel he had anything to do with our problem, and I wanted to get out of the conference. This was not popular, so I told them at the meeting that I was going to the church of Christ. A short while later I came to a full understanding of the plan of salvation and the church as it is revealed in the New Testament, and was baptized at the College View church of Christ. I feel if many would study and have an open mind, they would see what God's word has to say, and if they would ask themselves some questions in light of Bible teaching they would soon come to the truth as my wife and I did. Some questions that need to be

asked are:

1. Where in the Bible are those in authority called stewards and trustees?
2. Where in the Bible does it say that only preachers can be elders?
3. Where do you find the Conference in the Bible?
4. Where do you find authority for not eating the Lord's Supper every first day of the week?
5. Where do you find instrumental music used in the New Testament worship? (If you say in the Old Testament, then way aren't we under the whole Law of the Old Covenant and still stone people?).
6. Where in the Bible do you find sprinkling for baptism?
7. Where in the Bible do you find infant baptism?
8. Where in the Bible do you find "formalism" (candles, etc. and robes)?
9. Can all sing and give praise to God when only the choir sings?
10. Where in the Bible do you find only the ordained preacher can baptize people?
11. Where in the Bible do you find authority to use things other than the gospel to teach people what to do to be saved and how to behave afterwards?
12. Where in the Bible do you find "church ball teams, picnics, the bus ministry, camping trips" and so many other things that so many are engaging in? (And I might add that even some of my brethren are not a wit behind the Methodists in practicing many of these things!)

COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, FOR WHAT FELLOWSHIP HATH LIGHT WITH DARKNESS?

Why I Left the Methodist Church

By Robert Jackson

I became a member of the Methodist church at Charlotte, Tennessee at the age of twelve. This was result of being brought up in a Methodist family. I was taught that one should believe in Christ and then join the church of his choice, and his choice as a rule would be the one of his parents. June 5th, 1940, I obeyed the gospel of Christ, thus leaving the Methodist church. Since that time I have often been asked, "Why did you leave the Methodist church?" I will try to answer this question as briefly as possible in this article.

I did not Leave Because:

First, I will state some of the reasons why I did not leave the Methodist church:

- A. I was not made to live.** There was no pressure from within the Methodist church for me to leave.
- B. I did not leave because of the people in the Methodist church.** There were some of the finest moral living people in the Methodist church that you would ever want to meet.
- C. I did not leave the Methodist church because it was not a popular church.** The majority of people were Methodists in my home town.

After my discharge from the Navy in 1946, I had again made my home in Charlotte, Tennessee. In 1947, Grover Stevens moved to Charlotte. I was attending many of the services of the church of Christ where he was preaching and became very angry at some of the remarks made by brother Stevens. During this same time, brother Leonard Tyler conducted several meetings in this area which I attended and at which I was made angry. I became so mad at some of their remarks that I began to study my Bible to try to justify myself as a Methodist and at the same time to find error in their teaching, which I would have been happy to expose. Finally, I saw that I was fighting a losing battle and I either had to obey the gospel or stay with the Methodist church. I must say that it was a very difficult battle, knowing that I would be leaving that which I had been taught from childhood up, knowing that my personal friends would turn their backs on me, and knowing the heartache that it would cause my mother to see her only child leave the family religion. I made up my mind to put God first and obey His will.

Error Exposed...Truth Taught

The results of my leaving the Methodist church was due to the fact that error was exposed and truth was taught in a plain manner of speech and yet with love. I am deeply grateful to such preachers.

- A. Name.** The first impression that was made on my mind was that the Methodist church was wrong in name. Such a name could not be found in the Bible. I was called a Methodist, but yet no one in the Bible was ever called such. I was taught that they were called Christians (I Pet. 4:16; Acts 11:26). I immediately saw that I could not scripturally justify the use of the name Methodist.

- B. Wesley, the founder, not Christ.** It was made clear that John Wesley was the founder of

the Methodist church and not Jesus Christ. If I wanted to be a member of the church that Jesus built, then I could not be a Methodist. Such preaching stirred up my spirit to the extent that I became dissatisfied with being a member of a church that John Wesley built.

- C. Faith only -- salvation.** I had always believed that one was saved by faith only. This is exactly what the Methodist church teaches about salvation. However, when I was told to read James 2:24, I was made to see in words that none could misunderstand that "faith only" was wrong. I began to read more and found out that Jesus required faith and baptism. (Mk. 16:16)
- D. Choice of baptism.** I had always been taught in the Methodist church that there are three ways to be baptized: 1. Sprinkling; 2. Pouring; and 3. Immersion. I was led to believe by Methodist preaching that it was up to the individual to select his own choice. To become a member I had selected sprinkling. The preaching that I heard exposed this error. I was told to read Col. 2:12 and then Eph. 4:5. Even with a mind as weak as mine, I could see that according to God's teaching there was but one baptism, but by Methodist teaching there were three. I believed God.
- E. Instrumental music.** We had the instrument of music in the services of the Methodist church and were led to believe that it was only an aid in the worship. It was plainly proven to me that such was not an aid but an addition to the word of God. I then was reminded of John 4:24 that one must worship God in truth. I was told that my worship would be in vain if done by the doctrine of men (Matt. 15:9).
- F. How to raise money.** In the Methodist church we would have ice cream suppers, rummage sales, etc., to raise money for the church. The preaching that I heard by brother Stevens and others brought to my attention I Cor. 16:1-2. This was God's plan of having the church members raise its money, and the pie suppers, etc., were ways of men.

These are a few of the things that caused me to see the way of my error. Of course, since that time I have studied and found out many other errors within the Methodist church. I have never regretted leaving the Methodist church. I wish all would see their errors.

Thank God for Christ, His gospel, His church.

Why I Left the Pentecostal Church

By Mike Cornwell

Paul could have been thinking of me when he wrote this verse to a young man named Timothy (2 Tim 3:14). I was born into a Pentecostal family of many years. My grandfather preached "fire and brimstone" from the time I could remember until his death in 1968. He was some what an intimidating individual who was demanding and abrupt. I was taught that only those who were "chosen" or "called" could ever enter into the "faithful" ministry of our Lord. I never challenged his thinking or his preaching. What he said was like a direct command from Jesus Christ himself. With this in mind, at the age of 12, I was told I was being called into the ministry and preached my first sermon shortly thereafter. I spent a total of 18 years preaching as a "Pentecostal" preacher. I taught the "Jesus Only" doctrine known as the "Apostolic Faith" (United Pentecostal Church).

To this day, my family fully believes that if one is not of the "Lord's true church" that being, saved in baptism in Jesus Name, and filled with the "Holy ghost" with the evidence of "Speaking in Tongues," one is not a Christian and headed for a "Devil's hell." My Grandfather (before his death) preached this 54 years. My step-father has preached this in excess of 50 years. My brother-in-law and sister "Pastor" a very large Pentecostal church in the Cincinnati, OH area. I have two cousins that are "Pentecostal" preachers. I have been accused of being "In a den of thieves and a pit of vipers," because of my stand on the Word of God and my faithfulness to the Lord's church. My wife and I have been publicly chastised and the atmosphere is very tense when we are visiting with my family. We are shunned by most of my family. We are reminded regularly of (2 Tim 3:12): "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

It was the first Thursday night of October, 1984, at the age of 42, when I realized that all that I had been teaching for 18 years as a "Pentecostal" had been "false doctrine" and that I was like the "blind leading the blind." That Thursday night of October, 1984, changed my life, my thinking, and my understanding of the "Word of God." I was invited to a "Gospel Meeting" at the Sandstone Drive Church of Christ, Little Rock, AR. (I had never been to a Lord's church in my life.) Chris Bullock, of Kansas City, MO was to be the speaker. I consented to go with the attitude that I would be able to shed some light on his teaching and thus convince others of their wrong. Something happened: what was preached was what I had secretly believed all my adult life. One did not have to come to an "altar," cry out, beg and plead for mercy to receive forgiveness. One did not have to come again to the "altar" to "seek for the infilling of the Holy Spirit," which was promised to believers. One did not have to "utter" confusion in an attempt to show one has the gift of "speaking in tongues."

All one had to do was hear the simple word of truth, believe it, confess Christ as the Son of God, repent of one's sins, and be baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for remission of sins. The Lord not only forgives completely but adds one to the church. This I did in obedience the following Sunday evening. I became a "born again Christian." I gave up my life, my music, even my future dreams, to follow Jesus for the first time in my life. I was on the right path.

It was not until October, 1987, when I met Louis Sharp in Little Rock, AR, that I really understood what "faithfulness" really means. As we began to study and learn, I began to realize that the Lord had work for

me, as a Christian, to do. I then began to teach and preach the Gospel of Christ. It has now become my life. My desire is to teach those who are in error the truth that they to might become part of this body of Christ.

I. Let me tell you why I am a member of the Lord's church.

- A. Pentecostalism traces itself back no further than New Years Eve, 1899 (Topeka, KS). This is when a small group of people supposedly received a "Divine Revelation" for the first time ever recorded.
 1. The Lord's church dates back to 33 AD when the 12 disciples received the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4).
 2. This was a result of the fulfillment of the promise Jesus gave to his disciples (Acts 1:8).
 3. The Pentecostal church cannot show authority from God's word for its beginning!
- B. Pentecostalism teaches that the "power of the Holy Spirit" fell first on the 120 gathered in the upper room.
 1. The Bible teaches that only the 12 disciples received first the "Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:26-2:1).
- C. Pentecostalism believes that this power is received today because of the "New Revelation of God" in 1899.
 1. The Bible teaches no such thing (2 Tim 3:16-17).
 2. The scripture holds all that man needs to know for his salvation. There are no new revelations.
- D. Pentecostalism teaches that in 1914 another revelation was received, revealing that being baptized in "Jesus Name" became tenets of faith. Thus, they produced a law, a formula!
 1. That is not what the Bible says (Mat 28:19-20).
- E. We find that in the early half of this century (1900 - 1944) several Pentecostal groups were established. Two of those are: Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ, Inc., and the Pentecostal Church, Inc. In 1944 these two bodies became known as the UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH. The authority is: Pentecostal Church Manual, pp. 8-10, Foreword.
 1. The Bible teaches that the Lord established only one church (Mat 16:18).
 2. This is the only church that Christ and the Apostles ever speak of.

II. What are some of the Pentecostal practices?

- A. They claim that through the instrument of the Holy Spirit, miracles and healing incurable diseases occur daily. Silver fillings become Gold, Poor become miraculously rich, Dead are raised, and Sick people instantly healed. I never saw anyone miraculously healed in all the years I was "Pentecostal."
 1. I will not limit God. He has the power if he so chooses. Man does not have that power.
 2. If he does, where is the proof? They call it: "lack of FAITH."
 3. When does the Holy Spirit give to one man this power and not another? That is unscriptural.

- a. Only the disciples and those they laid hands on had this power. They are all dead.
- B. Pentecostalism teaches that a person may speak in "tongues" while under the influence of the "Holy Spirit" just like Peter and the other Apostles at Pentecost.
 1. The only others who were able to do this were Cornelius and his kinfolk (Acts 10:44-46).
 2. And those whom the apostles laid their hands on.
 3. Don't we all have the continued influence of the Holy Spirit through the word. Can any one of us speak in an "unlearned" language?
- C. "Pentecostalism" espouses religion as a "romantic" philosophy, that the heart of man has reasons which his mind knows not of, and that man's feelings are the highest authority.
 1. The Bible is truth (John 17:17). The truth is not subjective. It does not originate with a person's own thinking. Religion is not based on a "feel good" experience.
 - a. I get excited sometimes because of the truth. That is natural.
 2. The Bible must be read, studied and obeyed (2 Tim 2:15; John 8:31).
 3. The Bible is the absolute, inspired and authoritative Word of God (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21).
 4. When a man regards his feelings as the basic authority, he is on the wrong path.
 5. To reject the Word of God and do "that which is right in our own eyes" is to reject God (1 Sam 15:22-26; Mat 7:13-14).
 6. I feel good about the truth but my feeling good is not authority!
- D. Pentecostalism believes and teaches that women may participate in leading in prayer, teaching, and preaching in public, and doing the work of an evangelist and teacher.
 1. The Holy Spirit contrasted the duties of men from that of women in public prayer (1 Tim 2:8-15).
 2. Women are to learn in silence (1 Cor 14:34). They are not to teach in any capacity over a man.
 3. Women may teach younger women (Titus 2:4). They may teach a man in private (Acts 18:25).
 4. Timothy was taught in private. Apollos was taught in private.
 5. Women may not "teach" (deliver discourses). Women are forbidden to preach (1 Cor 14:34).
 6. There are many things women can and should be doing.
- E. "Pentecostalism" teaches that instruments of music are used to "glorify" God in worship.
 1. True worship is according to "Spirit and Truth" (John 4:24), the word of God, not Moses, not our feelings, and not what we believe to be right. Jesus will judge us in the Last Day (John 12:48).
 2. Vocal music was repeatedly specified as the kind of worship God wants from Christians (Col 3:16; Eph 5:19).
 3. Christians are to abide in the teachings of Christ, not in man (2 John 9-10). We are to follow the pattern given by God (Heb 8:5), without adding, subtracting or altering according to our own desires or opinions.

Conclusion:

I had read the Bible all my life. I preached that which I had been taught. When I doubted, I was always told of "new revelations" received from God. In the "Pentecostal" church, one is taught that the "Pastor" is the authority within the church, and knowledge is only gained by adherence to "God's man" and in the leading of the "Holy Spirit" directly. Accept that which you doubt with your faith.

Only until I realized that in order to understand the "Gospel" one must study with an open heart prepared to accept the truth of the "Gospel," and with this truth obey the word of God. The Bible really is a simple book to understand, but when man attempts to add to it, his opinion and his feelings, he begins to lose the truth and believe a lie.

Trust this word completely. Obey it! It contains all that man needs to get him into eternity with Jesus Christ.