

REDEEMING THE TIME

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).

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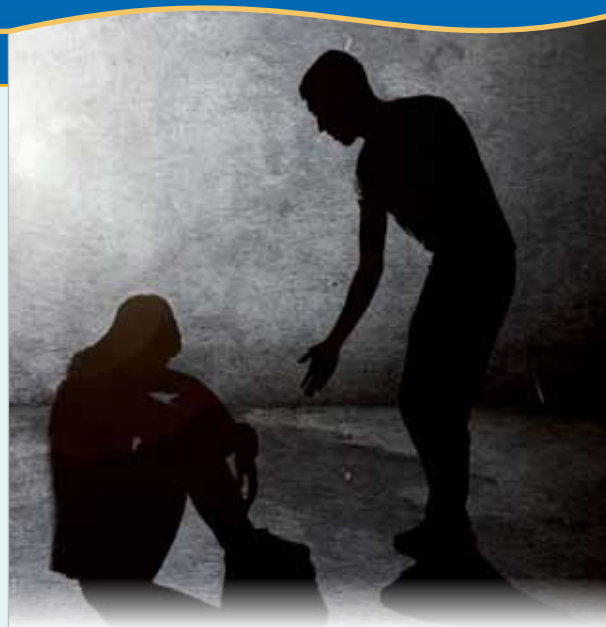
ACCC Convention: The Basis of Biblical Fundamentalism Is Holiness

The 78th Annual Convention of the American Council of Christian Churches was marked by a real spirit of unity around the Word of God and love for the brethren. The Convention was held from October 22-24, 2019, at Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA.

In addition to the messages, sessions were held dealing with how various Fundamentalist forefathers conducted their ministries. Included were: J. Gresham Machen, Robert Ketcham, Bob Jones Sr., Bob Jones, Jr., Carl McIntire, Ian Paisley, William and John Ashbrook, Don McKnight, Ralph Colas and W.B. Riley.

Reelected to office were: Rev. David Mook, President; Rev. Bradley Reider, Vice President; Rev. Jonathan Smith, Secretary; and Dr. Kevin Hobi, Treasurer.

A number of Biblical resolutions were passed, several of which can be found, beginning on page 7, of this issue of *Redeeming the Time*.



“by works a man is justified”

BY JOHN MILLS

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:24-26).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).


James speaks of the necessity of works in the matter of justification and Paul says that works have no part in it. How are these things reconciled? There is in fact no opposition between Paul and James. Paul tells us that there is no co-efficiency of faith and works in the matter of justification, but rather we are justified by faith alone. James assures us that faith and works will have a coexistence in



Rev. David Mook, President of the American Council of Christian Churches, leads a session at the Council's 78th Annual Convention, October 22-24, 2019, in Carlisle, PA.

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REFORMATION



Beginnings

PART IX

Martin Luther's Deliverance

BY MARK W. EVANS

Martin Luther's faithful witness before the Diet of Worms brought a crisis to the Vatican. Even if Pope Leo X had succeeded in executing Luther, the Reformer's refusal to recant was indelible. Church historian J.H. Merle d'Aubigne wrote: "Firm as a rock, all the waves of human power dashed ineffectually against him. The strength of his words, his bold bearing, his piercing eyes, the unshaken firmness legible on the rough outlines of his truly German features, had produced the deepest impression on this illustrious assembly. There was no longer any hope. The Spaniards, the Belgians, and even the Romans were dumb. The monk had vanquished these great ones of the earth. He had said no to the Church and to the empire."¹

Chancellor Eck informed the Diet that it would reconvene the following

day to receive the decision of Charles V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Enemies and friends waited for news following the Diet's encounter with the implacable champion of the Bible. As night fell, the monk appeared with an escort of two imperial officers. The vital question was

Few understood the depth of Luther's convictions. God's Word was sealed to his heart by the Holy Spirit.

shouted, "Are they taking him to prison?" Luther answered, "No, they are accompanying me to my hotel." Merle d'Aubigne described the scene: "Some Spanish soldiers of the emperor's household followed this bold man through the streets by which he had to pass, with shouts and mockery, while others howled and roared like

wild beasts robbed of their prey. But Luther remained calm and firm."²

Luther's protector, Elector Frederick of Saxony, had at first doubted the Reformer's ability to stand trial before such an august assembly. Now, he was elated with admiration for the monk's courage and stirring defense. Church historian J.A. Wylie wrote: "The Elector Frederick was overjoyed at the appearance Luther made before the Diet. The force and pertinency of his matter, the eloquence of his words, his intrepid yet respectful bearing, had not only delighted the sovereign of Saxony, but had made a deep impression on the princes of the Diet. From that hour many of them became attached friends of Luther and the Reformation. Some of them openly avowed their change of sentiment at the time; in others the words of Luther bore fruit in after-years."³

Rome immediately sought to crush the rising popularity of the Reformer. The Papal nuncio, Aleander, incited Charles V to action. In a hand written letter to the Diet, the emperor stated: "A single monk, misled by his own folly, has risen against the faith of Christendom. To stay such impiety, I will sacrifice my kingdom, my treasures, my friends, my body, my blood, my soul, and my life. I am about to dismiss the Augustine Luther, forbidding him to cause the least disorder among the people; I shall then proceed against him and his adherents, as contumacious heretics, by excommunication, by interdict, and by every means calculated to destroy them. I call on the members of the states to behave like faithful Christians."⁴

This declaration produced two responses. The first came from the Papal minions who insisted that Luther's safe-conduct be ignored. "The Rhine should receive his ashes, as it had received those of John Huss a century ago."⁵ The second response was abhorrence at such treachery. The princes of Germany, including Luther's enemy, Duke George, declared that they "will not permit a safe-conduct

to be violated. This diet, the first held by our new emperor, will not be guilty of so base an action. Such perfidy does not accord with the ancient German integrity.”⁶

Charles V announced: “I will not depart from what I have determined. I will authorize no one to communicate officially with Luther. But, I will grant that man three days for reflection; during which time, you may exhort him privately.” Few understood the depth of Luther’s convictions. God’s Word was sealed to his heart by the Holy Spirit. Elector Frederick knew that such attempts would fail. While appearing outwardly neutral, he determined to protect his noble subject. He wrote his brother, Duke John: “I should be ready to defend Luther. You cannot imagine how far the partisans of Rome carry their attacks against me. Were I to tell you all, you would hear most astonishing matters. They are resolved upon his destruction; and whoever manifests any interest for his safety is immediately set down as a heretic. May God, who never abandons the cause of justice, bring all things to a happy end!”⁷

The Reformer remained at peace in his soul. Merle d’Aubigne wrote: “[A] number of princes, counts, barons, knights, gentlemen, ecclesiastics, laymen, and of the common people collected before the hotel where the Reformer was staying; they went in and out one after another, and could hardly satiate themselves with gazing at him. He had become the man of Germany. Even those who thought him in error were affected by the nobleness of soul that led him to sacrifice his life to the voice of conscience. With many persons then present at Worms, the chosen men of the nation, Luther held conversation abounding in that salt with which all his words were seasoned. None quitted him without feeling animated by a generous enthusiasm for the truth.”⁸

The various political and ecclesiastical forces that surrounded Luther’s appearance led to an astounding con-

clusion. On April 26, 1521, the excommunicated enemy of Rome was allowed to depart Worms unharmed. Wylie wrote: “[S]urrounded by twenty gentlemen on horseback, and a crowd of people who accompanied him beyond the walls, Luther left Worms. His journey back was accom-

“[A] number of princes, counts, barons, knights, gentlemen, ecclesiastics, laymen, and of the common people ... could hardly satiate themselves with gazing at him [Luther]. He had become the man of Germany. Even those who thought him in error were affected by the nobleness of soul that led him to sacrifice his life to the voice of conscience. With many persons then present at Worms, the chosen men of the nation, Luther held conversation abounding in that salt with which all his words were seasoned. None quitted him without feeling animated by a generous enthusiasm for the truth.”

J.H. Merle d’Aubigne

plished amid demonstrations of popular interest more enthusiastic even than those which had signaled his progress thither. A few days after he was gone, the emperor fulminated his ‘edict’ against him, placing him beyond the pale of law, and commanding all men, whenever the term of Luther’s safe-conduct expired, to withhold from him food and drink, succour and shelter, to apprehend him and send him bound to the emperor.”⁹ Wylie remarked: “Luther had entered

Worms with one sword hanging over his head — the anathema of the Pope; he quits it with two unsheathed against him, for now the Pope’s excommunication is added to the emperor’s ban.”¹⁰

Eleven days after leaving Worms, traveling with a driver and his companion, Amsdorff, masked horsemen surprised the party, threw the driver to the ground, restrained Amsdorf, forced Luther into a saddle, and disappeared into the forest of Thuringia.¹¹ The friendly kidnappers, taking circuitous routes throughout the day, finally brought Luther to the castle of Wartburg. When he awoke the next morning, he knew immediately where he was. He now wore the clothes of a knight and owned a new name, “Knight George.” J.A. Wylie observed: “The Pope had launched his bolt, the emperor had raised his mailed hand to strike, on every side destruction seemed to await the Reformer; at that moment Luther becomes invisible. The Papal thunder rolls harmlessly along the sky — the emperor’s sword cleaves only the yielding air.”¹² “If God be for us, who can be against us” (Romans 8:31). •

¹J.H. Merle d’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, Vol. II (New York: American Tract Society, 1847), 250.

²*Ibid.*, 251.

³J.A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, Vol. I (New York: Cassell and Company, Ltd., n.d.), 345.

⁴J.H. Merle d’Aubigne, 254.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*, 255.

⁷*Ibid.*, 257.

⁸*Ibid.*, 257,258.

⁹Wylie, 347.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*, 348,349.



The Rev. Mark Evans is a minister in Faith Presbyterian Church, Bible Presbyterian Church, and is pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC.



chapel featured students apologizing to each other.” And, we might add that perhaps they would not have blinked if they had been praying to God, who created the plants. But, the truth is — They were not!

Another Tweet stated: “In worship, our community confessed the harm we’ve done to plants, speaking directly in repentance.”

Other Seminary statements said: “Because plants aren’t capable of verbal response, does that mean we shouldn’t engage with them?”

“And here’s the thing: At first, this work will seem weird. It won’t feel normal. It won’t look like how we’re used to worship looking and sounding.

“And that’s exactly the point. We don’t just need new wine, we need new wineskins.”

The Seminary here twists the words of Christ in Mark 2 to their own corrupt ends. How much better if they had chosen Isaiah 40:8: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

Animism

This false worship, advocated by a school that is training many future ministers and church leaders in the mainline churches is an offense to Almighty God.

There is one God, and He alone deserves our worship, praise and confession for sin. He declares with clarity and finality: “I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22).

To offer prayers of repentance to plants must assume that they contain a spirit, and that they are capable of granting forgiveness. This is a form of animism (that all things are “god” — animate and inanimate).

An official Union Seminary press release only increased concerns in this regard. It stated: “There’s been much discussion online about a Union chapel this week, in which the Union community was asked to engage with the plants, soil, rocks, birds, trees in our lives.”

“Today in Chapel We Confessed to Plants”

UNION SEMINARY AND THE ROAD TO APOSTASY

BY BRAD K. GSELL

Today in chapel, we confessed to plants. Together, we held our grief, joy, regret, hope, guilt and sorrow in prayer; offering them to the beings who sustain us but whose gift we too often fail to honor.

“What do you confess to the plants in your life?”

So stated an official Tweet from Union Theological Seminary, in New York, on September 17, 2019.

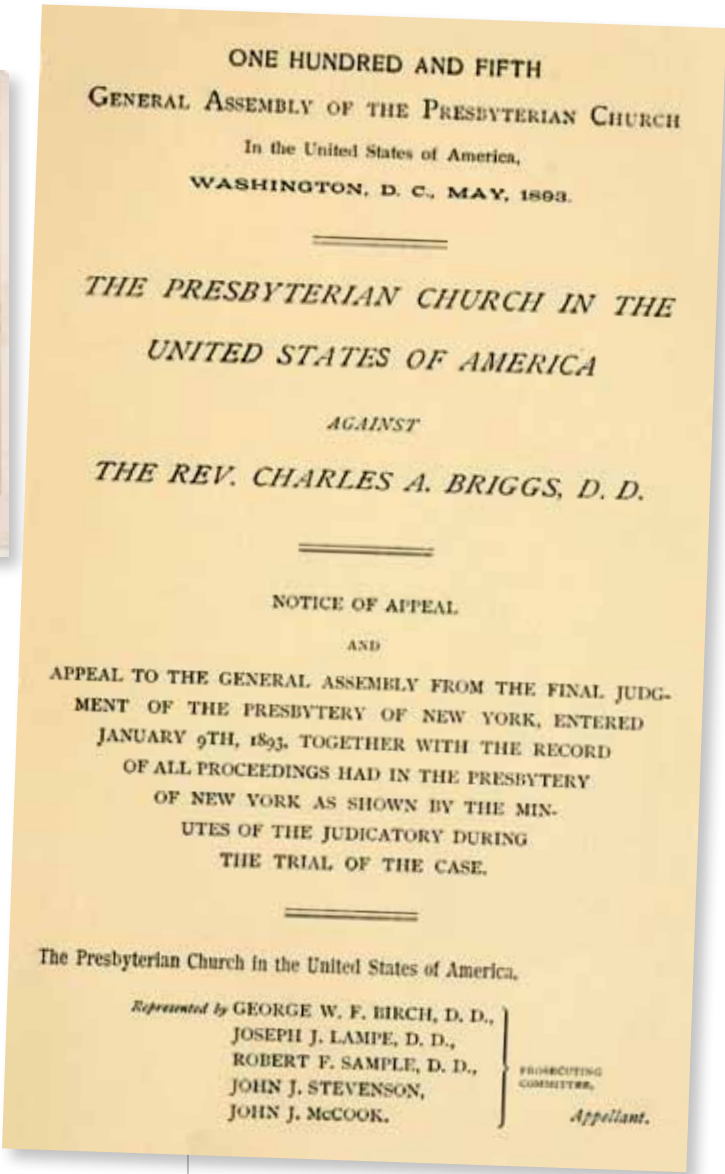
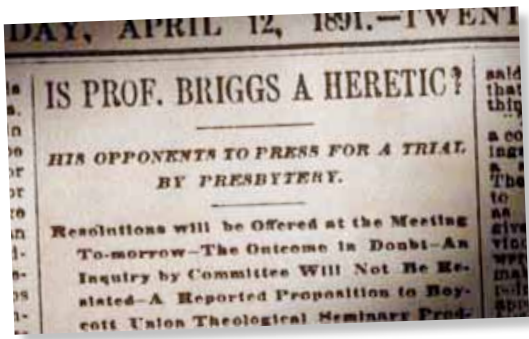
One had to go to the source, since the headlines sounded too much like the sensationalized “fake news” to which we have become so accustomed.

Praying to God or to the Plants directly?

It is one thing if confession is made to God for what we perceive to be sins in our lives. It is quite another to pray to the creation, rather than the Creator.

Could it be that this was just a poor choice of words?

The Seminary sent out a series of Tweets the next day, further clarifying their position that the original statement meant exactly what it stated: “No one would have blinked if our



1 John 1:9 tells us: “If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Paganism

This also is characteristic of paganism, which worships and prays to idols, forces of nature, other living things, and false deities. God, in the Bible, condemned and punished such things over and over again. Remember what happened when Aaron constructed the golden calf in the wilderness?

The first two of the Ten Commandments are quite clear: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:3-6).

Those attending this Union Theological Seminary chapel service, confessing to plants, received no more results than the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18. Despite their best attempts, their prayers went unheard. 1 Kings 18:27-29 tells us: “And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

“And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

“And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.”

Universalism

In the press release mentioned above, Union Seminary further proudly declares its full support for Universalism and religious pluralism. After describing the confession to plants service as “one expression of worship here at Union,” it continues: “Union’s daily chapel is, by design, a place where people from all the wondrous faith traditions at Union can express their beliefs. And, given the incredible diversity of our community, that means worship looks different every day! One day, you may come in to find a traditional Anglican communion, another day you may enter into a service of Buddhist meditation or Muslim prayer. Another, you may find a Pentecostal praise service or a silent Quaker meeting. We create a home where people can worship side

by side, in traditions similar to and very different to their own.”

The press release concluded: “The diversity and breadth of our chapel services is a huge part of what makes Union Union. And we wouldn’t change it for the world.”

Union’s Sad History

This did not happen overnight. Union Theological Seminary was founded by Presbyterian pastors in 1836. By the end of that century, it had become a hotbed of liberalism. Most notable was the message in 1891 by Charles Augustus Briggs at the time of his installation as chair of Biblical studies at Union. In it, he

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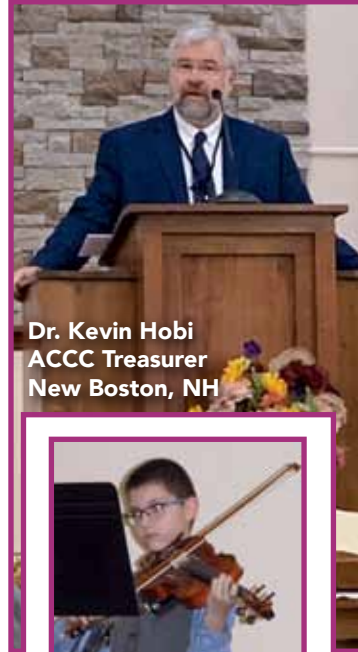
78TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

American Council of Christian Churches

October 22-24, 2019 • Carlisle, PA



Rev. Dan Grenfield
ACCC Executive Secretary
Orwell, Ohio



Dr. Kevin Hobi
ACCC Treasurer
New Boston, NH



Rev. Michael Mayer
Host Pastor
Carlisle, PA



Dr. Charles Dear,
Philadelphia, PA



Dr. John McKnight
Darlington, MD



ACCC RESOLUTIONS

Following are a few of the important resolutions passed by the 78th Annual Convention of the American Council of Christian Churches

◆ BIBLICAL FUNDAMENTALISM: PURSUING PURITY

Understanding the history of Fundamentalism involves recognizing its unchangeable essence while appreciating its change of practice in response to the challenges it has faced. From its efforts to drive Modernism out of its denominations and institutions during the first quarter of the 20th century to its withdrawal from those institutions after they were taken over by theological liberals assisted by tolerant conservatives in the second quarter of the 20th century, to its separation from compromising evangelical brethren since that time, Fundamentalism has been a separatist movement. As David Beale states in his history of American fundamentalism, the heart of the movement is “the unqualified acceptance of and obedience to the Scriptures.”¹ Its spirit reflects the zeal of Phineas executing the defilers of God’s people (Numbers 25:6-13). Its voice echoes the call of Jude to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

Sadly, the day of speaking out strongly against evil has been replaced with an era of political correctness. Strong denunciation of wrong has been labeled “hate speech.” The effect of this has carried over into evangelical circles. The number of voices challenging the compromising and corrupting of the gospel is shrinking. Our present-day softness stands in stark contrast with our Savior’s denouncement of the enemies of the gospel in His day. The righteous anger of the Son of God broke upon the religious leaders who pretended to be champions of God’s truth. Far from

winning God’s favor, religion not based on His truth merited His most intense displeasure (Matthew 23).

While the trend among conservative evangelicals is to shed the label of Fundamentalism, the American Council of Christian Churches stands true to the core of biblical Fundamentalism, to identify unashamedly with its name, and to seek to follow its pattern of pursuing purity.

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches, at its 78th Annual Convention, October 22-24, 2019, at Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA, resolves to declare its appreciation of the many faithful men who have been voices for the cause of Fundamentalism and to encourage Fundamental pastors and their churches across the nation to maintain their loyalty to the living Word and to the written Word of God. •

¹David Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism Since 1850* (Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1986), 3.

◆ CRITICAL THEORY

Since the 1930s, Critical Theorists have sought to supplant Biblical Christianity with their brand of Marxist ideology. They have taught that the Holy Bible should be superseded by the writings of the Frankfurt School,¹ Liberation Theologians,² and/or other false prophets.³ Federal headship likewise should not be found in Adam or Christ, but in race, class, gender, physical ability, age, or any combination of these. Sin then should not be exclusively defined as any violation of God’s Law in thought, word, deed, or state of being, but today rather should be predicated on one’s prox-

imity to being identified as an older, rich, white, able-bodied, heterosexual male, which is the chief of sinners.⁴

Critical Theorists thereby have taught two false gospels, depending on the group to which they say a person belongs. Salvation for a person in an “oppressed” minority group entails 1) an awareness⁵ of their innocent, victimhood status and 2) a relentless push to overthrow the hegemonic power⁶ in order to attain social justice. The gospel for a person in an “oppressor” group includes 1) a perpetual feeling of guilt⁷ for the group’s collective sins and 2) a life of penance involving endless apologies, reparations, affirmative actions, and silent listening to “marginalized” groups, as well as the mortification of all purported “microaggressions” of sexism, racism, ageism, ableism, cisgenderism, colonialism, misogyny, patriarchy, and toxic masculinity.

Within the last two decades, Critical Theorists have won many converts by preaching their destructive beliefs in almost every area of society, including academics, politics, athletics, entertainment, and religion. Quite a number of professing evangelicals have even imbibed Critical Theory to some degree.⁸

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches, at its 78th Annual Convention, October 22-24, 2019, at Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA, resolves to reject Critical Theory and its subfields, such as Gender Studies, Feminist Studies, Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, and Identity Politics. Rather, we admonish everyone to turn from these worldly ideologies unto God’s infallible and perspicuous Word, adhering only to His definitions of righteousness, sin, justice, guilt, grace, redemption, repentance, forgiveness, and sanctification.⁹ Romans 3:23 says that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”; therefore, we urge “all men everywhere to repent [and

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ACCC RESOLUTIONS

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believe the Gospel]: because [God] hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Christ Jesus] whom he hath ordained” (Acts 17:30-31). Lastly, we exhort all Christians to “put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all” (Colossians 3:10-11, cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:27-29). •

¹Such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, and Jürgen Habermas.

²Such as Gustavo Gutiérrez and James Cone.

³Such as Karl Marx, György Lukács, Antonio Gramsci, Paulo Freire, Derek Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Peggy McIntosh, Alison Bailey, Robin DiAngelo, Barbara Applebaum, George Yancy, and Richard Delgado.

⁴Intersectionality Score Calculator: <https://intersectionalityscore.com/>.

⁵Sometimes called getting “woke.”

⁶Depending on the focus, it can be called “heterosexual/straight privilege,” “male privilege,” “white privilege,” or “systemic/institutional/structural racism.”

⁷At times, this is called “white guilt.” The opposite is oftentimes called “white fragility.”

⁸See Tim Keller, “Racism and Corporate Evil: A White Guy’s Perspective,” *Desiring God Blog* (March 28, 2012): <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/racism-and-corporate-evil>; William H. Smith, “Critical Race Theory, RTS, and SBTS,” *The Aquila Report* (March 30, 2017): <https://www.theaquilareport.com/critical-race-theory-rt-sbts/>; Thabiti Anyabwile, “We Await Repentance for Assassinating Dr. King,” *The Gospel Coalition* (April 4, 2018): <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/thabiti-anyabwile/await-repentance-assassinating-dr-king/>; Samuel Sey, “Moses or Marx?” *Slow To Write Blog* (April 27, 2018): <https://slowtowrite.com/moses-or-marx/>; Hohn Cho, “Microaggressions ... or Speck-Plucking?” *PyroManiacs* (June 18, 2018): <http://teampyro.blogspot.com/2018/06/microaggressions-or-speck-plucking.html>; R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “Torn Between Two Cultures? Revoice, LGBT Identity, and Biblical Christianity,” *Albert Mohler Blog* (August 2,

2018): <https://albertmohler.com/2018/08/02/torn-two-cultures-revoice-lgbt-identity-biblical-christianity/>; “The [Dallas] Statement on Social Justice & the Gospel” (September 2018): <https://statementonsocialjustice.com/>; J.D. Greear, “Is white privilege real?” *J.D. Greear Ministries* (January 28, 2019): <https://jdgreear.com/askmeanything/white-privilege-real/>; Sey, “Whiteness, Blackness, Christless,” *Slow To Write Blog* (April 12, 2019): <https://slowtowrite.com/whiteness-blackness-christless/>; Darrell Harrison and Virgil Walker, “Whiteness,” *Just Thinking* (podcast), April 14, 2019, <http://thebarpodcast.com/JT/index.php/2019/04/14/whiteness/>; Tom Ascol, “Resolution 9 and the Southern Baptist Convention 2019,” *Founders Ministries* (June 15, 2019): <https://founders.org/2019/06/15/resolution-9-and-the-southern-baptist-convention-2019/>; James Lindsay and Michael O’Fallon, “Grievance Scholars Expose the Trojan Horse of Social Justice in Faith & Academics,” *Sovereign Nations* (August 9, 2019): <https://sovereignnations.com/2019/08/09/grievance-scholars-trojan-horse-social-justice-faith-academics/>; and Neil Shenvi, “Is Critical Theory a Threat to Evangelicalism? — A Dialogue with Bradly Mason, Part 1,” *Neil Shenvi — Apologetics* (August 30, 2019): <https://shenviapolitics.com/dialogue-with-bradly-mason-part-1/>.

⁹See the 1998 ACCC “Resolution on Violence in Our Society,” the 2011 “Resolution on Instances of Abuse within Professed Fundamentalism,” the 2012 “Resolution on Liberation Theology and Socialism,” the 2014 “Resolution Concerning Marriage and Sexual Morality,” the 2016 “Resolution on Freedom and Respect for Civil Authority,” the 2017 “Resolution on Racism,” and the 2018 “Resolution on Multiculturalism.”

◆ ECCLESIASTICAL SEPARATION AND THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Founded in 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention today unites over 47,000 local churches, just over 5,000 domestic missionaries, nearly 4,000 overseas missionaries, 41 state conventions, and over 1,000 other local associations. Church membership totals 14.8 million, with weekly attendance at these churches numbering 5.3 million. The national organization administers six seminaries training nearly 23,000 students. In the fiscal year 2017-2018, Southern Baptist churches raised \$9.6 billion, including

\$463 million donated to its Cooperative Program.¹

The Convention’s numerical success and widespread influence mirrors that of its most renowned preacher, Evangelist Billy Graham (d. 2018). A favorite son of Southern Baptists, Graham was remembered fondly by the 2018 Convention as “a beloved Southern Baptist who traveled the world sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.”² R. Albert Mohler, President of Southern Seminary in Louisville, KY, also venerated Graham as “a man of deep conviction whose passionate heartbeat was for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.”³ Dr. Graham delivered the address at Dr. Mohler’s inauguration as Seminary President in 1993, and in 2001 Dr. Mohler served as the Chairman of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Crusade in Louisville, KY. Today, students at Southern are educated at The Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry.

In addition to the Convention’s numerical success, Dr. Graham embodied its theology. That theology has included the repudiation of biblical separatism from false teachers. For the Evangelist, a stated concern for winning souls justified the disobedience of ecumenical evangelism. For the Convention, a stated concern for Christian unity has justified the disobedience of denominational loyalty in spite of unpurged errors. Many conservative Southern Baptist leaders even affirm that they are not separatist Fundamentalists: “Fundamentalism in religious circles has normally been characterized by separation, that is, departing from or removing oneself from a denomination. Quite obviously, [SBC] conservatives stayed.”⁴

This commitment to denominational loyalty continues to require problematic associational toleration and support of serious error by Southern Baptist churches and leaders. The ecumenism of Rick Warren, Russell Moore, and Timothy George, the charismatic⁵ of Matt Chandler, Steven Furtick, and Ronnie Floyd, the

female preaching of Beth Moore and Lysa TerKeurst, and the 2019 Convention's embrace of the critical race theory and intersectionality as legitimate "analytical tools" are all representative problems intrinsic to a number of the Convention's churches and leadership. The financial ties of the Cooperative Program, upon which conservative seminaries depend, are funded by the same state conventions that also finance state-controlled Southern Baptist universities with their liberal seminaries. These arrangements violate the command of the New Testament: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-10-11). As one of the forebears of New Evangelicalism's spirit of disobedience to the Bible doctrine of separation, the Convention is comprised of many congregations that exhibit the worldly weakness of this present evil world (Galatians 1:4).⁶

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches, at its 78th Annual Convention, October 22-24, 2019, at Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA, resolves to warn churches and Christian institutions against the dangers of compromise with and within the Southern Baptist Convention. Although thankful for every instance in which God's blessing overrules man's disobedience in the furtherance of the gospel, our consciences are bound by Scripture. Prior to co-laboring with SBC brethren, our challenge to them should be obedience to the clear command of the Lord: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). •

¹<http://www.sbc.net/BecomingSouthernBaptist/FastFacts.asp>.

²<http://www.sbcannualmeeting.net/sbc18/resolutions>

³<https://www.sbts.edu/graham/>

⁴Jerry Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation: The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville: Broadman and Holdman, 2000), 1. Sutton writes as an apologist for the resurgence. For a thorough response, see George Houghton, "Are Conservative Southern Baptists Fundamentalists?" Faith Pulpit (January/February, 2004). See also Larry Oats, "Southern Baptists: What has Changed, What Needs to Change" (unpublished paper presented at the Foundations Baptist Fellowship International's Annual Fellowship on June 13, 2018; audio available at <https://www.proclaimanddefend.org/preacher/larry-oats/>).

⁵In 2015, the SBC's International Missionary Board began to allow missionaries who speak in tongues, and a 2017 Lifeway Research survey found that 55% of SBC pastors believe that the phenomenon is a gift of the Holy Spirit today.

⁶"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world [age], according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4).

◆ RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND "THE EQUALITY ACT"

The apostle Paul instructed his assistant in ministry, Timothy, that prayer was an important priority for the churches of Jesus Christ. Church members must pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:2-4). The god of this world militates against the prayers of God's people, obscures the truth from men in authority, cares little for what is good and acceptable in the sight of God, hates the salvation from sin offered to the souls of men, and oppresses believers with religious persecution and political tyranny all over the globe.

Many of our nation's founders had fled such persecution, believing that religious freedom is the first freedom man needs. Even the skeptics among them understood with Thomas Paine that "political as well as spiritual freedom is the gift of God through Christ." He was "fully con-

vinced that spiritual freedom is the root of political liberty" (*Thoughts on Defensive War*, 1775).¹ Our nation's Bill of Rights concurs, opening with the guarantee of religious freedom. All other rights are then built on that foundation.

Seduced by the deceptions of the god of this world and void of this original American appreciation for the priority of religious freedom, the U.S. House of Representatives passed "The Equality Act" on May 17, 2019. Eight Republicans joined all but seven abstaining Democrats to approve the bill as law, 236-173 (16 Republicans abstained, and no Democrats voted against the bill). The stated purpose of the Act is "to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and for other purposes."²

"The Equality Act" would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in many areas of life on the basis of "race, color, religion, or national origin." Section 703 of the current law prohibits discrimination in the form of "Unlawful Employment Practices," and in that section the protected groups listed are the four above with the addition of "sex" after "religion." The amendment inserts a parenthetical after "sex," so the list of protected groups becomes: "race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), or national origin," and it then would make this phrase the list of protected groups in every other Section of the law. This placement of the parenthetical phrase means that the goal of this Act is to make discrimination because of "sexual orientation" or "gender identity" illegal in the same way that discrimination because of "sex" would be. The goal concludes that questions of "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" have more to do with "sex" than they do with the other protected categories, like "religion."

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ACCC RESOLUTIONS

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This conclusion is in error. The law's current category "sex" depends upon a discernable heterosexual distinction between male and female. The parenthetical obliterates the category by confusing that distinction. More correctly, "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" refer to religious doctrines of anthropology. As such, Bible believers, whose anthropology comes from the pages of Scripture, understand "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to be false religious doctrines, which, when codified into law, would discriminate against them and violate their constitutional rights of religious liberty. The parenthetical insertion of "The Equality Act" legislation destroys the equal protections of religious freedom by enshrining a state-sponsored religious anthropology as the law of the land for everyone to believe and live by.

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches, at its 78th Annual Convention, October 22-24, 2019, at Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA, resolves to expose the threat to religious freedom posed by "The Equality Act" as state-sponsored religious tyranny. We aver that our consciences are bound by Scripture when it comes to what we believe about the nature of mankind and human sexuality, that God made man in His own image as male and female, commanding them to be fruitful and to multiply and to fill the earth through monogamous, heterosexual marriage (Genesis 1:26-28). While we are committed to live peaceably with all men of differing religious viewpoints, we reject the anthropology of the sponsors of "The Equality Act," and we refuse to submit to laws that require us to violate our consciences when it comes to these important religious doctrines (Acts 5:29).³ We call on Congress and the President to respect our First Amendment rights and reject "The Equality Act." •

¹See Volume One of Moncure Daniel Conway's *The Writings of Thomas Paine* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1894), 57; available online at Google Books.

²Text of the legislation is at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5>. See Kevin Hobi, "Scripture on 'The Equality Act,'" *The Review* (May 2019), pp. 2-6 <http://www.ibfna.com/the-review-may-2019-2/>. The National Association of Evangelicals has responded inadequately to this situation. Although the NAE is currently against "The Equality Act" (<https://www.nae.net/religious-freedom-concerns-equality-act/>) for its attack on explicitly religious institutions, the NAE still promoted SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) legislation in 2018 that would deny religious liberty to Christian business owners of secular businesses/institutions (https://world.wng.org/2018/12/boards_back_sogi_compromise).

³"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

"TODAY IN CHAPEL WE CONFESSED TO PLANTS"

Continued from page 5

denied the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

The Presbyterian Church vetoed Briggs' appointment, and the General Assembly of 1893 found him guilty of heresy. He was deposed from the ministry in that denomination.

In reaction, the seminary declared its independence from control by the Church. Over the following 126 years, the seminary has produced some of the most leftist "theologians" in the history of the church. Union is proud of its recognition as the birthplace of the so-called Black Theology and Feminist Theology, among others.

How Did It Come to This?

Some may be wondering how a prominent seminary can go from being founded as a Bible-believing Presbyterian seminary to such a place that its students are taking such an extreme action as asking forgiveness from plants. The answer is really quite simple. Once apostasy and unbelief have

taken root, the trajectory is nearly always further and further away from the teachings of the Word of God.

Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25 tell us: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Once men leave the sure anchor of the Word of God, their deceitful, wicked hearts lead them on a path of destruction.

German pastor Dietrich Boenhoffer taught at Union Seminary in the 1930s. Though no Fundamentalist himself, Boenhoffer wrote concerning his experience there in his book *Barcelona, Berlin, New York: 1928-1931* (Fortress Press, 1931) 309-310: "The students are completely clueless with respect to what dogmatics [the theology of the Bible] is really about. They are not familiar with even the most basic questions. They become intoxicated with liberal and humanistic phrases, are amused at the fundamentalists, and yet basically are not even up to their [the fundamentalists'] level.... A seminary in which numerous students openly laugh during a public lecture because they find it amusing when a passage on sin and forgiveness ... is cited has obviously, despite its many advantages, forgotten what Christian theology in its very essence stands for."

Returning to the 1 Kings 18 account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal, we read in verses 36 and 37: "And it came to pass ... that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again...."

After Elijah prayed in faith to the God of the Bible, God was faithful in answering. In verse 39, we read: "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God." •



FAITH PRESBYTERY, BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH held its fall 2019 meeting on September 27, 2019, at the Bible Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, NC. A great time of fellowship was enjoyed by all. In the front row above are the Vice Moderator, the Rev. Hal Ricker; Moderator, Dr. H.R. Vandermey; and Stated Clerk/Treasurer, Elder Brad Gsell. At the meeting, Mr. Gsell was examined and then ordained to the gospel ministry.





Discerning the Lord's Body

BY BRAD K. GSELL

Message delivered at Pilgrim Presbyterian Bible Church in Kingsville, MD, October 27, 2019

With this being Reformation Sunday, as well as communion Sunday, I think it is good for us to remember the profound effect the Protestant Reformation had in reclaiming the Biblical view of the Lord's Supper.

October 31 marks the 502nd anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. Receiving far less notice is that 2019 is the 500th Anniversary of the famous Leipzig Debate between Luther and Johann Eck, an apologist for the Catholic Church and a skilled debater.

It was during this debate that Luther declared that *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone) was the basis of Christian belief. He also raised some eyebrows quite considerably by declaring that the Pope had no author-

ity, since there is no mention of a pope in the Bible. He again condemned the sale of indulgences to the laity (which was a "cash cow" for the Catholic Church and its leaders). He debunked the idea of Purgatory, stating correctly that there is no mention of it either in the Bible.

If the Pope was not upset with Luther before, he was now determined to quash the teachings of this impudent monk. This led to the famous Papal Bull which condemned and forbid Luther's writings. But, Luther had decided to "let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also. The body they may kill. God's truth abideth still. His kingdom is forever."

One Biblical teaching that was restored by the Reformers was the "priesthood of all believers." This had been very greatly abused by Rome. The Bible teaches that every believer is a priest with direct access to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 2:5 says: "For there is one God, and one

mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." This passage mirrors the words of Paul, who in Romans 12:1 writes: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

As a "royal priesthood," Peter reminds each of us: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [in your actions]; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy (1 Peter 1:15-16).

Rome taught that good works were meritorious to one's salvation. Even believers could reduce time in Rome's imaginary Purgatory by doing good works. Men and women who were faithful to the church lived in constant fear of not being good enough. The use of fear was employed to extract money out of them and all kinds of merciless sacrifices to increase the power of the Church.

Rome also had a solution for those living wicked lives. You could pay your way out of trouble. You could literally live like the devil, and then simply throw in some money. This had developed into a very corrupt system. All this money coming in left thousands in even deeper poverty than they already were, and had the Pope and powerful Vatican officials living in lavish luxury. Also, the extravagant plans for St. Peter's Basilica in Rome needed huge amounts of cash coming in.

The Reformers said, "Absolutely NOT!" The sacrifice which the Scriptures demand is your LIFE. Nothing you can do or give will merit the saving of your soul, but when you are a blood bought child of God, God demands your love and obedience to Him! This is something the true child of God desires to do willingly! Paul tells us that it is "our reasonable service."

The Catholic Church had also turned the Lord's Supper into a great offense to the Lord Jesus Christ. They taught that in the bread and wine, Christ literally offers Himself as a sacrifice again and again, through the ministry of a select group of Roman Catholic priests.

With this background, and as this is Communion Sunday, let us look at 1 Corinthians 11, which is one of the clearest passages in the Bible on this subject, in addition to the record given in the Gospels of the institution of it by our Lord Jesus Christ. This is recorded in Matthew 26, Mark 14 and Luke 22.

The Corinthian Church was a very carnal church. We see all through Paul's two epistles to this church numerous disputes and rivalries. They were taking sides between Paul and Apollos, and they were turning their heads away from unspeakable immorality in their midst.

Here in chapter 11, it appears that they had turned the Lord's Supper into a self-serving covered dish dinner of sorts. The rich were eating and drinking sumptuously to the point of great excess, while some went hungry.

Just imagine if your church announced a covered dish dinner, but instead of putting it all out on the table for everyone to enjoy equally, one family came with filet mignon, and shared it with another family who brought lobster tails — while making a poorer family sit on the other side of the room, where a few wormy apples, past their prime, were the only thing available. And that type of thing was actually what was happening at the Church of Corinth.

When Christ instituted the Last Supper, it was at the end of a meal, and many early churches continued this practice. But, the carnal Corinthians had turned the communion service into a big meal with their carnal desire to be fed, even gluttony, supplanting the solemn sacrament instituted by Christ.

Paul lets them know that their behavior is displeasing to God and that he certainly would not praise

them for it. He asked them if they did not have houses in which to take care of their hunger. In other words, the Corinthians once again were showing their extreme self-centeredness and mockery of the things of Christ. Not only were they discriminating against the poor in their midst, they had turned the Lord's Supper into a mockery. The solemnity and meaning of the Lord's Supper was being totally obscured and actually blasphemed.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10, after listing all of the terrible sins, and then turning to the Lord's Supper, warns the Corinthians that they cannot have two masters. In verses 20 and 21, he writes: "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."

As the Reformers many centuries later brought the church back to the Bible, so here we see Paul reminding them of what he had already taught them. Since they obviously didn't learn the first time, he begins in verse 23: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you...." He is saying: "Don't forget. I've already taught this to you."

He continues in verse 23: "that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body,

which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."

Verses 25 and 26 continue: "After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

Some may ask, "What is the purpose of the communion service? I'm already saved and am thankful for what Christ did for me on the cross."

Here we see of primary importance that this ordinance was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This was not just some ceremony that those immediately after His death and resurrection thought would add a nice touch or would bring them some magical good luck.

If we ever find ourselves saying, "Why does God make me do such and such?" the very first reason must always be, "Because God is my Father, and He told me to do it." Do we think that God is unable to save souls without men preaching the gospel and the sending of missionaries? Of course He is. But, He has given us the Great Commission: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel."

We also see that Christ instituted the Lord's Supper as a remembrance, a memorial, of what He had done: "This do in remembrance of me."

It wasn't to be a one-time occurrence, like baptism. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup...."

And, we see that it is to continue until the Son of God returns in the clouds in power and great glory. He says, "Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

Now, some of our Baptist brethren believe that the Communion service is just a memorial, and it certainly is that. But it is far more than when we go to a Memorial Day service for our fallen soldiers, as much as that is a very good thing.

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DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY

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At its 2019 Annual Convention, the American Council of Christian Churches had break-out sessions on “How Our Fathers Ministered.” It was good to remember the wonderful ministries of some of the great men of God throughout the 20th century. These sessions were indeed **memorials**, yet the Communion Service is so very much more than just remembering the events of Christ’s death on the cross and resurrection in victory over death.

We can first see this from a **NEGATIVE** aspect. In 1 Corinthians 11:27-30, Paul says: “Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [or have died].”

I attended the ACCC sessions with respect, but I never once feared that the Lord would find me unworthy of simply listening or remembering, or that I hadn’t examined myself sufficiently to hear the lectures — let alone that I was bringing damnation on myself because of a failure to do these things.

No there is something far more to the Lord’s Supper.

If we turn back one chapter to 1 Corinthians 10, we can see things from a **POSITIVE** aspect. Paul begins the chapter by listing a whole catalog of sins that the Corinthian Christians were probably involved in and were commanded to avoid.

Then, in verse 16, he turns abruptly to the Lord’s Supper. He writes: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not

the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”

The idea given by the word “blessing” here is that thanksgiving was offered for it and it was set apart for a sacred use — for spiritual nourishment. When Christ instituted the Lord’s Supper, Matthew 26:26-27 tells us: “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.”

The Lord’s Supper is not reserved for just some class of Super-Christians. Our Westminster Larger Catechism states that it is even for “weak and doubting” Christians.

The custom we have of praying, of “asking the blessing,” if you will, before our meals, is largely taken from these Scriptures. Just as our breakfast, lunch and supper are set aside for our physical nourishment, so are the bread and the cup of the Lord’s Supper set aside for our spiritual nourishment.

In 1 Corinthians 10:16, which we just read, is the use of the word “communion” in relation to both the bread and the cup. This word has in it the very concept of spiritual nourishment. Our Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 91, describes succinctly what takes place. It says that the spiritual benefit we receive is “only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.” It is entirely spiritual. There is no magic in the elements. It is only the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in our hearts.

The Westminster Divines also wisely dispelled two of the great errors of Rome, by saying: “not from any virtue in them [in the bread and cup], or in him that doth administer them.” The elements remain bread and wine.

There is no magical change to them, and the simple act of partaking of the physical elements produces nothing.

And brethren, if any are trusting in any virtue in me or any other minister, we are all in big trouble.

Rome teaches that Christ is sacrificed anew every time the mass is performed, that the elements themselves actually become the real body and blood of Christ when the priest elevates the elements, and that the virtue of a priest performing it is essential.

The Lutheran view is that the elements remain bread and wine, but that the body and blood of Christ are actually “with, in and under the elements.” This view is not as bad as the Catholic view, but both of them go well beyond and counter to what the Scriptures teach.

Hebrews 7:27 gives the glorious truth that refutes the error of Rome: “Who [Christ] needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” The price has been paid. “It is finished!” Hebrews 10:10 says: “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Never forget those words, “ONCE FOR ALL.”

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10, after listing all of the terrible sins, and then turning to the Lord’s Supper, warns the Corinthians that they cannot have two masters. In verses 20 and 21, he writes: “But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.”

Some accuse us Bible Presbyterians of being too separatist, that our fellowship is too narrow. Yet, here once again, Paul brings the subject in relation to the Lord’s Supper. We are to be a “holy priesthood,” separated unto Christ. In 2 Corinthians 6:15,

Paul writes, “What part hath he that believeth with an infidel [one who is in rebellion against God and His Word].”

In this whole passage, 2 Corinthians 6:14-17, Paul writes, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.”

Then, in verses 6:17-18 and 7:1, He concludes with this wonderful promise: “and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

These verses apply so well to our partaking of the Lord’s supper. Paul tells us, “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.”

That’s why he tells us: “Let a man examine himself,” and that we are not to take the Lord’s Supper “unworthily.” This is serious business.

We might be puzzled as to what it means to “discern the Lord’s body.” The Greek word here means to separate or to discriminate. Any who treat the eating of the bread and drinking of the cup of the Lord’s Supper as no different from the common eating of these things for physical sustenance bring damnation to themselves. The communion elements are set aside and are not for physical nourishment, but only for spiritual nourishment. To

treat them in any other way is mockery against God. As we have seen, chapter 11 starts out showing how the Corinthians were treating the Lord’s Supper as a carnal affair.

One very important element of the Communion service is that we are not only having communion with Christ, but also with each other as part of the Body of Christ. In the Scriptures, the Lord’s Supper is always a communal event. It is always done with the congregation. The first question in Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 29, states that our partaking of the Lord’s Supper is “to be a bond and pledge of [our] communion with him, and with each other, as members of the mystical body.”

When we read these verses, any of us who are honest may take pause as to whether we are ever “worthy” to partake. However, the Lord’s Supper is a joyous occasion. It is not shrouded in doom and gloom.

The Lord’s Supper is not reserved for just some class of Super-Christians. Our Westminster Larger Catechism states that it is even for “weak and doubting” Christians. However, Question 171 says that any who come are “to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after

Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.”

Question 174 states: “It is required of them that receive the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord’s body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fullness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.”

One very important element of the Communion service is that we are not only having communion with Christ, but also with each other as part of the Body of Christ. In the Scriptures, the Lord’s Supper is always a communal event. It is always done with the congregation. The first question in Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 29, states that our partaking of the Lord’s Supper is “to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of the mystical body.”

It is quite important to see what comes before and after passages of Scripture that we study. We have looked at how important 1 Corinthians 10 is in understanding the teaching concerning the Lord’s Supper in chapter 11. Well, when we go over to the next chapter, chapter 12, what do you think we find?

In verse 20, Paul says concerning the church: “But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head

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DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY

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to the feet, I have no need of you." He further states that those members of the body which may not be as popular, who might not be able to contribute as much, who might even be a bit annoying or needy, that to them is due "more abundant honor."

And in verses 26 and 27 he says: "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

The Lord's Supper also signifies our love for our brethren in the Body of Christ.

The Book of Hebrews, chapters 9 and 10, bring many of these things together. Hebrews 10:14-18 shows us that Christ paid the price for our sins, once for all. Verse 12 and 14 state: "But this man, after he had offered ONE sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Verse 14 says: "For by ONE offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Verses 17 and 18 say: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is **no more offering for sin.**"

Then, verses 22 to 25 show that we are to come together as a body: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

We are to draw together in faith. We are to come together as a body.

We are not to forsake this assembling of ourselves together. This may have a wider context, but it certainly applies to our observance of the Lord's Supper.

A little further down, in verse 31, it says: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." These things we have read today are very serious things and it should always be our desire not to displease the living God. This is the Scripture that one of the most famous sermons in American history was based upon. Jonathan Edwards preached the sermon "Sinners in the hands of an angry God," and many people fell to their knees crying out to the Lord for salvation, and believers repented of their sins.

And finally, in verse 38, we have that great Scripture upon which the entire Protestant Reformation was built: "Now the just shall live by faith."

Brethren, as we come to the Lord's Table together this morning, may we come in grief and repentance of our sins, with faith and love for Jesus Christ, and His atoning work for us on the cross. May thanksgiving be in our hearts, and may we have a genuine love and concern for all our Christian brethren, who are washed in the blood of the Lamb. •



The Rev. Brad Gsell is a minister of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, NC, and President of the International Council of Christian Churches and of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.

"BY WORKS A MAN IS JUSTIFIED"

Continued from page 1

those that are justified." (See Matthew Poole's *Commentary* on James 2:24).

The key words in James are "ye see then how that by works a man is justified." God sees to the justifica-

tion by faith alone wholly apart from works, and we see that a person is justified by the works it produces.

Faith and works are completely separated in the matter of justification and in no way joined together, as Paul clearly sets forth. However, they are joined together in the lives of justified persons, and we must not separate them, as James teaches.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Nothing could be clearer. Yet, we work out our salvation by working out, by His grace, that which God has worked in us (Philippians 2:12; Ephesians 2:10).

Clearly then, though freely justified by faith alone, we should not be idle in the business of salvation. Rather, by working together with God as His workmanship, we give evidence that we have not received His grace in vain. Therein we have Paul and James completely in agreement. •



The Rev. John Mills is a minister in Faith Presbyterian, Bible Presbyterian Church. He served for many years as pastor of Faith Bible Presbyterian Church, Trenton, MI, and as a well-loved radio Bible teacher.

REDEEMING THE TIME

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