

## THE WORD OF GOD

**T**he Word of God is the seed of the kingdom. Read carefully the parable of the sower. Matt. 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Lk. 8:4-15.

God is the author of all laws in nature and grace, and all operate on the same principle. Jesus makes Christians like a farmer makes a harvest, by sowing the seed. In nature we have the following facts: 1. All fruit is the product of seed. 2. Seed must be planted. 3. Every seed produces its own kind. 4. Seed unmixed will produce the same fruit the world over; the same here as in Asia, the same now as in the days of the apostles: may [p. 43] differ in amount, but not in kind.

The following are the corresponding facts in the spiritual kingdom: 1. All Christians are the product of seed. No seed, no Christians. 2. "The seed is the word of God." Nothing else will make Christians. It will make nothing else. 3. But the word must be planted in [sic] the soil, in the heart. It is good for a farmer to pray for an abundant harvest, but he need not expect it unless he sows the seed. We should pray for a great harvest of souls, but we need not expect it unless we sow the seed, preach the word. 4. This seed, the word, sown unmixed with man's doctrines, will produce the same fruit the world over: the same here as in Asia; the same now as when the apostles preached. There is no excuse for different kinds of Christians. These differences show that mixed seed has been sown. 5. Divine fruit is the product of divine seed. Human doctrines will never bear divine fruit. Hence, preach the word only, and the fruit will always be the same.

Peter declares that this seed lives and abides forever (1 Pet. 1:22-23.) Some declare the word is a dead seed; it will not benefit saint or sinner. No amount of preparation of soil will cause dead seed to produce a harvest. No amount of preparation of soil will produce vegetable life—the seed must be planted, or no harvest. No matter how much the sinner's heart may be prepared, divine life will never be there until the divine seed, the word, is planted in it.

What fruit does the word produce? 1. Faith. Rom. 10:17. 2. Repentance. God's goodness leads to repentance. But we learn of His goodness in the word. Rom. 2:4. 3. Baptism. The word commands it and to refuse, is to reject God's counsel. Luke 7:29-30. 4. New birth. 1 Pet. 1:22. 5. Salvation. Jas. 1:21. 6. Makes Christians, only; only Christians. Other seed is necessary to produce other fruit. 7. Leads into the Church of God. The word will not lead you into an institution or church which it does not mention. It will not lead you to be anything that it did not lead the apostles to be. It will produce no fruit now that it did not then. Hence, the various denominations are not the fruit of the word, for there was only one church then. True there were many local congregations or churches, but they were of the same faith. There is no ecclesiastical organization of these churches. Each was independent of the other. God planted his Church in the world. Every other plant will be rooted up (Matt. 15:13).

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## BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

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## Udenominational Christianity

**C**ontinually I come in contact with people who are confused over the various denominations that are in existence. Often I am asked, "Can I be a Christian without belonging to a denominational church?"

In the early days of Christianity there were no denominations. The early followers of the Christ were simply called Christians (Acts 11:26). Collectively, they were referred to as "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16). Religiously, the apostles Paul, Peter, John, and all the rest were neither Catholic, Protestant, nor Jew. They were Christians only.

First century Christianity was undenominational Christianity. There term should not be confused with the modern idea expressed in "inter-denominational" or "all-denominational" Christianity. Those who tried to create divisions within the church in the first century which would have resulted in denominations were reprimanded (1 Cor. 1:10-13). Their allegiance was to Christ and to Him only. The "party spirit" was not present in pure New Testament Christianity. There were no divisions over doctrine which divides the religious world today. Those who followed Jesus, followed His Word; they had a "Thus saith the Lord" for all they practiced. They were followers of Christ, members of the church which He purchased with His blood—this and nothing more. They practiced no man-made creeds which would have made them members of man-made denominations.

Certainly today if we follow the Christ as they did, we too can be just Christians, having "like precious faith" with the apostles (2 Pet. 1:1). We will be, as they were free from the error and confusion of denominationalism. We can worship and serve the same God as simply and acceptably as they did, following the pattern set forth in the New Testament. When we follow the same God and the same Christ using the blueprint given to us by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, then we can be New Testament Christians just as men and women were nearly two thousand years ago.

The plea of the church of Christ has been the same from the beginning. The Scriptures are sufficient to guide us in all matters of religion (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). We plead for men to abide in the "old paths" and walk therein. You can be an undenominational Christian just as in the early days of the church by following only the teaching of the New Testament.

*William S. Cline  
Deceased*

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.  
Morning Worship 11.00 am.  
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663

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## SECULAR FUNDAMENTALISM

The above phrase was not coined by me. I first heard it on the Michael Medved radio show. I believe that it is an apt description of the increasing **anti-religious** (especially anti-Christian) attitude among many in our society. These folk are bound and determined to remove all mention of religion from the public arena. For them religion should be put in a box and that box hidden away in one's heart.

It began over forty years ago when the U.S. Supreme Court forbade public prayer in public schools. Through the years this mindset has gathered steam resulting in religion being pushed aside in concern over "separation of church and state" (a concept not found in the U.S. Constitution or any state constitution).

Part and parcel of this growing antagonism is the **man-made** barrier between science and religion. The academic community in our nation has wholeheartedly embraced Charles Darwin's "Theory of Evolution" - the unsubstantiated belief that all life evolved from pre-existing life. This unproven "theory" has been swallowed whole by our public school system, the media and entertainment industries. They have no use for the Bible or Christianity. In its place they have attempted to make this erroneous science into their religion. **True science is complimentary and compatible with true religion and vice versa.** "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science (or knowledge - RLR) so called" (1 Tim.6:20).

Along with the acceptance of the theory of evolution is the new found respectability of **atheism**. Atheists have long been relegated to the ranks of crackpots and eccentric cranks, like the late Madeline Murray O'Hare. But lately a new crop of atheists has arisen. They have been involved in several debates and have written bestsellers. Perhaps this goes along with the rising tide of unbelief in our culture. Of course their arguments are still **intellectually bankrupt and childish** but so is the thinking of a majority of our society nowadays. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (Psa.14:1).

Another part of this growth of secular fundamentalism is **hedonism** or the incessant pursuit of pleasure; especially sexuality. Practices once considered disgraceful and disgusting by society are now openly flaunted: adultery, co-habitation, promiscuity, homosexuality, etc. **Deviant** practices once "in the closet" are out of the closet and their adherents are demanding that the rest of us keep our views "in the closet". "And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting." (Rom.1:28- ASV).

**What is the faithful Christian to do?** Rather than retreat from the forces of Satan we should obey the Lord and be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matt.5:13, 14). With love we must publicly refute this darkness with the light of God's word; whether in the pulpit or in print or in our daily conversations. Brethren I do not expect secular fundamentalism to retreat but to only grow stronger. **We should expect the worst.** They want us to "shut up and go away". "Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim.3:12, 13).

Rather than retreat, the church of Christ should **advance** with the gospel and help free more from the darkness of sin (cf. Acts 26:18). Christ is on our side as long as we are doing His will (cf. Matt.28:19-20).

Roelf L. Ruffner  
Cheyenne, WY

*Ken Chumbley*

## NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick's aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron' sister who is having health problems, Myrtle Grimsley, Lanny Niver together with his daughter, and Tim Smith.

Rachel Fitzpatrick was sick Sunday.

Lanny Niver was in Tennessee last Sunday but planned to be back this past week for a doctor's appointment.

Maomi Aaron's sister, Louise Rogers was hospitalized for several days but released Thursday.

Sheila Aaron, Glen' sister in law was in an accident this week and is having neck problems and was to have tests run last Friday.

During Spring Break the Arnolds and Kathy Treadway are in Florida, the Wilsons will be traveling to Indiana to Ron's mother's and the Chumbleys will be away for a few days.

## THE GOSPEL'S POWER TO SAVE

There must be some connection made between power and the thing to be moved. There is great power in a locomotive, but it cannot move the train of cars till proper connection is made with power.

There is sufficient power in the gospel to move every sinner out of sin into the blessings of salvation, but that power moves no one until proper connections are made. Preaching is the means of establishing that connection. It is God's way of bringing the sinner under the influence of his saving power. For that reason, Paul was not ashamed to preach it. (Rom. 1:16).

The gospel exerts no power over the heathen who has never heard it, or over the infidel who will not hear it, and it exerts but little power over him who looks for the power to come some other way. It exerts a power over us for good to the extent that we place ourselves under the influence of its teaching. The cyclone has no power over the man who is safely hidden away in his storm cellar, but it would be foolish for him to come out after the storm and confidently affirm that there was no power in the cyclone, but no more foolish than for a man who will not heed God's word to affirm that there is no converting power in it.

*R. L. Whiteside  
Deceased*