

LOVE, According to John

“True love” is an oft-repeated expression, because there are so many things parading as love which are counterfeit. “True love” is what we find in the Bible. It is that which God and Christ have for man. It is that which Jesus displayed and taught in His earthly life, and that which He enjoins upon us: “But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence...As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love” (John 14:31; 15:9-10). The Lord Jesus Christ proved His love for the Father and for mankind when He gave Himself according to the Father's will: “Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Gal. 1:4-5). Truly, we are to follow the love of God (Mk. 12:29-31; Jn. 3:16; 13:34- 35; Rev. 1:5; Eph. 5:1-2). God is imminently qualified to teach us about love, and He teaches us through the inspired men who wrote the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jn. 16:13). One of those men is John, often called “the apostle of love,” because he wrote so much about it. Let us learn from him about love.

True Love is Expressed in Action

Whether it be our love for God or for other people, love is proven by the proper action. For example, John condemns mere lip service without action, when he states: Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:16-18). Likewise, our love to God is expressed by obedience to His commandments: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3).

A False Concept of Love

From some men in the brotherhood today we would get the impression that to oppose a false teacher, or to refuse fellowship to those who are involved in error, is to be lacking in love and to be filled with envy and strife. However, the “apostle of love” declares that we must so do: Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 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 9-11).

We often convey a message by what we do not say. Earlier this year a well-known preacher wrote an article entitled, *The “Apostle of Love” on Love*. It was lacking any warning from John against false doctrine and false brethren, or the example of Jesus in doing so (Mt. 7:15-20; ch's 23-24; Mk. 7:1-13). Surely, gospel preachers and others ought to be able to see the urgent need to emphasize that love demands warning and the condemnation of that which is contrary to the doctrine of Christ (Col. 1:28; 2:8, 16-23; Acts 20:29- 31), especially in these perilous times

Continued on page 3

BELVEDERE BEACON

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

Volume 9

Number 31

August 3, 2008

A PUBLICATION OF THE BELVEDERE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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(Greater Augusta, GA area)

CRITICISM

Jesus warned that some would reproach us and say all manner of evil against us (Mat. 5:11-12). How should we respond to criticism? It is normal to desire encouragement. Few could survive constant criticism without plunging over the precipice of mental illness. Even occasional criticism is painful. It is so painful that some elders, deacons, and preachers have quit serving because of it. Others have even quit the church. Countless good works are never begun because of criticism. Other good works have been undermined and killed by it.

Some folks major in criticism. Jesus specifically had this terrible trait in mind when he warned, “Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Mat. 7:1). He does not forbid all judging, but He rebukes in this statement those who spend much or most of their time doing it. Some Christians seem to receive a fiendish delight in criticizing an elder (or all of the elders) or the preacher. Our Lord was the only perfect man who ever lived, and men often criticized Him nonetheless.

How should we react to criticism?

- We should do right in spite of it. The critics were not able to deter Jesus from His purpose. In spite of them He pressed on: “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to accomplish his work” (John 4:34). Think of our terrible plight if Christ had let criticism defeat Him. We are in the God-pleasing business rather than the man pleasing business (Gal. 1:10), and it is sometimes easier to please God than men. We must not say, “Why keep on trying?” and quit doing right when we are criticized.
- We should try to profit from criticism. Some critics want to help us and they will do so if we will let them. We should not consider constructive critics our enemies for telling us the truth (Gal. 4:16). Surely, none of us is above criticism. However, much criticism is intended to hurt; it is more for the benefit of the giver than for the receiver. Such verbal assassins may make a frontal attack where several others can hear, or they may drop an ominous suggestion here and there. They may use an anonymous call or letter. Often they will criticize their victim to anyone besides the victim himself (they “bite” behind his back, thus the term, “backbiting”). They may open a full-scale slander campaign, all the while claiming to “love” their target. We should even try to profit from such painful and unfair criticism as this.
- Finally, we should try to live so that criticism is not justified, or that it is at least kept to a minimum. Remember, the more you try to do, the more you will be criticized. If you must criticize another, try to be helpful rather than hurtful.

Dub McClish, Denton, TX

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.

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In a recent discussion an individual brought up this Scripture: “*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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*” (Romans 10:9-10). The individual sought to indicate that this passage showed that baptism wasn’t necessary in order for one to be saved.

We asked that individual to consider the following. To whom was that statement written? It was written to the church at Rome that is to Christians there. We reminded the individual of what we had previously discussed respecting Romans 6. There Paul, in writing to the brethren at Rome, reminded them of their baptism and what it indicated (Romans 6:3-6). They rose to “*walk in newness of life*” following their baptism into Christ. Paul continued by stating: “*For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection*” (Romans 6:5). The “*if*” indicating that conditional on our being “*planted in the likeness of his death*” (i.e. baptism – verses 3 and 4) then, and only then, can we also be “*in the likeness of his resurrection.*”

In Romans 10:9-10, Paul is indicating the need for the continued confession of Christ and His Deity. One cannot be saved who ceases to believe and confess Christ as Lord. Following on in chapter 10 we see that Paul teaches the need to call upon the name of the Lord (v.13). Then he asks how one can call on the name of the Lord until they have heard the message of the Gospel for “*faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God*” (Romans 10:17)? One must hear the Word of God, as did the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 and must respond to it, as he did. Phillip preached Jesus and the eunuch responded: “*See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?*” (Acts 8:36). In Romans 10:16 Paul states that not all have “*obeyed the gospel.*” In Romans 6:17 -18 Paul writes: “*But 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.*” When did they do that? When they were baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3) and started the new life when they had obeyed that “*form of doctrine*” (i.e. baptism representing the death, burial and resurrection of Christ). It was when they came forth from the waters of baptism that they started the new life, having died to sin (Romans 6:4-7) and ceased being servants of sin and became servants of righteousness (Romans 6:17-18).

Having mentioned Acts 8 and the Ethiopian eunuch, I would like to note that some versions of the Bible have verse 36, quoted above but **omit** verse 37 which reads: “*And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*” For that verse to be omitted leaves the eunuch’s question unanswered and gives no reason for what is stated in verse 38: “*And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.*” Why would the chariot be commanded to “*stand still*” and both go down into the water if the eunuch had not made the confession recorded in verse 37? Clearly, verse 37 belongs in the text, some so-called “*scholars*” not withstanding!

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick’s aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron’ sister who has having health problems, and Tim Smith.

Jeanette Goodwin of South Augusta asked for prayer for her father Jerry Hooper who has been diagnosed with terminal lung cancer.

It was good to see Helen Culpepper out Sunday evening. We have missed her.

Jean Peebles and Donna Wilkes were in Smyrna, TN. The Farmers and Mitchells were in San Diego, CA.

Wanda Walker was out of town Sunday as her sister’s grandmother had died. Wednesday she stepped on a nail and the doctor told her to stay off her feet – hence she was not out Wednesday evening.

Jennifer and Steven Wilson were also not well Wednesday evening.

Glenn Aaron has a new pager number at work – (706) 732-0774.

PROGRESS

Recently I heard a man, a Baptist preacher, make a short talk over the radio on progress. He spoke of what some people called progress — always going on, advancing. But he said that to make real progress we sometimes had to go back; and he used the prodigal son as an illustration. He did not say so, but he could have said that all the time the boy was away from home he was slipping — losing his money, worse than wasting time, and destroying his self-respect and his manhood. Yes, to make any progress he had to go back.

Some years ago some brethren decided to be “*progressive.*” When they went out from us they soon spent what Christianity they started off with in riotous indulgences in all sorts of innovations. Now some no longer believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. With them the religion of Christ is just one of the religions of the world. They are now in the condition of the prodigal son when he hired himself out to feed hogs; but they are not as wise as that boy — they are feeding on husks and think it is good eating. Progressive? They will never make any real progress till they return to the Father’s house.

— Robertson L. Whiteside *Doctrinal Discourses*

All though the above comments were written well over a half-century ago, about a previous time about a century ago, they are still as pertinent today when we see the “*progressive*” congregations and how they have changed regarding their teaching and practice over the last twenty to thirty years. Further, there are congregations today that although not as progressive as some are heading in the same direction? Where will they be in twenty or thirty years unless they return to the “*Father’s house*”? (Editor K.J.C.).