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Some lazy, disorderly busybodies were in the church at Thessalonica. "Now them that are such," said Paul, "we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Thess. 3:12). But what shall the church do if the offenders refuse to heed Paul's admonition? "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (2 Thess. 3:14).

Paul then made this order to the church emphatic by these words: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6). By following this course, they would not be treating the erring one as an enemy, but would be admonishing him as a brother in the most effective way (2 Thess. 3:6-15).

Beginning their insidious work in apostolic days, false teachers have done immeasurable harm to the cause of truth and righteousness. Paul said they would "...draw away disciples after them" by "speaking perverse things" (Acts 20:30). They have overthrown "whole houses" and churches, "teaching things which they ought not..." (Titus 1:11).

Their word has eaten "as doth a gangrene" and "the faith of some" has been overthrown (2 Tim. 2:17-18 ASV). Their theories have been more injurious to the church of God than all the persecutions that Christians have ever suffered from the hands of avowed enemies. All sectarianism, division, and the whole papal system are the outgrowth of false teaching.

The false teachers that arise from time to time from among the brethren certainly come within the scope of discipline. Invariably, bitterness, faction, and division follow in the way of their teaching. Eating "as doth a gangrene," their foolish theories and speculations overthrow the faith of many. They render useless some otherwise effective workers at home and abroad. Those who embrace these false teachings often forsake the plan of salvation and join denominations. There is a very strong human tendency to place new theories and speculations above long-accepted truth. False teachers will overlook the most grievous errors to associate with those who agree with their pet theories.

It is ridiculously absurd to claim that any error that divides the people of God is harmless. It is arguing against demonstration. The claim that something else has caused all the trouble — when confusion follows such teaching— is only a puerile attempt to smoke screen the issue and protect those false teachers whose "mouths must be stopped" (Titus 1:11).

The Scriptures state plainly the attitude that must be assumed toward false teachers. Paul referred to them as "vain talkers and deceivers...whose mouths must be stopped" and told Titus to "reprove them sharply" (Titus 1:10-13 ASV). "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3: 10-11).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). John said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in

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# BELVEDERE BEACON

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

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## Purity Calls For Discipline

A return to New Testament teaching on church discipline is one of the crying needs of the hour. A full and complete restoration of the ancient order of things is impossible while so many Christians fail to pursue any divinely prescribed disciplinary plan of leading the erring to repentance and of preserving the purity of the whole church.

Church discipline is not a question of human judgment or choice. It is a matter of divine legislation, and the Bible is just as explicit and undeviating on the subject as any other phase of Christian duty. To ignore the Scriptural attitude toward those whose conduct is evil or whose teaching is false and divisive is to ignore one of the plainest and most vital principles of the New Testament.

The question for consideration in this article is this: "What is the Scriptural course that must be pursued in dealing with a church member who *persists* in his evil conduct or his false teaching?" It is assumed that all understand that no disciplinary measure is to be administered until after the offending brother has been thoroughly warned of his evil and earnestly exhorted to repent.

In the church at Corinth a man was guilty of fornication in its most repugnant form, and the church had taken no corrective steps in the matter. The church was commanded to, "**Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh...**" and "**...not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat**" (1 Cor. 5:5,11).

God's purpose in inflicting this punishment was two-fold. First, to save the soul of the guilty party, and, second, to protect the whole church from corruption. It is presumptuous to assume that these two objectives could have been accomplished better by some other method or attitude toward the guilty brother, and it would have been rebellion against God for any member of the Corinthian church to continue his social intercourse with that incestuous brother (1 Cor. 5).

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### 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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**IS ROMANS ONE AN OBSCURE SCRIPTURE?**

In an interview held in a church building on the first Sunday in March, presidential candidate Barack Obama was asked a question by the "Pastor." In this article we want to focus on part of Obama's answer that dealt with one particular issue. Obama stated:

"I will tell you that I don't believe in gay marriage, but I do think that people who are gay and lesbian should be treated with dignity and respect and that the state should not discriminate against them. So, I believe in civil unions that allow a same-sex couple to visit each other in a hospital or transfer property to each other. I don't think it should be called marriage, but I think that it is a legal right that they should have that is recognized by the state. If people find that controversial then I would just refer them to the Sermon on the Mount, which I think is, in my mind, for my faith, more central than an obscure passage in Romans. That's my view. But we can have a respectful disagreement on that."

Here he states that he does not "believe in gay marriage" but does believe in "civil unions" of people of the same sex. However, it is the last part of this statement that I take exception to, as should every Bible believing individual: "If people find that controversial then I would just refer them to the Sermon on the Mount, which I think is, in my mind, for my faith, more central than an obscure passage in Romans. That's my view. But we can have a respectful disagreement on that."

With all due respect, all true Bible believers would have to disagree with this bold assertion one who desires the highest office in the land. His use of the term "obscure" indicates something that is either vague or unclear. However, the passage in Romans chapter one to which he refers is far from obscure. Paul, writing under inspiration states: "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (II Timothy 3:16-17). The book of Romans, including chapter one was given by inspiration just like the rest of the Bible. It is true that there are some passages of scripture that are more difficult to understand than others. However, every passage that discusses man's salvation from sin and the prevention of sin is very clear and can be easily understood by any honest and open-minded student of the Bible. In Romans 1:16, Paul states: "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*" Nothing could be clearer than that statement.

In the same context as verse 16 is the passage that Barack Obama describes as being "obscure" as it deals with the matter of homosexuality. Note what the passage teaches: "*For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet*" (Romans 1:26-27). Is there anything vague, unclear or obscure about that? One may not like what it teaches. However, it is very clear regarding God's mind on this matter.

Elsewhere, God's view of marriage – one man and one woman for life (Genesis 2: 21-24 and other scriptures) is also not obscure. Men may speak about "gay marriage" but God is very clear such relationships are "*against nature,*" "*unseemly*" and "*error.*" No man – politician or otherwise can argue with that! All need to remember that God's thoughts are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9), man is unable to direct his steps (Jeremiah 10:23) and God's word will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).

As for Senator Obama's reference to the Sermon on the Mount, we assume that he had reference to Matthew 7:1 "*Judge not...*" However, he needs to examine the context of Jesus statement for it is neither vague nor unclear that Jesus condemned hypocritical judgment (Matthew 7:1-5). Christians are opposed to homosexuality not out of hatred or prejudice but because the truth and righteousness of God, as revealed in His Word that is able to save our souls (James 1:21), clearly and in no obscure fashion condemns homosexual behavior as sinful. God's will is clear, it is man's responsibility to believe it and obey

*Ken Chumbley*

To see all of the Senator's remarks on that occasion look at this web page:

<http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/332110.aspx>

**NEWS AND NOTES**

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Kathy Treadway's 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.

Helen Culpepper had cataract surgery on Wednesday and is doing well.

Sister Grimsley is doing some better; keep her in your prayers. Also, her daughter in law is to have surgery Monday and sister Grimsley has asked for prayers on her behalf.

Susan Arnold, the boys and Kathy Treadway have been in Panama City, Florida this past week.

Lanny Niver asked for prayers for his daughter who is awaiting biopsy results.

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**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).**

These Scriptures reveal God's way for saving the false teacher and protecting the whole church from apostasy. They need no interpretation. They are as plain and strict and inflexible as anything God ever said. To ignore them is to rebel against God.

There are false teachers disturbing the church who have had both "**the first and second admonition**" (Titus 3:10). They have been reprov'd, rebuked, exhorted, both "**sharply**" and with "**all longsuffering and doctrine**" (2 Tim. 4:2). Yet they often continue to persist in their speculative theories, causing "**divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine**" which we have learned (Rom. 16:17). They are such as "**transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ**" (2 John 9). Surely all such teachers teach "**things which they ought not**" (Titus 1:11). God's course of discipline must be respected. He who does not "**mark them**" and "**turn away from them**" becomes a "**partaker of their evil deeds.**"

If the false teachers who disturb the church today had been dealt with promptly as the Lord commands, the peace of many congregations and the faith of some individuals might have been saved. It is high time that brethren to turn *back to the Bible in church discipline!*

*Cecil B. Douthitt*

(gospelpreceptor.com; Editor—Jerry Brewer.)

*[It is indeed amazing that these words written by brother Douthitt decades ago, sound as if they were being applied today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The word of God is always relevant, and some of the same attitudes that plagued the church then, do so even today! Danny Douglas]*