



The Voice of Truth



July 29, 2012

The Bible Is Clear By Jimmy Pettigrew

Recently, I have been having a discussion with a man (belonging to a denomination) concerning the church. He called me a brother, and I pointed out to him how he could become my brother in Christ. His reply, he asked this question in a sarcastic way, "Do you think our Creator cares about the particular denomination one belongs to? He goes on and says, "No... our Lord and Savior wants our hearts, that's what's important to Him." Then he says, "The church of Christ as the bible refers to it is talking about all followers of Christ regardless of denomination."

First, I want to say the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship to God is sinful because it is not authorized (**Ephesians 5:19**; **Colossians 3:16**). Denominationalism is sinful because it is not authorized by the Bible. Whatever in religion is not authorized by the Bible is sinful. This the Bible plainly teaches. People need to realize that whatever in religion that is not authorized by the Bible is sinful, and will be rooted up (**Matthew 15:13**). The essential head of every denomination is not Christ, but Satan. There would be no denominations if all men followed the Bible.

The Bible is clear that the church is not a part of the whole; the whole being false religion. We are not to go beyond the things written (**1 Corinthians 4:6**) and when we do, we do not have God (**2 John 9-11**). A denomination is a group of people who formulate their own creed not found in the Bible.

God cannot accept denominationalism because He condemns division (**1 Corinthians 1:10-17**). There is no authority in the Bible for the Lutheran "church," Methodist, or Baptist "church," etc. The man does not live who can prove that the Bible authorizes a man to be baptized into, say the Methodist "church." Such authorization is not in the Bible. The church for which Jesus died (**Acts 20:28**) is the one body of people who have been saved by His blood (**Ephesians 1:7**; **2:13-17**). The church for which Christ died is neither a denomination nor a part of a de-

nomination.

Remember Jesus said, "If ye abide in my word, (then) are ye truly my disciples" (**John 8:31**). Then Christ goes on to say, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (**John 8:32**). Truth is from heaven, not from man (**John 1:17**; **14:6**; **16:13**). It must be known (**John 8:32**), believed (**2 Thessalonians 2:12**), loved (**2 Thessalonians 2:10**), and obeyed (**1 Peter 1:22**; **Galatians 5:7**; **Matthew 7:21-23**; **Hebrews 5:8-9**). It sounds to me that there is more than just the Savior wanting our hearts.

Notice please, that denominationalists claim to be faithful servants of Christ while they (1) reject Christ's one plan of salvation and to accept a plan of salvation which has been invented by mere human beings (for example, salvation by grace or faith only), (2) reject the one church which Jesus died and enter a denomination, which also was invented by mere human beings, (3) to reject the way of worship which has been authorized by the New Testament and to engage in worship which has not been authorized by the New Testament. People, denominationalism is sinful because it is not authorized by the Lord Jesus Christ (**2 John 9-11**; **Colossians 3:17**).

The Bible teaches that every person who is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ is added by the Lord Himself to the church for which He died (**Acts 2:38**, **41**, **47**; **20:28**; **1 Corinthians 12:13**). Those who have done what the Bible authorizes become members of the church of Christ; Christians, and nothing more. They do not become a hyphenated Christian (Lutheran-Christians, Methodist-Christians, and Baptist-Christians); they become just Christians!

Do you see what this person is saying? He is telling me that the body of Christ doesn't matter. The church is not important. If that be the case, then he is telling me the blood of Christ doesn't matter (**Acts 20:28**). How could

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anyone say the church is not important? Who would say that Christ wasted His blood on the cross? You do if you say the church doesn't matter, as long as you give your heart to the Lord. If the church doesn't matter, God's eternal plan doesn't matter (**Ephesians 3:8-11**). His ideas, his attitude is, "I'm okay, and you're okay." His belief is as long as your religious you're alright in the sight of God. Wrong! Tell that to Cain, Nadab and Abihu (**Genesis 4; Leviticus 10**). I want us to notice what this man is saying, notice: The Baptists teach baptism by immersion; the Methodist by sprinkling; Baptists practice a closed communion with the Lord's Supper; The Methodist an open communion; The Baptists teach one can't fall from grace, while the Methodist can fall. According to this man's teaching, he believes both views on these subjects are correct, because it doesn't matter as long as you give your heart to the Lord. He accepts the view that God is the author of both these views on these subjects. Well God is not a God of confusion (**1 Corinthians 14:33**). Our God is ever a God of order. God demands order! He is not the author of confusion. We are to speak the same thing. *"Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and (that) there be no divisions among you; but (that) ye be perfected to-*

gether in the same mind and in the same judgment" (**1 Corinthians 1:10**). Here it is specified the need to speak the same thing, thus making it possible that there be no divisions. The speaking of the same things would be possible when all proposing to serve the Christ confined their speaking to *"the oracles of God"* (**1 Peter 4:11**), recognizing only the Word as authority (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). This is impossible under this man's doctrine.

We plead with everyone to realize that he can be just a Christian, not some so-called "hyphenated-Christian" – a member of some denomination. There never has been a need for any denomination. There is no present need for anyone to be a member of a denomination. All one needs to do is obey the gospel of Christ, the seed, which is His word (**Luke 8:11; 1 Peter 1:20-25**), as a penitent believer being baptized unto the remission of your sins (**Acts 2:38; 22:16**), and you have the assurance of God, as set out in His word, that you will be a member of the church for which Jesus died (**Acts 20:28**), in which Christ is a Savior of (**Ephesians 5:23**), you will be just a Christian. Obedience to the Bible makes nothing but Christians. And there is no way to become a Christian except by believing and obeying the Bible. •

"All Things Desirable To Men ..."

By Jarrod Jacobs

All things desirable to men are contained in the Bible." This is one of the many quotes of Abraham Lincoln. Certainly, this man understood something that the majority of people today do not. Anything desirable, anything worthy of imitation, anything pleasing to God will be found in the Bible, the word of God! Peter said that God *"has granted to us all things that pertain unto life and godliness"* (**II Pet. 1:3**). If God has given us *"all things,"* then what do we lack? If He has given us *"all things"* then why are men so pressed to find life's "necessities" somewhere else? Truly, *"all things desirable to men are contained in the Bible."*

Within the pages of Inspiration, we find God's instructions for life. The meaning of life is summed up thusly: *"Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man"* (**Ecc. 12:13**). God's word instructs us to treat men as we would want them to treat us (**Matt. 7:12**). No one has ever improved on this! God declares that it is necessary to live at peace with all men. We are to *"pursue what makes for peace, and for mutual upbuilding"* (**Rom. 14:19**). If people would just do this, we would have a much more peaceful existence upon this earth! God instructs us to speak to others in an edifying way, and

to not tear one another down through malicious words and gossip (**Eph. 4:29, 31**). Husbands and wives are to submit themselves to one another and love one another, cleaving to each other, and forsaking all others (**Eph. 5:22-33**). For any relationship you wish to discuss, the Bible has the answer. It truly contains *"all things desirable to men."*

The Bible also contains God's plan for the salvation of mankind from sin. We see it unfolding from **Genesis 3**, and continue to take shape until the coming of Christ who died on the cross for us! The Bible teaches that Christ was *"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"* (**Rev. 13:8**). His blood was shed to purchase us and to take away our sin (**I Pet. 1:18-19; Matt. 26:28; Jn. 1:29**). God loved man so much that He allowed His Son to die on our behalf (**Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:6-9**). Christ died for us, shed his blood, and resurrected on the third day, declaring Himself to be the Son of God with power (**Rom. 1:4**). The Holy Spirit was then sent to guide the apostles into *"all truth"* so that they could preach and teach the truth to all nations, which they did (**II Pet. 1:20-21; Jn. 14:26, 15:26, 16:13; Col. 1:5-6, 23; Rom. 16:26**).

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Now, it is man's responsibility to do that which is right and submit himself to God's will. He must come believing that Jesus is the Son of God (**Jn. 8:24**), repenting of his sins (**Lk. 13:3**), he must confess his faith in Christ (**Rom. 10:10**), and then be baptized for the remission of his sins (**Acts 2:38**). Upon doing these things, the Bible reveals that man is saved (**Mk. 16:16**). Notice please that man is not saved simply by "doing something." Man is not saved on his own merit. Man is saved by hearing and doing the will of God. He has done nothing on his own by which to boast, but has simply done what Christ expected of Him (**Lk. 17:10; Eph. 2:8-9**). He must then live a faithful life to God, doing the Lord's will as His faithful servant (**1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10**). The Bible teaches that when we submit to God, doing His will, and obeying His word, we become His servant or slave (**Rom. 6:16-18**). Still, this is a desirable position! What better place to be than in the loving care and mercy of a loving God whom you can now call your Father (**Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6**)? What could be more "desirable" than this?

The Bible contains the wisdom, and power of God to salvation (**Rom. 1:16**). Why men continue to push God aside amazes me! Only in this Sacred Volume can we learn of God's wisdom. God has revealed things to us that belong to us and our children forever (**Deut. 29:29**). When men refuse God's word, they are refusing God's wisdom! They are refusing God's power to save, for the Bible says the gospel "*is the power of God for salvation*" (**Rom. 1:16**). The Bible reveals our origin, it reveals our purpose for being here, and it reveals what shall become of us (the faithful AND unfaithful) at the end of time. Jesus said that this book will be our standard of judgment on the Judgment Day (**Jn. 12:48**). Seeing that this is true, how foolish it is to cast this book aside as "antiquated," or "a book of myths," or anything else! The Bible is necessary, vital, and alive, and we better never forget that (**Heb. 4:12**)!!

Yes, "all things desirable to men are contained in the Bible." The question is: Will you accept or reject the Bible?

Credit: The Old Paths - 7/29/12 ♦

Sinning Against Wisdom By Jonathan L. Perz

Using the literary device of personification, Solomon describes wisdom in some of the strongest terms possible—he speaks of wisdom in terms of life and death. He writes, "*For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord; but he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate me love death*" (**Proverbs 8:35-36**).

Ensnared within this life and death concept of the importance of wisdom. Solomon also sets forth the idea of "sinning against" wisdom as a wrong against our own soul. Have you ever imagined wisdom in those terms? Have you ever considered whether or not you have sinned against wisdom? Do you wrong your own soul?

If any man could speak of the value of wisdom, Solomon could. The annals of Israel's history say this of Solomon: "*And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men...*" (**1 Kings 4:29-31a**).

This, of course, adds all the more significance to his evaluation of wisdom. So important is wisdom, that the language he uses almost makes you think that he is

speaking of finding or hating God, and not merely wisdom. Yet, he is eloquently exalting the value of wisdom.

How is it that one sins against wisdom? In the simplest of terms, to sin is to transgress, or to fall short of or go beyond. It means to miss the mark (cf. **1 John 3:4—KJV**). To sin against wisdom suggests the idea of wandering from the way of wisdom.

When it comes to wisdom, one of the greatest contrasts we must learn as Christians is the difference between the wisdom of God, which Solomon extols, and the wisdom of men, which is often shed in a foolish light in comparison. One consistently leads to eternal life, whereas the other is rooted in the ways of this world, which are despised and condemned by God.

The Holy Spirit tells us through the apostle Paul, "*Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*" (**1 Cor. 3:18**). This suggests that those who are so enamored with the wisdom of this world will inevitably be blind to the wisdom of God. By failing to see the difference, they sin against wisdom. The only remedy is for one to become a fool in the ways of this world so that he may

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become wise in the ways of God.

This same sin against wisdom can be seen in those who reject, or even mock, the cross of Jesus. Earlier in the same epistle Paul wrote, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.' Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those of us who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:18-25).

Not only does the wisdom of God render foolish the wisdom of men, its fruit is righteous whereas the fruit of the wisdom of men is sinful. Consider the inspired words

of James who writes, "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:13-18). This also manifests how we can sin against the wisdom of God, by attributing the fruit of God to the wisdom of men and the fruit of men to the wisdom of God.

While there is much more that is written about wisdom, the basic fact of the matter is that a fool will have no heart for wisdom (Prov. 17:16; 24:7), whereas an understanding man will not only seek it; he will find it, keep it and live by it. "He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; He who keeps understanding will find good" (Prov. 19:8). In another place, the wise man writes, "Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Prov. 23:23). Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

Sin will take you farther than you
 Ever wanted to go.
 Keep you longer than you ever wanted
 To stay and cost you
 More than you ever wanted to pay. ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
 Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
 Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month