

The New Apostasy

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By

J. Edward Nowlin

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Solomon said, "of making many books there is no end." Perhaps the greatest reason for there being no end to the making of books is that the need for writing books has never ceased. Especially, this is true in the field of Bible teaching, for regardless of the extent of righteousness found in one generation, the succeeding generation inherits none of it; hence, must learn for itself how to mend its ways. If any excuse is necessary for the appearance of this humble work, the widespread need for such a writing should suffice.

The Present Need

Amid the confusion of religious names, creeds, and doctrines, the voice of New Testament Christianity is weak; nevertheless, it still cries out against all things unscriptural and preaches boldly the teaching of God's Word. This voice is further weakened by division and unscriptural doctrines and practices among those who claim to speak where the Scriptures speak and to be silent where the Scriptures are silent. Error has a way of disguising itself. For this reason we hope to turn the Searchlight of Truth upon those bodies of people who claim to be "churches of Christ" and reveal the errors which have crept in. Many honest, sincere souls do not know the difference between "churches of Christ" and "Christian Churches"; but think they are all the same, especially in areas where Christian Churches use the name "Church of

Christ." It is toward a definite statement of these differences that this writing is directed.

The New Testament Church

Even the casual reader of the Bible will notice that the church of the Lord had its beginning on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, in Jerusalem. (Acts 2.) Three thousand people who believed the gospel, repented of their sins and were baptized for the remission of their sins, were added to the church that day. (Acts 2:47.) The number increased daily until the persecution arose which scattered them abroad, and they "went everywhere preaching the word." Then congregations sprang up in Samaria, Antioch, Damascus, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Rome, and other cities and towns throughout the known world, until Paul could say in A. D. 64 that the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven. (Col. 1:23.)

The Falling Away

Peter and Paul foretold a falling away from the truth (2 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4; Acts 20:29, 30), which came to pass gradually by the introduction of pagan practices into the worship of the church, and by substituting the opinions of men for the teaching of the gospel. All unscriptural practices were opposed by faithful brethren, but the tide of apostasy swept over the world and finally culminated in the setting up of Catholicism as a religio-political machine which suppressed Bible knowledge and became more corrupt with every passing year.

The Reformation

This condition existed for about a thousand years. Then came the great attempts at reforma-

tion, led by Luther, Calvin, Huss, Zwingli, and others who dared question the decrees of the Pope. This Reformation resulted in the splitting up of Protestant forces into new bodies, and the new bodies in turn being divided until the majority of the religious world was made up of warring factions exalting specific doctrines, governments, and men to places of prominence; wearing human names, practicing human opinions and holding to human creeds.

The Restoration

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw efforts here and there being made to return to Apostolic faith and practice. James O'Kelly, a Methodist of North Carolina, and others in the state of Virginia began to plead for a return to the New Testament as the only creed and discipline, and rebelled against the power of the Methodist Bishops, contending for congregational government. They were in the minority, however, and failed to accomplish their purposes. They finally seceded from the Methodist church at Mankintown, N. C., on December 25, 1793. At first they took the name "Republican Methodists," but in 1801 resolved to be known as Christians, only. About the same time Abner Jones, a physician of Hartland, Vermont, a member of the Baptist church, became dissatisfied with human names and creeds. From 1800 to 1803 he succeeded in establishing congregations of this persuasion at Lyndon and Bradford, Vermont, and Piermont, N. H. Elias Smith, also a Baptist, and his entire congregation at Plymouth, New Hampshire, adopted Jones' view. This procedure was repeated in other New England states and in Canada, and spread into Kentucky and Pennsylvania and beyond. Many took up the cry of "back to the Bible," including Barton W.

Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Purviance, Scott, Franklin, and others. These widely separated movements gained publicity and contacted one another until by 1831 the "Restoration Movement" was presenting a united front against the world of sectarianism. Converts were made by the thousands and some even dreamed of a day when there would be no warring denominations, but only one church patterned after the New Testament order—a complete, wholesale restoration of New Testament Christianity. The greatest opportunity for a victory of truth that has ever been presented to godly men in modern times was before them; but, alas!

An Historical Reminder

Clouds of a new apostasy appeared on the horizon. Men began to love the pre-eminence. Some rose up who wanted to be "like the nations 'round about." They loved the popularity of the world more than the approval of God; or else, they deceived themselves into thinking that God would tolerate their additions to His word. They were using the same methods and the same gospel that the apostles had used in New Testament times and were doing the greatest piece of mission work the modern world had ever seen. Yet, with characteristic human vanity some thought they could make more progress by using the inventions of men, and in 1840 they organized a Missionary Society. Godly men opposed this move as unscriptural, but to no avail. Division began to rear its ugly head. The next bid for popularity with the world was the introduction of mechanical instrumental music into the worship. At Midway, Kentucky, in 1859, a melodeon was placed in the church building. This, too, was opposed by godly brethren

who desired to cling to the slogan of doctrinal purity and scriptural practice, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent," and conduct the worship "as it is written." Their pleadings for a continuation of unity on the authority of the Scriptures fell upon deaf and heedless ears. "Ephraim was joined to his idols," and no amount of effort could dissuade him. Worldly-minded and untaught members took up the hue and cry, and by majority vote in many cases the unscriptural society and mechanical music were put in over the protest of brethren who would be loyal to the Word of God. Those who could not conscientiously worship and work in the congregation under these unscriptural conditions were forced to withdraw themselves from the use of buildings which they had helped build, and begin all over again in a new location. This was the greatest day's work Satan has accomplished against the church in our day. The strategy of "divide and conquer" was not invented by Herr Hitler. The forward surge of the cause of New Testament Christianity slowed almost to a stand-still. The forces of sectarianism relaxed and gleefully looked on while the "progressives" and "conservatives" in the churches of Christ engaged in mortal combat.

Gradually, the "progressives" joined forces with denominationalists by adopting more of their unscriptural practices and compromising more Bible truths with them, until there came to be two distinct bodies with no semblance of fellowship between them. The "progressives" progressed beyond the teaching of the Bible in many ways, and came to be known as "Christian Churches" or "Disciples of Christ," while the "conservatives" stayed inside the Bible and held to scriptural names; such as, "churches of

Christ" (Rom. 16:16), "church of the firstborn" (Heb. 12:23), "the church" and "the body." (Col. 1:18.) To add to this confusion the "progressives" in some parts of the country use the name "Church of Christ" on their buildings. Many people think there is no difference between churches of Christ and Christian Churches except the use of instrumental music in the worship. Hence, to the task of pointing out some differences between these two bodies we now address ourselves.

Attitude Toward the Scriptures

The fundamental difference between these two bodies is the difference in attitude toward the Bible. Churches of Christ propose to speak where the Bible speaks and to be silent where the Bible is silent, contending that any addition, subtraction or substitution in the work or worship is a violation of that position. On the other hand, Christian Churches claim the right to speak where the Bible is silent, and thus have abandoned the motto of the Restoration Movement, as well as the teaching of the Scriptures. Moses said, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deut. 4:2.) The Apostle John said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." (2 John 9.) Jesus said, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from

the things which are written in this book." (Rev. 22:18, 19.) Under the claim of "liberty" to speak where the Scriptures are silent, Christian churches have adopted many unscriptural practices. On the same grounds they could consistently adopt many others. Therefore, the unscriptural practices are merely the symptoms of the real disease. The real disease is a lack of respect for the silence of the Scriptures.

Unscriptural Societies

In accordance with the above thoughts, at least three types of unscriptural societies have been organized in Christian churches; namely, Missionary Societies, Ladies' Aid Societies, and Christian Endeavor Societies. Missionary Societies are unscriptural because they are unauthorized in the Scriptures, and because they violate the independence of the local congregation.

Churches of Christ insist that the church, the local congregation, is God's missionary society, and that mission work should be done by each congregation sending support directly to the mission field as it was in New Testament times. Paul said, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. 3:10.) Hence, when the gospel is preached by the church, God receives the honor. Verse 21 says, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." When the work is done by the society, it receives the glory, and the local congregation is kept in the background with nothing to do but pay the office rent, salaries, and other expenses of the society, which take a large per cent of the money contributed. By the scriptural plan each congregation of the

church can send support to the missionary at no expense except a postage stamp, and have full control of its funds.

Ladies' Aid Societies are just as unscriptural, since the Scriptures nowhere authorize them, and the chief service they render is that of putting the ladies of the congregation in position to rule the church, which is not their work. God has given the qualifications of elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1) who are to bear the responsibilities of leadership in the church, and no woman can meet those qualifications. If God had intended for sisters to direct and control the affairs of the congregation, He would have said so. Churches of Christ do not have Ladies' Aid Societies and their women are faithful in their scriptural duties in the church.

Christian Endeavor Societies are not authorized in the Scriptures, therefore are human institutions, which exalt the young people to a place of unscriptural prominence in the church, and with national affiliations and conventions put them in a position powerful enough to dictate some of the policies of the congregation. The young people are necessarily "novices" because of age and lack of experience and knowledge. In such soil the seeds of digression grow rankest. Churches of Christ do not have such organizations, and the young people are able to carry on their work in the church scripturally and well.

Difference in Founders

The Christian churches have left the Bible so far behind that some of them are willing to say that Alexander Campbell was the founder of that church. The following was taken from a Nashville newspaper in 1939: "Alexander Campbell, founder of the Disciples of Christ Church,

was eulogized Sunday morning in sermons delivered at two Christian churches in Nashville, in observance of the sesqui-centennial anniversary of Campbell's birth. Dr. Roger T. Nooe, pastor of Vine Street Christian Church, gave a brief outline of the man 'who established the Christian Church with the desire that all Christians might unite and worship together.'" On the authority of Dr. Nooe, "pastor" of the Vine Street Christian Church in Nashville, we have it that Campbell founded the "Christian Church." Churches of Christ contend that Jesus Christ was the founder of the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18), and give honor to no man living or dead, which belongs to Christ. The Bible does not teach us to celebrate the birthday of Christ, much less that of Alexander Campbell!

Unscriptural Music

Christian Churches spend thousands of dollars for mechanical instruments of music in order to make music which God has not commanded in the worship. Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1, 2) offered "strange fire" unto God, "which he had not commanded" them and were punished with death. Think ye, that God will be more tolerant toward such presumptuous transgression of His word today? God commanded the use of fire from the altar; they used other fire. God has commanded vocal music; Christian Churches use instrumental music. No truer parallel example of disobedience and corruption of worship can be found in the Bible. The principle violated is the same. Can a just God who is no respecter of persons justify people today when He punished Nadab and Abihu for the same sin? The New Testament is as silent as the tomb regarding instrumental music in the worship of the church. If Christian Church-

es would be "silent where the Scriptures are silent," that alone would eliminate mechanical music, but as has already been pointed out, they claim liberty to speak where the Scriptures are silent, thus reversing the slogan of the Restoration Movement. By the same claim of "liberty" they could burn incense in worship!

Churches of Christ use the kind of music authorized in the New Testament. Paul said, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16); and again, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:19.) Also, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." (Heb. 13:15.)

Choirs, Solos, Quartets

The use of mechanical instruments of music has given rise to choirs and other special groups of singers who perform around the mechanical instrument for the entertainment of the audience, until very few people know the difference between worship and entertainment. Musicians and singers are often hired to perform who are not even Christians, while the congregation who should be worshipping God in song are either not invited to sing or are left so completely out of the picture that they do not sing for fear of being conspicuous. Churches of Christ do not use special groups to sing in worship, contending that each Christian is commanded to sing to the best of his ability and that no group can do that for him.

Unscriptural Name

The name "Christian Church" is an unscriptural name for two reasons: first, it is not found in the Scriptures. Second, "Christian" is a term applied only to individuals (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16), and not to a congregation of individuals. On the other hand, a congregation of individual Christians is a church of Christ, showing ownership. Christ "purchased with his own blood" the church (Acts 20:28), therefore it is His church. Furthermore, every congregation of it is His, and Paul so expresses it, "churches of Christ." (Rom. 16:16.) Any name found in the New Testament is acceptable to churches of Christ.

Unscriptural Titles

Christian Church preachers have adopted the titles of sectarian preachers; such as, "The Pastor," "Doctor," "Reverend." Nowhere in the New Testament do we read of any preacher being "The Pastor" of anything. The term "pastor" is always found in the plural (pastors) in the New Testament and refers to the class of men called "elders," "bishops," etc. It is translated from the Greek word "poimeen," which is rendered "elders" in 1 Pet. 5:1. A preacher may be a "pastor" if he has the qualifications of an elder, but being a preacher does not make him a pastor, much less the pastor. The word "reverend" is found only once in the whole Bible (Ps. 111:9), and there it refers to the name of God. Preachers in churches of Christ wear titles given in the Scriptures; such as "minister" and "evangelist." (2 Tim. 4:5; Eph. 3:7.)

Open Membership

Some Christian churches have gone so far away from the apostolic order that they will

accept into their membership the "pious unimmersed"; that is, if a person has been sprinkled for baptism, they will accept him as a member of the Christian Church without scriptural baptism! The following is an Associated Press dispatch under Memphis, Tennessee, date of March 19, 1940, and copied from the Nashville Banner: "CONTROVERSY OVER BAPTISM DIVIDES MEMPHIS CHURCH. A controversy over whether mere sprinkling or complete immersion is necessary for true baptism has caused a schism among Memphis pastors of the Disciples of Christ or Christian denomination. The Rev. J. J. Walker, pastor of the East End Christian Church in a fashionable part of Memphis, said seven of his brother ministers told him yesterday he would be 'unwelcome' at their weekly meetings until he accepted complete immersion as the true form of baptism."

Furthermore, J. J. Walker is not the only Christian Church "pastor" who accepts sprinkling for baptism. The following note is from a tract, "The Christians and the Disciples," by Dr. J. J. Summerbell, and published by the Christian Publishing Association of Dayton, Ohio. In his efforts to point out differences between what he calls "Christians" and churches of Christ, he has this to say on page 4: "But if anyone who did not believe in immersion should apply for admission, the Christians would unhesitatingly receive him, if his character, as manifested by his confession (or profession) and his conduct, was that of a Christian." So, we have it from a "Doctor" of the Christian Church that men are accepted on the strength of their morality and "conduct," rather than scriptural obedience to the Gospel! Yet, the Scriptures nowhere authorize sprinkling for baptism. That doctrine sprang from Catholicism. But the same is true of me-

chanical instrumental music in the worship! Such is the fruit of speaking where the Bible is silent.

Churches of Christ insist that one must obey the Gospel, including Scriptural baptism, before the Lord will add him to the church (Acts 2:47), and that then he is a member of the church of Christ, added to it by the Lord. He is saved by obedience (Heb. 5:8, 9); not by moral conduct. The pious un-immersed have not obeyed the Gospel (Rom. 6:17, 18), and Christ is to take vengeance upon those who obey not when He comes. (2 Thess. 1:7-10.)

Board Rulership

Christian Churches have come to be ruled by a "board," made up of men in the congregation who are "elected" to the board, with little or no consideration of whether they have the scriptural qualifications of elders or deacons found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Consequently, with such men to feed the flock, the preachers are not chosen for their soundness in the faith but for the size of the crowd they can attract. This explains the lack of straight-forward preaching in Christian Churches.

On the other hand, churches of Christ insist that the elders and deacons should have the responsibility of leadership in the congregation, and that they should have and retain the scriptural qualifications of elders and deacons as long as they serve. The New Testament is the standard in this case, as in all others.

Union Meetings

Christian Church preachers will encourage and take part in denominational "union meetings" with Methodists, Baptists, and any other groups of sectarians. In so doing they compro-

mise scriptural truths and bid men Godspeed who do not preach the truth on what to do to be saved and how to worship scripturally. This sort of thing is done even to the extent of endorsing the work of Catholics and Jews, thus becoming partakers of the errors and evil deeds of false teachers. 2 John 10, 11, says, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds." Churches of Christ have no part in such compromise affairs and refuse to fellowship any man who does not preach the truth of God's Word. (See 2 Tim. 4:1-4; Rom. 16:17, 18.)

Special Days

Christian Churches observe various special days, such as Easter, some of them winking at the Catholic "Lenton season" celebrations. The following excerpt is taken from the Sparta News, of Sparta, Tennessee, dated April 3, 1941: "PRE-EASTER SERVICES AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH. Beginning Sunday, April 6, and continuing through the week services will begin at 7:15 each evening. These services are designed for enlightenment, instructions in righteousness, and to aid in making life more meaningful. The theme of the entire week is 'Victory of the Cross.' The first four nights through Wednesday, there will be preaching by the minister, Joe Whitmer. On Thursday evening, music and The Lord's Supper. All Christians are invited to commune. Friday evening the service will be scripture reading. The scriptural account of the last days of Jesus' earthly life will be read in connective form. No services on Saturday evening.

"Palm Sunday morning subject: Path of the

Palms'; Palm Sunday evening, 'The Meaning of the Cross'; Monday evening, 'Behold Your King'; Thursday evening, Communion service; Friday evening, 'The Story of the Cross'; Easter Sunday morning, 'The Darkness Pierced'; Easter Sunday evening, 'When Mothers Meet'; 'The Bearer of the Cross' Dialogue Easter drama."

All this reads like a notice of the services of most any Episcopal, Methodist, or other denominational offspring of Catholicism. There is no more Scripture for Easter being the resurrection day of Jesus Christ than there is for eating the Lord's Supper on Thursday night! Needless to say, churches of Christ do neither. Paul said, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." (Gal. 4:10, 11.)

Conventions, Delegates

Christian Churches participate in various unscriptural conventions of a local, national and international nature; such as the "International Convention" held in Kansas City in 1936. During these conventions delegates from Christian Churches pass resolutions on various matters of a moral, economic and political nature. Such procedure violates the autonomy of the local congregation and tends toward establishment of a religious hierarchy after the order of the Catholics, Methodists and others.

Women Preachers, Dancing

Some Christian Churches will encourage women to preach publicly, which is a violation of the teaching of Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34. Dancing in the worship has been indulged in in some places, with the women doing the dancing. A Christian Church in St. Louis a few years ago had several young

ladies to "interpret the Psalms" in dances during their worship services, and in the Miller-Nowlin debate held January 26, 27, 1943, in the Lone Oak church building near Johnson City, M. B. Miller, President and General Evangelist of the Appalachian Mountain Evangelizing Association, admitted before the audience that he would not object "if some good sister" wanted to dance around over the floor and shout during the service. He was forced to this admission in order to try to justify instrumental music in the worship, since dancing and instrumental music are authorized in the Law of Moses, and he saw he was inconsistent in accepting the one without the other. He could have accepted animal sacrifices, incense, the Passover, the Sabbath Day, tithing, etc., on the same ground.

Unscriptural Financing

Christian Churches have done many unscriptural things to raise money. Suppers, plays, side-shows, rummage sales, grab bags, and punch boards are just a few. Church lotteries have been conducted widely. Not far from Johnson City a quilt was made by the "Ladies Aid" and raffled off by selling chances from house to house. A newspaper dispatch in 1939 stated, "Almost a third of all gambling done in the nation is in church lotteries, but many persons who participate in them do not consider them as gambling." The religious people may not consider church lotteries to be gambling, but the law considers lotteries gambling. Why should church lotteries be exempted? There is small wonder that professional gamblers have no use for the church when church members set such ungodly examples before them. It is high time that religion be cleaned up so that the world will respect those who claim to be Christians.

"The following news item appeared on the front page of the 'Childress Index,' Childress, Texas, issue of October 31, 1932. The item was embellished with a bold, three-line heading and enclosed in black face, box border. **FLASHY FEMALE TALENT TO SHINE ON DIAMOND.** Feminine Fats and Leans of Central Christian Church will clash in a baseball game for the benefit of the church funds, officers of the women's missionary society announced today. Personnel of the two teams is not complete, but prominent women of the church and their friends will be in the lineup. A date for the encounter will be set as soon as the players wear off a little of their pre-season stiffness in practice session." Don't you imagine they had lots of fun seeing those "Christian Church" wives and mothers sliding in on home plate? And all this "for the benefit of the church funds!"

Now, let all who think that the women are wholly to blame for such disgraceful antics in order to "raise" money take a look at the following: "Example No. 2 is taken from a recent issue of the Terrel, Texas, **Weekly Index** and is as follows: The men's Bible class of the First Christian Church, which recently sponsored the womanless bridge party, will present another womanless entertainment at the City Hall Friday, July 29. This time the class is having a 'Cry Baby' Show. Only men take part in the play and it will be great sport to see some of Terrel's prominent men mimicking babies or mothers. There will be plenty of crying, laughing, and fun. Prizes will be given to the best babies in the show. Rev. Harmon announces the men's class, of which he is teacher, presents the play to raise money for the church. Admission is 25 cents and 15 cents." Remember, all this has been done to "raise money" for Christian

Churches. What an unadulterated mess of foolishness! You may say that these things were not done here. I hope not. They should never have been done anywhere. However, in many places some of these things have been done, including the denominational practice of taking up an "offering" every night during a protracted meeting.

Churches of Christ do not use such catch-penny schemes to "raise" money, but follow the New Testament plan to "give" instead of "get." We give upon the first day of the week as the Lord has prospered us, according as we have purposed in our hearts (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7) and never put the church in the attitude of a beggar standing before an ungodly world asking for a handout! That is why so many people wonder where we get money to operate the church and do mission work. (The above quotations were taken from the booklet, "Why I Left the Christian Church," by Clarence C. Morgan. We suggest that the reader send 5 cents to Firm Foundation Publishing House, Austin, Texas, for a copy of this statement from a brother who left the Christian Church, April 24, 1932, after several years ministry in it. His closing words are: "Rome couldn't be reformed and neither can the 'Christian Church'.")

Millennial Speculation

Speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus, when they met him at Miletus, Paul revealed the future to them in these words: "For I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:29, 30.) The state of affairs here foretold by the apostle developed

centuries ago and continues to this day. One of the most "perverse things" men have arisen to teach in the churches of Christ in our generation is a materialistic system of heresy known as "Russellism," "Premillennialism," or "Bollism." This unscriptural theory has never been adopted as an article of faith in any denominational creed, but practically every prominent religious body in the land has been troubled by somebody going off at a tangent and preaching this doctrine in one form or another, while claiming a "deeper" knowledge of scripture or posing as very devout and branding those who oppose their wild theories as evil persecutors.

This anti-scriptural speculation has ensnared many preachers of the Christian Church, and a few preachers who claim fellowship in churches of Christ have been deceived by the plausible perversions of Adventists and Russellites regarding the second coming of Christ. The most aggressive of these teachers is Robert H. Boll, who was dismissed from the Gospel Advocate staff in 1915 for such teaching. He refused to be disciplined and persists in his error to this day, spreading it by his paper, "Word and Work." Two of Boll's followers, E. H. Hoover and Robert B. Boyd, preached this carnal theory in the Locust Street church in Johnson City, and ordered those who would not quietly accept it out of their own building! To anyone who wants to deny this statement the proof can be shown in writing. Hoover then went back to Chattanooga and assumed leadership of a small group of Premillennialists gleaned out of the various congregations there. As a result, forty-one elders, deacons, and leaders of the twelve churches of Christ there at that time, signed and published a statement which read as follows in part: "None of the churches of Christ

in Chattanooga fellowship the group which calls itself "the Downtown church of Christ" and meets at 610 Cherry Street, because of its factional origin and premillennial teaching."

Some Errors of Premillennialism

Anyone who is familiar with the writings of Russell and Boll knows that they differ in a very few minor points on the whole system of millennial teaching. The following are a few of the false doctrines of Premillennialism.

1. Premillennialists teach that the kingdom of Daniel 2:44 has not yet been set up. The truth is that Daniel said it would be set up in the days of the kings of the fourth world empire represented by the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which was the Roman empire. Either it was set up then or God defaulted His promise.

2. They teach that the kingdom of Daniel 2:44 will be set up when Christ returns. The truth is that kingdom was set up in the days of the Roman kings, as Daniel prophesied, for the Roman kings were in power when Jesus ascended to heaven to begin His reign. (Acts 2:29-31; 1 Cor. 15:24, 25.)

3. They claim that Christ's kingdom is to be ushered in with great destructive force at His second coming. The truth is that His kingdom was ushered in with "power" (Mk. 9:1; Acts 1:8; 8:19), and constructive force on Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-47; 8:12; 11:15.)

4. They claim that Christians will then be rulers in His kingdom. The truth is that Christians are now in His kingdom (Col. 1:13), and are now reigning with Christ. (Rev. 1:6; 5:10.)

5. They claim that Christ will then sit on David's throne. The truth is that He is now sitting on David's throne (Lk. 1:32, 33), for David's

throne was God's throne (1 Chron. 29:23), and Christ is now on God's throne. (Eph. 1:20, 21; Rev. 3:21.) Also, David's throne was established in heaven (Ps. 89:37) and Christ is now in heaven. (Lk. 24:51.) Furthermore, Christ has been on that throne since His ascension. (Acts 2:30, 31; Rom. 1:3, 4.)

6. They claim that Christ will then reign on His throne. The truth is that He is now reigning on His throne. (1 Cor. 15:24, 25.)

7. They claim Christ will come to earth to become a king. The truth is that He went into heaven for that purpose. (Dan. 7:13, 14; Eph. 1:20, 21; 1 Pet. 3:22.)

8. They claim "the regeneration" (Matt. 19:28), will be when Christ reigns 1,000 years on earth. The truth is that this age now is the period called "the regeneration"; for Christ now reigns (1 Cor. 15:25), the apostles are now declaring His will or law (judging). In accordance with that law men are being regenerated or born again (John 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:22, 23) into Christ's kingdom, and saved by the "washing of regeneration." (Tit. 3:5.)

9. They claim that Jesus and the church will be the "Christ" then. The truth is that Jesus is the Christ now. (Matt. 16:16; Acts 2:36; 8:37.)

10. They claim that the wicked will not be raised for more than a thousand years after the second coming of Christ. The truth is that they will be raised "when he comes." (1 Thess. 1:7-10) and be judged along with the righteous and cast into the lake of fire. (Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:11-15.)

11. They claim that Christ will reign on the earth 1,000 years after His second coming. The truth is that the earth will not exist after His coming! In his discussion of the second coming

of Christ, Peter says (2 Pet. 3:4-13), that some would scoff at the promise of His coming, but the Lord will come (v. 9) unexpectedly, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (v. 10.)

The Infallibly Safe Way

It is a bad diagnostician who can tell what the trouble is and is unable to offer a remedy for the disease. In keeping with that thought, we respectfully submit for your consideration the only sure remedy for the division that exists today. It is the same remedy that was applied in the days of the Restoration Movement; namely, a return to the Bible. The slogan of the Restoration is still safe and scriptural: "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." The "one thing needful" is the Scripture to authorize the above-mentioned unscriptural practices and doctrines. As long as men insist upon following their opinions and adding to the work, teaching and worship of the church those things not authorized in the scriptures, just that long may those same men expect to be disfellowshipped by those who "speak as the oracles of God." Paul says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:17, 18.)

May God help those who teach and practice unscriptural things to see the error of their way and come back to the Bible. We still stand on the same scriptural ground we occupied when

they left us by adding unscriptural things. No compromise can be made with error. We have not moved one inch. When they see their prodigality and come back where they left us, we shall have unity and peace based upon the only sure foundation—the authority of the scriptures. Unity upon any other ground would not please God.

They Are Doing It!

To give credit where it is due, we are glad to say that many individuals are leaving the fellowship of those who teach and practice unscriptural things and are taking their stand upon a "thus saith the Lord" in everything. This may not be called a wholesale return to truth, but in some places whole congregations are seeing the truth and turning from their errors. This writer can name six congregations who have abandoned their errors in less than a year. Now and then a preacher sees the only way out and takes his stand with those who hold to the scriptural position. Among them are M. C. Franklin, the late Hall L. Calhoun, C. C. Morgan, D. H. Hadwin, Calvert E. Wiley, H. E. Jones, Floyd A. Decker, H. J. Keltch, and others. Is it too much to suggest that there are many other honest souls whose love for the truth is strong enough to lead them out of error when once their eyes are opened?