

THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

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RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

A woman, who obviously delighted in heated discussions of worldly matters, once said to me: "I do not believe in arguing about religion." A by-stander, overhearing her remark, commented, "I cannot think of anything more worthy of discussion."

Honorable controversy in religion is not wrong as some seem to think. Our Lord was the greatest controversialist this world has ever known. His church was born in the midst of controversy and grew in the midst of controversy. Stephen, the first of the Christian Martyrs, died at the hands of dishonorable men who "were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." (Acts 6:10). When Paul was at Athens, "his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city given wholly to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him." (Acts 17: 16-17). There was controversy within the church as well as without as honorable brethren sought the course of truth and right. When brethren came down from Judea to Antioch teaching error concerning circumcision," Paul and Barnabas "had no small dissension and disputation with them." (Acts 15:1-2). Later, they went up to Jerusalem about this question, but it was not settled until "there had been much disputing." (Acts 15:7).

There was no "hush-hush" or "closed door" policy in the church of the first century and there is no place for such in the church of the twentieth century. Truly, it is a sad thing for differences of any kind to arise between brethren and friends, but it is sadder still for those differences to continue because of reluctance to reason together in an honorable effort to elicit truth that might be united there in the service of God. Catholicism thrives on the closed-door policy, the hierarchy presenting that which the people are demanded to accept and practice without question! The papers recently carried accounts of Catholics forbidden to religious discussions with those of other faiths. The religion of Jesus Christ thrives on the inalienable right of every man to think for himself. He has the right to all evidence bearing on any religious question, and in the light of all the evidence he has the solemn obligation of arriving at the truth, embracing the truth, and contending for truth. (Jude 3). Let it be remembered, however, that only acceptable evidence upon which such decisions are to be made is a "thus saith the Lord." "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Pet. 4:11).

Sometimes it may fall the lot of the honorable, as in the case of Stephen, to

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Editorial.....

Speaking With Boldness

The word **"boldness"** suggests confidence and courage. It is opposite of fear and timidity. One who speaks with boldness has sufficient confidence and courage to speak freely, unreservedly and without ambiguity. Those who are too fearful or timid to speak with boldness **"will have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."** (See Rev. 21:8).

SOME WHO SPAKE BOLDLY

The apostle Peter and John were put in jail (as recorded in Acts 4) because **"they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."** Those in authority who examined them marvelled **"when they saw the BOLDNESS of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men."** They **"commanded"** Peter and John **"not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus"** and **"threatened them"** and **"let them go."** When Peter and John were released, they went to their own company and reported what had happened. When their brethren heard the report, they prayed to God that He would **"grant"** unto His servants, that **"WITH ALL BOLDNESS"** they might speak His Word. Acts 4:31 says, **"and they**

spake the Word of God WITH BOLDNESS."

A certain Jew named Apollos, who was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, went to Ephesus. Apollos **"was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in the Spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John."** Although he needed to learn the Word of God more perfectly, we learn that Apollos **"began to SPEAK BOLDLY in the synagogue."** (See Acts 18:24-28).

We have a record in Acts 17 of Paul and some companions visiting Thessalonica. Later Paul wrote to the church of the Thessalonians and said: **"..... we (including Silas and Timothy) were BOLD IN OUR GOD TO SPEAK unto you the gospel of God with much contention."** (1 Thess. 2:2). Prior to these events, Paul (known then as Saul) **"had PREACHED BOLDLY at Damascus in the name of Jesus."** (See Acts 9:27). We learn from Acts 9:29 that **"he SPAKE BOLDLY in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him."**

Speaking of Paul and Barnabas in Iconium, Acts 14:3 says: **"Long time therefore abode they SPEAKING BOLDLY in the Lord"**.

While Paul was in Ephesus we learn that **"he went into the synagogue, and SPAKE BOLDLY for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of three years"** (Acts 19:8-10).

In writing to the saints at Corinth Paul said: **"Great is my BOLDNESS OF SPEECH toward you....."** (2 Cor. 7:4).

Paul urged the saints at Philippi to pray for him that he might **"open"** his **"mouth BOLDLY, to make known the mystery of the gospel,"** for which he was an ambassador in bonds, that there-

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TWELVE EXCELLENT RULES TO PROMOTE HARMONY AMONG CHURCH MEMBERS TODAY

1. To remember that we are all subject to failings of one kind or another.
2. To bear with—and not magnify—each other's infirmities. (Gal. 6:1-2).
3. To pray one for another in our social meetings, and particularly in private. (James 5:16) **Editor's note:** We should also pray for each other in our public assemblies.
4. To avoid going from house to house for the purpose of bearing news and interfering with other people's business.
5. Always turn a deaf ear to any slanderous report and to lay no charge against any person until well founded.
6. If a member be in fault, tell him of it in private, before it is mentioned to others.
7. To watch against shyness of each other and put the best construction on any action that has the appearance of opposition or resentment.
8. To observe the just rules of Solomon — that is, leave off contention before it is meddled with. (Proverbs 17:14).
9. If a member has offended, to consider how Godlike it is to forgive, and how unlike a Christian it is to seek revenge.
10. Remember that it is always a giant artifice of the devil to promote distance and animosities among members of the church; and we should therefore watch against everything that furthers this end.
11. To consider how much more good we can do in the world at large, and in the church in particular, when we are all united in love, than we could do when acting alone, and indulging in a contrary spirit.
12. Lastly, to consider the express injunction of the Scriptures, and the beautiful example of Christ, as to these things. (Eph. 4:32; 1 Pet. 2:21; John 13: 5, 15).

—Selected

A WORTH WHILE THOUGHT

It is better to think a good thought about an evil man than to think an evil thought about a good man.

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engage dishonorable disputants. It is not uncommon to hear a man appeal to the emotions and prejudices of his audience rather than to the word of God. He may talk much about past or present practices as though practice were authority. "Why, we have always done this!" he may say, but he fails to give Scripture that would establish his point. He may ridicule, belittle, and seek to stigmatize those who disagree with him. This is not honorable controversy and will be rejected by discerning men as indicative of one thing only—the weakness of the man. All the sophistry of all the wisest in the wisdom of this world cannot change the truth of God's eternal word.

—Hugh W. Davis

(Continued from page 2) SPEAKING WITH BOLDNESS

in he might SPEAK BOLDLY, as he "ought to speak." (See Eph. 6:19-20).

WE SHOULD SPEAK BOLDLY

If we are to follow the example of the apostles in preaching, it unquestionably stands that we should SPEAK GOD'S WORD WITH BOLDNESS. There is a dearth of "BOLD PREACHING." The "boldness" which we have "in Christ" should prompt us to speak the truth with plainness and humility. The gospel should be spoken "with much contention!"

Our speaking should not be of deceit nor in guile. Neither should we use flattering words nor a cloke of covetousness. Cowardice or timidity should never seal our lips nor stay our tongues. We should not speak the Word of God as the word of men, "but as it is in truth, the Word of God."

We cannot speak the Word of God with boldness unless, first, we are willing to SPEAK THE WORD. Pressures may be exerted in an effort to keep us from teaching the truth. Each one of us should earnestly pray to God that we may have sufficient strength and wisdom TO SPEAK THE WORD WITH BOLDNESS!

(CRS)

ALREADY SAVED

It has been argued by some that the command to be baptized in Acts 2:38 was given to people already saved. If so, then the command to repent was also. If saved people were commanded to be baptized, then saved people were commanded to repent, for both are on the same side of remission of sins. It follows then that men repent because they are already saved! According to this theory, repentance has nothing to do with salvation! Suppose we grant for a moment that the command to be baptized was given to people already saved. We can still prove that baptism is essential to salvation. Is baptism a command of the gospel? Read Mark 16:15-16. If it is **and it is**, then it must either be obeyed or men will die in disobedience. If men die in disobedience what is their reward? (Read it in 2 Thess. 1:7-8). Here we find that Christ will bring vengeance upon them that know not God and that obey not the gospel. Whether baptism comes before or after pardon, it certainly comes before the judgment, does it not? All who have not obeyed, will be lost. Dear reader, one of two things lies in your path, either baptism for remission of sins or the vengeance of God.

—Roy E. Stephens

A PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM, etc.

A series of public discussions have been scheduled to be conducted at the **Neighborhood Center** (near Evans Elementary School) in Albertville, Ala. on July 16, 17, 19, 20, 1973 at 7:30 each evening.

The disputants will be **Mr. E. J. Reynolds**, district overseer of the Alabama City District of the Churches of God, which have their headquarters in Cleveland, Tenn. and **Carrol R. Sutton**, a Christian.

Mr. Reynolds will affirm for two evenings that "The Scriptures teach that believers today receive Holy Spirit baptism, speak in tongues and receive spiritual gifts as did the apostles in the first century." **Carrol R. Sutton** will deny that proposition.

Carrol R. Sutton will affirm for two evenings that "The Scriptures teach that Holy Spirit baptism and the spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Cor. 12 ceased with the apostolic age." **Mr. Reynolds** will deny this proposition.

Mr. O. N. Franks, pastor of the local Church of God denomination will serve as moderator for **Mr. Reynolds** and **Hiram Hutto**, a Christian, will serve as moderator for **Carrol Sutton**.

We cordially invite and sincerely urge you to attend these discussions.

Sentence Sermons

Many parents are not on "spanking" terms with their children.

Lie down with dogs and you will get up with fleas.

People make enemies by complaining too much to their friends.

He who talks without "thinking" runs more risks than he who thinks without talking.

Every moment you are angry, you lose one minute of happiness.

Those who complain about the way the ball bounces are often the ones who dropped it.

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