

Contending FOR THE Faith™

“BROAD IS THE WAY”

Roelf L. Ruffner

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it (Mat. 7:13-14, NKJV).

This spiritual admonition of our Lord resounds through time to the present age of apostasy in the church. For many of my brethren the Gospel and the Bible are not enough to guide them spiritually. They want to be titillated by emotions and mysticism. They are described by Paul in the following verses.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables (1 Tim. 4:3, 4).

A case in point is the sad goings on at Lipscomb University and its haven for heretics, the Institute of Christian Spirituality (ICS); it is neither Christian nor “spiritual.” ICS is deeply entrenched in the Emerging Church Movement—a radical attempt to bring together all “branches” of Christianity to form a “new, progressive church.” In April of 2021, they brought in two non-Christians, certified Enneagram trainers Adele and Doug Calhoun, for a seminar on using the Enneagram. The Enneagram or Enneagram of Personality “is a model of the human psyche which is principally understood and taught as a typology of nine interconnected personality types.” From my research I found the Ennea-

gram to be some sort of psycho-babble Ouija board. Even the Vatican condemned its use in 2003.

Their latest venture into weirdness is the Children’s Spirituality Summit/InterGenerate Conference on May 24-26, 2021. Sadly, this may be a replacement for the Lipscomb Lectureship of years ago. They advertised its speakers as “from a broad range of Christian faith communities” (i.e., denominations) and its keynote speakers live up to that pathetic feign to ecumenism. For example, “REVEREND F. Douglas Powe, Jr. is an ordained elder in the Baltimore/Washington Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.” (My emphasis, RLR). “REVEREND Rachel Turner is the Parenting for Faith Pioneer at Bible Reading Fellowship in the United Kingdom.” By the way, ICS did not use the title “Reverend” in their advertising but for clarity and honesty’s sake in this article, I do. Nowhere in the New Testament was a preacher of the gospel given the title of “Reverend” or one worthy of reverence. Only false teachers and their ilk use that title. **“But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven” (Mat. 23:8, 9).**

Another female false teacher and keynote speaker was REVEREND Lacy Finn Borgo, who spoke on “Spiritual Conversation with Children.” Borgo teaches and provides spiritual direction for the Renovaré Institute, for the Doctorate of Ministry in Spiritual Direction at Fuller Theological Seminary and at Portland Seminary. She is also associated with “Good Dirt Ministries” (No, this is not a joke!). On her website, I found the following, “Spiritual direction is a way of companionship with people in their life with God. Spiritual directors offer the gift of listening to both the directee and listening to the movement of the Spirit.” So, she taught the

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher
dpbcftf@gmail.com

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917–October 10, 2001

Editorial...

“WHICH OF YOU BY TAKING THOUGHT CAN ADD ONE CUBIT UNTO HIS STATURE?”

(Mat. 6:27)

INTRODUCTION

Although they are not the only ones, denominational people do not know how to correctly study the Bible, the New Testament’s teaching concerning the importance of the authority of Christ, and how to ascertain the same for what we are to believe and practice (2 Tim. 2:15; Mat. 28:18; John 14:6; Col. 3:17). Thus, they do not know how and when one is saved from sin. Neither do they realize that the Lord adds those He saves from their sins to the church He built, purchased with His own blood, and that is revealed on the pages of the New Testament (Mat. 16:18; Acts. 2:38, 41, 42, 47; 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27). Furthermore, the denominations fail to see the inspired New Testament identifying marks of the Lord’s church—its mission, organization, work, and worship. For the most part, denominations admit they are man-made religious organizations, founded on and sustained by the commandments and doctrines of men, and having no bearing on one’s salvation. Thus, one cannot expect them to do more than give lip service to Jesus. With few exceptions, most of the denominations will accept people as Christians who confess they believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and have “taken Him as their personal Savior.”

Because of their false concepts of the church, denominational people have long said that “it doesn’t make any difference what we believe, just so we are sincere.” Furthermore, they also continue to say, “You go to your church and I’ll go to mine and we’ll all get to heaven together.” A prime example of this erroneous concept is the Community Church. It is an amalgamation of various and sundry denominations who agree to disagree on about everything that makes the denominations differ one from another as long as they sincerely profess Jesus to be their Savior.

SINCERITY ALONE AND WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG MORALLY

With the foregoing in mind, we want to pursue where the doctrine of “It doesn’t make any difference what one believes just so one is sincere” can lead those who consistently practice it in every area of their lives. This erroneous slogan sounds good to the denominational mind because of their belief that the church is not essential to one’s salvation and that all churches are denominations. Furthermore, denominationals limit the application of this view to religious matters. However, they seem not to realize that there is no reason that the slogan cannot apply with equal force to what is morally

right and wrong. In other words, if it is the case in religious matters that “it does not make any difference what one believes as long as one is sincere,” then why is it not the case that the same is true in moral matters?

The same Bible that teaches about salvation and the church also teaches what is right and wrong morally. Indeed, Christian ethical conduct is derived from the teaching of the New Testament concerning what it is to live the Christian life. Explicitly, most denominationalists uphold the Bible as an absolute objective moral standard and they would never think of explicitly (in just so many words) teaching that in morality “it doesn’t matter what one believes as long as one is sincere” However, if such is correct in religious matters, will someone please explain why it does not equally apply to one’s ethical conduct? If a woman is sincere in believing she can kill her unborn baby, why doesn’t the denominationalist excuse her murderous actions by saying, “It doesn’t make any difference what one believes just so one is sincere.” The same would apply to the rapist, the liar, the thief, etc.

And, this brings us to those who are under the umbrella of LGBTQ+.

LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or sometimes questioning), and others. The “plus” represents other sexual identities including pansexual and Two-Spirit. The first four letters of the acronym have been used since the 1990s, but in recent years there has been an increased awareness of the need to be inclusive of other sexual identities to offer better representation.

The acronym is used to represent a diverse range of sexualities and gender-identities, referring to anyone who is transgender and/or same/similar gender attracted. (Definition from <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-does-lgbtq-mean-5069804>, accessed on June 28, 2021).

DEFINITION OF TRANSGENDER

Merriam and Webster defines the word *transgender* to be:

of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity differs from the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth especially: of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity is opposite the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transgender>, accessed on June 26, 2021).

In other words, one’s beliefs or feelings about one’s gender ignores the objective absolute facts of one’s physical being. Thus, their strong sincere beliefs that they have transitioned or are transitioning into the opposite sex deceives them into believing they are no longer the gender into which they were born. And, if it is the case, that “it doesn’t make any difference what one believes just so one is sincere in one’s beliefs,” such people’s views of themselves must be accepted on the sole basis that they sincerely believe they transitioned from the sex of their birth into the opposite sex or whatever.

Now to the scripture that serves as the title of this liter-

ary piece. **“Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?”** (Mat. 6:27) A man who is five feet tall can be as sincere as he can be in his mental concentration to become a man who is six feet tall, but his sincere in-depth concentration to accomplish the same will never cause him to be what he desires. Moreover, Matthew 6:27 not only applies to the man in our example, but it also tells us that no matter how great one’s mental concentration may be in wanting to become the opposite gender from the one into which one was born, such concentrated fervent thought will not one’s sex or gender change.

DENYING REALITY

If the people who have done all they can in attempting to change their gender will check their DNA, they will learn that they continue to be the gender they were when they were born. No matter the medications and surgeries (plastic and otherwise) they have undergone to appear to be the opposite sex, they have only obtained a disguise—they have not changed their gender, only how they appear.

A schizophrenic is a person who has difficulty distinguishing between reality and what is imaginary. Although schizophrenics may be as sincere in their beliefs as they can be, they are mentally ill. Other people deny reality because it suits their lusts so to do. As the prophet declared, **“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”** (Pro. 14:12; 16:25). Jeremiah confessed the truth when he said, **“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”** (Jer. 10:23).

TRUTH IS OBJECTIVE AND ABSOLUTE— IT IS FIXED, NOT FLUID

Belief does not determine what is true. Truth is that which corresponds to reality. Remember, Saul of Tarsus was as sincere as one could be in persecuting Christians, but he was sincerely wrong in so doing. What transgenderism represents is a deliberate disregard and rejection of evidence that is replaced with feelings. Such people strive to get others to believe that truth is whatever a person says it is—shades of those described in Romans 1:25. But God created the human species male and female (Gen. 1:26, 27; Mat. 19:4-6). No other species of humans have existed, does exist, or can exist.

The LGBTQ+ bunch ignores evidence contrary to their agenda and they feverishly work to impose their corrupt and deranged views on all who disagree with and oppose them. That being the case, Christians must apply such scriptures as Ephesians 6:10-19 and Jude 3, boldly opposing the LGBTQ+ immorality as well as all other religious and moral error. Many people are so opposed to conflict of any kind that they will readily accept lies rather than stand for the truth and oppose all error. Let us not be once named among them.

—David P. Brown, Editor

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naïve folk at the conference to “listen” for subjective nonsense. “Spiritual direction” sounds like an old fashioned seance. Perhaps that “movement of the Spirit” is just a bit of undigested potato? Should we teach impressionable children to trust some nudge in the night rather than the Word of God?

And when they say to you, “Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isa. 8:19).

There was no “light” in any of this.

Another heretic who spoke was REVEREND Jared Patrick Boyd. Boyd is “a pastor, spiritual director, teacher, and founder of The Order of Sustainable Faith, a missional monastic order for the 21st Century.” I looked up The Order of Sustainable Faith on the internet and found this:

THE ORDER OF THE COMMON LIFE IS A MISSIONAL MONASTIC ORDER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY (Their emphasis, not mine, RLR.) We believe that the contemplative and charismatic are meant to be brought together, that we can grow in our awareness of God’s invitation to each of us, and that the future of monasticism is missional. New cultural contexts call for new expressions of Christ-centered communities. We plant contemplative worship communities called abbeys and priories as part of our developing work called The Abbey Collective.

This character wants to combine holyrollerism with medieval monasticism. Shades of hair shirts and meditation in jeans while sipping a decaf mocha latte!

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron (1 Tim. 4:1,2).

Boyd’s topic was “Imaginative Prayer.” Notice this description (not necessarily Boyd’s) of introducing this heresy to others:

1. Light the candle to symbolize God’s presence, God’s desire for us to come to him in prayer, and the Spirit’s work in our hearts as we seek God. 2. Explain the process —You will pray using Ignatian Contemplation, a prayer in which you engage with God using all your senses and imagination followed by a time of sharing as time permits.

“Ignatian Contemplation” is from a Roman Church prayer book, *Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*. Emerging Church aficionados, like Boyd, get their practice of contemplative prayer from the Roman Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, and even Buddhism. It is focusing the mind by constant repetition of a phrase or word. Such ascetics as the “saint” Teresa of Avila taught that you could enter into a “mystical union” with God using this method.

Imaginative prayer is a form of contemplative prayer in which you focus on a story in the Bible, like the wedding feast at Cana, and imagine you are there. You see in your mind this imaginary Jesus and you dwell upon what He looks like and does. My problem with this is, what do Jesus, Peter, Mary, etc. look like? No one knows because we have no authentic pictures or likenesses of them! Did Jesus have blue eyes or brown? Is this practice not a form of idolatry?

You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth (Exo. 20:4).

The theologian J. I. Packer wrote, “Imagining God in our heads can be just as real a breach of the second commandment as imagining Him by the work of our hands.” Such a practice may turn young minds toward the worship of images and icons as the Roman Church and others practice. **“Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).**

As a Christian, I have no problem with meditating or reflecting on God’s Word. **“Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Psa. 119:11).** But imaginative prayer is not that. Imaginative prayer is adoration. It is relying on these meditations rather than the Word of God as our guide in life and worship. This is what one reviewer said about Boyd and his book on imaginative prayer and children:

Jared Patrick Boyd discovered that children’s spiritual formation is rooted in the imagination. When we lead our children through guided times of imaginative prayer, they can experience a connection with God that transcends mere Bible knowledge or doctrinal content.

It seems that for Boyd and ICS the Bible is just not enough for one to “experience God.” Their real goal is to enslave young minds to mysticism and subjectivism.

Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other (1 Cor. 4:6 – ASV, 1901).

As a student of history and the Bible, I read time and time again how Christians have left the “**narrow way**” of the Gospel for the “**broad way**” of mysticism and false doctrine. For example, as the Roman Empire declined and society became increasingly chaotic, many Christians embraced monasticism and mysticism. Contemplative prayer, false doctrine, and the worship of icons became popular among the masses. Out of this arose the semi-pagan monstrosities of the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church. In the 7th Century A.D., in the Middle East, the Muslim hordes boiled out of Arabia and overwhelmed the rotten edifice that was “Christendom.” Thousands of “Christians” submitted to Islam as it kicked the door down. Are we seeing the same thing in the 21st Century?

When the Bible is not one's standard of authority in life and worship, but rather one's own feelings and imaginations, anything is possible. Let us take that "narrow, difficult" way that leads to eternal life. Sadly, that "way" is not the way Lipscomb University is presently taking? They have left the Holy Bible behind and trampled upon it.

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart (Eph. 4:17-18).

END NOTES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enneagram_of_Personality#Criticism as of May 28, 2021.

<https://www.lipscomb.edu/events/intergenerate-conference-childrens-spirituality-summit-2021> as of May 25, 2021.

<http://www.gooddirtministries.org/spiritual-direction> as of May 26, 2021.

<https://www.jaredpatrickboyd.com> as of May 26, 2021.

https://www.luther.edu/grace-institute/assets/Ignatian_Contemplation_Imaginative_Prayer.pdf as of May 25, 2021.

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—2500 Moore Court
Columbia, TN 38401

THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

G. A. "Gus" Dunn

Some years ago while I lived in Memphis, TN, I got a letter from a young man, a school-teacher, who lived in Arkansas. He had never met a preacher who claimed to be a Christian only. His days had been spent among the "sects." He had read his Bible much and learned "the plan of salvation"—that is, the Gospel. In talking to sectarian preachers, with whom he did not agree, he was told by them that I taught what he believed, and, also, that I was to hold a meeting in Perryville, AR., that year. The young man got my address and wrote me the situation, also asking if I was to hold the meeting in Perryville, and, if so, when.

I held the meeting. The young man came to it, and I baptized him. He knew the Gospel before I met him. He learned it from the New Testament. He did not belong to the "sects," nor the "Reformation," nor the "Restoration Movement." Now, why all this talk of a "Restoration" movement? Why any "movement," or name or names, save the simple Gospel of Christ?

What if some good man did start a "Restoration?" Who cares? Who is interested in it? We do not need "movements," but we do need the Gospel, and that without "frills" or additions or subtractions. The "Reformation" is very dear to some people; the "Restoration" is very dear to others. Forget it all. Preach the Gospel—and it alone—and never name a "movement" of any human label. As that Arkansas school-teacher learned the Gospel without "movements" or mover of "movements," so may others. The Gospel is easily learned. In reading *Acts of the Apostles*, one can see how quickly and easily people then learned the Gospel. All one needs to do is

to "back up and hitch on" to the second chapter of Acts and move on with the Gospel, and it alone. Do not canonize or glorify "movements," "reformations," "restorations," or any other.

Speak as the Bible. Let everything else die and be forgotten. I am not refusing to honor good men and their works. Paul was wonderful, but he exalted no "movements," but simply preached the gospel. That is not too much, but it is enough (*Gospel Advocate*, March 12, 1931).

—Deceased

To say we ought to be good is one thing.
However, to understand the foundations of—

- 1) Who human beings are,
- 2) All rational thought,
- 3) All moral oughtness, and
- 4) What is actually good is quite another.

To say we ought to be good, without the foundations, is merely to assert preference. Preference, whether personal or societal, is not a good foundation for these will always be erratic, whimsical, and arbitrary. —Author Unknown

"FOR OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO MAN LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST" (1 COR. 3:11; ALSO SEE JOHN 8:31, 32; 12:48; 14:6).

WHY IS THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST SUCH GOOD NEWS?

Danny Douglas

The word, *Gospel*, is translated from the Greek word, *euangelion*, and it means: “glad or joyful tidings, good message, good news.” Indeed, the Gospel is good news, and those who bring it have a distinct privilege and responsibility. Paul in Romans 10:15 emphasizes this point, as he quotes from the prophet Isaiah, “**How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!**” (Isa. 52:7).

It is the God-given duty of the Lord’s church to proclaim the gospel to a lost and dying world (Mark 16:15-16). Paul stated to the Ephesians, “**to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in heavenly places might be known through the church the manifold wisdom of God,**” (Eph. 3:10, *ASV*-1901). Yet, as wonderful as the Gospel is, the soul who refuses to obey it will be eternally destroyed (2 The. 1:7-9). Now, let us consider why the gospel of Christ is such good news, and why it is so urgent for us to obey and teach it!

“**As cold waters to a thirsty soul, So is good news from a far country**” (Pro. 25:25). The good news of God, the Gospel, was brought down from heaven to earth by the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 1:12). Inspired men have recorded this message for us in the Sacred Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Cor. 2:13). Man is lost and condemned without the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). To downcast man, lost in sin, hungering and thirsting for salvation—the Gospel has come!

If we really appreciate the Gospel of Christ, then we will be willing to: (a) suffer for it, like Paul (2 Tim. 1:8-9); (b) sacrifice for its proclamation and realize that carnal things are very small in comparison to the spiritual blessings brought forth by the preaching and teaching of the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:11-18; Eph. 1:3-7; 3:8); (c) “**be fellowhelpers to the truth**” (3 John 8); (d) be “**fellow-labourers**” in the Gospel (Phi. 1:17; 4:3); (e) spread the Gospel message ourselves (Acts 8:4; Pro. 11:30); and (f) help faithful men to be trained to preach and teach it (2 Tim. 2:2). In the Lord’s church today, we urgently need to have a greater love and devotion to the “**glorious gospel of the blessed God**” (1 Tim. 1:11). It is noteworthy that beloved apostle Paul refers to it as the “**glorious gospel of Christ**” (2 Cor. 4:4).

WHY IS THE GOSPEL SUCH GOOD NEWS?

1. *The Gospel is Good News because it tells man of the Savior who came to earth to save him* (Luke 2:10-12; 19:10). As the song says: “Why Did My Savior Come To Earth... Because He Loves Me So” (1 John 4:8-10; Phi. 2:5-11; Rom. 5:6-11; Rev. 1:5). In the Gospel, we learn about: “**the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me**” (Gal. 2:20b).

A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord. The Gospel announces: “**how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures**” (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Man, under the condemnation of sin, has a Savior who loves him, and who shed his precious blood to save him and wash away his sins (Mat. 1:21; Rev. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:19). It is good news indeed to learn that sinful man does not have to be lost in hell (Rom. 5:8-9)! Now that is truly good news!

2. *The Gospel is Good News because it is for all people* (Rom. 1:16; Acts 15:7). Jesus commanded His disciples: “**Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned**” (Mark 16:15-16). Indeed, Christ “**by the grace of God**” tasted death “for every man” (Heb. 2:9). Every soul needs the Gospel, yet, many in the church treat with indifference the soul-saving message! The story was related several years ago about a man who decided to move from the country to the city. Before leaving he gave a bag of wheat seed to one neighbor and he gave a second bag to another neighbor. When he returned to visit a year later, he passed by one man’s field and it was chock-full of golden grain! He passed by the other man’s field and it was grown up with weeds. He asked him about the bag of wheat seed and he said, “I put it in the attic and the rats ate it.” This is like the attitude that many have toward the Gospel. They neglect the study of it, obedience to it, and the teaching of it! Although it is the most precious seed in the world. “**The seed is the word of God**” (Luke 8:11).

3. *The Gospel is Good News because it is the “gospel of the grace of God”* (Acts 20:24). “**For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us**” (cf. Tit. 2:11-12). Because of God’s grace, man has the privilege of being taught the Gospel of Christ. Moreover, the Gospel is the message of God’s grace, and the grace of God has made the Gospel possible. By it we have access to God’s grace (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 5:1-2; 10:17; Tit. 3:4-7; 1 Cor. 15:1).

Without the Lord’s grace, no one could be saved (Eph. 2:8). When the apostles and elders came together in Jerusalem to consider the matter of circumcision, which certain Judaizing teachers were erroneously seeking to bind on new Gentile converts to Christ, Peter announced: “**But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they**” (Acts 15:11).

4. *The Gospel is Good News because by it we are begotten by God and become His children* (1 Cor. 4:15; Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23). When one obeys the Gospel of Christ, he is begot-

ten by God and born into His house, the church of Christ—the kingdom of God (1 Tim. 3:15; John 3:3-5; Col. 1:13-14). As physical children are begotten by their fathers, God’s children have been begotten by His seed, the Word of God (Luke 8:11; Jas. 1:18).

The apostle Peter declares that those who have been purified and born again by the truth of the Gospel are under the Divine obligation to love one another with a pure heart fervently.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Pet. 1:22-23).

What a privilege to be a child of God (John 1:12-13). **“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not”** (1 John 3:1).

5. *The Gospel is Good News because it is the “gospel of God”* (Rom. 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor. 11:7; 1 The. 2:2, 8-9; 1 Pet. 4:17). It is from God—not men! Inspired men received it from God; they did not receive it from man (Gal. 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 2:6-16). Unlike the teachings and inventions of man, the gospel is perfect and eternal (Eph. 1:13; John 8:32; Tit. 1:14; Mat. 15:9; 15:13; 2 John 9; 1 Pet. 1:25; Rev. 14:6).

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe (1 The. 2:13).

6. *Christ’s Gospel is Good News because it tells man of heaven and makes the hope of heaven possible.* Truly, it brings hope to a dark and hopeless world. Precious souls learn of this hope through the gospel, as Paul stated to the church at Colosse:

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel (Col. 1:3-5).

Yet, we must continue steadfast and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel if we are to reach Heaven. Paul went on to declare to the Christians at Colosse who had been reconciled to God:

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, Yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister (Col. 1:21-23).

7. *The Gospel of Christ is Good News because it brings peace.* It is the “gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15; Rom. 10:15). By the Gospel, God has made peace between Jew and Gentile, and

between Himself and man (cf. Eph. 2:11-22).

Through the Gospel, man is able to have his sins remitted by the blood of Christ and, therefore, have access to God the Father (Eph. 2:13-18). It is through the Gospel that man learns how to reach the blood of Christ, whereby he is made near to God: **“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ”** (Eph. 2:13). Paul speaks in powerful and beautiful terms of the peace of God available to man through the gospel: **“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”** (Phi. 4:7). By the Gospel, **“we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Rom. 5:1). This is a peace which the world cannot provide (John 14:27; 16:33).

On the first Pentecost Day following the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, the apostles were **“filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance”** (cf. Acts 2:1-4). It was on this day that the church of the Lord, the kingdom of God, came, just as Jesus had predicted (cf. Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 2:47). The beginning of the church was attended by the gospel being preached for the first time in its fullness. After Peter’s sermon, the Jews cried, **“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”** Peter gave this answer: **“...Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”** (cf. Acts 2:37-38). It is noteworthy that they were to be baptized for the express purpose stated by the apostle, **“for the remission of sins.”** This was the same purpose for which our Savior shed His precious blood, as He had stated a few days earlier when He instituted the drinking of the cup in the Lord’s Supper, saying: **“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins”** (Mat. 26:28). This implies that when one is baptized **“for the remission of sins,”** he reaches the blood of Christ, that is, he is baptized into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3). This is also in harmony with the command which Ananias gave to Saul of Tarsus to be baptized to **“wash away thy sins”** (Acts 22:16), in that, it is only the blood of Christ that washes sins away (Rev. 1:5).

The preaching of the Gospel, including the remission of sins and the apostles’ reception of power from on high on Pentecost Day (Acts 2:1-38), is a fulfilment of that which Jesus had predicted before His ascension:

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high (Luke 24:45-49).

8. *The Gospel is Good News because by it we are called unto God, and by it we are able to obtain “the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 The. 2:14). **“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ**

our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). Thus, the Gospel is the means by which God calls men to Him. Thus, we can understand why God wants all men to hear the Gospel of Christ (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). What are we doing about it?

Moreover, with the Gospel, the Christian is able to overcome any sin and to defeat any error. Hence, Paul teaches that the Christian soldier is incomplete without taking the **“sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”** (Eph. 6:17), and this is the only offensive weaponry that we have. We are not only to use it as a weapon wherewith to win souls, to build up the church, and to defend the body of Christ, but we are to defend it against any attacks made upon it, like Paul, who said: **“...I am set for the defence of the gospel”** (Phi. 1:17).

9. *The Gospel of Christ is Good News because it is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”* (Rom. 1:16; cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-2). To believe the Gospel is to obey it. Christ became the Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him (Heb. 5:9). In the New Testament sense, to believe involves obedience to God. We find that belief is the opposite of disobedience in the Scriptures: **“He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him”** (John 3:36—*ASV*, 1901).

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed (1 Pet. 2:7-8).

Our **“Saviour Jesus Christ... hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”** (2 Tim. 1:10). To Christians it is called, **“the gospel of your salvation”** (Eph. 1:13). It informs man that to be saved, he must: hear and believe the Gospel (Acts 15:7; Rom. 10:14-17); repent (Acts 2:38; 17:30); confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Acts

8:37; Rom. 10:9-10); and be baptized in His name for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

Having put on Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4), one must remain faithful (Rev. 2:10; John 8:31-32; 14:15, 21-24; 1 John 1:7). Those who walk in the light are those who have fellowship with God and the faithful and who receive the continual cleansing of the blood of Christ, as John wrote to the brethren: **“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”** (1 John 1:7). Those who walk in the light are those who know the Lord by obeying His commandments (1 John 2:3). Their lives are worthy of the glorious Gospel of Christ, as Paul states to the Lord’s church at Philippi:

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel;” (Phil. 1:27—*ASV*, 1901).

Those who do not know God and have not obeyed the glorious gospel of Christ will be lost eternally!

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (2 The. 1:7-9).

The preaching of the Gospel is the preaching of the cross of Christ and the unsearchable riches of Christ (1 Cor. 1:18-25; 2:2; Eph. 2:13; 3:8). When brethren are faithful and uncompromising like the apostle Paul, this enables the **“truth of the gospel to continue”** with the brethren (Gal. 2:4-5). How great the Gospel is!

—704 Azalea Dr.
Mt. Pleasant, TN 38474