



606-140

Fultondale Church Of Christ

WHAT IS "REPENTANCE"?

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not desiring that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" - 2 Pet. 3:9.

It is repent or perish!

Anything that important ought to capture our attention. We ought to want to understand it.

Repentance must precede one's baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Repentance is a condition of forgiveness for a child of God (one who has already repented and been baptized) when he sins (Acts 8:22). Repentance is a condition for a brother's forgiving another. Note: "If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and IF he repents, forgive him." (Luke 13:3).

What, then, is this important act?

According to those who define Greek words, the word basically means a change of heart or change of mind. But, just a change of mind is not all that is meant by the word as it is used by New Testament writers. It means that - and more!

It is a change of mind regarding sin. Sometimes sin is expressly tied to the word by the writers (cf. Acts 8:22; Rev. 2: 21,22). Most of the time it is simply understood that it is a change of mind relative to sin.

It is a change of mind regarding God. (Acts 22:21). Hence, godly sorrow produces repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). One turns from sin toward obedience to God in repentance.

It is not just being sorry for sin. But, it is prompted by godly sorrow. One can be sorry for sin for many reasons - without repenting. He might be sorry that he got caught! He might be sorry that he embarrassed himself and his family. But, until he is sorry that he has sinned against God he will not repent in the New Testament sense of the word.

It is not just reforming one's life. One can change his conduct without ever repenting. There are many motives that produce reformation of life. A man might be so fearful that drinking will kill him or see what it does to himself and his family (all of this is good as far as it goes), but never repent. He may have even have changed his mind, but it was not prompted by godly sorrow. Yet, one must "do works suitable to repentance" (Acts 26:20).

What then is Bible repentance?

It is a change of mind away from one's sin(s) toward obedience to God that is prompted by godly sorrow and is followed by reformation of life.

Repentance does not stand alone. A sinner who have never been saved, must repent AND be baptized (Acts 2:38). A sinner who has been saved, but has reverted to sin, must repent AND pray (Acts 8:22).

Editor

SINGING (From page 1)

In 1957, I heard brethern Porter and Guy N. Woods debate the church's support of the orphan homes among churches of Christ. In that debate and another they had on the subject, brother Porter had a chart on which he listed the various activities (along with benevolence) of the church. He pointed out that the church could use various means to accomplish these activities - without setting up a separate organizations to do them. On the left of the chart he listed the activities: Teaching, preaching, benevolence, singing, etc. In the middle he listed various means that the church could use to carry the work out and it still be the CHURCH doing its work. On the right of the chart he listed institutions, real and fictional, to do these works. He pointed out that if one accepted church support of a separate institution (a benevolent society), overseen by a board of directors, to do the church work of benevolence then such reasoning could lead to the acceptance of a missionary society like those that divided brethren in the 1800's. He then listed fictional but logically parallel institutions for other functions of the church. Brother Woods, and others, protested vigorously that they would never accept these absurd parallels, in fact, arguing that they were not parallel at all.

One of brother Porter's parallels to the benevolent and missionary societies that often brought a chuckle was that of the "Singing Saints Society". He was showing that if the church could place its work of benevolence and/or evangelism under a man-made institution with its board of directors that it could put its singing under a similar institution - which is called the "Singing Saints Society".

In 1957, none of us would have thought that even the wildest liberal minded brother would have endorsed such a society - even though many of us contended that such a society was the logical fruit of their position.

Well, dear brethren, they have done it! Our liberal brethren now have Porter's "Singing Saints Society". They didn't choose Porter's name for it - but it is the "Singing Saints Society" just the same.

In a letter, dated February 18, 1983, and addressed to the church here it is all out in the open for us to see. The nicely printed letterhead boldly reads:

"Tennessee Valley A Cappella Singing
Post Office Box 204
Owens Cross Roads, Alabama 35763.
A Non Profit Organization."

The organization is conducting "THE FOURTH ANNUAL TENNESSEE VALLEY A CAPPELLA SINGING". It "is scheduled for Friday night, June 24, 1983 from 7:00 p.m. until midnight at the VBCC (Von Braun Civic Center, Huntsville -Ed).

They write:

"We need your help in several ways:

- "1. Announce and plan to attend.
- "2. Publish the announcement in your church bulletin. (Well, here it is -Ed.)
- "3. Encourage as many Christians as possible to attend and to bring with them a non-Christian friend.
- "4. SUPPORT THE SINGING FINANCIALLY BY INCLUDING THE SINGING IN YOUR BUDGET THIS YEAR. (Caps mine - Ed)."

The letter is signed by "The Board of Directors, Tennessee Valley A Cappella Singing".

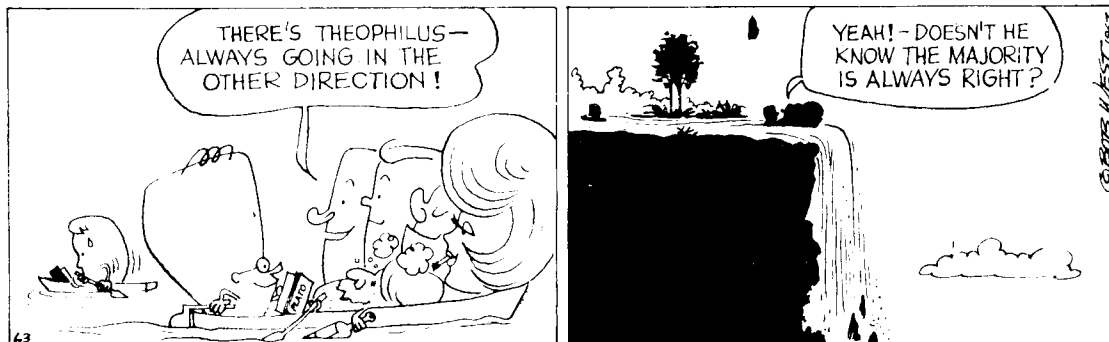
Those who think that the controversy that raged in the 50's was over how to take care of some needy folks - mainly orphans and widows - need to take note. We were fighting for the very purity of the Lord's church. We were fighting to keep brethren from supplanting the local church, overseen by elders, with man-made institutions to do the work of the church - overseen by a board of directors. We warned that if the church, with its God-ordained overseers (elders), was granted the right to place its benevolent work under a human institution, with its man-made overseers (board), accepting and soliciting funds from churches; that given the time to prepare the brethren's minds for it that they would put other works under such institutions. It has happened many times. This is but another example of institutionalism carried to its logical end.

A "Singing Saints Society" - indeed!

Brother Porter, if he were alive, would blush if we suggested that he was a prophet. Of course, he was not - but he did have the ability to see where institutionalism would lead. While he would not rejoice in iniquity, he would probably say - "See, Guy, I told you so".

-Editor

THEOPHILUS



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