

# The Reflector

"We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" • Acts 4:20

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**The Fultondale Church Of Christ Invites You To**

# A WEEK OF GOSPEL SERMONS

**December 3-8, 1989**

**Sunday Morning 10:45 • Night Services 7:30**

**Larry Rouse, Evangelist**

During their different-speaker meeting last year, the elders of the BELVIEW HEIGHTS congregation in Birmingham assigned me the subject of this outline. I preached it on Friday night, October 14, 1988. It is published here because I have since noticed that the question raised in the title of this sermon needs to be considered widely among brethren. — E.O.B.

## Christian Duties For Young And Old — Is There A Difference?

Acts 2:17,21

### Introduction:

- A. Age groups.
  - 1. Physical realm: Infancy, childhood, youth, maturity, old age.
  - 2. Spiritual realm: Babes in Christ, Mature in Christ.
- B. New Testament Christianity reduces rather than magnify fleshly differences.
  - 1. All one in Christ. (Gal. 3:28).
  - 2. Spirit on all flesh: male, female, old, young, etc. (Acts 2:17)
  - 3. Partiality based on fleshly considerations forbidden in the church. (James 2:9).
  - 4. Church activity not divided into special programs catering to each physical class.
    - a. Amazing how little attention in epistles paid to differences.
    - b. Epistles addressed to individuals and churches, none to youth groups, servant groups, etc.
- C. Modern Christianity magnifies rather than reduce fleshly differences.
  - 1. Denominational "ministries": youth, singles, marrieds, aged.
    - a. Why not add other ministries catering to perceived special social and spiritual needs of Poor, Rich, Labor, Management.
    - b. Why not add other ministries for various ethic groups?
  - 2. Brethren follow suit.
    - a. Some "Liberal" churches fast catching up with denominations.
    - b. Some "Conservative" churches, in recent years, in my judgment have become too heavily tilted toward youth.
      - (1) Barrage of "specials" geared to young people.
      - (2) Have not learned lessons of history.
      - (3) Preachers become de facto youth directors.
- D. Christians, old and young, have been assigned two basic kinds of duties:
  - 1. Those things that pertain to this present world (cf. 1 Cor. 6:3,4).
  - 2. Those things that pertain to the kingdom of God. (cf. Acts 1:3)

### Discussion:

#### I. Christian Duties In Things That Pertain To The Present World.

- A. Duties due to our domestic status.
  - 1. Married or unmarried. (1 Cor. 7).
  - 2. Husband or wife. (Eph. 5:22ff).
  - 3. Parent or child. (Eph. 6:1-4)
- B. Duties due to our economic status.
  - 1. Rich or poor. (1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19).
  - 2. Master or servant. (Eph. 6:5-9).
- C. Duties due to our age status.
  - 1. Older people. (Tit. 2:1-10).
  - 2. Younger People. (1 Tim. 4:12; 5:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:22).
- D. Duties due to our physical location: Neighborhood, state, country.

#### II. Christian Duties In Things Pertaining To The Kingdom Of God.

- A. All one in Christ regardless of age, social, economic, or physical differences. (Gal. 3:17).
  - 1. Common faith regardless of age. (cf. Jude 3.)
  - 2. Common duties regardless of age.
    - a. Plan of salvation.
    - b. Assembly and Worship.
    - c. Church Work (In accordance with one's ability, office and sex).
    - d. Christian living.

- B. Duties may vary due to ability and/or spiritual maturity - not physical age.
  - 1. Each does duty to benefit whole body. (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-25).
  - 2. Each joint to benefit whole body nor just one segment. (Eph. 4:16).
- C. Treatment may vary according to spiritual age, not physical age.
  - 1. Babes in Christ, whether initially or reverted back, may need special attention.
  - 2. No group deserves special treatment based **solely** on physical age — such is partiality.

**Conclusion:**

- A. Let all young and old do duty in things that pertain to this life.
- B. Let all young and old do duty in things that pertain to life to come.

## "They Hate Him . . . They Abhor Him" — Amos 5:10

RICHARD BOONE

**A**mos 5:10 reads, "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly." These words were written to an apostate Israel who had known God and seen the works that He had done for them (see Amos 3:6-16). However, Israel had not been faithful in following God's Law. Instead, the people were followers of the false religion set up by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:25-33). In their departure from God, Israel had become so corrupt that even civil rulers who spoke truth and judged righteously were no longer desired, as our text shows. Israel desired those judges who "afflict the just, take a bribe, and turn aside the poor in the gate from their right" (Amos 5:12). For that apostasy, Amos, the prophet from God (3:1), plainly passed the sentence ". . . prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (4:12).

Today many Christians have the same attitude as Israel. Whereas it used to be that evangelists would speak forthrightly about sin and problems among God's people, that is no longer the case. Indeed, many "hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly" in reference to preachers and their preaching the truth of God's Word. We see that so easily in the "liberal" churches where Christians have been led farther and

farther away from the truth by weak and "Bible-less" sermons. Sadly, that type of preaching is even desired among "conservative" churches. I believe we have reached a turning point. A point that, if left unchallenged and uncorrected, will direct us straight toward apostasy and ultimately into hell! The cry from the pews in many places is no longer for the clear and forceful proclamation of the Truth, but for the latest pop-psychology and human wisdom. I have heard of days long ago when preachers boldly proclaimed God's Word, without worrying whether or not they may be disliked or whether they may lose their jobs at local churches. They had deep convictions and were not ashamed to speak their convictions when opportunity came knocking. Why don't we hear that same preaching today? The answer is simple. Let me offer my answer with an illustration.

In my Western Civilization class in college, the teacher made a statement that makes very much sense. In reference to the French dynasties of the 1500's and 1600's, he said, "As was the king, so was his kingdom." So it is with many churches now: "As is the desire of those in the pew so it will be the preaching that comes from the pulpit." I am certainly aware that this is not true of every individual of every church. I am also aware

that weak preaching does not come from every preacher. But, we cannot ignore the simple fact that this is true in too many places (and really one place is too many!). It appears to me that we are becoming concerned with sophistication and polish more than the unashamed and truthful proclamation of God's Holy Word. Brethren, learn lessons from history (Rom. 15:4, 1 Cor. 10:10-6)! Do you remember Israel wanted a king so they could be like all the nations around them (1 Samuel 8)? They were concerned with their appearance before neighboring nations rather than being righteous before God. We also must be more concerned with our condition before God rather than following the trends of the denomi-"nations" around us.

I hope that you will sincerely and seriously consider what I have said. I am not an enemy of positive preaching (as long as it is positively Biblical) or of eloquence per se. But what I am worried about is the attitude that is behind brethren who would rather be entertained than taught. Fellow Christian, if you would rather be entertained, "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God" (s:21). If you would rather be taught, "desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:1) ■

# "No Excuse" Sunday

LUTHER W. MARTIN

**A**lthough the New Testament speaks only of the "Lord's day," with no special emphasis on any one "Lord's day" in the calendar year, many churches of men resort to "special days" with greater stress or emphasis placed upon attendance at worship on those days.

The disciples at Troas met to observe the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The Christians at Corinth were given instruction about "laying by in store, as God had prospered them," on the first day of the week (I Cor. 16:1-2).

Under the Jewish Theocracy, the Day of Pentecost always occurred on the first day of the week. Therefore the Lord's church had its beginning on the first day of the week (See Acts, the second chapter). Thus, the first gospel sermon, offering salvation from past sins, was introduced to the waiting world on that day. The 3,000 believers were obediently baptized on that day. Peter identified the events on that Pentecost,

as "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." The Holy Spirit had been promised to the Apostles: to remind them of what Christ had taught them personally; to show the Apostles things to come; and, to guide the Apostles into all truth! (John 14:26; 15:26; and 16:13).

So, "the Lord's day," "the first day of the week," and several centuries later, "Sunday," all made reference to the same weekly observance.

## Now, Someone Has "Invented" A "No Excuse" Sunday!

Some unidentified friend of mine, has anonymously placed the following on my desk. I shall re-word some of it, so as to remove the sectarian wording that was originally used.

Granted, we all tend to make excuses. To "explain away" why we failed to do what we should have done, or to describe why we did that which we should not have done, I suggest that instead of "no excuse" Sunday, we would all do better to eliminate "excuses" from

our vocabulary; thus, lead no-excuse lives.

"To make it possible for everyone to attend worship next Sunday, we are going to have a special 'No Excuse' Sunday.

"Cots will be placed in the vestibule for those who just must 'sleep-in' on Sunday mornings!

"Steel helmets as will be provided for those who expect the 'roof to fall in' when they attend! "Blankets will be provided for those who claim that the building is too cold; and, fans will be provided for those who think the building is too hot!

"Hearing aids will be provided for those who say, 'The preacher speaks too softly!' Cotton will be available for the ears of those who say, 'He's too loud!'

"Score-cards will be available for those who wish to list all the 'hypocrites' present!

"Some 'relatives' will be in attendance for those who would otherwise go visit relatives on the Lord's day!

"For those who can't 'cook dinner' and come to worship, too' somebody'll take you home with them for Sunday dinner!

"Finally, one part of the building will be devoted to potted plants, for those who like to 'seek God in nature!' Among these potted plants, will be some lilies and poinsettias, especially selected for those who automatically think of Easter and Christmas ... when they see these species...even though only one of these 'holy-days' is mentioned in the KJV of the Bible. And, there, it's an error by the translators!"

(See Gal.4:10-11.)

• Gospel Anchor, March 1989

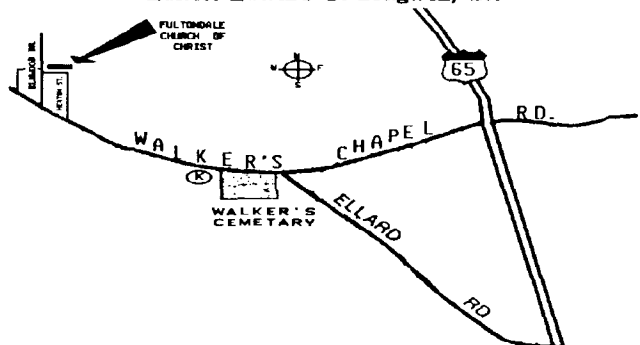
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