

COLLECTED WORKS

by Batsell Barrett Baxter

The collected writings of Batsell Barrett Baxter, a prominent 20th-century minister, educator, and television preacher in the Churches of Christ tradition. His works address Christian doctrine, practical Christian living, and evangelistic themes.

5 Chapters

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01 Biography

Sketch On The Life Of B.B. Baxter

Batsell Barrett Baxter was born of Mr. and Mrs. Batsell Baxter September 23, 1916, at Cordell, Oklahoma. He was baptized by his father, Batsell Baxter, in 1925. On December 22, 1938, Batsell Barrett Baxter married Miss Wanda Roberts. To this union three sons were born: Scott, Alan and John.

Baxter began preaching in 1933 at Nashville, Tennessee. He received his training from David Lipscomb College, Abilene Christian College (B.A.), University of Southern California (M.A., Ph.D.), Vanderbilt University (B.D.). While in California he served two churches as minister: Whittier, 1938-42, and Burbank. 1942-45.

Baxter was well prepared to serve in any responsible position in a Christian College, being the son of Batsell Baxter who served as president of three Christian colleges: Abilene Christian College, David Lipscomb College and Pepperdine College. When Baxter returned from California he was appointed head of the Speech Department at David Lipscomb College. Later he was named to the chairmanship of the Department of Bible upon the passing of his father, Dr. Batsell Baxter, March 4, 1956.

Baxter preached for the Trinity Lane Church in Nashville from 1946-51. He served the Hillsboro Church as its regular preacher from 1951 until his retirement in 1980.

He was an excellent and well-known writer. He wrote for the Gospel Advocate, Twentieth Century Christian, and other periodicals. He wrote a number of books: "Heart of the Yale Lectures," "Preachers of Today" (with Norvel Young), Volumes 1, 2, 3, "Speaking for the Master," "If I Be Lifted Up," "Great Preachers of Today," Volume 1, "Churches of Today" (with Norvel Young). Three of his most recent publications were "The Family of God," "The Search for Happiness," and "A Devotional Guide to the Bible Lands." This beloved gospel preacher was the first preacher for the "Herald of Truth" television program in August, 1959. Later he became a regular speaker for the radio series of "Herald of Truth." He produced his last television program in October, 1981, and his last radio program in December, 1981. At one time he served as an instructor at Pepperdine University in California where his father was the founding president. In 1962, Baxter received Abilene Christian's Outstanding Alumnus of the Year award. In 1961, he led a month-long evangelistic campaign in London, England. In November of 1978, a program honoring Baxter at David Lipscomb College brought in contributions and gifts totaling \$101,669 to the College. This sincere Christian man will be remembered as a Bible scholar, Christian educator and an eloquent gospel preacher. He was the author of 18 books.

Those who knew Batsell Barrett Baxter loved him. They do not think of him just as a national radio and television figure, but as a just, honorable, sincere, warm-hearted, gentle, kind individual. In his passing the church has lost one of its greatest preachers, teachers, leaders, influential men of the century. Batsell Barrett Baxter died on Wednesday, March 31, 1982, in the Baptist Hospital in

Nashville, Tennessee. Funeral service was conducted at the Hillsboro Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, on Friday, April 2, Acts 10:00a.m. He was survived by his wife, Mrs. Wanda (Roberts) Baxter; three sons: Scott and John of Nashville, Tennessee, and Alan of Stark, Florida; and two grandchildren. Brandon and Will.

Eddie Montgomery led the congregational singing for the service. Dan Harless, long time associate of Baxter at Hillsboro, read appropriate Scriptures and led in prayer. Talks were made by Harold Hazelip and Willard Collins. The final prayer was led by Larry Van Steensburg, minister of the Hillsboro Church.

Baxter was 65 at the time of his passing. He fought a long battle with cancer. He underwent surgery a number of times from 1977 until the time of his passing. His great example and good works will live long to influence many to live close to the Lord that we may be together in heaven.

-In Memoriam, Gussie Lambert, Shreveport, LA, page 20,21

Spring, 1982 Issue of Rex A. Turner's Sound Doctrine Relating

The Passing Of B.B. Baxter, Spring, 1982 Batsell Barrett Baxter

Buried April 2, 1982

Willard Collins

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Baxter was 65 years of age. He had fought a long battle with cancer. He underwent his first surgery for this illness in 1964. He was admitted to the hospital on February 24 of this year. He had undergone surgery a number of times from 1977 until the present. This eloquent gospel preacher was appointed chairman of the Bible department at David Lipscomb College in 1957. He came to Lipscomb in 1945 as head of the Speech Department.

He was very interested in the work of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE. He worked as a member of the Centennial Committee in 1955 with B. C. Goodpasture, and he was a member of the 20th Century Committee with Ira North and Willard Collins for many years.

Baxter was educated at David Lipscomb College, Abilene Christian University, the University of Southern California and Vanderbilt University. His father, Batsell Baxter, was president of three Christian colleges: Abilene, Lipscomb and Pepperdine, and was also a well-known gospel preacher.

Batsell Barrett Baxter preached for the congregation at Whittier , California from 1938-41. He then served the congregation in North Hollywood, California from 1941-45.

He became head of the speech department at David Lipscomb College and was later named to the chairmanship of the department of Bible upon the passing of his father.

He preached for the Trinity Lane church in Nashville from 1946-51, and served the Hillsboro congregation as its regular preacher from 1951 until his retirement in 1980. At the time of his death, he was an elder of the Hillsboro church. This beloved gospel preacher appeared first as the preacher for the television program "Herald of Truth" in August of 1959. Later he became a regular speaker for the radio series of "Herald of Truth." He produced his last television program last October and his last radio program last December. When he came to Nashville in 1945, he preached for the Belmont congregation. He also served at one time as an instructor at Pepperdine University in California where his father was the founding president. Three of his most recent publications were: The Family of God, The Search for Happiness and A Devotional Guide to the Bible Lands. In 1962, Baxter received Abilene Christian's Outstanding Alumnus of the Year award. In 1961, he led a month-long evangelistic campaign in London, England. In November of 1978, a program honoring Baxter at David Lipscomb College brought in contributions and gifts totaling \$101,669 to the institution. This sincere Christian man will be remembered as a Bible scholar, Christian educator and an eloquent gospel preacher. He was the author of 18 books.

I do not think of our friend Batsell Barrett Baxter just as a national radio and television figure, but as a warm-hearted, gentle and kind person!

David Lipscomb College has lost its most widely known and best-loved administrator and faculty member.

Tom McMeen, chairman of the Board of Directors at David Lipscomb College and an elder of the Hillsboro congregation in Nashville, said of his friend: "Batsell was one of the most loved and respected men I have ever known. He was one of the easiest to work with as a member of the faculty at Lipscomb, as a minister and as a fellow elder."

—Gospel Advocate Articles – Vol. CXXIV No. 8 April 15, 1982 pages 228,229, 242 The Influence Of

Batsell Barrett Baxter

Flows On Like A

Mighty River

Ira North On Wednesday morning, March 31, the beloved Batsell Barrett Baxter crossed Jordan. We knew him well and loved him much. We had taught with him for eighteen years at David Lipscomb College. We had served with him on the 20th Century Committee of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE for a quarter of a century. We had lunch with Batsell Barrett on a regular basis for thirty years. The last few years Avon and I met once each month with Willard and Ruth Collins, and Wanda and Batsell and to enjoy a period of fellowship. We referred to our meetings as a "Crisis Luncheon," because we discussed the various crises in our brotherhood, in our church work and in Christian education. We feel a great sense of personal loss in the passing of this

noble, gentle and faithful gospel preacher. We shall miss his fellowship, his counsel, and his unstinted friendship. **The Power and Importance of a Good Family Background** When we think of Batsell Barrett Baxter, we think of the power and importance of a good family background. Batsell Barrett's father was a distinguished preacher and educator. He was President of David Lipscomb College, Harding College, and Pepperdine. His mother was a godly woman, who dedicated him from the womb to the work of the Lord. Batsell Barrett was blessed with a gracious and charming Christian woman for a wife. No wife could have stood by more faithfully and loyally and devotedly than she has since the malignancy was first discovered nearly eighteen years ago. Brother Baxter lived in a modest home and always on a modest salary compared to his great talents, and yet if he had had \$10,000,000, he could not have bought the love and care and the concern that he received from the woman he loved. To have a great man we must start with his grandfather and grandmother. We ask all young married couples to begin now to plan to give their children a strong family background. Give them a father and a mother who are loyal and faithful to the church and who respect the dignity and the sanctity of marriage. The last speech we heard Batsell Barrett make was in the chapel assembly at David Lipscomb when we presented him with the Couple of the Year Award from the GOSPEL ADVOCATE. He told those young people that those who follow the path of free sex and serial marriage could never have what he and Wanda had and what Ruth and Willard Collins have and what Ira and Avon North have. He urged them to accept the Biblical principles of the dignity and sanctity and permanence of Christian marriage. **The Power and Importance of Preparation** When we think of Batsell Barrett Baxter, we think of the great power and importance of preparation. After graduating from high school, he paid the price for a college education at Abilene Christian University. He then went on for the Masters degree and the Ph.D. degree in Speech at Southern California. And although he had family responsibilities and responsibilities at Lipscomb, he went on for another graduate degree at Vanderbilt, in order that Lipscomb might be fully accredited for its Bible work with the Southern Association.

Years of preparation require strength of character, and sometimes it is easy to give up. Moses prepared for eighty years for the great task of leading the children of Israel out of bondage. Our blessed Lord prepared thirty years for his three years of public ministry. If Batsell Barrett Baxter had not been willing to spend many years in diligent study and preparation, he could never have wielded the great influence in our brotherhood and reached the thousands of people for good that he did. He was willing to pay the price, and God used him mightily. **The Power and Importance of A Good Example** When we think of Batsell Barrett Baxter, we think of the power and importance of a good example. He lived so close to the Lord, that when you followed Batsell Barrett, you were following Jesus. It was not only his excellent gift of speech and his ability to communicate that endeared him to thousands of students and to our brotherhood, it was the good example that he set. This endeared him to the members of the church at Hillsboro, to his vast television and radio audience, and to the students who sat at his feet. **The Power and Importance of a Meek and Humble Spirit** When we think of Batsell Barrett Baxter, we think of the power and importance of a meek and humble spirit. Brother Willard Collins was at his best when he delivered the tribute at the funeral service and pointed to 1 Corinthians 13, and stated that he believed the real secret of Batsell's success was found in that 13th verse, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." **The Power and Importance of Overcoming Evil with Good** When we think of Batsell Barrett Baxter, we think of the power and importance of overcoming evil with good. Some thirty years ago, Brother Willard Collins, Batsell Barrett Baxter, and this writer were meeting,

as was our custom each week, to work on the circulation of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE. Brother Collins that day had received a paper from Lufkin, Texas. It was ugly and critical of Batsell Barrett Baxter. When I walked in and read it, I could feel my blood pressure rising, and within I felt anger and hostility. When Brother Batsell Barrett Baxter came in, Willard Collins said, "Read this and see what they think about you in Lufkin, Texas." Brother Baxter carefully read the article, and about that time they brought our food and Willard asked Batsell Barrett to give thanks for the food. He bowed his head and prayed the most sincere prayer for the man who had written the article. He called his name and the name of his family, and prayed that God would bless them with good health and happiness and would use them for the spread of the Kingdom and for the good of the work of the Lord. I could feel the hostility lifting from my own soul, and when he said Amen, I said to myself, "There is indeed an Israelite in whom there is no guile."

We wish that everyone in our brotherhood could have attended the funeral service of Batsell Barrett Baxter. It was more like a graduating exercise than a funeral. Brother Baxter himself had planned the service. The congregational singing was superb as the auditorium and balcony of the Hillsboro church were filled to overflowing. We sang "When We Walk With the Lord," "Oh To Be Like Thee," "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," and "My Faith Looks Up To Thee." We all left rejoicing in the faith in which he had lived and now the glorious hope of the resurrection in which he fell asleep. We are thankful to the Heavenly Father that for sixty-five years he gave us Batsell Barrett Baxter. His influence rolls on like a mighty river, and heaven will be sweeter because of this gentle, kind, faithful and loyal servant of our blessed Lord. We believe we speak for millions when we say to Brother Baxter: "Christian soldier, well done. The battle is over, the victory is won."

—Gospel Advocate Articles – Vol. CXXIV No. 8 April 15, 1982 pages 229, 242 Location Of The Grave Of Batsell Barrett Baxter

Batsell Barrett Baxter is buried in the Woodlawn Memorial Park Cemetery In Nashville, Tennessee. The Cemetery is located behind the 100 Oaks Shopping Center that faces I-65 just before the I-440 Interchange. From 100 Oaks travel east on Thompson Lane and turn left into the main entrance of the Woodlawn Cemetery. Take your first left and travel up the hill. Note that Fountain View C & D will be on your left. At the top of the hill you will see a fountain area. Turn to the right and pull off to the left. You should be in front of a sign saying, "Fountain Lawn A." Between the sign and a sidewalk you will see a little pole with a flag facing west. Go in from that flag about three or four rows. In that area you should find the grave of Batsell Barrett Baxter. The stone is facing east.

Section Fountain Lawn A - Lot 61 #2

GPS N 36° 06' 49.4" x WO 86° 45' 41.1"

Accuracy to within 20ft.

2002-10 The Crucial Issue Of Authority

<http://www.gospelpreceptor.com/BaxterB1.htm> The Crucial Issue Of Authority Batsell Barrett Baxter

Every thinking person realizes that authority plays a very significant role in all of our lives. Before we may drive a car, we must have the authority of a license. A doctor must have a diploma from a reputable medical school before he can practice. A policeman must have a badge which authorizes him to carry out his duties. To get married, we must have a license. There is little that we can do in life without proper authorization.

Especially in the realm of religion must we have proper authority for all that we do. In the worship and service of God we must do that which we are authorized to do and nothing else.

The question Jesus once faced, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" (Matthew 21:23) is a good one for all of us.

Possible Sources Of Authority

Final or ultimate authority in religion rests in one of three possible sources. First of all, there are those who believe that final authority rests in the church. Councils, conclaves, and synods meet and make decisions. From these human deliberations such doctrines as purgatory, the adoration of Mary, the seven sacraments, papal infallibility and others have come.

It was Martin Luther who pointed out the problem of such human authority when he said, "...I cannot trust either the decisions of Councils, or of Popes, for it is plain that they have not only erred but have contradicted each other..." (Friedenthal, Luther: His Life and Times, p. 278).

Second, others conceive final authority to rest in the reasoning power of men. One's own conscience, inner feelings, or reason is the final arbiter. Saul of Tarsus demonstrated this view to be erroneous. In spite of his honesty of purpose and intensity of zeal, he was wrong. Many a person, guided by his own inner feelings, believes and practices what is contrary to the will of God.

The whole blight of denominationalism is a result of man's trusting his own views, rather than conforming his convictions to God's teaching. Liberalism makes the mistake of thinking that man's reason is the infallible authority in religion.

The third possibility, as the absolute source of authority, is the Bible, the inspired word of God. God the creator of the universe and of man is the only ultimate, final source of authority. He has spoken in his word. It is our responsibility to read the scriptures, understand them and obey them. Let us say, as Samuel did, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." (1 Samuel 3:10).

Never With Men

Authority always rests with divinity. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), and in so doing established his ultimate supreme authority. Later, when Jesus was

upon the earth he said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." (Matthew 28:18). He further announced to his apostles that when he left the earth, the Holy Spirit would come in his place and "...shall guide you into all truth." (John 16:13). Authority has always rested with the Godhead, and never with men. The prophets, the apostles, and others miraculously guided by God were simply spokesmen. God's word has always been the final authority among men. Our Only Guide

The Bible is our guide — our only guide. For this reason, it is encouraging to hear people say, "Let us have a 'thus saith the Lord' for all that we do in our religious faith and practice." Still, another way of saying it is "Let us speak where the scriptures speak, and be silent where the scriptures are silent." Each of these is a statement indicating the acceptance of the authority of the scriptures.

At this point let us examine two opposite positions on the matter of the authority of the scriptures. Martin Luther championed the idea that, "Whatever is not expressly prohibited in the scriptures is permissible." (History of the Great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, by D'Aubigne, Book II, p. 297). Luther's view opens the door to all kinds of innovations, such as the burning of incense, the lighting of candles, the use of images, instrumental music, and even adding other elements to the Lord's Supper.

Huldreich Zwingli championed the second view which said, "Whatever is not expressly authorized in the scriptures is prohibited." (History of the Christian Church, by W. Walker, 1959, p. 322). This is the view set forth in the scriptures themselves. In Galatians 1:8, Paul wrote, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." The apostle John said the same thing in these words: "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 1:9).

Three Avenues

In determining what the scriptures authorize, there are three avenues through which we may receive guidance. First, there are direct commands, such as Acts 2:38. In the second place, there are approved apostolic examples, such as the apostle Paul's eating of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7). And, finally, there is necessary inference. Each command of God authorizes whatever is necessary to carry it out. When the Lord commanded Christians to meet for worship, he necessarily authorized the providing of a place for Christians to assemble for worship.

Our religion — our relationship to God — is our most important relationship. We must be absolutely certain about everything that we believe and practice.

2004-02 To Each His Own

<http://www.gospelpreceptor.com/BaxterB2.htm> "To Each His Own"

Batsell B. Baxter

How we do like to have our own way! We certainly do hold ourselves in high esteem. Instead of praying as the Saviour did, "Not my will, but thine, be done," it is hard for us to keep from having this spirit: "Not thy will, but mine, be done." Somehow there is too much selfishness and egotism in the hearts of all of us.

Men are perfectly willing for the Lord to provide for salvation. They even emphasize the fact that He bought the church with His blood. They like to think of His glorious promises. Many religious leaders like to "strut in borrowed finery." They revel in the glory which the character and religion of Jesus Christ have reflected upon His disciples, and yet they are not willing to be His disciples. They are willing neither to learn nor to follow. They must run anything religious with which they are connected, and so they get them up a church to suit them. Those of us who cannot fellowship their getup are called "narrow and unchristian."

A semblance of unity is being provided by religious leaders after this method: "Every one of us will recognize everybody else as a child of God, provided he does not question anything we do or teach as religion." Some of these men are getting so "broad" that they even take in Buddhism and Mohammedanism. It is hard to see how anybody can call such a mess "unity in Christ."

Turning The Lord Out

Why try to do a thing in a way that is absolutely contrary to the spirit of that thing? Why try to accomplish unity by the road of division? Why attempt to honor Christ by stripping Him of His authority? Why call Him "Lord" and do not the things which He says? We have read of puppet kings and puppet emperors in history. Somebody wants to rule, but so strong is a certain sentiment that he cannot do it; so he puts up a figurehead ruler and manages the government through him.

Christ prayed for His followers to be one, but He did not pray for that to be accomplished by deposing Him as the head of our spiritual government. And yet, that is the way men are trying to bring about modern religious unity. The slogan is, "You in your way, and me in mine." This leaves out God's way altogether. It turns Christ out into the cold. It does not recognize Him as our Prophet, Priest, or King. These folks talk about the church as if it were some sort of plastic thing like clay, the broken pieces of which they could bring together and mold after their own fashion. It all resolves itself down to this: Who is the ruler in the kingdom of Christ? Whose church is it?

It Is Christ's Church

Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church..." (Matthew 16:18). It is Christ's church. It belongs to Him. He made the laws by which men can become members of it. He made the rules

by which it shall be governed. We have no right to change any of these laws or rules. Jesus made them the way He wanted them to be.

If we had built a church, then we could make any kind of laws we wished, and we could change these laws as often as our fancy suited. We could do any way we wanted with our church. As it was ours, no one could object to the way we would manage it. But our church would not be worth anything in saving men from sin. The Scripture says that we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may give an account of his deeds done in the body (2 Corinthians 5:10). We must obey the commands of Christ (Matthew 7:24-27).

If we had a church of our own, how much liberty we would have! If anybody did not do to suit us, we would let him start himself a church and run it to suit himself. Then if his rules and way of doing did not suit some of his members, they could start themselves a church and fix a plan that suited themselves. They could all just agree to disagree and everybody have a religion and a church to suit him. But the trouble about such an arrangement would be that God has not promised to have anything to do with it except to root it up. "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." (Matthew 15:13).

The only safe way is to belong to the church that Jesus built, abide by the laws He has given, and trust Him for the promises. Paul said, "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Timothy 1:12ASV). That way is right and cannot be wrong. That way shows respect for the Lord, who died to provide the church for us. We are baptized into that church by being baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27).

2005-01 A Leader Gone Astray

<http://www.gospelpreceptor.com/BaxterB3.htm> A Leader Gone Astray Batsell Barrett Baxter

"But there was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up" (1 Kings 21:25ASV).

Leaders have a great responsibility, because they have a great deal of power. Ahab, the king of Israel, began his reign with very little conviction in his heart. His wife was Jezebel, a foreign woman who worshipped idols. When she came to Samaria, she brought her idol worship with her. Ahab's religion meant very little to him, so it was not much of a sacrifice of conviction for him to give up the worship of God and worship Baal along with his strong minded wife. She ruled Ahab and Ahab ruled the nation.

The religion of Baal became the dominating religion of the kingdom. All the court lords and ladies followed the lead of the king and queen, and all the people who loved to be in style — and that was most of them — followed the lead of the king and court. Of course they all knew that the religion of Jehovah was the true religion, but it was not the style any more to worship God. So nearly all of them went the popular way.

The Stubborn Prophet

Elijah was not a crank. He was not stubborn for the mere sake of being different or odd. He was not anxious to stir up trouble. He loved peace and harmony, but he loved God more. His conscience would not allow him to forsake Jehovah.

His courage led him to stick by his convictions, even though it meant a break with the king and even though it made him a social outcast. He had sense enough to look beyond the authority and demands of an earthly king to the authority and will of the King of the universe. He had discernment enough to see through the glamour and show of unthinking multitudes to the real principles of conduct and teaching. He could see the paltriness and emptiness of Baal's religion in contrast with the genuineness and abiding quality of the religion of Jehovah. To Elijah, persecution and even death were minor things as contrasted with loyalty to God.

Misrepresentation And Ill Treatment

Of course Elijah was misrepresented. At court he was spoken of as, "the troubler of Israel." He was so hated by the queen that she planned constantly for some means to get him out of the way. At times it was necessary for him to flee for his life; but while that was extremely discouraging, it did not take away his loyalty to God.

He preferred to eat the scraps of the ravens' food in the dark canyon near the Dead Sea than to sit as a liveried nothing in the palace of Ahab in Samaria. He chose rather to hear the voice of Jehovah in the lonely mountain cave than to listen to the empty jabber of Queen Jezebel.

It cost Elijah just about everything that flesh holds dear to maintain his religious and moral integrity, but he knew that the reward was worth far more than the price he had to pay. Every age has its Elijahs, unpopular, misrepresented, and abused while they lived, but the foundation stones upon which humanity has been enabled to step across one swirling crosscurrent after another down through the stream of time.

The Real Test

Pomp and pageantry and show are not a test of principles, but they do command a big following. What is in style and what is right are often two different things. The real test is the will of God! Just as the Rock of Gibraltar still stands, though it has been obscured by many a cloud and lashed by many a storm, so the will of God is supreme and eternal, though often clouded and lashed by the conflicting currents of earthly leadership and popular clamor.

Ahab and Jezebel were drunk with power. The nation reeled like a drunken man in the intoxication and revelry of Baal worship. But out on Mount Carmel one day the proud king and his clamoring followers saw Baal's worship go down in defeat (1 Ki. 18). They saw the prophets of Baal — 400 of them — work themselves up in an all-day frenzy of pleading and shouting and bodily mutilation, but no answer came from their idol.

Then in the evening they heard the prayer of faith borne from the heart of Elijah to the throne of God. They saw the answer of Jehovah as the fire fell and consumed the sacrifice, the altar of stone, and even the water in the trenches. Fallen to the earth in penitence and humility, the people acknowledged their wrong. From their hearts went up the cry, "Jehovah, he is God" (1 Kings 18:39ASV).

A Modern Application

Baal is abroad in the land today — not the old fish god of the Philistines and Sidonians, but the god of human exaltation and lust of the flesh. His religion is voiced in the maxim, "Whatever is, is right." It is further explained in the teaching, "Follow the earthly great and powerful, no matter what they do. Do not be out of style." This is the philosophy of "Political Correctness."

This god has all but taken possession of even the religion that claims to be Christian. He has branded the God of the Bible as "out of date" and fit only for the age of superstition. He is proclaiming from the ivy towers of educational institutions and from the centers of social prominence that to be religious in the Bible way is a matter of ignorance and lack of sense. Like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, he plays his tune in the halls of colleges, in the pulpits of fine churches, and echoes his claims from the lips of the prominent and powerful among religious denominations.

But men and women of Elijah's type will fear God and keep His commandments, though ostracized socially and belittled religiously. We must not think that days like Elijah's are gone. There is plenty of opposition now, and discouragement and persecution for people who love the Lord and are willing to serve Him. It takes different forms, but it is just as effective and deadly.

A good old song says,

"Am I a soldier of the cross,

A follower of the Lamb;

And shall I fear to own His cause,

Or blush to speak His name?"

The Lord Himself has issued this challenge: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38ASV).

Who are the churches of Christ

Who are the churches of Christ

and what do they believe in?

By: Batsell Barrett Baxter What is the distinctive plea of the church of Christ?

It is primarily a plea for religious unity based upon the Bible. In a divided religious world it is believed that the Bible is the only possible common denominator upon which most, if not all, of the God-fearing people of the land can unite. This is an appeal to go back to the Bible. It is a plea to speak where the Bible speak and to remain silent where the Bible is silent in all matters that pertain to religion. It further emphasizes that in everything religious there must be a "Thus saith the Lord" for all that is done. The objective is religious unity of all believers in Christ. The basis is the New Testament. The method is the restoration of New Testament Christianity. The Historical background of the Restoration Movement

One of the earliest advocates of the return to New Testament Christianity, as a means of achieving unity of all believers in Christ, was James O'Kelly of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1793 he withdrew from the Baltimore conference of his church and called upon others to join him in taking the Bible as the only creed. His influence was largely felt in Virginia and North Carolina where history records that some seven thousand communicants followed his leadership toward a return to primitive New Testament Christianity. In 1802 a similar movement among the Baptists in New England was led by Abner Jones and Elias Smith. They were concerned about "denominational names and creeds" and decided to wear only the name Christian, taking Bible as their only guide. In 1804, in the western frontier state of Kentucky, Barton W. Stone and several other Presbyterian preachers took similar action declaring that they would take the Bible as the "only sure guide to heaven." Thomas Campbell, and his illustrious son, Alexander Campbell, took similar steps in the year 1809 in what is now the state of West Virginia. They contended that nothing should be bound upon Christians as a matter of doctrine which is not as old as the New Testament. Although these four movements were completely independent in their beginnings eventually they became one strong restoration movement because of their common purpose and plea. These men did not advocate the starting of a new church, but rather a return to Christ's church as described in the Bible.

Members of the church of Christ do not conceive of themselves as a new church started near the beginning of the 19th century. Rather, the whole movement is designed to reproduce in contemporary times the church originally established on Pentecost, A.D. 30. The strength of the appeal lies in the restoration of Christ's original church.

How many churches of Christ are there? The most recent dependable estimate lists more than 15,000 individual churches of Christ. The "Christian Herald," a general religious publication which presents statistics concerning all the churches, estimates that the total membership of the churches of Christ is now 2,000,000. There are more than 7000 men who preach publicly.

Membership of the church is heaviest in the southern states of the United States, particularly Tennessee and Texas, though congregations exist in each of the fifty states and in more than eighty foreign countries. Missionary expansion has been most extensive since the second World War in Europe, Asia and Africa. More than 450 full time workers are supported in foreign countries. The churches of Christ now have five times as many members as were reported in the U.S. Religious Census of 1936.

How are the churches organizationally connected?

Following the plan of organization found in the New Testament, churches of Christ are autonomous. Their common faith in the Bible and adherence to its teachings are the chief ties which bind them together. There is no central headquarters of the church, and no organization superior to the elders of each local congregation. Congregations do cooperate voluntarily in supporting the orphans and the aged, in preaching the gospel in new fields, and in other similar works.

Members of the church of Christ conduct forty colleges and secondary schools, as well as seventy-five orphanages and homes for the aged. There are approximately 40 magazines and other periodicals published by individual members of the church. A nationwide radio and television program, known as "The Herald of Truth" is sponsored by the Highland Avenue church in Abilene, Texas. Much of its annual budget of \$1,200,000 is contributed on a free-will basis by other churches of Christ. The radio program is currently heard on more than 800 radio stations, while the television program is now appearing on more than 150 stations. Another extensive radio effort known as "World Radio" owns a network of 28 stations in Brazil alone, and is operating effectively in the United States and a number of other foreign countries, and is being produced in 14 languages. An extensive advertising program in leading national magazines began in November 1955.

There are no conventions, annual meetings, or official publications. The "tie that binds" is a common loyalty to the principles of the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

How are the churches of Christ governed? In each congregation, which has existed long enough to become fully organized, there is a plurality of elders or presbyters who serve as the governing body. These men are selected by the local congregations on the basis of qualifications set down in the scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-8). Serving under the elders are deacons, teachers, and evangelists or ministers. The latter do not have the authority equal to or superior to the elders. The elders are shepherds or overseers who serve under the headship of Christ according to the New Testament, which is a kind of constitution. There is no earthly authority superior to the elders of the local church.

What does the church of Christ believe about the Bible? The original autographs of the sixty six books which make up the Bible are considered to have been divinely inspired, by which it is meant that they are infallible and authoritative. Reference to the scriptures is made in settling every religious question. A pronouncement from the scripture is considered the final word. The basic textbook of the church and the basis for all preaching is the Bible. Do members of the churches of Christ believe in the virgin birth?

Yes. The statement in Isaiah 7:14 is taken as a prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ. New Testament passages such as Matthew 1:20, 25, are accepted at face value as declarations of the virgin birth. Christ is accepted as the only begotten Son of God, uniting in his person perfect divinity and perfect manhood. Does the church of Christ believe in predestination?

Only in the sense that God predestines the righteous to be eternally saved and the unrighteous to be eternally lost. The statement of the apostle Peter, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable unto him" (Acts 10:34-35.) is taken as an evidence that God did not predestine individuals to be eternally saved or lost, but that each man determines his own destiny.

Why does the church of Christ baptize only by immersion? The word baptize comes from the Greek word "baptizo" and literally means, "to dip, to immerse, to plunge." In addition to the literal meaning of the word, immersion is practiced because it was the practice of the church in apostolic times. Still further, only immersion conforms to the description of baptisms as given by the apostle Paul in Romans 6:3-5 where he speaks of it as a burial and resurrection. Is infant baptism practiced?

No. Only those who have reached the "age of accountability" are accepted for baptisms. It is pointed out that the examples given in the New Testament are always of those who have heard the gospel preached and have believed it. Faith must always precede baptism, so only those old enough to understand and believe the gospel are considered fit subjects for baptism. Do ministers of the church hear confession?

No. Ministers or evangelists of the church have no special prerogatives. They do not wear the title of Reverend or Father, but are addressed simply by the term Brother as are all other men of the church. Along with elders and others they do counsel and advise those seeking help. Are prayers addressed to the saints?

No. God the Father is considered the only one to whom the prayers may be addressed. It is further understood that Christ stands in a mediatorial position between God and man (Hebrews 7:25). All prayers are therefore offered through Christ, or in the name of Christ (John 16:23-26).

How often is the Lord's supper eaten?

It is expected that every member of the church will assemble for worship on each Lord's day. A central part of the worship is the eating of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7). Unless providentially hindered, each member considers this weekly appointment as binding. In many instances, as in the case of illness, the Lord's supper is carried to those who are hindered from attending the worship.

What kind of music is used in the worship? As a result of the distinctive plea of the church - a return to New Testament Faith and practice - acappella singing is the only music used in the worship. This singing, unaccompanied by mechanical instruments of music, conforms to the music used in the apostolic church and for several centuries thereafter (Ephesians 5:19). It is felt that there is no authority for engaging in acts of worship not found in the New Testament. This principle eliminates the use of instrumental music, along with the use of candles, incense, and other similar elements. Does the church of Christ believe in heaven and hell?

Yes. The statement of Christ in Matthew 25, and elsewhere, are taken at face value. It is believed that after death each man must come before God in judgment and that he will be judged according to the deeds done while he lived (Hebrews 9:27). After judgment is pronounced he will spend eternity either in heaven or hell. Does the church of Christ believe in purgatory?

No. The absence of any reference in the scriptures to the temporary place of punishment from which the soul will eventually be released into heaven prevents the acceptance of the doctrine of purgatory. By what means does the church secure financial support?

Each first day of the week the members of the church "lay by in store as they have been prospered" (1 Corinthians 16:2). The amount of any individual gift is generally known only to the one who gave it and to the Lord. This free-will offering is the only call which the church makes. NO assessments or other levies are made. No money-making activities, such as bazaars or suppers, are engaged in. A total of approximately \$200,000,000 is given on this basis each year. Does the church of Christ have a creed?

No. At least, there is no creed in the usual sense of the word. The belief of the church is stated fully and completely in the Bible. There is no other manual or discipline to which the members of the church of Christ give their allegiance. The Bible is considered as the only infallible guide to heaven.

How does one become a member of the church of Christ? In the salvation of man's soul there are 2 necessary parts: God's part and man's part. God's part is the big part, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory" (Ephesians 2:8-9). The love which God felt for man led him to send Christ into the world to redeem man. The life and teaching of Jesus, the sacrifice on the cross, and the proclaiming of the gospel to men constitute God's part in salvation.

Though God's part is the big part, man's part is also necessary if man is to reach heaven. Man must comply with the conditions of pardon which the Lord has announced. Man's part can clearly set forth in the following steps:

Hear the Gospel. "How shall they call on him whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14).

Believe. "And without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Repent of past sins. "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent" (Acts 17:30).

Confess Jesus as Lord. "Behold here is water; What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:36-37). Be baptized for the remission of sins. "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Live a Christian life. "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

OPEN INVITATION

Now that you are aware of a church in the 20th century which is built according to the blue prints of Christ's original church, why not become a member of it? In becoming a member of it, you will be called upon to do nothing which you cannot read in the New Testament. You will then live and worship just as the apostle-guided Christians of the first century did. Not only is this return to New Testament Christianity a wonderful basis upon which all believers in Christ can unite, it is absolutely solid ground. If we do just what our Lord commanded we know that our salvation is certain. Come with us as we go back to the Bible, back to Christ and his church!

If you need help in locating a congregation of the churches of Christ nearest to you, please e-mail us at garcia@church-of-christ.org, and we will be more than happy to help you find one. No one from the church will call without your consent. Please come by and visit us soon. We care about you and your family.

"Who are the churches of Christ and what do they believe in?" was written by Batsell Barrett Baxter

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