

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

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## Toward Better Communication

"This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger, for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." (James 1:19-20)

Can you imagine better advice for getting along with others? How often we hear it said that the problem in a family, a plant, an office, a school, or even a church is a breakdown of communication. Obedience to this verse would change all of that.

"Be quick to hear." Listen! Try to understand where the one who is talking "is coming from" and what he or she really means. See if you can repeat what was said so accurately that the one who said it will agree that you have stated the position accurately.

Now, make sure a reply is needed. We do not have to correct every mistake we hear. Some are not serious enough to require attention. Others, though serious, may have to wait for a more suitable time to be corrected.

Even if a reply is needed, take your time. "Be slow to speak." Think of what you are saying. Think how it will sound to the one hearing it and how it will sound if it is repeated to someone else. Ask yourself if what you are about to say will do good or do harm. Ask God to help you to say only what needs to be said. Nehemiah was asked a question by the king and managed a prayer before he answered (Neh. 2:4-5). Remember that once you have spoken, you cannot recall your words.

Above all, "be slow to anger." Anger almost always breaks down communication; shouting matches seldom end in a better understanding of each other. And, besides jeopardizing human relationships, they endanger our relation with God. We may fancy that our anger is "righteous indignation," but the Holy Spirit says: "The anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

Are you thinking, "That's not much of a way to win an argument"? RIGHT! But it is a pretty good way to stop one. How would you like to argue with someone who is "quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger"?

- Sewell Hall

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## **"And They Stood Every Man in His Place"**

Israel had been oppressed by the Midianites for seven years when Gideon was called by God to deliver them. When Israel knew that he was to be their deliverer, 32,000 men gathered to him to help in defeating the great host of Midianites who were encamped in the valley of Jezreel. But to prevent their thinking that their own strength

had defeated Midian, God wanted a much smaller army than Gideon. At last the number was reduced to only 300 men. These 300 were divided into three groups, each man being armed with only a trumpet and a pitcher containing a lamp, and were instructed to follow the example of their leader, Gideon. In the middle of the night these three companies surrounded the host of Midian. At the appointed signal every man broke his pitcher, blew his trumpet and cried, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The result is described in Judges 7:21. "And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran, and cried, and fled."

Today spiritual Israel, the church of our Lord, is confronted with a great army, the hosts of Satan and sin. In comparison to that host we are but few in number. Like Gideon's army our weapons are not those ordinarily used in warfare (Eph. 6:11-17). The members of this church are varied in their talents and abilities as are the different parts of our physical body (1 Cor. 12:12-27), but each is expected to contribute his part in the great work of defeating the foe. As with Gideon's army, our success depends upon each individual standing in his place and implicitly following our leader, Christ.

- Elam B. Kuykendall, 1954

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## Is There A Difference?

- If you are seeking a wife - is one as good as another?
- If you are sick - is one doctor as good as another?
- If you are catching a train - is one as good as another?

- If you are buying a house - is one as good as another?
- If you are taking medicine - is one as good as another?

The Lord's church is the one He bought with His own precious blood. Why not obey the gospel and let Him add you to His church, over which He rules as supreme Head and in which the Holy Spirit dwells? Surely, it does make a difference? Why wait until the Judgment to acknowledge this? It will then be too late!

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## **I HAVE ONLY QUOTED THE SCRIPTURES**

In his trial for heresy, held at the Popular Creek Baptist Church in Limestone County, Alabama soon after the War Between the States, R.W. Officer was questioned about his teaching on baptism. He was suspected by his fellow Baptist preachers of advocating what they called "Campbellism." Dr. J.R. Graves, the influential editor of the *Tennessee Baptist*, had been called in to lead the examination of Officer in an effort to expose the heresy of their unorthodox brother. The part of the trial that involved baptism proceeded as follows:

*GRAVES: I have been informed that you make baptism a condition of pardon; in other words, you teach water salvation. When is the sinner pardoned?*

OFFICER: *Paul says the sinner is freed from sin when he obeys from the heart that form of doctrine delivered him (Romans 6:17, 19). 'Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.' I take it that we rise from the waters of baptism to walk 'in newness of life' (Romans 6:1-5).*

GRAVES: *But what will you do with what Paul says in his letter to the Galatians: 'Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:26)?*

OFFICER: *I will do with that just what I have done with the rest of the sentence - viz., believe it. It reads: 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' (Galatians 3:27)."*

GRAVES: *But what does that mean?*

OFFICER: *It means just what it says.*

GRAVES: *What do you believe are the conditions of pardon or remission?*

OFFICER: *I believe just what the Bible says on the subject.*

GRAVES: *But what is your interpretation of what the Bible says on the subject?*

OFFICER: *I suppose I have no interpretation of the Bible on any subject.*

GRAVES: *But you have; all denominations have their interpretations of the Bible. We, as Baptists, teach that repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ secures pardon. What do you think about that?*

OFFICER: *The Bible says: 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God' (John 3:5). 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved' (Mark 16:16). To believers, Peter said: 'Repent, and be baptized... for the remission of sins' (Acts 2:38).*

GRAVES: *We all believe the Bible as strong as you do. Tell us what your interpretation of the texts you have quoted is. That is what we want to get at.*

OFFICER: *My interpretation is exactly what I have quoted, in other words, I have no interpretation of it. I simply believe it, just as it is written.*

GRAVES: *Do we understand you to say that all who are not baptized will go to hell, are eternally lost?*

OFFICER: *I did not say so.*

GRAVES: *But the quotations you have made lead us to believe that is your opinion.*

OFFICER: *I have only quoted the Scriptures.*

GRAVES: *But do you or do you not believe that the un-baptized will all be lost in hell forever? ...Do you believe these pious un-baptized people will all go to hell? Answer yes or no."*

OFFICER: *Yes or No.*

GRAVES: *Which do you say? Let us not have any foolishness about it. Do you believe the un-baptized will go to hell?*

OFFICER: *My faith is not in the direction of hell. I am not well posted on that end of the road.*

GRAVES: *The brethren want to know where you stand.*

OFFICER: *Faith, repentance, and baptism are conditions which belong to time and look to the remission of sins of the past. Love that never fails is the eternal condition which looks to the new life and everlasting salvation and happiness.*

GRAVES: *Then you do not believe that baptism is a condition in order to salvation?*

OFFICER: *'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved' looks to salvation from sins of the past, doesn't it? If it were salvation in heaven, all would rise from the waters of baptism into heaven and enjoy eternal life.*

During the past century it was common for denominational preachers like Officer to study their way out of denominationalism. Their honesty in preaching what they found in the Bible without

regard to human creeds brought them into conflict with their orthodox brethren. But a young man of limited education who took the Bible as his only guide as this excerpt from Officer's heresy trial indicates, could hold his own with the most astute advocates of sectarianism.

- Earl Kimbrough

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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"The Changeless Christ!"* (text: Heb. 13:8-9); Sunday evening: *"LAMENTATIONS: Israel's Great Catastrophe!"*

**SCHEDULE:** Our Gospel Meeting will be July 28 – Aug. 2, Sun. regularly scheduled times, M-F at 7:00 p.m., with Tanner Campbell, of Piggott, AR.