

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

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oldhickorycofc.com

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If the Blind Lead the Blind

When Jesus invited His disciples to "become as little children," He certainly was not suggesting that they cast aside reasoning, bury their consciences, and follow their religious superiors without questioning, as would a docile lamb his shepherd. Neither was He suggesting that they should withdraw into a self-satisfied ignorance, content to allow someone else to do their thinking for them. And yet, many who profess a religious faith manifest this very character. This is not to question the sincerity of their profession. No doubt, most are extremely sincere. But in their sincerity they also display a certain naïveté that never questions the instructions they receive from their religious leaders. As a result, they possess a "second-hand" faith, sincerely adopted by them, but thoroughly "thought out" by someone else.

One would expect to find this naïveté in a young child whose implicit faith is in his parents, and thus, who never questions what they tell him. But the Lord never intended His disciples to be mentally credulous. Instead, they are exhorted, "Be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in

understanding be men." (1 Cor. 14:20.) "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good." (1 Thess. 5:21.) "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." (2 Cor. 13:5.) A commendable example is that of the Bereans who, when taught by Paul "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11.) The Lord expects His children to use all the powers of a maturely developed mind to reason and to investigate all that they have been taught.

Without this investigative spirit there is no legitimate system of "checks and balances" between teacher and student. Religious teachers have taken advantage of such situations, making preposterous statements that have gone unchallenged. Their actions have constituted a tampering with the Word of God, changing it to suit their needs. And the only reason they could get away with this is because others allow these teachers to do their thinking for them. In time, these "preposterous statements" find their way into the creeds of churches and become the "standards of orthodoxy." And no one questions it. "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9.) An example of this boldness upon the part of a religious teacher can be found in the writings of John Calvin concerning baptism. His preposterous teaching is presently contained in the creeds of most of the major denominations. Consider what he has to say. "Whether the person baptized is to be wholly immersed, and that whether once or thrice, or whether he is only to be sprinkled with water, is not of the least consequence: churches should be at liberty to adopt either, according to the diversity of climates, although it is evident that the term baptize means to

immerse, and that this was the form used by the primitive church."
(Institutes 4:15:19.)

John Calvin here speaks as if he possesses all the authority of God. But who gave it to him? He tells us that it "is not of the least consequence" whether baptism takes the form of immersing or sprinkling, although he informs us that immersion was the practice of the primitive church, and thus, of the Bible. The Bible says, "Do this, but John Calvin says, "Feel free to do that instead." For years people have been satisfied with the assurances of religious leaders like John Calvin . instead of taking the Word of God as it is in the Bible.

John Calvin also tells us that "the term baptize means to immerse" but then he turns around and tells us that it's okay "to be sprinkled" instead. By what authority? If "to baptize" means "to immerse," then when God commands us to be baptized He commands us to be immersed. It's that simple. How is it that we can obey God's command to be immersed by being sprinkled? Immersion and sprinkling are not the same thing. I suppose that if John Calvin had been there when God told Noah to build the ark out of gopher wood, John Calvin would have counseled Noah, "or build it out of oak, or maple, it is not of the least consequence." But it is consequential because one is found in God's Word, and one is not. Immersion is what God commanded, as admitted by John Calvin. But sprinkling comes from no higher authority than Calvin and religious teachers like him. "We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29.)

The sadness in all of this is that "if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. 15:14.) Too many religious

teachers have come saying, "Here's what the Bible says, but you can do what you want and it won't matter with God." Why do so many follow these "blind guides"? Has the philosophy that "it doesn't really matter what you believe, just so you're sincere" so permeated the thinking of the many that they are no longer impelled to challenge an untruth, but instead are content to live with it?

Yes, it really does matter what we believe. It matters whether we follow the lead of God or the lead of men in matters of faith. It's the difference between a blessing and a curse from God. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." (Lk. 11:28.) On the other hand, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:9.) And again, "La vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9.) Let no man say it doesn't make a difference with God. Sincerity alone will not suffice. Truth must also prevail. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24.)

When error goes unchallenged, truth remains camouflaged. When minds refuse to think for them-selves, deception gains a foothold. And when the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. How many have been sprinkled with water, believing this to be baptism when, as John Calvin admits, "the term baptize means to immerse"? In being sprinkled with water one has obeyed a command of men, but has not actually obeyed the command of God. He has been misled by a "blind guide." As a result, he has not become a partaker of the promises attached to God's command, namely, the removal of sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16), and salvation in eternity. (1 Pet. 3:21.) Here is the sadness. By not "searching the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11), he has allowed himself to be deceived.

It is unfortunate when an earnest soul who seeks salvation inquires of a man who poses as a spokesman of God, and then receives from him an answer other than what the Lord has spoken. "Woe unto you, ye blind guides." (Matt. 23:16.) 'Woe unto you, lawyers for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." (Lk. 11: 52.)

But it is equally unfortunate when the inquiring soul is satisfied to accept whatever he is told, and unwilling to investigate the Scriptures "that thou mightiest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." (Lk. 1:4.) The responsibility lies with both parties. And unless we enter into a search for truth with both eyes open and with a discerning mind, we are destined to be the blind led about by the blind.

- Bill Imrisek

Bill Nye Debates Ken Ham

Live Streaming FREE on Feb. 4 at 7 PM ET

Is creation a viable model of origins in today's modern, scientific era? Leading creation apologist and bestselling Christian author Ken Ham is joined at the Creation Museum by popular TV personality and evolution apologist Bill Nye.

Ham, a former science instructor who emigrated to the USA from Australia over 25 years ago, is joined by the popular children's program personality Bill Nye "the Science Guy" for this first and only scheduled debate. Each man delivers what he believes is the best information currently available for his case. Each then has an opportunity for rebuttal and afterward answers questions submitted by the audience.

The upcoming February 4 debate has already generated significant attention from national media, and tickets to attend live were completely sold out within two minutes of release.

Don't miss this "debate of the decade"! Watch at home, or organize to show the live stream to your small group, your youth group, or even your entire church. This event may be freely rebroadcast to groups so long as no admission or other fees are charged to any participants or attendees.

The debate is to be held in the 900-seat Legacy Hall lecture arena at the Creation Museum (sponsored by Answers in Genesis). The live stream will be available to watch on this page, and it is being hosted by Google+ Hangouts On Air through YouTube.

Furthermore, the live stream will be available for free on YouTube for a period of time after the debate. The event is also recorded for DVD and digital download distribution to help offset significant costs in organizing and sponsoring the debate.

See: <http://www.answersingenesis.org/live/debates/bill-nye-vs-ken-ham/>

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- > "No one can help everyone, but everyone can help someone."
 - > "Put your heart, mind, and soul into even your smallest acts.
This is the secret of success."
 - > "Judge each day not by the harvest you reap but by the
seeds you plant."
 - > "Be kind whenever possible - and, by the way, it is always
possible."

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Blunt Statements in the Bible!"* (text: Josh. 24:19); Sunday evening: *"ZECHARIAH: Stirring the People and Looking Beyond!"*