

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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THINGS SAUL SAW WHEN BLIND

While Saul of Tarsus was on the road to Damascus, he was blinded by a light from heaven (Acts 9:1-9). During the time that Saul was blind, he saw a number of things that most people today don't see. Let's notice three things that Saul saw while blind.

(1) That One Can Live In All Good Conscience And Be In Error. The trend in religion today seems to be, "just let your conscience be your guide." Saul of Tarsus was guided by his conscience, but he was guided into error. Saul was a man who "made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and hailing men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8:3). Tell Me Saul, did your conscience bother you while you persecuted the church? Saul said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). Many today may live in all good conscience in religious matters, but still be engaged in religious error.

(2) That A Person Can Be Zealous In His Religion And Be Wrong. Saul revealed to the Galatians that he was a religious man (Gal. 1:13). But Saul was not your ordinary religious man. He was zealous in his religion! In Acts 22:3, Saul testified that he was "zealous toward God." Furthermore, he announced to the brethren in Galatia, that he was "exceedingly zealous" (Gal. 1:14). The Bible teaches that zeal is essential if one is to please God (Tit. 2:14). Yet, some today may be in the same condition that Saul was in — "concerning zeal, persecuting the church" (Phil. 3:6). It takes more than just being zealous to be pleasing to God!

(3) What A Man Must Do To Have His Sins Washed Away. While Saul lay trembling on the earth, he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord answered, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). It must be recognized that whatever Saul was told to do, in the city, that it was imperative if he was to have his sins washed away. Saul was told, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be

baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Saul, while blind, saw that in order to have his sins washed away, he had to be baptized.

Saul of Tarsus saw these things while blind. Can you see them?

- John Isaac Edwards

All Feeling, No Proof

The current rash of tongue -speaking, miracle -sanctioning, and the far more common errors concerning direct Spirit indwelling, that infects many institutional churches of Christ, was not brought to earth in the Apollo 11 moon dust. It sprang from causes within the ranks. Last month we suggested that reaction to coldness may have triggered some of this error. As an interrelated cause, some sought to promote genuine worship with material props, such as dimmed lights, mood music (a cappella, of course) and other devotional clap-trap; and the resulting emotionalism was glibly assigned to the Holy Spirit.

Serving God from the heart involves the emotions, to be sure — but such emotions as proceed from knowledge of God’s will, and desire to serve Him. The art work and parties of the popular Young People’s Classes produce only a superficial knowledge of the Bible, (doctrinal studies, you know, are no longer relevant) so churches that have gone along with the modern trends are poorly equipped to combat direct Spirit errors.

But the underlying cause of this and practically every other brotherhood problem is subjectivism — looking within ourselves for authority. When brethren no longer feel the need for Bible authority (external authority — going to the Bible for their faith — Rom. 10:17) they look inward, to human reason, practical experience or feelings for the answers. This may begin with their feelings about instrumental music (I like) or the care of orphans (Surely that is good) or other church-hood projects (proven right by mainstream acceptance) until finally, demands for Bible authority become most distasteful.

Subjectivism takes many forms. The rank modernist makes God’s word subject to his approval — divine truth becomes relative to his understanding, or so he thinks. But the same error is at work among those who say God’s word can be understood only by the Spirit-endowed elect. And those who believe they are cut by the Holy Spirit (apart from His sword, the written word) are but a step away.

When Pat Boone says that God communicates with Him in a way that maybe you wouldn’t understand except inwardly and in a spiritual way — this is subjectivism. The product of the communication is put upon exactly the same ground as the feeling, or still small voice

of the sectarian, that he offers as proof of his salvation. Neither can be proven by the external authority of God's word, as revealed to the Apostles and Prophets. (1 John 4:6; Eph. 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 14:37)

Conservative brethren, who have steadfastly demanded Bible authority for faith and practice, are little affected by the current Spirit craze. It is the brother who has been softened by earlier forms of subjectivism who now feels that the Holy Spirit helps him to find a parking place. I feel no joy in stating this. I am saddened by the defection of Pat Boone, and all the others. But my sadness began long before they got this far. It began years ago, as they took their first steps in institutionalism and the social gospel movement.

- Robert F. Turner, via *Plain Talk*, April, 1970

Pointed Excerpts:

"A truly penitent brother who has sinned has already been "whipped" and humiliated by his sin. Shall overzealous brethren play the part of a bully demanding more? If so, on what basis? We would do well to consider the warning, "Consider thyself also lest thou be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). We need to rejoice that a penitent brother's faith has not failed. We need to rejoice that one has come home and that if I should err somewhere, sometime in the future, there is a brother, like me, who will make supplication that my faith fail not and will encourage me to turn again."

- Bill Robinson, Jr., 1986

From the Introduction to Revelation chapter 20:

"From the early centuries of Christianity this passage has been used as the basis for various theories of a thousand year reign of Christ on earth. ... The general theory, with variations among different schools, is briefly this: Christ will come in the first phase of his return to earth (called "the rapture"), and at this time the righteous dead will be raised, the living saints will be changed and both will be caught up in the air to meet the Lord. Then will come the marriage feast of the Lamb, during which there will be great tribulation on earth. After the wedding He and the bride, the church, will then complete the return to earth (called "the revelation, ") where Christ will set up His kingdom, sit on David's throne and reign from Jerusalem for a literal thousand years - the millennium. According to some, the Jews will be converted and return to Palestine, Old Testament worship will be restored (with modifications) and there will be on earth an idealistic life which will continue for the definite period of one thousand years. At the end of this millennium Satan will be loosed for a short time and make a last furious effort to destroy the Lord's people and work. This will be followed by the resurrection of the wicked dead (for the righteous dead will have

been raised at the beginning of the thousand years). The judgment will occur and the eternal destinies of heaven or hell will be meted.”

“The theory must read into the passage (vv. 1-10) all that it claims to draw from it, for the following are not mentioned in the text: (1) the second coming of Christ, (2) a bodily resurrection, (3) a reign of Christ on earth, (4) the literal throne of David, (5) Jerusalem of Palestine, (6) conversion of the Jews, or (7) the church on earth. A theory that rests on a passage of Scripture in which not one of its peculiar tenets of doctrine is found cannot be true!”

- Homer Hailey, *Commentary on Revelation*, pp. 389-390

Why Bring Christ Back to the Earth?

His mission of redemption is complete (Col. 1:13-14). What more could he do to provide the means of salvation? His authority is complete (Matt. 28:18-20; Heb. 12:25; Eph. 1:20-23). What else needs to be put under his authority? His revelation is complete (Jude 3; Heb. 1:1-3). Why would we desire anything else? His glory is complete (Luke 24:25-26; 1 Pet. 1:20-21). Should he give up this to return? Jesus said that his work on earth was finished (John 17:4). Surely he knew whether or not this was true.

The one thing he cannot do is reign in the literal city of Jerusalem! He is of the seed of Coniah, and God promised that no man of his lineage shall rule any more in Judah (Jer. 22:30; Matt. 1:11). How could a reign in Jerusalem be justified if this promise is kept?

He now reigns as King in heaven!

- Robert Harkrider, *Commentary on Revelation*, p. 295

- > “If you don’t practice what you preach, it would be better for you to listen than to try to teach!”
 - > “To blame others for our shortcomings is to come short in overcoming them!”
 - > “It creates a dangerous situation when a person is smart but is not wise!”
 - > “When something is not right, it is wrong, and if it is wrong, no amount of wishing, praying, rationalizing or bullying will make it otherwise!”
 - > “There is no right way to do a wrong thing (Acts 5:1-11)!”
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THIS WEEK’S LESSONS: Sunday morning: “*Before Destruction!*” (Prov. 16:18-20); Sunday evening: *Calvinism* (Lesson 13, pp. 76-80).