

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### All We Are People

The husband may be a highly educated scientist, brought up in a city. The wife may be a country girl (met him when she came to town to take nurse's training) who understands the man even though she doesn't understand his job. They appreciate one-another's strengths, and supplement one-another in times of weakness — because they love one-another, and the home they share.

The son is a husky eighteen: football star, self-confident. The older daughter is an uncertain thirteen: so bashful — lady-like one day and all giggles the next. And there is the two-year-old: exasperating, into everything, spoiled, spanked, loved. But together they make a family. The child experiments; mature ones correct and guide. One frets, another forgives. There are storms, but in a pinch they pull together.

These, and greater differences are overcome in order to weld families, teams, businesses, and even nations into useful units of society. If you are successful in business, government, sports, or family life it is probably due in great measure to your ability to adapt to and work with the heterogeneous society of our day. If you are a failure in life, check your ability to get along with folk.

And if the church of which you are a member is plagued by chronic frictions, before you blame it on insurmountable doctrinal differences take a good look at your ability and willingness to get along with people of different social, economic, and domestic backgrounds.

We are not suggesting a course of petting, flattering, or compromising ones convictions. We are aware that genuine issues may divide brethren, and that our individual obligation to God must come first. But don't expect to teach another, in a single lesson, what you learned over many years.

The church is country-city, well-educated and no education; people who have grown up in the church and others who but recently learned Christ in a non-sectarian way. But love for the Lord, and one-another, in that order, can weld us into a close family.

- Robert F. Turner, via *Plain Talk*, November, 1974

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## WHY THE DIFFERENCE? A LOOK AT REVELATION 22:14

KJV – "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

NASB – "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city."

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The Revised Version and most other translations read: "Blessed are those who wash their robes . . ." The difference is due to the fact that the oldest and best manuscripts, which have been discovered since the KJV was translated, all render the passage in the latter manner.

Of course, this presents no problem one way or another. There are many passages which teach us to do the Commandments of God, and only by faithful obedience can we wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb (Matt. 7:21-23; John 14:15; Heb. 5:8, 9; 1 John 5:3). There is no lack of scriptural evidence to show that keeping the commandments of God is necessary before we can have access to the tree of life and enter into that new and glorious city described in these last two chapters of Revelation.

But since no man perfectly obeys the commands of God, and since we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), there is something else essential to the washing of our robes and our subsequent entry through the gates into the city. That is the forgiving grace of God. It is by grace through faith that we are saved (Eph. 2:8). Our robes are pure and white when we come into this life, but they soon become spotted and blackened by sin. We need then to do as Saul of Tarsus was commanded. He believed that Jesus is the Son of God. He repented, and in Acts 22:16, he was told, "And why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." If we then remain faithful unto death, we are promised the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

Back in 7:9 we read of the great multitude of all nations and tongues who stood before the throne in white robes. They were identified in v. 14 as they which came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

God by His grace has provided the forgiveness. He has provided the blood atonement. It's up to us to provide the faith. We must provide the obedience to His gospel which demonstrates our faith. In this way, the grace of God and the faith of man works hand in hand to win for us our eternal salvation.

- Green, Ken, Radio Sermons On The Revelation (Cullman, AL: Printing Service, 1978), 126-127.

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The meaning essentially is the same because those who do his commandments are those who "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14; also see notes on 1:5). By faith they have repented of sins (Acts 2:38), confessed that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10), and have been buried by baptism into his death (Rom. 6:3-5; Acts 22:16). By man's disobedience he was driven from the Garden of Eden, and now by obedience man will be granted entrance into the eternal paradise (Heb. 5:8-9).

- Harkrider, Robert F., Revelation. In Mike Willis, ed., Truth Commentaries. (Bowling Green, KY: Guardian of Truth Foundation, 2008), 259.

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The phrase **those who wash their robes** points to the response humanity must make to God's grace in order to enjoy His blessings. In the original text, "wash" is in the present tense and could be translated "continue to wash." As Christians continue to walk in the light of God's Word, the blood of Christ continues to cleanse them of their sins (1 Jn. 1:7).

The KJV has an alternate reading here: "Blessed are they that do his commandments." In the Greek, the two phrases "wash their robes" ... and "do his commandments" ... are similar in appearance. The textual evidence favors "wash their robes," but the meaning of the two phrases is basically the same.

As was seen in chapter 7, we "wash our robes" in the blood of Jesus by obeying His will .... Unless we are willing to submit our lives to the Lord, we cannot enter heaven. The only ones who have a right to the tree of life are "those who wash their robes." Nevertheless, God wants us to remember that we cannot earn our salvation. We must never forget that which makes our "robes" clean is Christ's blood (7:14). We are saved by God's wondrous grace.

- Roper, David L., Revelation 12-22. In Eddie Cloer, gen. ed., Truth For Today Commentary. (Searcy, AR: Resource Publications, 2002), 395.

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## "AS HE THINKETH-"

Solomon said, "As he thinketh in his heart so is he". (Proverbs 23:7). Our hearts are the fountains of life. As is the fountain, so is the stream. If our hearts are pure, our lives will be pure. If our hearts are impure, our lives will be impure. Good thoughts will result in proper actions. Evil thoughts produce sin. On one occasion Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God". (Matthew 5:8). On another occasion, He said, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies". (Matthew 15:18-19). Sin originates in the heart.

In view of the fact that evil thoughts produce ungodly conduct, we should strive to have pure hearts and lives by pure thinking. Those who are not Christians should first purify their hearts by obeying the truth. (See 1 Peter 1:22.) Then as Christians they should carefully guard their thinking. We are responsible for how we think!

We should not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, but should think soberly. (Romans 12:3). We should not be lifted up with pride and arrogance, but we should be meek and contrite in spirit. We are mere creatures of the great Creator! We should be cognizant of our weaknesses and thus feel our need for and dependence upon God.

Paul suggests in 1 Corinthians 4:6 that we should not "think of men above that which is written". This shows that we should not follow men unless they follow Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 11:1.) Respect for God's revelation as written in the Scripture must be shown if we expect to go to heaven. Let us never put our trust in man's wisdom but God's revelation!

In thinking properly, we must meditate in the Lord's Word. (See Psalms 1:1-2; 119:97; 1 Timothy 4:15.) The apostle Paul said, "Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians 4:8). Notice: THINK ON THESE THINGS! Thinking on these things will never bring regret.

Is your heart pure? It isn't if your thinking isn't pure! Do you think on things true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report? You should! Is your thinking circumscribed by God's revelation? Are you earnestly endeavoring to be directed by God's will as revealed in the New Testament in all that you do? Paul said, "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." (2 Timothy 2:7).

- Carrol R. Sutton, via *The Instructor*, February, 1964 [slightly edited – GFS]

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# True Story

Frances was raised to be in the assembly of Christians on every occasion of meeting. Her father was an elder and taught her that the Lord God is first in everything. When she married a Christian and moved away from home, the meetinghouse was seven miles from where they lived. They *walked* to worship God.

They walked seven miles to get there and seven miles to return. They walked. Rain, shine, sleet, or snow, they walked. They never missed, unless they were sick. What about when she was carrying her children? She walked.

Is there a difference between this lady's commitment and mine? Is it more convenient for me to go to and from than for her? In view of her example, would you feel any shame for allowing a busy schedule, a vacation, a child's sporting event, a trip to visit friends, the arrival of company, feeling okay, or having fun to interfere with your commitment to the Lord? – To love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength (Mark 12:30)?

I would conclude that it was priority for this lady to hold fast the confession of her hope without wavering, to stimulate others to love and good deeds, and to be encouraging to others (Hebrews 10:23-25). Would you? Thank you, dear lady, for your example!

- Gary Smalley

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\* "Be the change you want to see in other people!"

\* "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only (James 1:22)!"

\* "Character is what we stand for, reputation is what we fall for!"

\* "Each of us has the ability to lighten another's load!"

\* "Before facing the challenges of the day, face the day with God!"

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# ***What Must I Do To Be Saved?***

## **HEAR THE GOSPEL**

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

## **BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST**

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

## **REPENT OF PAST SINS**

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

## **CONFESS CHRIST**

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

## **BE BAPTIZED**

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

## **LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE**

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)