

Of Me and Change ...

Ok. I admit it. When it comes to the practice of my faith and the church, I am resistant to change. If that makes me an old moss back or one stuck in the mud, so be it. The fact that we have "always done it" doesn't affect me in the least – if the way we have always done is right. Quite frankly, I spend very little time sitting around trying to think up something new to try. Why?

First, "the faith" was once for all time delivered to the saints in the First Century (**Jude 3**). So, anything that is a part of "the faith" should not be changed. It must remain as it was in the back then. The spiritual needs of man have not changed with time, nor does the way to meet those needs change. God's way of saving men or making men righteous must remain as it has been for over 2,000 years. The activities and nature of the church as revealed in "the faith" must also remain constant. We must not mess with it. Any changes made in this area will result in nullifying the benefits that God meant to bring mankind through the "the faith" or "the gospel." (**Gal. 1:6-9**).

Second, there are means and methods sometimes called expedients involved in carrying out those things required by "the faith." And it is true that in this area things may change from time to time and place to place without violating the scriptures. In this area, one might even be innovative. Yet, even in this area, I confess that I am still somewhat resistant to change or innovation. Before getting behind any change or innovation, I want some questions answered:

1. Does it violate any principle taught in the Scriptures.
2. Why is this better than those, admittedly lawful expedients, that we are doing now that have been refined and proven over many years of use.

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

3. Will this make our worship more acceptable to God than it is now or make us stronger as Christians that we are now?
4. Does this present any real danger of being a precursor to other changes that we would not want to see made. Sometimes efforts to "tweak" things a bit results in over-tweaking and breaking it. There is a lot to be said for "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."
5. Is this proposed change being made to better please God and honor Him more, or is it more about you – just to satisfy your desire to change and "get out of a rut?" It may be that the problem that got you "in a rut" is not how things are being done, but you have allowed your mind to get "out of the groove" of worshiping and serving God with your all – might, heart, mind and soul – using the expedients already in place.

So, if I am to endorse one's proposed change or innovation he needs to give good solid reasons for my doing so. I admit that I like my comfort zone and am reluctant to have it disturbed unnecessarily. Yet, I hope that I am not so wed to that zone that I will not leave it even when solid evidence is given that I should. Nor do I mind having it challenged. I recognize that in this area of expediency that being neither "new" nor "old" of itself makes a thing either right or wrong. But, constant efforts to get me to blindly favor this or that new unproven "fad" will not likely get me excited in a positive way.



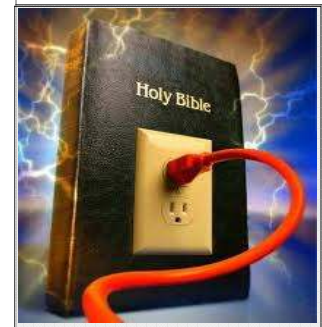
The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

The Profitable Word

By Irven Lee



Thoughts to Ponder

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. (**Romans 1:16**)

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

It certainly makes sense for one to suggest that man should study the Bible. The Bible is a revelation of the will of God. This revelation includes His authoritative commandments which man must obey if he would please his Creator, and it includes the exceeding great and precious promises concerning the good things laid up in heaven for the faithful. (**2 Peter 1:3-4**.) We may observe that every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward. (**Heb. 2:2-3**.) He chastens every son whom He receives that strength of character may be developed. (**Heb. 12:6**.) How could one carefully examine the profitable word and not be impressed by the goodness of God? God is love (**1 John 4:8**), and those who would know of His mercy and of His plan for man may learn from His revealed will.

A FIRM BASIS

Man is capable of having many similarities to a vicious wild animal, but he is also capable of being a lively stone in the temple in which God dwells among men. (**1 Peter 2:5**.) Man can so follow the example of Christ that purity, unselfishness, and strength of character can remind us that he was created in the image of God. There is an indescribable difference in the man most like the wild beast and the man who best exempli-

Christ came to seek and save the lost. (**Luke 19:10**.) The gospel is God's power to salvation, but, as a by-product, Christians receive a hundred fold in this life. Their righteous lives are as the saving and lighting influence in a crooked and perverse nation. (**Phil. 2:15**.) This nation needs salt.

fies the image of his Maker. What is the difference? One is taught of God. The other follows the leadings of his carnal animal nature.

The sacred writings are able to make one wise unto salvation. (**2 Tim. 3:15**.) They completely furnish man the instruction he so sorely needs, since the way of man is not in himself. (**Jer. 10:23**.) The way that seems right unto man may lead to destruction and ruin. (**Prov. 14:12**.)

The same holy scriptures are able to furnish the motivation for the good life. The goodness of God leads to repentance. We love Him because He first

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Check Us Out On the Internet: www.aubeacon.com

Sick

Kevin Simpson (Bob Simpson's son)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Donna Pridmore (Erin Miller's Mom)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Andrew Westphal	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Betty Bradford	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Dale Herd (Brother of William Herd)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Eli Williams	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Diane Lewter (Kyle Lewter's mother)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkins' Dad)	Toni and William Herd	Amy Baswell Hall

June Birthdays

- 3 - Philip Stephens
- 8 - Mac Searcy
- 9 - Kay White
- 11 - Hannah Alexander
- 11 - Clint Stagner
- 12 - Orié Cecil
- 13 - Addison Dembowski
- 14 - Jeremiah Johnson
- 16 - Kaleigh Green
- 17 - Sarah Norman
- 17 - Brooks Pender
- 18 - James Long
- 20 - Jonas Dembowski
- 20 - Aiden Hergett
- 22 - Paul Tam
- 23 - Micah Pittman
- 24 - Justin Bice
- 25 - Corey Hunt
- 28 - Clint Davis
- 28 - Craig Davis
- 29 - Lisa Lanier

News and Notes

- ☒ - Lets keep in our prayers Fallon Hartsell as she is expecting twin girls!
- ☒ - Kris Brewer is speaking today!
- ☒ - Congratulations to Clint and Suzanna Stagner on their wedding last week!
- ☒ - VBS postcards are in the foyer. Please be sure to register your children for VBS!
- ☒ - Sympathy is extended to BJ Winslett whose aunt, Ann Byrd, died last Sunday.
- ☒ - Hannah Morris' mom had shoulder surgery on Wednesday.
- ☒ - Sympathy is extended to the Bradford family at the death of Edna Bradford last Sunday.
- ☒ - Larry is away in a meeting this week at Lacey's Spring near Huntsville.
- ☒ - Be sure to go to www.auchurch.com for latest audio and directory!

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loved us. The example of the Christ in His life on earth and the love revealed in His death on the cross draw men to Him. Many have died for their faith. Many have given all that they might gain Christ and lay hold on the hope set before them. It follows, as night the day, that those who have hope, as sons of God, of obtaining the prize of the high calling of God purify themselves. There is no stronger pull toward righteousness than that exerted by the gospel of Christ. It is able to save. **(Rom. 1:16.)** It attracts one into the way that leads unto life.

Is there sufficient evidence that the Book is of God? Did the holy men speak as they were moved by the Spirit of God? **(2 Peter 1:21.)** These men gave the world the perfect standard of righteousness. They were holy men, and they said they obtained it by revelation. Would liars write such a book? Surely they were not pathetically deceived. Would ignorant men have given such a wonderful standard of behavior? The influence of the Bible in this scientific age in America is still as wholesome in the hearts of those who are led by it as it was nineteen hundred years ago in Palestine. The test of the pudding lies in the tasting. Those who know most about the Bible appreciate it most. It will bear acquaintance. When we see the lives most influenced by it, we are led to glorify God.

The well proven fact of the resurrection, other miracles, fulfilled prophecies, along with the unity and perfection of the message give us a firm basis of hope. What more could He do than He has done to give us a written revelation? No men on their own in any generation could have approached its perfection.

PLANTING IS NECESSARY

The word is the seed of the kingdom. **(Luke 8:11.)** America could have the word, but few there be that find the way that leads to life. **(Matt. 7:14.)** Many who have eyes have never read from its pages. Many who could have heard many sermons were not listening. Their hard hearts were engrossed in arrogant fulfillment of the lust of the flesh and in the search for money by any means. Animals they are, and without the wholesome influence of the powerful word.

Preaching to some is like casting pearls before swine, while some hunger and thirst after righteousness so they receive the word with all readi-

ness of mind. If men have no love for truth, but have their pleasure in unrighteousness, God will send a strong delusion that they may believe a lie and be damned. **(2 Thess. 2:10-12.)** The lake of fire is for the unbelievers as well as for the liars. **(Rev. 21:8.)** The flaming fire of vengeance is for those who know not God as well as for those who obey not the gospel. **(2 Thess. 1:8-9.)**

Many men say they appreciate the Bible and believe it to be the word of God, but they remain babes in knowledge. They evidently do not desire the milk or the meat of the word. They are without excuse for their lack of skill in the use of this great discernment of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Ignorance is alarming even among those who should be teachers. **(Heb. 5:12-13.)** They are not rooted and grounded, but they are as unstable and as easily tossed about by the winds of doctrine as the wave of the sea by the winds of the storm cloud. **(Eph. 4:14.)** The wave is fastened by nothing. The willingly ignorant are in no position to give an answer to those who may ask a reason for their hope. **(1 Peter 3:15.)**

AWAKE FROM SLEEP

The night is far spent. **(Rom. 13: 11-12.)** It is high time for America to awake to righteousness. The atomic bomb is not the only thing that can destroy America. The increasing number of burning, looting, angry anarchists can do it. It may now be too late to preserve this land as a land of opportunity for the free. It is not too late to try to save it.

The gospel was not given to make America or any other country great. Christ came to seek and save the lost. **(Luke 19:10.)** The gospel is God's power to salvation, but, as a by-product, Christians receive a hundred fold in this life. Their righteous lives are as the saving and lighting influence in a crooked and perverse nation. **(Phil. 2:15.)** This nation needs salt.

Let more people meditate on the law day and night. **(Psa. 1:2.)** This is our way up from the gutter in which we now find ourselves. The church is in distress, the nation is in confusion, and the world is in turmoil. What can help? The profitable word always leads to the abundant life here and here after. It is the word of God. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" **(Rom. 11:33.)** We need to open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things in His law. Is there anything more important for us?



R. W. Officer: "Suppose I Have No Interpretation of the Bible on any Subject"

By Andy Sochor

Robert Wallace Officer (1845-1930), at one point in his life, served as a missionary for the Liberty Baptist Association. During this six year period, he faced several charges of heresy. Below is an excerpt from a heresy trial in which Dr. J.R. Graves examined him to determine his "soundness of faith."

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?' (Gal. 3:26.)"

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

Graves: "But what does that mean?"

Officer: "It means what it says."

Graves: "What do you believe are the conditions of pardon or remission of sins?"

Officer: "I believe just what the Bible says on that subject."

Graves: "But what is your interpretation of the Bible on that subject?"

Officer: "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 secure pardon. What do you think about it?"

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

R.W. Officer claimed to "have no interpretation of the Bible on any subject." Instead of twisting the Scriptures as the denominations did, he said, "I simply believe it, just as it is written."

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. This 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." (R.W. Officer – Heresy Trial)

<http://www.therestorationmovement.com/officer.htm>

[The link above will take you to a page that contains historical information about R.W. Officer and additional quotes from the heresy trial. It is an entertaining and interesting read.]

Graves stated that "all denominations have their interpretations of the Bible" – this is certainly true. The apostle Paul said, "God is not the author of confusion" **(1 Corinthians 14:33)**. Yet the churches of men have many different and conflicting doctrines. Such confusion is of men, not of God. Denominations are founded upon the commands and opinions of fallible human beings.

R.W. Officer claimed to "have no interpretation of the Bible on any subject." Instead of twisting the Scriptures as the denominations did, he said, "I simply believe it, just as it is written."

God has revealed His word in a way that will allow us to understand it **(Ephesians 3:4)**. Rather than twist the Scriptures **(2 Peter 3:16)** to try to make them say what we want them to say, let us resolve to simply accept the word of God as it has been revealed in truth.

