

Likeness

By Gary Henry

Life in God is not about us; it is about Him. We need to be reminded of this. In a day when "self-actualization" is thought by many to be the ultimate goal, we must remember that Christianity is not about the simple reformation (or even the "actualization") of our own character. It is about the character of Christ being formed within us. Christianity is about God.

It is clearly true that our own characters need to be reformed. The sins we've allowed to creep into our lives have marred us and made us into beings very different from those we were created to be. But God's purpose in dealing with sin is not merely to remove the habits that hinder us from "self-actualization." As Lilius Trotter wrote, "Holiness means something more than the sweeping away of the old leaves of sin; it means the life of Jesus developed in us." This is the very desire Paul indicated when he addressed the Galatian Christians: "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you" (**Galatians 4:19**).

In the New Testament, our coming to bear a closer likeness to God is nothing less than the goal of the gospel. Paul wrote, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are be-

ing transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (**2 Corinthians 3:18**). And writing to another group of Christians, Peter said that God's power "has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (**2 Peter 1:3-4**). We are called to partake of God's own nature.

God created us in His own image so that we could show forth His goodness and respond to His love. Sin destroys our ability to do these things, and if sin's damage is to be undone, we must not only be forgiven of the sin itself, but we must be remade in God's image. He has arranged for us to be crucified and recreated. To seek Him is to seek this very thing.

"The essence of true holiness is conformity to the nature and will of God" (Samuel Lucas).



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)	Mark Dean (Father of Logan Dean)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Betty Bradford	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Bob Cannon (Friend of Holly Law)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Eli Williams	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Lisa Carter (Josh and Luke Carter's mother)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkins' Dad)	Toni and William Herd	Amy Baswell Hall

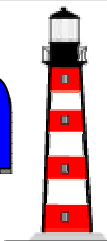
August Birthdays

- 2- Emma Miller
- 2 - Heath Donahue
- 4 - Will King
- 7 - Joey McGee
- 7 - David Golden
- 9 - Elliot Weldon
- 9 - Troy Swenson
- 10 - David Hartsell
- 11 - Walker Davis
- 12 - Jon Coleman
- 13 - Brendan Kirby
- 14 - Elizabeth Wiggs
- 15 - Kalee Reid
- 16 - Cade Smith
- 18 - MaKayla Chittam
- 19 - Brettlyn Currier
- 20 - Caleb Law
- 24 - Sophie Hall
- 25 - Emily Jones
- 27 - Chip Freeman
- 28 - Larry Rouse
- 28 - Cole Johnson

News and Notes

- ☒ - Lets keep in our prayers our expectant mothers, Fallon Hartsell and Brittany Bagent!
- ☒ - Congratulations to Mac Searcy + Kaylee West and Nathan Bradshaw and Madison Seals as they were married this weekend!
- ☒ - There will be a special ladies class on Mon, Aug 18 at 7 PM at the Rouses. Jean McPherson will be our visiting teacher!
- ☒ - There is an evangelism class on Tuesday Night at 7:30 at Eagle's Landing Unit 62.
- ☒ - Remember Tim Morton and also Matthew Cavender, a new student to be with us in January, in your prayers as both are deployed to Afghanistan.
- ☒ - The meal list for our upcoming meeting is in the foyer.
- ☒ - Angela Fowler's grandmother is in critical condition in Mississippi.
- ☒ - Jon Jon Huddleston, Suzanne's cousin, has been diagnosed with leukemia.
- ☒ - Remember our gospel meeting with John Gibson, Aug 24-28! Cards are in the foyer.

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**)

Volume 5, Issue 40

August 10, 2014

What is "Sectarian Baptism?"

By Robert F. Turner



Thoughts to Ponder

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

(Romans 6:4)

Elders
Walker Davis
(334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse
(334) 734-2133

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

In the early days of what is now the Oaks-West church in Burnet, a young man answered the gospel invitation by declaring his faith in Christ, and his desire to be baptized into Christ. We had no baptistery at that time, so we asked leaders of another church in Burnet, if we might use their baptistery. We were refused. The preacher said, "You will baptize him into a sect; bring him to me and I will baptize him into Christ." I replied, "You mean the one baptizing him makes the difference?" No reply! We took the boy to a lake and baptized him "into Christ" - not because we did the baptizing, or because we uttered the right words, but because that is what takes place when one obeys Jesus Christ.

I doubt the boy had any "views" on institutionalism. He had learned that he was a sinner, that Christ had died for sinners, and wanted each of us to trust and obey Him. By repenting of his sins and obeying the Lord in baptism the young man came into an acceptable relationship with Christ, his sins being forgiven. My baptizing him, even if I espoused a "sect," would not make this act "sectarian baptism." Nor was his baptism valid or invalid on the basis of "church authority" to baptize.

If he was baptized for some reason other than that given in the gospel of Christ, seeking to obtain some benefit promised, not by the Lord, but by some religious group, we could call that sectarian baptism.

Baptism is not a "church" ordinance, it is the Lord's ordinance, depending upon the subject's compliance with the Lord's teaching for its validity. The "sectarianism" of the church who heard his confession, if it had any, would not invalidate his baptism. Scriptural baptism is a covenant, direct and immediate, between the subject and his Lord.

The subject must have proper respect for Christ, and act in compliance with the Lord's will, in order for that baptism to have divine approval. For example, if the subject submitted to baptism out of respect for a "church" ordinance, as an initiative ritual of

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some sort, that baptism could be called "sectarian." If he was baptized for some reason other than that given in the gospel of Christ, seeking to obtain some benefit promised, not by the Lord, but by some religious group, we could call that sectarian baptism. If he ignored the instructions of the Lord concerning the nature of baptism, accepting sprinkling or pouring on some "church" authority rather than the immersion commanded by the Lord, that would be sectarian baptism. It is very possible that some young people (and older people) have been baptized to "join" a local "Church of Christ" - with nothing more than sectarian baptism.

One's baptism depends upon the genuineness of one's faith in Christ (**Mk. 16:16**); and genuine repentance, crucifying the "old man" or former way of life (**Rom. 6:6**). It is the symbolic burial, before the resurrection to walk in newness of life (**Rom. 6:3-11**). It is not "for remission of sins" because someone said this at the time of the immersion, but because divinity gave it this purpose (**Acts 2:38; 22:16**). It does not bring into the "right" church because it is the initiation ritual of any church, but because the Lord's church consists of all who, come to Christ. We must put greater stress upon the true nature of baptism, and its indication of a changed allegiance and life, if we are to do much about the problem of sectarian baptism. If we continue to regard "our" baptisms as valid, and "their" baptisms as sectarian, we are arguing on the wrong basis (**cf. Mk. 9:38f**), and only adding fuel to the problem.

There are many things the scripturally baptized may not understand. But God-approved baptism involves conscious willful faith in Jesus as the Christ, recognition of one's absolute need for Him, and a submission of man's will to His will. Such a convert then grows in the knowledge of "all things whatsoever I command you" (**Matt. 28:18-19**). An attitude toward divine authority has been established that affects his treatment of all subsequent questions. His worship and work, collectively and individually, is dictated by his understanding of the Lord's will, not to please himself or his peers. Church members who settle questions on the basis of traditional practices or "the great middle section," have abandoned the

Christ they once received and promised to serve.

When thinking along these lines some are prompted to ask, "Could a member of some denomination have been scripturally baptized?" It is certainly possible, although such baptism is contrary to most sectarian teaching, and the one with such an understanding is on his way out. One does not get into a denomination by scriptural baptism, and those who faithfully serve the Lord, growing in the knowledge and sincerely conforming their practice to each new truth learned, could not remain in a church whose worship and work is without divine authority. And when they do leave the denomination how are we to regard their baptism? The problem is not who baptized them, or where they were baptized. It is the far more basic, where they truly baptized? The fact that they are leaving some sect is encouraging, but we should be concerned that they are not simply "changing sects"; nor should we encourage them in a false hope.

It is true that sincerity in repentance and trusting faith are things we can but imperfectly judge, and some have concluded from this that we have no right to question anyone's baptism. But that is tantamount to saying we cannot help one another get to heaven. If our faith is true conviction, we also believe, and therefore speak" (**2 Cor. 4:13**). With loving concern we examine their fruits that we may know them (**Matt. 7:16-20**). 1 question people who come from churches believed to be in error because of concern for their souls. If one has only been sprinkled as an infant, or, if allegiance was to some church rather than unto Christ, it is in their interest that the error be corrected. In the final analysis you might say I am questioning their faith rather than their baptism, but it is done in exactly the same vein and for the same reason that I would welcome their assisting me to a better understanding of God's will, and the way to heaven (**1 Pet. 3:15**).

Sectarian baptism gives a false hope, both in "our" churches and in others. It is in the interest of eternal souls that we should avoid sectarianism in our own lives, and do all possible to bring others into true fellowship with God.

Guardian of Truth - August 7, 1986



Preach Christ and Not ...

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

One should never underestimate the subtlety of the Devil. I am convinced that one of his more subtle devices over the years has been to convince people that if they are going to give Christ the glory that he deserves that they need to be preaching "Christ and not _____." You fill in the blank with about anything associated with Christ in the New Testament and you will get the picture. Some examples of things we have head over the years:

1. "Preach the man (Christ) and not the plan."
2. "Preach Christ and not baptism."
3. "Preach Christ and not the church."
4. "Preach Christ and not obedience."

This sounds very appealing, especially when one says this is the kind of preaching the apostles did and points to passages about preaching Christ. And who would not want to give the name and person of Christ all glory and praise? The fact is the results of implementing these suggested preaching styles is to encourage people in their minds to separate Christ from the things he teaches, loves, and cherishes. Preaching a Christ without these things is preaching a Christ other than the one revealed in the New Testament scriptures. Paul warns the Corinthians against preaching another Jesus, spirit, or gospel (**2 Cor. 11:4**).

Philip, the evangelist, preached Jesus to the eunuch (**Acts 8:35**). Somehow the eunuch got the message from this preaching that he needed be baptized (**v. 36**). Do you suppose that preaching Jesus included preaching about baptism? Earlier in Samaria, as one of those scattered abroad preaching THE WORD (**v. 4**), Phillip is said to have preached CHRIST to them (**v. 5**). In **verse 12**, it says that he preached "the things concerning the KINGDOM OF GOD, and the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, they were baptized." He preached

Saying, "We need to preach Christ and not the church" is not the same as we sometimes say, "Our loyalty should be to Christ and not the church." The later is saying that Christ is the source of all truth and not the church.

Christ AND the church (Kingdom) not Christ AND NOT the church and as a result people were baptized.

The facts are, one cannot preach the Christ of the New Testament without preaching his plan for man's salvation, or baptism, or the church, or obedience to all his commands. Nor vice versa. One cannot preach the N.T. plan of salvation, N.T. baptism, N.T. church, N.T. obedience without preaching Christ. It is not "either, or." It is all of the above.

It is Christ who gave the plan which includes baptism and has revealed it. It is Jesus who is said to have established the church, gave himself for it, purchased it with his blood, loves it, cherishes it, etc. It is Jesus who is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him (**Heb. 5:8-9**). One is preaching Jesus when he preaches any of those things that one must obey and the results of that obedience.

We grant that not everyone who repeats the catch phrase, "Christ and not _____," means to completely eliminate whatever may be put in the blank. But, by often repeating such may very well encourage their hearers to do so.

One additional thought about the church. Saying, "We need to preach Christ and not the church" is not the same as we sometimes say, "Our loyalty should be to Christ and not the church." The later is saying that Christ is the source of all truth and not the church. The church is to practice the truth, but it can err from it. If our loyalty is to the church rather than Christ, then we will go with the church into error. But if our loyalty is to Christ then we will remain with Him.

