

# **A Quarterly Religious Journal**

*(Presented by email)*

## **“LIGHT FOR OUR AGE”**

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*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

*Psalm 119:105*

**Editor's Note: Last month I experienced some difficulty in the mailing of that issue. If you failed to receive the July edition, and would like to have it, let me know and I will send you a copy.**

## **Feature One: Editorial**

### **“To What Extent Should Members of the Church Follow the Eldership?”**

For the last few generations we have lived in an era where there has been a lack of respect for authority. We have seen it in the political world, and we have seen it in the church. I suppose it is only natural that people tend to want the church to be like the world around them. In that we live in a democracy, it is only natural that we would like to see the church operate in that manner. Many feel if an eldership makes a decision the members do not like, they can either ignore the decision and do what they want, or they can stir up enough resentment to the decision to try to force the eldership to back down from the decision they have made.

This attitude has caused some in the church to see the eldership as a board of directors that may be replaced. In my last editorial I discussed the fact that elders are shepherds. They are leaders as shepherds are leaders. They are to lead as Christ has taught them, for He is the Chief Shepherd. It is a frightening thing to serve as an elder, for the Hebrew writer teaches:

*Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

Elders must give an account for those that are in their care. Jesus did not

leave his church without leadership. That is why members are instructed to obey the eldership.

In the same sense that an eighteen year old living at home is still under the control of his parents, so are members of the congregation under the oversight of the elders. Suppose the parents of an eighteen year old believe it is not safe for their son or daughter to be out after midnight. Do they not have the right to lay down that rule? Remember, an eighteen year old is considered an adult in our society. But by living at home are they not still subject to their parents?

The Lord chose older men to be His shepherds. These men have seen much in their lives. They have identified many things that might be dangerous to the congregation where they serve. Sometimes their decisions are made as safeguards for the congregation. However, once made, the congregation is to obey the eldership as they would obey Christ. This is a direct order from the Lord through the Hebrew writer.

As it is in the case of parents, not all decisions are popular. Not all are easily made. In most cases, however, parents make decisions that they believe will help safeguard their children. Elderships as well must sometimes make decisions that may be unpopular, but those decisions are made to safeguard the congregation. Satan has many ways to cause us to stumble. An eldership is to be ever vigilant and watchful.

This is not to say that an eldership is to be followed blindly. We must each stand before God in judgment and give an account for what we have done.

*2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

Under no circumstance are we to disobey Christ or His word. If we look back to my illustration of parents and the adult child, this illustration would still be true. Suppose the parents tell a child that they are to tell someone that calls that they are not home when they are. That would be a lie, and a Christian is only to obey parents “in the Lord” (Ephesians 6:1).

This is also true in working under an eldership. If an eldership were to want to change the worship to something unscriptural, we need to remember our first loyalty must be to the Chief Shepherd. Should this arise, an effort should be made to study with the eldership to show them how they are wrong scripturally. Paul actually warns that this can happen.

*Acts 20:28-30 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

It is essential that we all know the scripture so we will not be led astray by elders, preachers, teachers, or anyone else. We will answer for what we have done, and remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 15:14 “...And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” But also remember in matters of opinion where elderships are trying to do what is best for the members of the congregation, we are all admonished to “obey them that are over you, for they watch for your souls.” This is not an option.

It is sinning against our Lord to ignore the shepherds He put in place to watch for our souls.

**Feature Two: *an article by R. C. Oliver from Light Magazine***

*January, 1955*

**Appreciation of Christianity**

In the field of education much attention is given to various kinds of learning processes, such as: memorization or perceptual learning, understanding or logical learning, motor skills, appreciation et cetera.

Though each process has its own peculiar problems, yet perhaps the one presenting the most difficulties is that of appreciation, for it is not only difficult to teach but it is equally difficult to measure the product of appreciation after it has been taught. What is appreciation? How can I teach it? When can I know the student has it? How can I measure it when he gets it? These are but few of the many questions that one may ask, and though perhaps they have not all been satisfactorily answered as yet; nevertheless, many educators have agreed upon several aspects of appreciation, which they believe will manifest themselves through the behavior of those who possess appreciation, Should one therefore appreciate Christ and the Christian system as he should, these aspects will reveal the presence of that appreciation in the life of the individual. The purpose of this lesson is therefore this: to help us acquire a knowledge of these aspects of appreciation in order that we might examine our own selves as to whether we do or do not appreciate Christ as we should. What, then, are these aspects through which the presence of appreciation may be ascertained? – that is the question – the answer follows.

**Satisfaction In The Thing Appreciated:** The person who possesses an appreciation of Christianity will be satisfied with Christianity. He will not wish for anything more in the realm of the religious. The doctrines and commandments of men cannot allure him. To him, they, when compared with Christian doctrine are as false jewels are to the true. And as no one except those who lack understanding and appreciation of the true diamond would sacrifice the true diamond for a piece of cut glass, neither will the man who has understanding and appreciation of Christianity sacrifice it for any one or all of the false systems of earth. Christianity satisfies!

**Desire For More of the Thing Appreciated:** Appreciation of Christianity manifests itself on the part of the one who has it, in his desire for, and his receiving and applying to his daily life, more and more of the Christian principles, He enjoys prolonged and extended search into both the theory and practice of Christian doctrine, He is anxious to find out all he can as to its origin, its history, and its influence upon the world.

**Desire to Express One's Self Creatively:** Appreciation for a thing not only manifests itself through a desire for a fuller knowledge of that thing, but it will also manifest itself in the individual by placing within him a desire to give creative expression to his own ideas and feelings which have been set in action by his having experienced a fuller knowledge of that which he appreciates, The man, therefore, who possesses a real appreciation of Christianity will not be satisfied to merely read: "It is more blessed to give than to receive," he will want to "go do likewise"!

**Identification of One's Self With The Thing Appreciated:** Appreciation manifests itself in the individual's desire for and association

with the thing appreciated, One therefore has little real appreciation of Christ who will not unconditionally surrender to Him and His will. Lack of such obedience shows lack of appreciation.

**A Desire to Clarify Life's Problems In the Light of That Which is Appreciated:** The person who really appreciates the teachings of Jesus is stimulated by those teachings to rethink his own point of view regarding the many problems of life with which he must deal, and is desirous of adjusting and modifying his own practical behavior so as to cause his own conduct to conform to the principles of Christ, To quote an authority: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"—Jesus.

**Desire to Evaluate the Thing Appreciated:** Appreciation also manifests itself in a conscious effort on the part of the individual to evaluate the worth of the thing appreciated, One who has proper appreciation of Christianity will therefore be concerned about its value to the world, He will also, in his attempts to properly evaluate its worth, think of what the world would be like were it to be without Christianity.

Let us therefore "examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith; prove our own selves." –2 Corinthians 13:5. Or again, let us "Study to show ourselves approved unto God, being workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God." –2 Timothy 2:15.

## **Feature Three: Sandy's Women's Corner**

### **WHO WOULD BE A DISCIPLE?**

I am privileged to teach a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Bible class. I love this age group because they are so inquisitive and also so honest.

In one of the years, we study the Life of Christ. This is one of my favorite studies. I have taught it for many years, but I always learn something new when we study these lessons.

The children memorize a Bible verse every week, and we have additional memory work to help the children understand the various stories we study. One of these extra memory assignments is the list of disciples. I like studying the disciples even though we don't know much about many of them.

I give the children facts about the disciples, and we try to understand through what we know about them why they react the way they do or how their profession affect certain situations. It is fun to see how the children use the facts to understand the disciples.

One of the questions I ask them is. "Who, of the people they know, would be a disciple if Jesus were alive today?" I am always interested in their answers, but there is one person every class always says would be a disciple. They always name our minister, Charlie Cochran, as a man whom Jesus would have chosen. Most of the time, he is the one they name first.

When I ask them why they think Brother Charlie would be a disciple, they say, "Because he loves to teach people". They hear him talk about conducting Bible studies, and they take notes during his sermons. They know he loves God.

Sometimes I think we forget how much the children in our congregations are watching us. They practice what they see at home, but they also practice what they see and hear in our worship.



I remember when I was a little girl, pretending to teach Sunday school. While my mother was preparing lunch on Sunday, I would line up my dolls on the stairs and teach the lesson my Sunday school teacher taught that morning. She often gave me some of her Gospel Advocate visuals at the end of the quarter, and I would use those to teach my “students”. I think she is one of the reasons I am a Bible school teacher today.

Try an experiment. Ask your children whom they think would be one of Jesus’ disciples. You might be surprised by their answers.

Remember what Paul told Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity”.

## **Feature Four: Our Communication: (Just Interesting!)**

FACT ONE - TOP TEN Some surveys and research results show that most people rather die instead of talking in front of a live audience. This is a global fears top ten:

1. Fear of public speaking or stage fright - Glossophobia
2. Fear of death and end of life - Necrophobia
3. Fear of spiders and other arachnids creatures - Arachnophobia
4. Fear of darkness and twilight - Achluophobia, Scotophobia or Myctophobia
5. Fear of heights, altitude or elevations - Acrophobia
6. Fear of people or social situations - Sociophobia
7. Fear of flying - Aerophobia

8. Fear of open spaces and squares - Agoraphobia
9. Fear of natural thunder and lightning - Brontophobia
10. Fear of confined spaces or small rooms - Claustrophobia

<http://www.speech-topics-help.com/fear-of-public-speaking-statistics.html>

## **Feature Five: Bible Question**

### **Who is the antichrist?**

We live in an age where many are trying to figure out who the antichrist is. If we can figure this out the presumption is that we can figure out when the Lord will return as well as attempt to stay out of his way. Some have come to the conclusion that the antichrist might be one of these: Vladimir Putin, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Pope Benedict XVI, Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, or Barack Obama. In the past people have been convinced that the antichrist was Adolf Hitler.

Before we get lost in speculation, what does the Bible teach about the antichrist? There are four passages that refer to the antichrist.

*1 John 2:18-19 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*

*1 John 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*

*1 John 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit*

*of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

*2 John 1:7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*

This is all the Bible says about the antichrist. It is clear that there is not “an Antichrist” that is coming, but this is an attitude. Even in John’s day he teaches that antichrists are present when he says “even now are there many antichrists”. In the other three passages John teaches what the spirit of antichrist will be. He says it is one that denies the Father and the Son (2:22); it is one that refuses to admit that Jesus came in the flesh (4:3) and (2 John 1:7).

In no place does the Bible in general, or John specifically teach that the “antichrist” will be a particular person. Rather, the Bible teaches that there is a “spirit” of antichrist. There are those that will teach things that are against (anti) Christ.

## **Humor:**

A little girl was sitting on her grandfather’s lap as he read her a bedtime story. From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach to touch his wrinkled cheek. She was alternately stroking her own cheek then his again. Finally she spoke up, “Grandpa, did God make you?”

“Yes, sweetheart,” he answered, “God made me a long time ago.” “Oh,” she paused, “Grandpa, did God make me too?” “Yes, indeed, honey,” he said. “God made you just a little while ago.”

Feeling their respective faces again, she observed, “God’s getting better at it, isn’t he?”

## **In Closing:**

Where has this year gone? It seems as though we just began 2012 and here we are at the last edition of the paper for this year. As we prepare for our fifth year of "Light For Our Age" send me your comments and questions. I will be glad to include them in future editions.

In the Master's service,

*Bob Oliver*