

of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" that made us free from the "Law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:31). We are told to "fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). We are "under law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9: 21). We are to strive "lawfully" or according to law. (2 Tim. 9:5).

Our failure, at times, to emphasize God's grace is no excuse for swinging to the other extreme of doing away with dependence upon law in

any sense. Calvinists have made that mistake for years.

If the exponents of the new dogma would read their Bibles more and denominationally oriented books less, they might even become more tolerant of those of us who insist that the way is narrow. They might even find that some who have gone before them have masterfully answered the very positions that they are now expounding. If they would spend more time in

rapport with experienced gospel preachers and less time with those who are "ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" they might just be a little more understanding of those who still insist on "mark (ing) them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine . . ." (Rom. 16:17). Anyway, one with an open mind ought to be willing to give it a try. ~

Truth Magazine XVII: 33, pp. 9-11- June 21, 1973

NAVARRE MESSENGER

February 8, 2015



A New Dogma

by Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

A new and dangerous dogma seems to be surfacing in the church. It is really old liberal denominational dogma in new garb. It seems to thrive more near college campuses, but is by no means confined there. We have detected it in the writings, speeches and conversations of some brethren

lately. Some consider its promoters to be intellectuals. Fortunately, its influence has been felt but little in the average congregation.

These folks are similar to the Pharisee of old, but a little different. They trust in themselves that they are highly spiritual, humble and thank God that they are not as their

brethren, proud, narrow, legalistic, negative, partisan, pharisaical and fossilized. They read their Bibles often, gaining new insights into its meaning to their lives through rapport with those of "other fellowships." They have learned that there is more to learn at the feet (or from the books) of theological liberals than from those who demand a "thus saith the Lord" for all

We meet on James M Harvell Rd next to the public library in Navarre. Call for directions and more information (850) 939-8109

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible Class for all ages_9:00 AM

Morning Worship Service_10:00 AM

Evening Worship Service_6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class for all ages_7:00 PM

This entire publication and previous issues are available online at

navarrechurchofchrist.net

along with some more useful information

Navarre church of Christ

8490 James M Harvell Rd
Navarre, FL 32566

Place
Stamp
Here

VISITORS ARE WELCOME!

things. They use some old words to most members of the church, but with new connotations.

"Pharisaism"

If one affirms that his practice is Scriptural while other practices are unscriptural, then he is charged with "Pharisaism." Luke 18 is given as the proof-text.

The Pharisee was not rebuked by Jesus because he said the publican and sinners were wrong. If so Jesus would have been pharisaical in saying the Pharisee was wrong. The Pharisee did not feel the need for God's forgiving mercy. He thought himself to have been righteous by virtue of his perfect obedience. He felt himself to be above sin!

The remedy for real Pharisaism is not to lack confidence that we are members of the Lord's church - the very one found in the Bible, if we have

obeyed the gospel and worship in spirit and truth. It is not to question the exclusiveness of God's way. It is found in Galatians 6:1 and similar passages, i.e., that while we point out the faults of others and point them to the New Testament pattern that we must remember that we are but forgiven sinners - that we must ever be considering ourselves lest we too be tempted.

"Party-spirit"

If one insists that another become just like him in religious matters then he is often said to have the "party-spirit." Is it a cardinal sin to insist that another conform to the same religious rules as ourselves? Paul said that he wished that "all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." (Acts 26:29). Paul did not, nor should we, desire a personal following. But he believed what he was doing strongly enough to want everyone to conform to that way so

should we. When I go out to evangelize (call it "proselytize" if you like!), I try to get folks to believe what I believe, obey what I obey, be what I am and worship as I do. I am not ashamed of it. Why? Because I believe what I preach with all my heart. Is that the "party-spirit?" Not if I point to Christ as authority. Not if I seek to get people to follow Christ and not man. Not if I refuse to lead a personal following. Not if I do not seek to rally folks around one point of doctrine to the neglect or exclusion of all other points.

"Know-it-all"

If one affirms with certainty any point of religious doctrine, then he is dubbed a "know-it all." One point in the new dogma seems to be that if one admits that there are some things he does not know about the Bible, then he must cease to be positive about anything.

It will come as no surprise to

my readers that I do not know all about any subject. I know enough mathematics to have taught for a brief time in high school, but there is a lot about math that I do not know. My own children, three of whom are in high school, will verify that! But, I do know that $A = (\pi)r^2$ is not the formula for computing compound interest. If one of my students had so used it I would have marked him Wrong! Suppose he had protested, "Do you think you know all there is to know about math? If you do not, how can you be so dead sure that $A = (\pi)r^2$ will not compute compound interest? What right have you to say that I am wrong since you admit that you don't know all the answers?" Frankly, I would have still marked him wrong and probably done a little more than that if he had called me a "know-it-all."

"Legalism"

More and more the terms, "legalism" and "legalist," are popping up in the writings of

"It is not really a question of 'legalism,' but whether God's merciful blessings are conditional or unconditional. If preaching the conditions makes void the grace of God, then every New Testament preacher voided God's grace."

some brethren and in much the same contexts as used by liberal denominational writers for years. It is applied to one who insists that obedience has something to do with our salvation.

The Bible does say that salvation is "not of ourselves." It is not "of works" or "debt." (Eph. 2:8,9; Rom. 4:1-5). We simply cannot earn salvation—from past sins or eternally. But that is a far cry from saying that our salvation does not depend on our obe-

dience to the law of Christ. It certainly does so depend. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth...." (1 Peter 1:22). ". . . He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:9). Call it legalism, law depending, or whatever - our salvation is conditioned on obedience.

It is not really a question of "legalism," but whether God's merciful blessings are conditional or unconditional. If preaching the conditions makes void the grace of God, then every New Testament preacher voided God's grace. After we have done all within our power to keep God's law, then our salvation will still be by grace and not of merit because we sin and must have God's forgiveness. But even God's forgiveness is conditional (Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:7-9).

It is both unscriptural and misleading to say that salvation does not depend on law in any sense. It was the "law