

THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE

The psalmist wrote "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right" (Psalms 119:128). The first Christians were guided by the "apostle's teaching" (Acts 2:42). They were taught to "remember the words of the Lord Jesus..." (Acts 20:35). The Lord's church has always thus honored and been guided by the Sacred Word. However, this has not been the attitude of all churches.

Someone has said that the Scriptures are like the Sun and the church is like a clock. A clock is commonly found to be fast or slow. It may even stop, be clogged with foreign matter or broken. The Scriptures have come from God. The church being composed of human beings is earthly and fallible. As the sun moves with mathematical precision and never needs to be reset or adjusted, so the Scriptures are always the sure standard. The human leadership of churches is often found to be out of harmony with God's Word. When this happens, the church always needs to reset itself according to the Bible. Never should man even think of altering the message of Divine Revelation to match a changing church.

There are two common trends in current religious thought that this lesson is applicable to:

1. The papal concept of the infallibility of the church. Repeatedly the teachings of God's word has suffered as the sun was adjusted to match the clock. Yet in spite of all the efforts, the clock is still incorrect in its time.
2. The theology of many Protestant churches often rejects basic principles of the Biblical message. God's message is emasculated in order to fit their existential humanistic philosophy. This is often styled liberalism or modernism. Such theologians deny the supernatural element of the Bible so they try to interpret it so as to excise the miraculous content.

No intelligent person would ever think of trying to adjust the sun to agree with his inaccurate clock. If there is a discrepancy, the clock must be changed to match the sun. Only a fool would contemplate the former. Really the same is true of those who try to recast the supernatural message of God's word to fit their church doctrines.

The word which Jesus spake shall judge us in the last day (John 12:48). Churches of Christ are content to let the word of God speak and then do their best to obey its every precept. Do you share our view? Won't you join hands with us in thus following Jesus? JHW