

CHRISTIANITY: THEN AND NOW

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“PROFANING THE HOLY”

In ancient times things that were sacred and devoted God were described as “holy.” Especially were the items associated with the worship of God in his temple considered holy. To misuse or mishandle God’s sacred things was the sin of profanation (Lev. 19:8). For profane hands to touch that which was holy was a great offense to God and a shock to the sensibilities of his righteous servants. “They shall not profane the holy things...which they offer unto Jehovah and so cause them to bear the iniquity that bringeth guilt” (Lev. 22:15). God charged unfaithful priests with doing “violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things; they...made no distinction between the holy and the common...” (Ezek. 22:26).

When Korah, Dathan and Abiram challenged Moses and Aaron for the leadership of Israel, it was not only rebellion but profanation (Num. 16:1-40). When Uzziah the king of Judah sought to enter the holy place and offer incense it was a profane deed for which God severely punished him (II Chron. 26:16-21).

Some acts of profanation were flagrant and diabolic. Such it was when Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria erected an image of Zeus in the temple of God and then ordered a swine to be sacrificed and its blood scattered over God’s sacred things. Other profanations were not deliberate or malicious, nevertheless they were harshly dealt with by Jehovah. When David was moving the ark of the covenant from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem, he failed to follow the divine procedure that it be carried by staves, on the shoulders of the Levites (Deut. 10:8; I Chron15:2). They carefully placed the ark on a new cart drawn by oxen. When the oxen stumbled, Uzzah, one of the attendants, fearing the ark was going to fall, reached out to stabilize it. Not being a Levite, he was not authorized to touch the ark. God smote him and he died (I Chron. 13:10). This harsh lesson emphasized for all ages the importance of absolute respect for all things holy to Jehovah.

The church of Christ, purchased by the dying blood of God’s Son, is holy (Acts 20:28). So is His testament, ratified and sanctified by his precious blood (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:17-18). Holy also are the doctrines, ordinances and practices ordained by the founder, head and savior of the church. We are warned against teaching “a different doctrine” (I Tim. 1:3). No mortal man is authorized to tamper with or change the holy things of Christ’s religion. To add to or take from them is to invite disaster (Rev.22:18-19). When preachers and teachers presume to ignore, modify or change the holy practices, principles and doctrines given by Christ they are placing profane hands on that which is holy!

- When God says that we are to “hold the pattern of sound words” (II Tim. 1:13) and promoters of change deny that there is a divine pattern, they profane the Word of God.
- When change agents attempt to change the praise ordained by heaven from “singing and making melody with your heart” (Eph. 5:19) to sing and making melody on an organ, they have profaned that which is holy!
- When they seek to change the Lord’s Supper from a sacred memorial (I Cor. 11:25) to a joyous festival and part of a fellowship meal they have profaned the holy.
- When they would replace the proclamation of the gospel (Mk. 16:15; Rom. 1:16) with stories, jokes and promotions of common, ordinary things, they are profaning the holy.
- When they turn the worship of God into a theater for entertainment it is profanation!
- When they would elevate women to position of public leadership in the church even though God has specifically denied that to them (I Cor. 14:33-34; I Tim. 2:11-12), they have profaned God’s holy things.

- When they seek to gain possession of houses of worship and schools built and paid for by other Christians for the honor and glory of God and use them for their new doctrines and practices, such is profanation.
- When they discount and make fun of the sacred name “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16), such is profanation. Such sarcastic expressions as the “Churches of Christ of the yellow pages” smells of profanation.
- When they dare to tell sinners that they can be saved by grace, before they are immersed in the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38), they are profaning the holy.
- When they deny that Christians are in any way or sense under the law of Christ, even though the Holy Spirit teaches that we must be submissive to the royal law of Christ (Jas. 2:8), the perfect law of liberty in Christ (Jas. 1:25) they are profaning the Holy will of God.
- When they seek to broaden the fellowship of Christ’s family to those not born into it (John 3:3,5), they profane it.
- When they pit their human wisdom against the re-vealed will of God that too is profanation.

Given the severity with which God dealt with profaners of his sacred things in days past, the prudent man will take care not to take any unauthorized liberties with God’s Word, his church, his doctrine and his worship . Lest we be found complicitors with profaners, every man and woman should roundly reject any and every man who proposes to make changes to the holy things of God. We don’t want to partake of other men’s sins (I Tim. 5:22) nor their punishments. **JHW**

LOOKING FOR A FRIEND, A BENEFACTOR OF JESUS CHRIST

Churches of Christ are in a crisis. A large, influential element of people within her ranks have turned their backs on the foundational Bible teachings and practices long held by their members. They have set about in a determined way to remake the church into one of their liking. Their changes affect most noticeable the worship of the church, but also her faith and the work that is hers to do. Wherever their changes are successfully implemented, the

congregation, for all practical purposes, ceased to be a church of Christ founded on God’s Word.

In the face of this assault, What shall we do? Ignore it, hoping it will go away? Strike a compromise in hope of salvaging a scrap of our Bible-based convictions? Abandon the field and let the false brethren have all that our fathers labored to build up and pass to us for safe-keeping? Or shall we be true soldiers of Christ and rise up in defense of his precious church? The latter is the only course I can conceive of taking.

Five years ago when we saw the destruction being wrought by the promoters of change this little church with its membership of mainly retirees, resolved to do what we could to awaken the brotherhood to the danger and to oppose the change movement with all our might. A handful of brothers and sisters and a few small churches have joined hands with us so that today we are now sending **Christianity: Then & Now** to the preachers and elders of some 7,000 congregations in the USA and to 150 more abroad. We cover all the congregations in 43 states and hundreds more in the seven remaining. Now we need to complete the task.

We need your help. Our current efforts cost us approximately \$3,132 per month. To finish mailing the rest of the US churches will take another \$1,032 per month. To finish mailing the congregations in the other English speaking nations will cost \$ 537 per month. To mail all our missionaries and student preachers will take another \$469 per month. To provide needed books to the libraries of mission schools where preachers are taught requires \$85 per month. This totals \$2122 per month.

Is there not a brother or sister whom God has richly blessed who can see the great danger confronting the church and the need to act decisively, now!? Will not this brother or sister step forward with a solid commitment to provide the necessary funds for the successful prosecution of this project? All gifts are needed and appreciated. The retiree’s \$10 or \$25 per month is important. But we need commitments of \$50, 100 or more per month to help us reach this goal. To those who have helped in the past, but have dropped out, we urge you to get back on board with us.

We send a monthly news report with a financial statement to all who contribute. Every penny received goes into this effort, no one is paid for his work save the printer. Your gifts are tax deductible. When you sing, **My Jesus, I Love Thee**, or **I Love Thy Kingdom Lord**, or **Am I A Soldier of the Cross?**, ask yourself what are you doing to save the

Lord's precious bride from being ravaged by those who are laying profane hands on her sacred ordinances?

Let me hear from you. John Waddey, 12630 W. Foxfire Dr. Sun City West, AZ 85375. Ph. (623) 214-3715. Email: johnwaddey@aol.com JHW

WISDOM FOR THE CHURCH

"The way to preserve the peace of the church is to preserve the purity of it" (Matthew Henry).

They "built God a church and laughed His word to scorn" (Cowper).

"Some to church repair, not for the doctrine, but the music there" (Alexander Pope).

"Division has done more to hide Christ from the view of men than all the infidelity that has ever been spoken" (George MacDonald).

"Persecution has not crushed it, power has not beaten it back, time has not bated its force, and, what is most wonderful of all, the abuses and treasons of its friends have not shaken its stability (Horace Bushnell).

"And this is the mission of the church—not civilization, but salvation—not better laws, purer legislation, social elevation, human equality, and liberty, but first the "kingdom of God and His righteousness;" regenerated hearts, and all other things will follow" (A. E. Kittredge).

"The church that compromises Truth today will compromise Morals tomorrow" (H. D. Bruce).

"In the true, original...religion of Jesus Christ and in this alone, all the divided religions of Christendom find their union, their repose, their support. Find out His mind, His character, His will; and in His greatness we shall rise above our littleness...." (Dean Stanley).

"When I go to the house of God I do not want amusement: I want the doctrine which is according to godliness. I want to hear the remedy against the harassing of my guilt and the disorder of my affections. I want to be led from weariness and disappointment to that goodness which filleth the hungry soul. I want to have light upon the mystery of Providence; to be taught how the judgements of the Lord are right; how I shall be prepared for duty and for trial; how I may fear God all the days of my life, and close them in peace" (John Mason).

"Congregations must justify their existence. If they only bring people together to be "very much pleased," why, the lecture bureaus will contract for all

that. "Did you worship? Were you edified? Did the Lord speak to you? Did you speak to Him? Do you mean more seriously to be pure, honest, upright, generous, manly, holy, from that you did and heard today?" These are the questions which the best part of mankind feel to be proper, and to which we must have affirmative replies" (John Hall). JHW

A READER'S GUIDE TO AN EARLIER CHANGE MOVEMENT

It may come as a surprise to you to know that the change movement currently troubling the Lord's church is the second such disruption to afflict us. The first change movement emerged in 1849 when D. S. Burnet was able to launch his American Christian Missionary Society. Objections by concerned brethren and the turmoil leading up to the Civil War kept the society from reaching full blossom until after the war. In 1859 Dr. L. L. Pinkerton led the congregation in Midway, Kentucky to introduce a musical instrument to accompany its singing. Following the war, Northern churches embraced an endless a number of innovations including: women in church leadership roles, a denominational status for their churches, fellowship with denominational bodies, acceptance of the unimmersed into church fellowship and skeptical views concerning the inspiration and authority of the Bible. These changes swept through the brotherhood capturing thousands of congregations, all our Christian schools, most of our mission outposts. By 1906 it was evident that a permanent breach had been inflicted upon the church. A census revealed the tragic results. The progressives had 982,701 members in 8,203 congregations, our brethren numbered 159,658 in 2,649 congregations. Some eighty-five percent of the great restoration movement was lost to apostasy.

Those who know their history are best equipped to avoid its mistakes. The following books tell the story of that period of conflict and division. Some are yet in print, the others might be borrowed from the libraries of some Christian School. Read and be strong.

The following tell the story from point of view of the churches of Christ.

- **Search for the Ancient Order** Vol.2 & 3, by Earl West. (In pr.). A general history of the period.
- **The Life and Times of David Lipscomb**, by Earl West. (In pr.). Lipscomb led the

Southern resistance to the apostasy.

- **The Eye of the Storm** (Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin), by Earl West. (In pr.). Franklin led the north-ern resistance to the apostasy. Originally he supported the missionary society, but later became its foe.
- **A Voice Crying in the Wilderness** (Life of David Lipscomb) by Robert Hooper.
- **Daniel Sommer, 1850-1940** by William Wallace. Sommer succeeded Franklin as the major opponent of apostasy in the North. He proved to be as radical and divisive as the progressives in their liberalism. His spirit blighted the Cause in the North for nearly a century.

The following books tell the story from the standpoint of the progressives of the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches.

- **The Story of D. S. Burnet**, Undeserved Obscurity by Noel Keith. Burnet was the father of the missionary and other societies that troubled the church. (Out of pr.)
- **J. H. Garrison and Disciples of Christ** by William Tucker. Garrison edited the Christian Evangelist and played a principal role in leading the progressives into theological liberalism and ecumenical fellowship with denominational bodies. (Out of pr.)
- **Memoirs of Isaac Errett** by J. S. Lamar, 2 Vols. (Out of pr.). Errett was editor of the Christian Standard and the principal leader of the progressives. He was not inclined to theological liberalism as was Garrison.
- **Origin and Development of the Disciples** A. W. Fortune. (Out of pr.). Explains the development of the denominational mind set that came to control the progressive wing of the church.
- **Alexander Campbell and the General Convention**, by Allen Moore. (Out of pr.). The traces the change in the thinking of A. Campbell from opposition to embracing the idea of a general convention of the churches and the missionary society.
- **Fifty Years of Attack and Controversy** by Stephen Corey. (Out of pr.) Corey served as

president of the Missionary Society. He traces the opposition and hostility to the society and shows how step by step they prevailed over the opposition.

- **One Hope** by Mrs. C. E. Stark (Out of pr.). Mrs. Stark turned from being a friend and supporter of the Disciples leadership to an outspoken critic. It was the theological liberalism that changed her perspective.
- **Church of Christ Number Two** by A. T. De Groot. (Out of pr.). DeGroot was a militant liberal and this is his response to the defection of the conservative Independent Christian Churches. He sought to insult them by likening them to us.
- **The Grounds of Division Among the Disciples of Christ** by A. T. DeGroot (Out of pr.). A vigorous apology for the changes the progressives choose that led to the division in 1906.
- **The Restoration Principle** by A. T. DeGroot. (Out of pr.) This is a valuable book that shows how the liberal mind interprets the restoration principle and our movement. I suspect that many of our intellectual spokesmen for the change movement have studied this books since they make heavy use of his concepts and vocabulary

Solomon wisely observed that there is nothing new under the sun (Eccle. 1:9). The reader of these and related books will be convinced that the change movement is the revival of the old apostasy that devastated our brotherhood in the last half of the 19th century. The long dead corpse has been resurrected but the putrid smell of death is still upon it. **JHW**