

THEIR EYES THEY HAVE CLOSED

Some people choose not to see the obvious. It was this people to whom Jesus referred when He said, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Mat 13:15).

It becomes more and more alarming that many in the church who should be well informed have chosen to close their eyes to the Truth with reference to a movement among us which denies the distinctive nature of the church and spreads an umbrella of fellowship over those in the denominational world. I refer here, not to those who have forsaken the Truth with reference to Bible doctrine, but to those who know the Truth, yet who are not at all hesitant to announce, promote, and attend meetings featuring those who have forsaken the Truth.

Do you believe, for example, that the prayer of the Lord in John 17 proves that we are to include in our fellowship all of those in denominational churches who just believe in Jesus? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit provides direct leadership to the Christian separate and apart from the Bible? Do you believe the denominational bodies are filled with faithful Christian? If brethren do not believe these things, then why do they invite men who are on record as teaching these things to be featured speakers on various programs? If brethren do not believe these things, then why do their church bulletins carry announcements about programs featuring those who teach such? Why do they announce such from their pulpits or urge their people to attend? The answer, in many cases would be: "We just do not believe these preachers stand for these things." In other words, "Their eyes they have closed." It is not that evidence of their positions on various things is not available, or that they have kept their positions secret. They have declared their positions very publicly and faithful brethren have called attention to the dangerous errors they espouse. Tape recordings of their speeches have been made available. But some choose not to see. In many cases those who are courageous enough to speak out against these false teachers are accused of bitterness, or even jealousy. Some become intimidated by such accusations and decide to remain silent. Faithful preachers need to read often the words of Ezekiel 3:17-19:

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

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BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

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OBEDIENCE

But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth (Jer. 7:23-28).

As in Jeremiah's day people would rather hear false "good news" than the truth, Truth is labeled by the false teacher as "bad news." False teachers cry "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:15). "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jer. 6:16).

This command is just as relevant today as in Jeremiah's day. The point is simple: "Stand in the old paths." "Speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Keep His commandments (John 14:15). "Contend for the faith" (Jude 3). Obedience is important (1 Sam. 15:22). God has always desired that we Him; and if we are not obedient to Him we will have no excuse on the day of judgment (2 The. 1:7-9). In Jeremiah's time the people said no and were punished. Learn from their mistake and be obedient to all the truth today.

Curtis L. E. Graves, Paris, KY

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.

Morning Worship 11.00 am.

Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663

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DEFENCE BY FLIGHT

Dunkirk now stands for victory in defeat. By retreating, Churchill was able to save the British Empire. It is not necessarily a mark of cowardice to flee. The wise general in the army calls it retreat. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he said, *“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness”* (1 Tim. 6:11). There can be no safety from some sins except in flight. Youthful lusts are not to be wrestled with but fled from. Peter was weak when he was unafraid. When Jesus told His apostles, *“it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad... Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended”* (Mat. 26:31-34). The apostle Paul was a brave man, but he knew when it was time to run away. *“And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket”* (Acts 9:23-25).

A man will not flee if he is not afraid. There must be an apprehension of danger or there will be no flight. Oftentimes people perish because they have no sense of danger. Destruction is inevitable if we have no fear of what lies ahead. Jesus repeatedly raised the red flag by saying: “Take heed.” Paul carefully pointed out the works of the flesh and the consequences thereof in Galatians 6. In the Colossian letter, chapter three, Paul said, *“put to death [or crucify] your members which are upon the earth”* (v. 5). Paul further warns by saying *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”* (1 Cor. 10:12).

It is not a mean motive to escape through fear. Fear sometimes is admirable prudence. Noah *“moved with godly fear, prepared an ark”* (Heb. 11:7). We are slow to perceive some dangers. Dangers connected with what men call “sweet sin” are most destructive. A sin that is born of a boastful mind or which is countenanced by the example of others is very dangerous. The most dangerous and poisonous serpents in our land are less likely to be seen. In fleeing we are simply moving toward God, our strength for protection. Let us flee unto God, and like David who said, *“O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings”* (Psa. 61:1-4).

G.K. Wallace
Deceased

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Kathy Treadway’s mother and Bronwen Gibson’s mother (Lavonne McClish) – who has continued health – related issues and who is undergoing pain management therapy, Linda Chumbley is also undergoing pain management therapy; and Rachel Fitzpatrick’s aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer.

Their Eyes They Have Closed, continued from page 4.

We have no intention of closing our eyes to the things taking place in the church. We would urge others to "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). *Sober* according to Thayer, means, "of **sound mind, sane**, in one's senses." It is insane to try to promote the cause of Truth by promoting and encouraging those who teach error. Refusing to face the fact that certain ones are false teachers does not make them any less false teachers. Neither does it set one at liberty to promote and encourage false teachers as if they were teaching the Truth. Those who promote and encourage false teachers become guilty of teaching false doctrine themselves (see 2 John 9-11).

Some will accuse us of interfering with congregational autonomy when we warn against the dangers of engaging false teachers. We are not interfering with congregational autonomy, we are practicing it.

Bobby Duncan

Deceased

New Testament Faith

Christianity is a system of faith, and in that arrangement the individual who is converted to Christ undergoes a change by his acceptance of the Gospel of Christ. God’s scheme of salvation is based upon man’s response to the Truth.

Our word *faith* comes from a Greek word which can be translated as faith or belief. The root word for faith is *peitho*--which means to persuade, to confide in, or to trust. One person defined faith in this manner: “To acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and devote oneself to Him. To believe and embrace what God has made known, and to live ones life thereby.” Faith is not just belief, as some would have us think. Belief alone will not save! Notice James 2:19: “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” Question: Will the devils be saved? If it takes belief alone, they would! But we realize that this cannot be the case. Faith must be active and based upon God’s Word. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (Jam. 2:26).

Thus, we can clearly see that God expects us to *do* something. We must hear (Rom.10:17), believe (Mark 16:16), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Rom. 10:9-10), be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16), and then live faithfully (1 Cor. 15:58; 1 John 1:7). **This is the faith that saves!**

Author Unknown