

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM

Speaker, Robert Emerson

Study Sunday 10:00 AM

Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM

Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM

Singing every 2nd Sunday evening

Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you.”

—John 15:13,14

**Servants during January:**

Songleader: Stanley (3), Larry (10), David (17),
Peter (24), Stanley (31)

Reading: Mike Beckman

Announcements: Larry

Table: Stanley, Marty, Robert, David

Wednesday Lesson: Larry (6),

Stanley (13), Kris (20),
Larry (27)

**Hays Mill church of Christ**

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The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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Restoration Principles in John's Epistles

By Bill Hall

Changes inevitably occur with the passing of time. New teachers arise, introducing doctrines that are false, but attractive. Each new generation tends to be more sophisticated than the former, rejecting the “outmoded” practices of their forefathers and adopting new ideas and practices.

This is not a new phenomenon. Changes occurred in the first century as they do in the twentieth. As there are “brotherhood issues” today, there were “brotherhood issues” that affected the Christians of the first century: the question of circumcision, and toward the end of the first century, Gnosticism, with its varying doctrines and corrupting morals. By the time John wrote his epistles, many changes had occurred since Pentecost in the thinking, morals, and attitudes of the people. As John addresses the changes that had occurred, he lays down three principles that should guide us in dealing with the changes of our day.

When changes occur, we must go back to “the beginning,” not to what has been traditionally accepted. “Back to the beginning” is the very essence of restoration, and it is to the beginning that John leads his readers. We read from his pen, “Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning,” 1 John 2:7; again, “For this is the message that you heard from the beginning,” 1 John 3:11; cf 2 John 5,6. John further assures his readers that “if what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father,” 1 John 2:24. Acceptance of that which is from the beginning is therefore essential to acceptance with God.

When changes occur, we must go back to the source of truth, not to highly trained “clergymen” or “know-it-all” dictators in the church. In fact, John's writings would erase all “clergy-laity” distinctions. He does not write to a few

seminary-trained scholars who, in turn, are to interpret his writings for the untrained laymen. He addresses “little children,” “fathers,” and “young men,” 1 John 2:12-14. MacKnight, in his comments on these verses, uses the terms “new converts,” “old Christians,” and “vigorous Christians.” All are to read John’s letter, understand it, and follow its teaching. People will never return to truth as long as they allow a few learned men to do all their studying and thinking for them.

John teaches his readers to “test the spirits, whether they are of God,” 1 John 4:1, rather than to follow blindly their teaching. The elect lady must determine whether or not a teacher “abides in the doctrine of Christ” before extending to him hospitality and fellowship, 2 Jn 9-11. Gaius must not give in to the dictates of the domineering Diotrophes, 3 Jn 9-11. John’s message in all these passages is that every Christian must read, think, come to sound conclusions, and stand, even when his stand brings him into conflict with the elite of the church. This is the only way to find truth when changes occur.

When changes occur, we must go back to the apostles, not to high-sounding philosophies that may be gaining popularity all around us. The

philosophies of Gnosticism were impressive. Those who espoused them took on an air of superiority. But John says of the apostles: “*We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error,*” 1 Jn 4:6. “Back to the apostles,” John is saying. This is the means by which the spirits are to be tried, and false prophets are to be separated from the true. In commending Demetrius, John further says, “*You know that our testimony is true,*” 3 Jn 12. We go “back to the apostles” today when we go to the New Testament scriptures. This is our only means of knowing “*the spirit of truth and the spirit of error*” and of standing on testimony that “*is true.*”

We may differ in our estimation of the “restoration movement” of the nineteenth century and of its leaders, but we must not veer from the principle of restoration. There is only one answer for the religious division and corrupting doctrines of our day, and that answer is the same as it was in John’s day: back to the beginning—back to the source of truth—back to the apostles. Here we take our stand! Here we withstand all enemies of truth and right! Here we know that we indeed are of God!

—via *Two Men*, p61-63 

who has already won the battle, Gen 3:15. With His aid we can be victorious. We can be “*more than conquerors through Him who loved us,*” Rom 8:37.

Heaven means beauty—unsurpassed beauty—a street of gold, walls of jasper, a foundation of precious stones, gates of pearl, a crystal clear river flowing from the throne of God.


Heaven means home—Happiness is not found in our material surroundings, but in being with those we love. We experience homesickness, but our homesickness is not for a house or anything material, but for wife and children, for loved ones. Similarly, we speak of the beauty of heaven, and truly its beauty enhances our anticipation, but surely the greatest joy will be found in being with our Lord, the One “*whom having not seen [we] love,*” and with our God, with the Spirit, with the angels, and with the redeemed of all ages. This will be our eternal homecoming.

Heaven means happiness—There will be nothing there to mar our happiness. There will be no more tears, no more sickness, no more heartache, no more death, “*nor sorrow, nor crying.*”

There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away,” Rev 21:4.

Heaven means holiness—Never again will we hear the name of our Lord taken in vain. There will be no more adultery, filth, guilt, murder, crime. Truth will abound. There will be no more lying, deceit, flattery, hypocrisy. Women will no longer have to fear those who would abuse and desecrate them. Love will be pure and unfeigned. The Lord assures us, “*But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lambs Book of Life,*” Rev 21:27.

Heaven means eternity—This blessed state shall never end. “When we’ve been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we first begun” (Joseph Scriven). You can quit if you so choose, for God will not force anyone to serve Him. But, remember, the day you quit is the day you forfeit all hope of eternal happiness and choose in its place eternal damnation. And eternity is a long time.

—via *Two Men*, p102,103 

***“And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior’s Blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me, who scorned, His perfect love?”***
—Charles Wesley

Thinking of Quitting?

By Bill Hall

No doubt, someone will read this article who is discouraged, weary of struggling, disappointed in his brethren, facing severe obstacles in his service to the Lord, and is in danger of quitting. But I would make this appeal: “Before you quit, look anew at the incentives the Lord

holds before you; look again at heaven.”

Heaven means victory—victory in the strife with Satan and his allies. The battle is sometimes hard; the foe is formidable. Our own strength seems so small. We become discouraged. But lift our eyes! On our side is the Lord, the One

Remember in Prayer

Ronda’s niece has had the twins; one is still in NICU. **Joyce** is struggling with her cancer. **David and Chessie Harwell** are both unwell. **Scott Richardson**, a relatively young preacher, has numerous serious health issues, but a wonderful attitude; and he remains very busy in the

Lord’s work. Remember them all: prayer is a powerful friend, Jas 5:16; 1 Pet 3:12. Let us remember these, as well as those that cannot meet with us: **Lois Adams, Madelene Britnell, Carolyn Dennis, Tim and Dot Hice.** 