

### Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
Study Sunday 10:00 AM  
Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM  
Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM  
*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*  
Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

### Preacher / bulletin editor:

Kris Vilander, (256) 472-1065

E-mail: kris@haysmillchurchofchrist.org

Website: www.haysmillchurchofchrist.org

“Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning,”

—1 John 2:7



### Servants during March:

**Songleader:** Dwight (3), Stanley (10), Larry (17), Dwight (24), Stanley (31)

**Reading:** Stanley

**Announcements:** Larry

**Table:** Mike M, Larry, Marty, Stanley

**Wednesday Lesson:** Larry (6), Stanley (13), Kris (20), Larry (27)

### Lawn Mowing (week starting):

Kris (17), Marty (24), Stanley (31)

### Area Meetings:

## Hays Mill church of Christ

21705 Hays Mill Road

Elkmont, AL 35620

# The Bible . Examiner

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

Volume 6

March 24, 2024

Number 42

# 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.

**1) 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 Jn 2:7; again, “For this is the message that you heard from the beginning,” 1 Jn 3:11; see also 2 Jn 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 Jn 2:24. Acceptance of that which is from the beginning is therefore essential to acceptance with God.

**2) 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 Jn 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 Jn 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.

**3) 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: Articles on Practical Christian Living*, pp61-63 

# It’s Original!

by Bill Hall

“It’s original,” you say. Oh yeah? It may be no more original than an article I wrote recently for *Perspectives*. I thought it was original, but then ran across a similar article by Ralph Williams that had been written

long before my article, which had no doubt influenced my thinking and had become such a part of me that I was sure that those thoughts were mine. My original thoughts!

Or it may be no more original

than some of those original (?) thoughts that Sewell and I come up with for sermons, only to learn that our dad has presented those thoughts in sermons since we were boys. In fact, I’m wondering now who has written an article on the subject of “It’s Original.”

We are blessed with a rich heritage. We have heard great men preach great sermons, bringing out just about every thought imaginable from the greatest book that has ever been written. Most of the sermons we have forgotten. Nor are we able to relate specific thoughts to the men whom we first heard preach them. But those thoughts became a part of us, and those sermons, little by little, changed our lives and our thinking to bring us to our present convictions and status before God. We are indebted to so many, but especially to God, from whom all truth originates, Jn 17:17.

But a warning is in order at this

## Remember in Prayer


**Mike B** will be having another procedure on his liver, shortly—they have traditionally been very painful.

Remember others with chronic illnesses as well, including **Carolyn; Betty; Kathy Mitchell;** and **Joyce.**

Pray for **John, Sylvia and Paige Pollard;** they may be moving to Sugarland, TX, which might be a great blessing in caring for Paige. Also pray for the continued health of the church

point. For, whereas we are grateful for the truths that have been taught through the years, we must never accept any teaching as truth just because brethren have “always” believed and taught it. Humility would demand that we be slow to reject such, but truth is determined only by an examination of Bible teaching. “*Your word is truth,*” Jn 17:17. “*If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God,*” 1 Pet 4:11. The old, accepted teaching must be examined, not only by each generation, but by every individual within that generation, with the same care with which any new teaching is examined.

Independence of thought does not demand a rejection of old, accepted teaching, but it does demand a careful examination of that teaching in the light of the scriptures.

—via *Two Men: Articles on Practical Christian Living*, pp63-64 

they would leave in Germantown, MD.

Please pray for the brethren suffering persecution throughout the world, and those laboring among them teaching the truth. Also for those suffering due to war, or natural disasters. Continue to pray for our leaders and our nation; as well as the upcoming election—that we would select those men most fit to lead. 