

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

July 13

2008

Editor's Note: One of the favorite ploys of those who do not wish to abide within the teaching of Christ (2 John 9) is to charge those who may question their unscriptural teaching and/or practice as being "legalists." In our society today it seems as though this is such an undesirable trait that making such a charge is all that is necessary to discredit anyone who insists on adhering to the teaching of Christ. The following article dealing with this charge was written many years ago by the late Max Ogden. (JH)

Am I A Legalist?

Webster defines a legalist as one who is strict in adhering to law. I take it that this has reference to the law under which he lives. We should think that if the one who claimed to conform to the demands of the law, yet disregarded it when it did not suit him, would come short of his claim.

There may be many laws that we do not regard as so very important, and few people may know about them. There are other laws that seem so very important and are kept ever before us. For example: traffic laws. We are reminded of them often all along the road. The speed limit differs in states. I have been told by brethren who do not want to abide by it that it is alright to exceed it if you will stay within ten miles of it. I have never yet been told by brethren that it is resisting the power, and withstanding the ordinance of God. (Romans 13:2.)

We gather from this that people do what they want to do regardless of the law. I have often wondered how one could successfully teach men to obey God's law while at the same time is disobedient to civil law. I wonder if those who would add ten miles

to a civil law, would not add what suited them to God's law. I have heard brethren reason like this: "Where do we have scripture for a meeting house?" I have tried to figure out why they would make such a statement. I have decided that it is a way of saying that you don't have to stay within the limits of God's law. They do not explain that God commanded His people to assemble, and to carry out the command necessitated a place. I have heard asked: "Where is the passage for a microphone?" When I hear such statements without any explanation, I decide one is trying to practice in the name of religion things not commanded of God. Is not this the argument? If we can use a house to meet in not commanded, why not use something else that is even more effective?

Such reasoning will destroy every command of God. It will place sprinkling for baptism. It will change the worship commanded of God. We would do well to believe God. *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."* (1 Peter 4:11.) Mary said of Jesus, *"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."*

✍️ Max Ogden



Reconciled

An instance of reconciliation always brings joy to the heart of the godly. The terms "reconcile", "reconciled", "reconciliation" and "reconciling" are found a total of 13 times in the New Testament. The passages using these words speak of four areas of reconciliation.

Brother to Brother

In Matthew 5:24, Jesus explained that it was to worship God if we were at enmity with a brother. Therefore, He stresses of being *reconciled* immediately. If there arises dissension between two brethren, both have a responsibility, and should desire, to achieve reconciliation at the moment. In the passage mentioned Jesus is simply saying, they must "make up." There had been mutual hostility. Now there must be concession on the part of each that they might be reconciled and at peace again.

It should be noted that Matthew 5:24 is the passage in the New Testament using a denoting *mutual* hostility and *mutual* concession. In every other passage dealing with reconciliation, a term is used denoting *onesided* hostility, demanding *onesided* change. In other

words, in such a dispute the innocent party has nothing to repent of and need not make concessions. Only the guilty must adjust his course of action!

Wife To Husband

In 1 Corinthians 7:11, Paul explains that a woman who departs from her husband (when he has not committed adultery) has but two choices. She must remain unmarried or "be reconciled to her husband. The word "reconciled" in that passage is used as a verb denoting action. The very nature of the term here indicates that the woman having departed must make the concession or adjustment and come back.

Jew And Gentile

In Ephesians 2, Paul explains that by abolishing the Law of Moses, the wall between the Jews and the Gentiles had been broken down. Hence, for the first time in 1500 years there could be reconciliation between the seed of Abraham and other peoples. In Ephesians 2:16, we learn that this reconciliation was made possible by the cross of Christ. As Jews and Gentiles obeyed the gospel and were baptized into Christ, they adjusted their lives, came into fellowship with God and so being in the one body, the church, they had fellowship one with another.

Man To God

Even though we are pleased to see brethren, marriage partners and nations reconciled, it is infinitely more important to see people *reconciled to God*. The person who has never been a Christian, and unfaithful church members, need to be reconciled to God. Until our sins are removed, we are separated from God. In Isaiah 59:2, the prophet explains, "*Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*" We remind you that God has never sinned against man. God has never separated Himself and left man. No, God is not at fault. The problem is always with man. Man sins, he departs, he alienates himself from his Creator, the loving heavenly Father. It is not up to God to make concessions to bring about reconciliation.

However, the Bible makes it plain that our heavenly Parent so desired a reconciliation that He went to great lengths to work out a system whereby peace could be restored and there could be an

honorable reconciliation. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, the apostle Paul wrote, "*And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us (Christians, R. E. H.) to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*" Yes, dear friend, God truly wants you to be reconciled! He allowed Jesus to die in YOUR stead. He has given mankind the gospel and the church. God has done His part won't you do YOURS?

If you have never been a Christian, *believe* in God and Jesus (Hebrews 11:6), *repent* or turn from your *sins* (Acts 17:30), *confess* that Jesus is the Son of God (Matthew 10:32) and *be baptized* for the remission of your *sins* (Acts 2:38) these are God's terms of reconciliation for you. God loves you! He calls you in this way! **WON'T YOU COME?**

If you are a child of God, but have become unfaithful and drifted back into the world, God also wants YOU to be reconciled. How is this effected? You must consider the goodness of God, be sorry for past *sins*, and truly repent of them (Acts 8:22). You must confess your *sins* to God and to your brethren, and pray earnestly for God's forgiveness (James 5:16; 1 John 1: 9). Brethren and friends, life is short and judgment is certain -- "Be ye reconciled to God."

✍ Raymond Harris

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sun. Bible Study. 9:30 a.m.
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.
Sun. Evening Worship. 5:00 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study. 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Charles Carpenter. . . . (317) 839-3873
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507

Deacons

Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
Don Perry. (765) 676-5825
Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514
Mike Thomas. (317) 539-2699

Evangelist

James Hahn. (317) 745-1507