

Saving the Church

By Robert Turner

Lots of people are trying to save the church these days. There are so many problems among brethren, and so many brethren who are apparently unconcerned, that I suppose we should rejoice that someone cares.

Fact is, I have considered saving the church a time or two. Maybe I had a touch of the Don Quixote spirit and fancied the giants reeling from my trusty lance. But no more. In the first place, it is hard to find a church that wants to be saved, and those who do want this, are pretty well on the road with a "do it yourself" job.

Too, it occurred to me that the church already has a Saviour. My job, and that of every concerned member, is to stir up greater love and respect for the divine Saviour. We need a better understanding of what He saves, and how.

We may work up an ulcer trying to save a union of people while the true Saviour is dividing people in order to preserve unity in the faith. **Matt. 10:32-39; 1 Cor. 5:1-8.**

We may fail to confess Him because, in our pride, we are trying to save our "place" in the community.

Not infrequently, we are more concerned about what people will think than we are with pleasing God. **(Jn. 12:42-43)**

And multitudes are more concerned with the "party" (our institutions, our brotherhood) than they are with the church for which Christ died.

Christ saves the church *one member at a time*. **(1 Cor. 12:12-f; Jn. 15:1-6; Gal. 3:26-27)**. The body of Christ, His church **(Eph. 1:22-23)** of which He is Saviour **(Eph. 5:23)**, is composed of *individuals*. One by one, as we are saved from sins, we are added to this church. **(Acts 2:47)**. This is a crucial point, yet one we seem determined to ignore, or refuse to obey.

As the church was first saved from "alien" sins, so must it be saved from worldliness, the social gospel, institutionalism, or any other sins. Somehow, some way, each individual member must be aroused from sleep, to renew his love and service to Christ, who alone can save the church.



Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Betty Mcareavey (Mary Ann Roberts' mom)	Audrey Barnett (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland (Toni's relatives)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Toni Herd	Rebecca Davis (Chuck Hahn's Niece)	Holly Law
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkin's Dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Ellie Vaughn (Scott and Genna's baby)

August Birthdays

- 2-Emma Miller
- 2-Heath Donahue
- 7-Joey McGee
- 8-Alli Luther
- 9-Elliot Weldon
- 9-Troy Swenson
- 10-David Hartsell
- 11-Walker Davis
- 11-Andrew Kiser
- 12-Jon Coleman
- 13-Brendon Kirby
- 13-Ariel Ramsey
- 15-Kalee Reid
- 16-Cade Smith
- 18-Makayla Chittam
- 19-Brettlyn Currier
- 19-Taylor Lawrence
- 20-Caleb Law
- 21-Matt Cavender
- 23-Jordan Flatt
- 23-Colton Miller
- 24-Sophie Hall
- 27-Chip Freeman
- 28-Larry Rouse
- 28-Cole Johnson

News and Notes

- ☒ - Lets keep in our prayers our expectant mothers, Jessica Anderson and Nicole Pender!
- ☒ - Our meeting with Paul Earnhart, begins today and will last through Thursday! Be sure to take cards and invite others.
- ☒ - Matt Loggins grandfather, Allen Davis, had surgery on Sat for colon cancer.
- ☒ - Be sure and get your picture made for the bulletin board and updated directory! Please see Paula Davis.
- ☒ - Let us work to welcome our students that are returning and to meet the large number of new students arriving!
- ☒ - Audio CD's are provided in the foyer immediately after each service. You can also download them at www.auchurch.com

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:16)**

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Who Started This Argument From Silence?

By Paul Earnhart



Thoughts to Ponder

You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. **(Deuteronomy 4:2)**

The students of John L. Girardeau, professor at Columbia Seminary, South Carolina in the 1880's, asked him to explain to them why he opposed the use of instrumental music in the worship of the Presbyterian churches. In response, he wrote a book which was published in Richmond, Virginia in 1888. It was titled, "Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church." Girardeau's expanded discussion of this subject gives some valuable insights into how men of the Reformed tradition in late 19th century America decided the question of whether or not a practice was pleasing to God.

Girardeau began his discussion with a statement of principle which guided his arguments throughout the book: "A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government, and worship in the church; that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence from their statements is forbidden."

The irony is that I first found this old book preserved in the library of a college operated by avowed restorationists who practice the very thing which Girardeau condemns. The book's card revealed it had lived a quiet life. Who started this "argument from silence?" As nearly as we can determine, God did.

It may surprise us that a 19th century Presbyterian seminary professor not only understood the "argument from silence," but used it and felt confident that others would be persuaded by it. I suspect that there has been the feeling on the part of some that those who labored so earnestly in the last century to turn men back to simple New Testament Christianity were the originators of the idea that God's silence on a matter was equal to a divine prohibition. Clearly, that was not true.

The arguments Professor

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
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Evangelist and Editor

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Girardeau makes will sound very familiar to those of us who have been concerned to “speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where it is silent.”

He first says that the prohibitory significance of God’s silence is deducible from **2 Tim. 3:16-17**, which affirms that God’s man is fully equipped for “every good work” by the “holy scripture.” Everything therefore not mentioned in the Scripture would not be a “good work.” Sound familiar?

Girardeau then proceeds to give some biblical statements that verify his principle of silence. **Ex. 25:40**, “And see that thou make them after their pattern which hath been showed thee in the mount.” **Deut. 4:2**, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you.” He cites also **Deut. 12:32; Prov. 30:5-6; Heb. 8:5; Matt. 15:6; 28:18-20; Col. 2:20-23; 2 Tim. 3:16-17 and Rev. 22:18-19**.

In extending his argument further, our Presbyterian professor treats several concrete instances that argue the prohibition of God’s silence. He cites the cases of Cain and his sacrifice, Gen. 4. He mentions Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, **Lev. 10:1-3** about which he comments: “But they presumed to add to God’s commandments, exercising their own will in regard of his worship, they did that which he did not command them, and they were instantly killed for their wicked temerity.” He adds the cases of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, **Num. 16**, Moses’ striking of the rock, **Num. 20**, Saul’s sacrifice at Gilgal, 1 Sam. 13, Uzzah’s touching of the ark, **1 Chron. 13:7-10**, and the presumption of King Uzziah, **2 Chron. 26:16-21**.

His arguments are then summarized in the following words: “The mighty principle has thus been established by an appeal to the

didactic statements of scripture and to special instances recorded in scriptural history... that whatsoever is not in the Scripture, either explicitly or by good and necessary consequences, is forbidden.”

Girardeau goes on to observe that instrumental music was never used in the worship of Israel without God’s explicit command, **2 Chron. 29:25-26** and, therefore, could not be used in New Testament worship without an explicit New Testament command. He notes that instrumental music was never used in synagogue worship and that Rabbinic literature forbade its use on the sabbath, save in the Temple.

From the New Testament, Girardeau simply asks, “Did Jesus teach or practice it?” “Did the Apostles teach or practice it?”

From what he writes, it is obvious that this Presbyterian teacher had paid a price for his convictions: “it is easy to see how irrelevant and baseless is the taunt flung by high churchmen, ritualists and latitudinarians of every stripe against the maintainers of the opposite principle, that they are narrow-minded bigots who take delight in insisting upon trivial details. The truth is exactly the other way. The principle upon which this cheap ridicule is cast is simple, broad, majestic. It affirms only the things God has commanded, the institutions and ordinances that he has prescribed, and besides this discharges only a negative office which sweeps away every trifling invention of man’s meretricious fancy.”

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My Dreams Have Shrunk

By Aubrey C. Belue

When I was younger, I had awesome dreams. In my “awakening” (a deeper sense of awareness I came to some years after I became a Christian), when I faced my first opportunities as a fledgling preacher, it seemed I had the world at my feet – no, not due to any sense of accomplishment or ability on my part, but because I believed the message I was bringing was “The” power – the walls of evil would crumble before it if I just stayed out of the way and gave folks the unvarnished truth. I was literally amazed that anyone who heard it was able to resist it – or, even worse, would reject it and act contrary to it. As time (and my own experience) went on, I came to see that it was not only possible, it was likely! It took me some years, but I finally came down to earth.

Rather than an optimist, I became a realist – and one reason was that it became obvious that the gospel was not the only ingredient in the mix of life, or even in the kingdom. Practically, it only has a positive result in the hearts and lives of the willing – and far too often, for far too many reasons, men and women are not willing! Instead of envisioning instant growth, and a visibly deepening spirituality (which was my mindset in the first five or six moves I made from place to place), I learned to expect apathy, procrastination, complacency, cowardice and compromise wherever I went (I do not claim to be any better, because these are personal demons I also have to struggle with, and am no more satisfied with my own level of discipleship than that of others) – and to a lesser or greater extent, it was always the case. It was never true of all saints, and there were always some who were strong in the faith. “Normal” circumstances would find a congregation where the majority were largely bystanders, a part were willing to share in the worship and teaching aspects, and still fewer still actually so committed as to make the sacrifices and priority choices that fruitful discipleship produced. Usually such a mindset was so en-

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trenched that efforts to stimulate enthusiasm and devotion collectively could be compared to turning a battleship around -- any positive indicators were slow and incremental.

But, brethren, in spite of the steady stream of sputtering efforts (and facing up to the fact that I was not always as much help as I should have been) – I still have dreams! Today, I believe they are more realistic and likely, because they have a foundation of fact. The facts

are:

1. There is no long range hope for the world – both reason and scripture points to an end, and if current trends are significant, sooner rather than later.
2. God’s will is served by both acceptance and rejection – He has as much interest (and has devoted significant time and planning) in determining who is not suited to heaven as He has in determining who will be.
3. His ultimate goal is achieving the destiny of individuals, not churches – by its nature, the gospel is exclusive, and will eliminate the shallow, the indulgent, and the unmotivated, who seem to include an increasing part of the human population.

So, my dreams now are small. I wish to, and have tried to serve God faithfully in order to, contribute to those goals, but it basically is up to each one of us. For me, my dream is:

“Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.” - **2 Corinthians 5:9**

In the end, Paul’s main hope was for his personal future, and for others only insofar as they shared with him a common love of Christ “and His appearing”. (**2 Tim 4**)

My “main” prayer to God is, “Thy will be done.”

