

For Our Information

John Jackson is doing physical therapy for his shoulder recovery.

Adelaide Laubach broke her right arm last week. She will be in a cast for a few weeks.

Bill Venable's brother came through surgery well. They removed 3 tumors. Surgeon said things look good. He may be going home in 8-10 days. Bill is travelling back home this weekend.

Keep our brothers & sisters in mind

We seek only to serve God according to His Will!

does not depend on law in any sense. It was the *"law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"* that made us free from the *"Law of sin and death."* (**Romans 8:31**). We are told to *"fulfill the law of Christ"* (**Galatians 6:2**). We are *"under law to Christ"* (**1Corinthians 9:21**). We are to strive *"lawfully"* or according to law. (**2Timothy 9:5**).

Our failure, at times, to emphasize God's grace is no excuse for swinging to the other extreme of doing away with dependence upon law in any sense. Calvinists have made that mistake for years.

If the proponents of the new dogma would read their Bibles more and denominational oriented books less, they might even become more tolerant of those of us who insist that the way is narrow. They might even find some who have gone before them have masterfully answered the very positions that they are now expounding. If they would spend more time in rapport with experienced gospel preachers and less time with those who are *"ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"* they might just be a little more understanding of those who still insist on *"mark(ing) them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine ..."* (**Romans 16:17**). Anyway, one with an open mind ought to be willing to give it a try.

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Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about our work in the Lord's Kingdom.

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Seeking His Righteousness

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A New Dogma (Again)

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

A new and dangerous dogma seems to be surfacing in the church. It is really old liberal denominational dogma in new garb. It seems to thrive more near college campuses, but is by no means confined there. We have detected it in the writings, speeches and conversations of some brethren lately. Some consider its promoters to be intellectuals. Fortunately, its influence has been felt but little in the average congregation.

These folks are similar to the Pharisee of old, but a little different. They trust in themselves that they are highly spiritual, humble and thank God that they are not as their brethren, proud, narrow, legalistic, negative, partisan, pharisaical and fossilized. They read their Bibles often, gaining new insights into its meaning to their lives through rapport with those of "other fellowships." They have learned that there is more to learn at the feet (or from the books) of theological liberals than from those who demand a "thus



Now I urge you brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

Romans 16:17



Meet With Us

Worship Services

Sunday 10:20 am & 5:00 pm

Bible Classes

Sunday 9:30 AM

Wednesday 7:00 PM

1512 Tanner St. Malvern, AR

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saith the Lord" for all things. They use some old words to most members of the church, but with new connotations.

"Pharisaism" - If one affirms that his practice is Scriptural while other practices are unscriptural, then he is charged with "Pharisaism." **Luke 18** is given as the proof-text. The Pharisee was not rebuked by Jesus because he said the publican and sinners were wrong. If so Jesus would have been pharisaical in saying the Pharisee was wrong. The Pharisee did not feel the need for God's forgiving mercy. He thought himself to have been righteous by virtue of his perfect obedience. He felt himself to be above sin!

The remedy for real Pharisaism is not to lack confidence that we are members of the Lord's church - the very one found in the Bible, if we have obeyed the gospel and worship in spirit and truth. It is not to question the exclusiveness of God's way. It is found in **Galatians 6:1** and similar passages, i.e., that while we point out the faults of others and point them to the New Testament pattern that we must remember that we are but forgiven sinners - that we must ever be considering ourselves lest we too be tempted.

"Party-Spirit" - If one insists that another become just like him in religious matters then he is often said to have the "party-spirit." Is it a cardinal sin to insist that another conform to the same religious rules as ourselves? Paul said that he wished that *"all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."* (**Acts 26:29**). Paul did not, nor should we, desire a personal following. But he believed what he was doing strongly enough to want everyone to conform to that way, so should we. When I go out to evangelize (call it "proselyte", if you like), I try to get folks to believe what I believe, obey what I obey, be what I am and worship as I do. I am not ashamed of it. Why? Because I believe what I preach with all my heart. Is that the "party-spirit?" Not if I point to Christ as authority. Not if I seek to get people to follow Christ and not man. Not if I refuse to lead a personal following. Not if I do not seek to rally folks around one point of doctrine to the neglect or exclusion of all other points.

"Know-It-All" - If one affirms with certainty any point of religious doctrine, then he is duped a "know-it-all." One point

Store In My Heart

John 6:44-45

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.

We need to remember that without God, we have nothing at all. God has delivered to us His Word and it is only by following that Word that we have any hope in Christ.

God expects us to give attention to the Word He has preserved for our learning. If we listen to what He has said it will keep us close to Him and His Son.

Despite the call of so many in the religious world today, just loving Jesus will not get us to heaven.

in the new dogma seems to be that if one admits that there are some things he does not know about the Bible, then he must cease to be positive about any thing. It will come as no surprise to my readers that I do not know all about any subject. I know enough mathematics to have taught for a brief time in high school, but there is a lot about math that I do not know. My own children, three of whom are in high school, will verify that! But, I do know that $A = (\pi)R^2$ is not the formula for computing compound interest. If one of my students had so used it I would have marked him Wrong! Suppose he had protested, "Do you think you know all there is to know about math?" If you do not, how can you be so dead sure that $A = (\pi)R^2$ will not compute compound interest? What right have you to say that I am wrong since you admit that you don't know all the answers? Frankly, I would have still marked him wrong and probably done a little more than that if he had called me a "know-it-all."

"Legalism" - More and more the terms, "legalism" and "legalist," are popping up in the writings of some brethren and in much the same contexts as used by liberal denominational writers for years. It is applied to one who insists that obedience has something to do with our salvation.

The Bible does say that salvation is *"not of ourselves."* It is not "of works" or "debt." (**Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:1-5**). We simply cannot earn salvation - from past sins or eternally. But that is a far cry from saying that our salvation does not depend on our obedience to the law of Christ. It certainly does so depend. *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth...."* (**1Peter 1:22**). *"... He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."* (**Hebrews 5:9**). Call it legalism, law depending, or whatever - our salvation is conditioned on obedience.

It is not really a question of "legalism," but whether God's merciful blessings are conditional or unconditional. If preaching the conditions makes void the grace of God, then every New Testament preacher voided God's grace. After we have done all within our power to keep God's law, then our salvation will still be by grace and not of merit because we sin and must have God's forgiveness. But even God's forgiveness is conditional (**Acts 2:38; 1John 1:7-9**).

It is both unscriptural and misleading to say that salvation