

“What Saith the Scripture?” is a collection of newspaper articles written by John Isaac Edwards. These writings appeared in *The Salem Democrat*, Salem, Indiana.

knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt. 7:23), unless they repent of their lawlessness? If you would not want to be allied with “a sarcastic attitude,” would you want others to be allied with you when you reflect sarcasm? Would you have wanted to be allied with Elijah, who “mocked” and massacred the prophets of Baal (1 Ki. 18:27)? Jesus was not ashamed to be allied with such a man of God (Mt. 17:1-5)? Why should we be?

When we strive to “war a good warfare” (1 Tim. 1:18) and “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12), we are said to show no mercy, be without peace and non-loving. Yet, when Jude requested that “mercy,” “peace” and “love” be multiplied unto the sanctified (Jude 2), he commanded them to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Those who try to distinguish between being loving and contending for the faith are making a distinction the Bible does not make.

Dear reader, do not make distinctions the Bible does not make, and do not overlook distinctions the Bible does make. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

In interest of the Truth,
John Isaac Edwards

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THERE IS A BIBLE DISTINCTION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND THE CHURCH

Dear Editor:

The Thursday, July 29, 2004 *Readers' Forum* carried a letter containing some spiritual misinformation. For readers' benefit, I am writing in defense of the truth.

The letter said that the Bible makes no distinction between individuals and the church, and that to make such a distinction is to be guilty of "legalistic hair-splitting." To the contrary, there is a clear distinction made, in the Bible, between individuals and the church. One of the finest places to see such distinction is 1 Timothy 5:16: "If **any man or woman that believeth** have widows, let them relieve them, and let not **the church** be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." This teaching shows a distinction between individuals and the church, as our intelligent readers' can see. Now, was the apostle Paul guilty of "legalistic hair-splitting," when he taught that there are some things individuals are to do that the church is not to do? This is not "legalistic hair-splitting," but "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

Failure to recognize and respect the Bible distinction between individuals and the church has caused many churches to get involved in things which Christ (the Head) never authorized the church (His body) to do (Eph. 1:21-23; Col. 3:17); such as, book sales, sidewalk sales, car washes, yard sales, barbecue and bake sales, and the list goes on.

When we teach the truth and expose error, sometimes we are charged with being more combative than loving. When we are so accused, and our letters are called "sneering" letters, or our comments are said to be "snide and mean-spirited," are our detractors being non-combative and loving? Is it loving to say nothing, when there are many who will hear the Lord say, "I never

A GLORIFIED Y

May 15, 2003

As I sat down to read the newspaper, a writing concerning The Washington County YMCA caught my attention. The short article listed some of the new activities planned at the local Y; including, Swimming, Tae Kwon Doe, Soccer, Fun Tumbling and Mid-day Bible Study.

As I read the activities planned and promoted by churches today, it is obvious that a lot of churches bear a closer resemblance to the YMCA than they do to the church of the New Testament. Many churches are nothing more than a glorified Y! Perhaps, we need to be reminded, "the church is the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

If you are searching for the church built by Christ (Mt. 16:18), which you read about in the New Testament, come visit us.

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

May 22, 2003

The question of all questions was asked in Acts 2:37: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” This response came from those convicted of sin by the pointed preaching of Peter concerning Jesus (Acts 2:22-36). This brief writing calls attention to the answer given to the question.

1) **WHAT THEY WERE NOT TOLD.** First of all, they were not told God unconditionally preselected the individual to be saved or to be lost, and that there was nothing they could do. Nor were they told that God, in His grace, and already done everything and that there was nothing for them to do. They were not told to just believe and they would be saved. And they were never told to pray a sinner’s prayer of some kind. Nor were they told that they needed to “get” the Holy Spirit. Why is it that many today tell us things that folks in the New Testament were never told in being saved?

2) **WHAT THEY WERE TOLD.** Take your Bible and read Acts 2:38 in black and white for yourself. “Then Peter said unto them (now here is what they were told to do, JIE), Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” To repent is to change one’s mind and course of action (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30). To be baptized, in this verse, is to be immersed in water (Acts 8:36-39; 10:47-48). The purpose of repentance and baptism is to receive the remission of sins, as Jesus shed His blood for the remission of sins (Mt. 26:28). “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:41, 47). To receive the remission of sins and be added to the church to which they were added, we must simply do what they did. Why not do it today?

group. There was also a bake sale of various goodies. The funds raised will help send some of the youth group to Wonder Valley Christian Camp. “Please come and join in on the efforts to serve the Lord for a Mighty Kingdom,” the announcement read.

Did you ever read of such in your Bible? These fund-raising schemes are a far cry from the first day of the week, laying by in store of the apostolic order. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him...” (1 Cor. 16:1-2). The day these activities become Scriptural is the day you can read in your Bible about the church at Jerusalem having a eunuch chariot race with proceeds benefiting ministration neglected widows! My only plea is for a return to the Bible.

In the interest of Truth,
John Isaac Edwards

Addendum:

(The following appeared in The Salem Leader Readers' Forum)

BIBLE DOESN'T CONDONE FUND-RAISING SCHEMES

Dear Editor:

As I read the paper, there seems to be no limit these days as to what churches will do to raise funds. Here are a few things I ran across in the last few weeks:

Book sales. Members of New Beginning Baptist Church are currently selling cookbooks, with 243 recipes, for \$10 each. Proceeds will go towards the church's building fund.

Sidewalk sales. The First Baptist Youth Group held a sidewalk sale on High Street in Salem from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, June 5, to help fund their summer projects.

Car washes. The West Side Baptist Church softball team held a car wash Saturday in the parking lot next to McDonald's starting at 9 a.m.

Golf scrambles. This scramble was organized by the Salem Assembly of God to help raise money for their building fund program.

Yard sales. Salem Wesleyan Church held a yard sale Saturday, May 8, at 8 a.m. The church had the yard sale to raise money for aluminum siding for the building.

Barbecue and bake sales. On Saturday, May 8, at the Jay C Food Store parking lot, next to Our Home Oven, the C'burg Christian Ladies Group had a chicken barbecue fund-raiser for the youth

by John Isaac Edwards

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WHEN GOD BREATHED

May 29, 2003

The breath of God is powerful breath. To impress us with the awesome power of God, attention is called to some things that occurred when God breathed.

1) **MAN WAS GIVEN LIFE.** The book of origination says, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Man is not the product of evolutionary chance, but the result of divine breathing. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4).

2) **THE HEAVENS WERE MADE.** The Psalmist uttered, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. 33:6). What power, as God "spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:9). "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:4).

3) **THE SCRIPTURES WERE GIVEN.** Paul informed Timothy, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). That literally means the Scriptures are God-breathed. As there is life in breath, the words of Scripture are the words of life. Peter said of the Lord, "thou hast the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:68).

What breath is to physical life, the Scriptures are to spiritual life. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (Jn. 5:39).

“I AM NOT ONE TO ARGUE SCRIPTURE”

June 5, 2003

When we challenge those who teach things that are Biblically incorrect, and call for public discussion of such, we are often met with the response, “I am not one to argue Scripture.” Those who shun religious disputes ought to read the following passages:

1) **Acts 17:16-17:** “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.”

2) **Acts 18:1, 4:** “After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth...And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.”

3) **Acts 18:19:** “And he came to Ephesus...and reasoned with the Jews.”

4) **Acts 19:8-9:** “And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years...”

The word translated “disputed” and “reasoned” is defined as, “to think different things with other persons, to converse, argue,

and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). If the world is just going to be purified and not disintegrated or terminated, as the Jehovah’s Witnesses assert, the words “pass away,” “melt,” “burned up,” and “dissolved” have no meaning!

May we prepare ourselves for the end, by hearing the word of God (Mt. 17:5), believing Christ (Jn. 8:24), repenting of our sins (Lk. 13:3), confessing Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), being baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3-4) and living “soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Ti. 2:12-13).
