

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

It Isn't In the Book

By Roy E. Cogdill

Have you ever heard someone say, “*There isn't anything in a name,*” or “*One name is as good as another*”? Where do you suppose they would be willing to apply such teaching? Surely no one would say “*There isn't anything in a name*” concerning the family relationship...A father is particular as to the name his children wear. A husband is particular as to the name of his wife. A name is surely important in family relationships.

Then what about financial matters? Is there anything in the name that is signed to a check? People are sent to prison for signing the wrong name to a check. Manufactured products bear registered trademarks and are given copyrighted trade names which are protected by law. Severe penalties are inflicted for violating these regulations governing the use of trade names in the financial world. If someone else should make a car and put the name Ford on it, would it make any difference?

There is no realm but religion where people would be willing to accept such a doctrine. It isn't any more sensible in religion than it is elsewhere. Names are one of the essential and primary marks of identification. God had every beast of the field and every bird of the air named by Adam (Gen. 2:19-20). God changed Abram's name to Abraham and gave the reason for the change (Gen. 17:5). God changed the name of Jacob to Israel and gave the reason for the change (Gen. 32:28). In that name was incorporated the name of Jehovah — EL — for His people to wear. The religious name we wear is likewise significant. It is a mark of identity for a Christian. God has designated the name His people are to wear and it is disrespectful to God to wear any other name.

The Old Testament prophets prophesied that a new name would be given to His people when the “*Gentiles see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory*” and that New Name was to be named by the mouth of Jehovah (Isa. 62:2). Saul of Tarsus was a chosen emissary to bear that new name — the name of Christ — specified by the mouth of the Lord himself — before the Gentiles and kings of the earth (Acts 9:15). This prophecy in all its elements was fulfilled and Saul served that mission while preaching Christ in Antioch of Syria. “*The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*” (Acts 1:26). For the first time Gentiles and Jews were brought together in Antioch into a common fellowship upon common terms. Thus the new name was given.

This name was not given by the multitude as some careless students seem to think. The word translated “*were called*” is the Greek “*Chrematizdo*” and it occurs nine times in the New Testament Greek text and in every instance where the word is used by inspiration God did the calling. It never has any other significance in the New Testament.

Other passages bear witness to the significance of the name to be worn religiously.

1. Do nothing in any other name but the Lord's (Col. 3:17).
2. Glorify God in the name of Christ (1 Pet. 4:16).
3. No other name as good as the name of Christ (Phil. 2:9).
4. Salvation is in no other name but the name of Christ (Acts 4:11-12).
5. Human names are condemned. We should wear the name of Him who died for us and into whose name we have been baptized (1 Cor. 1:10-15).

All these and passages and many others eliminate the name of John, The Baptist, Martin Luther, Wesley, Campbell or any other man. These also eliminate calling ourselves after religious ordinances, forms of church government (Methodist, Presbyterian, or Episcopal) or deriving our names from particular doctrines instead of from Christ - (Baptists, Seven Day Adventist, Holiness, Pentecostal, etc.).

We should be content to wear the name of Christ. Why would anyone want to wear a name in religion that cannot be found in the Bible, that God did not give, in preference to the name of Christ? The idea that “*there is nothing in a name*” just isn’t true anywhere and especially is it false in religion. The doctrine that is so widespread, “*One name is just as good as another,*” just **ISN’T IN THE BOOK**. The Bible teaches exactly the opposite. – *The Gospel Guardian*, January 12, 1956. ■

Soft Pulpits and Dusty Bibles

By Dickey Howard

During the 50’s the Lord’s church divided over institutionalism, and there was a clear line drawn between truth and error. Many of God’s people stood for the truth, and continue not to support institutionalism, but one battle does not win the war. “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Pet. 5:8). The devil must be very pleased so many are living in the past, and thinking the war has been won. Yes, the lines were clearly drawn in the past, but today those lines have become fuzzy and gray, because of soft preaching in some pulpits and dusty Bibles in the home.

The church today is in trouble because it is uninformed. How many know anything about the issues that are dividing the church today? How many even know there is a division taking place in the church? Soft preaching has left the church uninformed and has tickled folk’s ears. When error is clearly taught, it is called false teaching by those who will stand for the truth, and is easy to recognize. Soft preaching is not error, but it does not teach the whole counsel of God, and is not as easy for many folks to see. It is dangerous because it allows the church to ease into apostasy. It doesn’t point out sin in the congregation, nor expose error or the names of those teaching it, as did Paul in 1st Corinthians 5. Soft preaching is for those with “*itching ears*” (2 Tim. 4:3).

Many will say we are not in trouble. Let us look at this honestly. Are we not in trouble when there are those, in the Lord’s church, who will condemn a gospel preacher because he exposes error and calls the names of those who teach it. Some may say he doesn’t have the right personality, or his sermons are a little too long. No one would dare say he taught any error, in fact everyone would say he taught the truth right down the line.

There are those who would say such a gospel preacher would cause dissension in the congregation where they preach, and also the surrounding congregations. God’s word has always caused division, because the word clearly separates truth from error. The truth “*turned the world upside down*” in Acts 17:6. “*Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?*” (Gal. 4:16).

Soft preachers are not the only ones to blame for the softness in the church today. Hebrews 13:17 tells elders they will give an account of how they watched for souls. God will not overlook elders who do not have the backbone to stand for the truth, and to see to the feeding of the flock that is among them (Acts 20:28). “*Be vigilant,*” means to be alert or watchful (1 Pet. 5:8). Reactive preaching is like closing the gate after the mule is out. Elders and preachers must be watchful and listen to what is being taught and supported. God’s people must be warned of the dangers that face the church.

There are those who want to hear hard or plain gospel preaching like Paul and the other apostles did. It was preaching that exposed error and called names of those who did it. It was preaching that encouraged the brethren to love God and their brothers and sisters in Christ and to have unity according to the word. It was not “unity-in-diversity” by fellowship of any and everything for the sake of peace.

We must remember, no one can go to heaven on the group plan. Each of us will stand before God in judgment and give an account of ourselves. Matthew 12:37 says, “*For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*” Let us not let friendship or kinship cause us to say or do things that will cause us to lose our soul in eternity. I long for the day when folks will come to the elders and preachers and say “give us the truth and nothing but the truth.” God told the Laodiceans that He would spew them from His mouth because they were lukewarm, and we had better check our temperature before it is too late. – *Truth Magazine*, December 4, 1997. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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