

gaged in religious work seems to ignore the principle of humility as taught by the Savior. And religious Doctors are altogether unscriptural. These are important matters in which we ought to be interested.

I do recall that the word "reverend" occurs one time in the Bible. In Psa. 111:9 I read this statement: "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and reverend is his name." In this language of David we learn that "reverend" is descriptive of God's name. What right then, does man have to wear a term that is given only to God? And as to other titles worn by preachers note this statement from the lips of Jesus: "But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ: and all ye are brethren. And call no man your

Father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." Matt. 23:8,9. Could you think of instruction that is plainer? Jesus simply says for his people not to be called Rabbi, for we have but one master, and that is Christ. Why, then, will any man call himself Rabbi and have others call him that? And why will men call him that? Perhaps it is because they do not know that Jesus said not to do it. But this is exactly what he said. And why will people call some religious leader Father? I may not know why people do so, but I do know that Jesus said to "call no man upon earth your Father." These men who take this title to themselves are upon earth. So Jesus includes them. We have but one Father and that is God. We should not give to human beings that honor that is due God

only. But maybe your preacher knows of a passage I have overlooked. So if he wears the title Reverend, Doctor, Rabbi or Father, ask him where he gets his authority in the Bible for doing so. If it is in the Bible, he will be able to tell you where to find it; and if he tells you there is no such authority in the Bible, then ask him why he wears such titles, and call his attention to what Jesus said about it. ~

by W. Curtis Porter

(More of these radio sermons from the 1940's by Curtis Porter in future issues of Navarre Messenger as the Lord and time permit.)

NAVARRE MESSENGER

Volume 4 Issue 32

August 30, 2009

Ask Your Preacher #2

I do not know a better way to get before you the fact that certain religious practices and doctrines are not taught in the Bible than the plan I followed in the preceding lesson - that plan was a request to ask your preacher for certain things. So I wish to present to you a series of sermons right along this line. Having been a preacher myself for many years, I have some idea of about what should be expected of a preacher and of what should be his attitude toward those who inquire of him concerning the things he teaches and practices in religion. With the Bible as our rule of faith and practice, containing the revelation of God's will to us, we should be very anxious to do just the things it authorizes.

Even a preacher should not want to practice in religion those things that it does not teach. And, if he is following the New Testament as his authority, he should be more than willing to tell his brethren just where they can read the various things he does. Conse-



We meet on James M Harvell Rd next to the public library in Navarre. Call for directions and more information (850) 939-8109

Navarre church of Christ
8490 James M Harvell Rd
Navarre, FL 32566

Place Stamp Here

Assembly Schedule

Sunday
Bible Class for all ages ___ 9:00 AM
Morning Worship Service ___ 10:00 AM
Evening Worship Service ___ 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Class for all ages ___ 7:00 PM

VISITORS ARE WELCOME!

This entire publication and previous issues are available online at navarrechurchofchrist.net along with some more useful information

For a free Bible correspondence course by mail, call us.

quently, I come to you again today with the request that you ask your preacher regarding a number of things that I shall mention.

1. Ask your preacher where the Bible says that all denominations are branches of the same vine. You have heard this statement made many times, no doubt, when there has been any discussion of denominationalism. We know that the religious world is woefully divided, with conflicting sects of every kind. Not only do denominations differ in name; they differ in teaching and practice.

Their doctrines are in direct conflict with one another. In no sense is there unity, harmony or concord, but there is discord, disagreement and division. We sometimes ask if God is pleased with a condition like this, and we are told that it is perfectly all right, for all denominations are just branches of the same vine. Now if you have heard your preacher say this, please ask him where the Bible says so. I have read the statement made by Jesus in John 15:1-6 that is often relied on to sustain this idea. But it doesn't say anything that even remotely resembles it. In this passage Jesus is talking to his disciples. He is not talking to denominations - but to his disciples. And to his disciples Jesus said in Verse 5: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." He was not even speaking of denominations, for in that case he would have said: "I am the vine, THEY are the branches." But he did not say "THEY are the branches." He said: "YE are the branches." A number of disciples made a number of branches. Christ was the vine; the disciples were the branches; and each dis-

ciple in Christ was a branch in the vine. It took just one disciple to make a branch, for Jesus said in verse 6: "If a MAN abide not in me, HE is cast forth as a BRANCH." This destroys the idea that Jesus referred to denominations as branches, for in that case, it would take a great group of men to make a branch, but Jesus said one man makes a branch.

So this is not the passage that must be found. If your preacher refers you to this passage, call his attention to the fact that one man is a branch and that he must find some other passage. This one will not do, for it does not even begin to say that all denominations are branches of the same vine.

2. Ask your preacher where the Bible says that inspired men ever invited alien sinners to the altar to pray for salvation. This practice is very general in the religious world today. Perhaps it is practiced in the church where you worship. If so, then I do not know of a better one to tell to ask your preacher for this information than you. You are well acquainted with him; you have been in his audience many times; you have heard him preach over and over the things he believes. So just go to him in a friendly sort of way and tell him you want the book, chapter and verse where any inspired man ever told alien sinners to come to the altar for prayer that they might thus be saved. Surely he could not object to a thing like this. So don't hesitate to ask him.

I have read in the Bible of an alien sinner engaged in prayer when a heaven-sent man came to him to tell him what to do. A case of this kind is found in the twenty-second

chapter of Acts. Saul, who had been one of the worst enemies Christianity ever had, became convinced of the error of his way. He asked the Lord what he would have him to do. Jesus told him to go to Damascus and there he would be told what he must do. So he went to the city and waited for that information. Ananias, a certain disciple in that city, was sent to tell him what to do. When he came into the presence of Saul, the sinner, he found him engaged in prayer. But he did not tell him to pray on. That is what many preachers today would have told him. But Ananias did not. He was telling Saul what God wanted him to do. So he stopped the prayer. He said: "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:16. To "arise" of course, means "to get up." So Ananias told Saul to get up from his praying and to do something else, to be baptized and wash away his sins. Hence, this couldn't be the passage your preacher could point you to, for the man of God there followed the very reverse of the course preachers generally follow.

And, too, I remember reading in the second chapter of Acts about a great multitude of sinners being condemned by the preaching of the apostle Peter. In Acts 2: 37 they asked him and the rest of the apostles: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" I do know that it would have been a good time for inspired men to tell them to pray through to salvation, but according to my Bible, that is not what they said. As it reads in my Bible, Peter answered after this fashion: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus

Christ for remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38. So instead of these alien sinners being told to come to the altar of prayer, they were told to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins."

Furthermore, Jesus said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven." Matt. 7:21. None of these statements resemble the religious practices of men who invite sinners to the altar to pray for salvation. So I was just wondering if your preacher knows where inspired men ever followed a course like that. I am, therefore, asking you to ask him for this information. Just ask him to give you the passage in the Bible that contains the practice. And then if it is not too much trouble, I would be glad for you to send the information to me.

3. Ask your preacher where the Bible says anything about "getting religion." As far back as I can remember I have heard people talk about getting religion; I have read reports in religious papers of numbers who "got religion." And I have heard preachers talk about it from the pulpit, over the radio, and otherwise. I suppose my experience along this line has been the experience of many of my listeners. Since so much is said about it, I am sure it is a subject of interest among religious people. Why not, then, go to your preacher, if you have heard him talk of "getting religion," and ask him to tell you where you can find anything about it in the Bible.

Oh yes, the word religion occurs in the Bible. However, it is not mentioned many times. In the Old Testament the word does not occur, and it is found only five times in the King James translation of the New Testament. But in all these passages it is evident that religion is something that men DO, not something they GET. Paul referred to his early religion as his manner of life: "My manner of life from my youth, which was at first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." Acts 26:4, 5. His religion at that time was not something he received in answer to prayer but it was his manner of life: it referred to what he did. In Gal. 1:13, 14 he said: "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jew's religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." The religion mentioned here was his conversation, or his conduct, his manner of life, instead of something he received in some way,

James says in Jas. 1:26, 27: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Two kinds of religions are here mentioned - vain religion and pure and undefiled religion. But even

the vain religion refers to something the man does - bridles not his tongue but deceives his own heart. Also the pure and undefiled religion is not something one gets but something he does, for James says it is "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." This refers to deeds we do. Also to "keep himself unspotted from the world." Surely this refers to the manner of living. But James says that is religion. Where, then, can we read any thing about "getting religion?" As much as I have heard it talked about, I am frank to confess to you today that I do not know where to find anything about it in the Bible. If your preacher knows, he has learned more than I have; and I will be delighted to have you to ask him for the information.

4. Ask your preacher where preachers in the Bible were ever called by the titles of Reverend, Doctor, Rabbi and Father. The practice is quite general in religious circles today. We constantly read in the papers of men who are called by these terms. We read of Reverend Smith, or Doctor Jones, or Rabbi Jacob, or Father Hezekiah. But where can such things be found in the Bible? Do you remember of reading of Rev. Peter, Rev. Paul or the Right Reverend Barnabas? Can you recall the passage of Scripture that speaks of Dr. James or Dr. John? No reference is made to the degree of Doctor of medicine or to other Doctor's degrees that have been received as a result of literary attainments in some field of science or philosophy, but to the use of the term as a religious title. However, the prevalent use of such educational degrees in referring to men en-