



June 17, 2007 (Vol. 7)

Unwritten Creeds

Edited

Many men through the years have seen the wisdom in claiming that the Bible is the **only** creed we should have. This position is so obviously true and correct, that even those who do not actually practice what they preach, still see the advantage of **claiming** to follow only the Bible. It is also evident and clear that unlike denominations, the churches of Christ do not have any written creed, church manual or catechism apart from the Bible.

One of the most common accusations against the Lord's people is that though we have no written creed, we yet have an "unwritten creed". Even some of our brethren, when they begin to wander into forbidden paths and find themselves opposed by brethren who would call them to repentance, make the sudden "discovery" that we have an "unwritten creed" and that we enforce it very tyrannically. If this charge is true, we ought to confess it honestly and repent of our duplicity. But is it true? If it is true, someone who knows it to be so ought to be able to point out the articles of this creed. We confess ourselves unable to point out a single one.

Is the belief in immersion one of them? What we believe in regard to this is not unwritten; it is written in the plainest words in the New Testament. What could be plainer than this: "**Buried** with Christ in baptism, wherein we are also **risen** with him by faith in the operation of God which raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12)? Is the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins one of them? It is also written in exactly these words in the Scriptures: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**" (Acts 2:38). If we had a written human creed, we could not write it any more plainly than this, though many a follower of

the Calvinist creed attempts to twist its plain meaning.

What of repentance, confession, the Lord's Supper, of our church officers, the elders and deacons? What of every single item of our faith, ordinances, organization, worship and practice? We speak not of "mainstream" churches of Christ, their "fellowship halls", socialized gospel, sponsoring church arrangements, etc. - they will have to defend their **additions** for themselves. We speak not of the opinion binders (the veil, one cup, no Bible class, etc.). We speak only of ourselves and those who, like us, reverence God's word enough to avoid adding to or taking away from it (Rev. 22:18-19).

Now, there are many things we are in the habit of denying, which are not written in our creed (the Bible); such as the denial of infant baptism, of sprinkling, the mourner's bench, of pardon before immersion, of instrumental music, of "contemporary worship", of church officers and church organizations not named in the Scriptures, etc. But these cannot be called articles of an "unwritten creed", for they are merely denials that these things are authorized by our written creed, the Word of God.

If a Baptist **denies** that a Pope is **authorized** by the creed of his denomination, no one would speak so absurdly as to say that this denial is an article in an unwritten creed which he has **in addition to** his written creed. Why, then, be so hard as to charge us with having an unwritten creed because we **deny** that certain things are **authorized** by the Bible?

When any man says we have an unwritten creed, I deny it and challenge him to present a single article which belongs to such a creed. **Everything** which we require men to believe in order to **fellowship** with us **is written**, and written **in the Word of God!** And **everything** we deny is denied **because** it is **not** written therein. Our creed, then, is not only a written one, but we bind ourselves so closely to it that we refuse to believe anything of divine authority that is not in it. This cannot be said by the followers of any other creed; for **besides** all that is in their own creed **they believe much that is contained in ours** and **not theirs!**

And here is the source of the problem. Men who give lip service to the Word of God as completely authoritative, who yet follow something in addition to and apart from the Word of God (cp.

Matt. 15:8-9; Gal. 1:6-9). Men whose professions of faith, in part or in whole, originate with man rather than just God's Word are not truly following God. And such men so often become defensive when they are questioned and challenged, it has become socially "impolite" and "unkind" to dare question their faith and to urge them see whether what they believe is in the Scriptures or not! Ah such times as these, but they are not new (Eccl. 1:9). No, this is as old as the earth - as old as Cain's defensive reaction to God's plain questions (Gen. 4:6, 9)!

Do you see the problem, friends? Do you see that the failure is in men who do not submit to the plain word of God? Is that not the very **same** struggle **we all face** day by day? If not that, then what? That we, the churches of Christ, like Abel serve our God by faith and others, like Cain, serve him not by faith. Oh, they have a kind of faith, but not Biblical faith - that comes **only** from God's word (Rom. 10:17). Brethren, may we never be ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16). There will be those who are ashamed of Truth (1 Cor. 11:19), but let not **your** name be among them.

Recall the words of our Lord, when He warned: "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, **how much more** them of his household!" (Matt. 10:25) Be strong and courageous. Commit yourself to God, to His Truth, to learn, to do and to teach (cp. Ezra 7:10). For it is by our humble submission to Christ, in the service of the Divinely revealed faith that are given assurance, comfort, hope, confidence and victory (Rom. 15:4; Rev. 2:10).

May the Lord's blessings be upon the Israel of God. And indeed, it will (Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16). For who can deny that He watches over His people for good (Rom. 8:28)?

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

Joyce Gardner (eyes), **Johanna Fletcher**, **Othena Kinnard**, **Jo Miller**, **Wesley Geer** (At home), **Mag**

Bumbalough (Life Care 519), **Thelma Cunningham**, **Mary Cox**, **Monie Petty** (breathing difficulties), **Dave Poteet** (NHC 212), **Dorris Williams**, **Robert & Betty England**, **Ed Williams** (heart blockages), **Joe Smith**, **Mike Tenpenny**, **Thelma Klein**, **DeLeesa Price** (expecting) and **Alisa Fletcher** (expecting). **Kenley Streeval**, **Lydia Poe**, **Larry Bumbalough**, **Jake Hale**, **Joshua & Misty Poteet**, **Carolyn Williams**.

Herbie Sims (Ralph's brother).

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Teacher's Meeting** - Sun. June 17 after am services.
- **Home Bible Study** - Sat. June 23 & July 7, 21
- **Door To Door** - Every Tuesday @ 6pm.
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. June 24
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month.
- **GM** - Raymond Castillo, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **GM** - Brian Yeager, April 13-18, 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

We Invite You To All Our Services!

Sunday Bible Study	9 am
Sunday Worship	10 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7 pm

<http://frontiernet.net/~nscoc>
nscoc@frontiernet.net

Ask About A Home Bible Study!

It is ten lessons covering many basic topics like evidences for God, evidences for the Bible's inspiration, evidences for the Deity of Jesus, how to be saved, what the church is like according to the Bible, a brief history of where all the denominations came from and how to have unity according to God's word. It is free. We can study with you or you can go over it by yourself. Just ask!

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