

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

September 26, 2017

Issue No. 316

Controversy

"If it matters, it produces controversy." – Jay Green

"When a thing ceases to be a subject of controversy, it ceases to be a subject of interest." – William Hazlitt

"Controversy is only dreaded by the advocates of error." – Benjamin Rush

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." – Martin Luther King, Jr.

"All great ideas are controversial." – George Seldes

It is curious that man seems to thrive on matters that are controversial. It is truly a shame but Miley Cyrus was right when she said, "People like controversy, because that is what sells."

Even in religious circles, people seem to thrive on controversy. They love discussing topics such as divorce and remarriage, miracles, baptism, and salvation.

Even our Lord was surrounded by controversy. Jesus even asked His disciples on one occasion, "'Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?' So they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets'" (Matt. 16:13-14).

Churches of Christ are often held in a negative light because we do not use musical instruments in our worship services. Some have assumed we don't because we can't afford them. While it may be controversial because it is so widely accepted in denominations, people don't realize that there is no authority for their use. Scripture gives us the authority to sing (Eph. 6:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15-16). Granted, instruments were used in the Old Covenant with the Jews, but there is no mention of their usage in the New Covenant. So the authority for their use is not found. To use them would constitute an addition to God's Word; to presume upon His authority.

There will always be matters in which we do not agree. We may, for instance, not agree on the gift of the Holy Spirit, Paul's thorn in the flesh, or even which Bible translation should we use. But we must be extremely careful in seeking out authority for what we do and practice, especially in the Worship service.

Be cautious of your demeanor when controversies arise. We must not act like the people of the world. Hatred and strife are so detrimental to the body of Christ.

Always remember that God's Word is the divine standard and the source for determining what is right and wrong. Many controversies arise from sentiments such as, "I think," or, "I feel." Let God determine what is true, noble, and right.