

## **"My Ways Which Are In Christ"**

*"For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17).*

*"For this cause."* The word "for" indicates "because; for this reason." In this instance the reason Paul had sent Timothy to Corinth was stated further in the sentence. Timothy was Paul's faithful helper; a "one of a kind." Paul wrote of him to the Philippians, *"I have no man like-minded who will care truly for your state"* (Phil. 2:20). Paul sent Timothy to the Corinthians that he might *"put them in remembrance"* of his ways in Christ.

Remembering the ways of Paul at the time he was present with them was important to the Corinthians. It was obedience to that teaching that made the Corinthians what they were. Besides this, Paul had delivered them the gospel of Christ which he had received by revelation from Christ, which gospel could not be changed nor added to. The Galatians were told, *"Though we or an angel from heaven should preach unto you gospel other than what which we preached unto you, let him be anathema"* (Gal. 1:6-9). Remaining steadfast in that teaching would be comparable to Jeremiah's exhortation: *"Stand in the ways and see and ask for the old paths wherein is the good way, and walk therein and ye shall find rest for your souls"* (Jer. 6:16). There is just one faith, one gospel and we must abide in it. *"As I teach everywhere in every church."* Paul was consistent in his teaching. He did not teach one thing in one church; another thing in another church. Whatever he taught about salvation to the Corinthians, he taught to the Ephesians, the Thessalonians, and the Philippians. Trust could not be placed in Paul (or any other teacher) who was inconsistent in his teaching. Such a person would soon lose whatever "credibility he had ever had." How ridiculous it would have been for Paul to have taught the Corinthians that they had to be baptized in order to be saved but had taught the Romans that baptism was not essential to salvation; to have taught the Thessalonians that baptism was only immersion but had taught the Ephesians that either sprinkling, pouring, or immersion could be administered as baptism. How confusing had he taught the Colossians that infants were to be baptized, but taught the Bereans that only adults were subjects of baptism! Had Paul taught in this way, who would ever had given heed to anything he said, had men knowledge of what he had done? Not only is this true, but how could any churches be united with such contrary teaching of this? Think what confusion would have reigned had some from Rome (who had been taught by Paul that baptism was not essential to salvation); moved to Corinth to live and which church had been taught that baptism was essential to salvation? What chaos

would have reigned throughout the Grecian world had Paul taught divergent views about baptism, the Lord's Supper, apostasy, morality, marriage and divorce, or a host of other doctrines. The church would long since ceased to exist, for how could it stand with such teaching? Jesus said, "*A kingdom divided against itself shall not stand*" (Mk. 13:8). It was ethically and honorably necessary that Paul teach the same thing in every church. What reasonable person would disagree with this conclusion?

Question: If it was necessary that Paul teach the same thing in every church, is it not necessary all teach the same thing in every church? Can there ever be unity unless all teach the same thing, whether it be one man who teaches two different doctrines or two different men who teach different doctrines? "*Whoso goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God ... If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works*" (2 John 9-11).

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