

*The Right Way*  
By W. W. OTEY



W. W. Otey was born near Snowville, Va., March 14, 1867. He married Minnie Showalter in 1885. His present address is Belle Plaine, Kans. For twenty years he wrote for a religious journal and contributed articles to four other papers. In 1908 he engaged the noted debater, J. B. Briney, in Louisville, Ky., in a four days' debate on questions of instrumental music in worship and authority for societies.

In 1930 *Firm Foundation* published several thousand copies of his book, "Creation or Evolution." The book was revised, new material added, and printed in 1936 under the title, "The Origin and Destiny of Man." It was endorsed and used by four Christian colleges. He has been preaching and writing more than fifty years and has held meetings in about twenty states. He says one thing that distresses him most is that he has done so little for the salvation of the lost.

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## **THE RIGHT WAY**

**By W. W. OTEY**

Luke wrote to Theophilus, "That thou mightiest know the certainty of the things wherein thou wast instructed." (Luke 1:4.) There should not, and need not, be the least doubt as to the "certainty" of that which is believed and practiced by any believer in Christ. Yet there is serious doubt and "uncertainty" in multitudes. God is not at fault for He has made the way plain. The "uncertainty" is not due to . any lack of clearness in the word of God but to the theories of men. Many ask, "How am I to know the right way when so many different ways are taught and practiced?" There can be many wrong ways but only one right way—one way to heaven. If a way can be pointed out, every word of which can be read in the Bible, and that every well-informed Protestant says is right, may we not conclude with "certainty" that it must be the right way? We desire to do that in this writing.

Many often say, "My greatest objection to you people of the church of Christ is that you are so sure you are right and others are wrong." Well, friend, do you think you are right? If so, then you hold the same position. If you don't think you are right, then you should seek the right way and walk in it.

How may we know the "certainty" of what he believes and practices? First, every item of teaching and practice must be clearly read in the word of God. Nothing must be left untaught and practiced and nothing added to that which is clearly taught in the word of God. Members of the church of Christ confidently believe that they conform to the word of God in every item of teaching and practice. This is the foundation of their confidence of the "certainty" of their position. A second reason is the fact that every well-informed Protestant admits that every item of teaching and practice of the church of Christ is right. What greater "certainty" could one have than the testimony of both the Bible and all well-informed Protestants? No special effort will be made in this writing to prove by quotations from the Bible that every item that we teach and practice is plainly read in the Bible. Plain statements of what we teach and practice will be made, and then appeal to the reader to say whether it is right or wrong. It is suggested with all confidence that every reader will agree, because it is plainly taught in the word of God—the only infallible standards by which to measure.

1. We teach that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and contains all of the will of God to man. That the Bible should be believed, and that all of its commands that apply to those now living should be obeyed from the heart. That "every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in right-

eousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) Is this wrong? Everyone says it is right. On the foundation of Paul's statements that the word of God "furnishes the man of God unto every good work," we confidently build. No "good work" must be left untaught and anything not taught in the word of God is not a "good work," in a religious sense. Every Protestant bears witness that this is right.

2. We teach that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary as the only begotten Son of God; lived a sinless life; worked many miracles that prove His claim as the Son of God. We teach that His death made a full atonement for sin; that he was raised from the dead; gave the apostles the great commission to preach the gospel to every creature. We teach that in order to qualify the apostles to carry out His commission that the Holy Spirit was poured out on them to "guide them into all truth," and "bring all things to their remembrance that He had commanded them." In other words the Holy Spirit was given to enable them to preach the gospel without error, and to perform miracles to confirm the gospel. Does any Protestant suggest for a moment that this is wrong? Certainly not, but all say it is right.

3. We teach that the gospel must be preached just as it was preached by the apostles when guided by the Holy Spirit. Both the Bible and every Protestant testify that this is right.

4. We teach that sinners must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Not merely give an intellectual assent but believe with the whole heart. Is that right? Again there is not a dissenting voice.

5. We teach that the sinner must repent of all his sins. That the sinner must not only be sorry for his sins, but must hate sin and turn away from sin to a holy life; that his heart must be changed and purified, which will change his whole life. Here again the word of God and every Protestant affirm that the teaching of the church of Christ is right.

6. We teach that those who come to Christ in obedience must "confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus." Every Protestant denomination requires a confession of some kind in order to become a member. The church of Christ teaches that the sinner must "confess with the mouth that Jesus is the Son of God." (See Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8; Acts 8:36, 37, 38; Rom. 10:9, 10.) There is not one believer in Christ who will say this is wrong, but all say it is right.

7. We teach that Christ commanded baptism, and that His commands must be obeyed in order for us to be saved or pardoned. "Christ became the author of eternal salvation unto them that obey Him." (Heb. 5:9.) On this point both witnesses—the Bible and every Protestant—agree.

8. We teach that in order to obey the command of Christ to be baptized one must be immersed — "buried therefore with him through baptism into death:" and "raised up to walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4.) Does

any one say it is wrong to obey the command to be baptized? Not a single well-informed Protestant will say it is wrong. True, many say baptism, though commanded by Christ, is a non-essential. Yet almost all Protestant denominations demand what they call baptism in order to become members of their respective organizations. Is it right to be immersed? I have never heard of any one who said it is wrong to be immersed. Many say sprinkling or pouring water on believers in Christ will do. But none say it is wrong to be immersed. Once more both witnesses, the Bible and all Protestants, agree in bearing witness that the teaching of the church is not wrong but is right. 9. The church of Christ teaches that when the sinner has heard the gospel, received and retained it in his heart; believed on Christ as the Son of God with all his heart; repented of all his sins and turned away from evil thoughts, words and deeds; confessed faith in Christ as the Son of God; and has been immersed into the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit; that such a one is pardoned, saved from past sins, is a child of God, in the kingdom or church, which is the spiritual body of Christ. And I have never heard of one who would deny that such a one is pardoned and saved from all past sins. Without the shadow of a doubt both the word of God and all Protestants bear witness that what the church of Christ teaches as to the "certainty" of the exact place where and when the sinner is saved.

"But," asks one, "is there no dis-

agreement between the teaching of the church of Christ and Protestant denominations?" Yes, there is some disagreement. What is the point of disagreement? Others teach that the sinner is saved immediately when he believes on Christ. In other words, they teach the sinner is saved by faith only or alone, before he fully obeys the gospel. Suppose it might be possible that the sinner is saved just when he believes, and before he obeys the gospel. Even in that case we are still right, for we teach all the faith in Christ that any can teach. If he is saved by the faith only or immediately when he believes, certainly he is still saved after he fully obeys the gospel. If it be contended that the sinner is saved by faith and repentance and stress its necessity in order to be saved, as strongly as it is possible for any to do. We teach and urge all the faith and repentance that any religious people teach. So if they are right we are still right, even by their own admission. There is no question in the minds of any whether the sinner is saved at the point we teach he is saved, for all agree on that point. The only question that can be raised is whether the sinner is saved by faith only or faith alone, or by faith and repentance before he has obeyed the gospel; before he has "obeyed from the heart that form or doctrine delivered them. Being then made free from sin, ye become the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:17, 18.) No one denies or doubts the "certainty" that the sinner is saved when he has believed on Christ with the whole



heart, repented of all past sins, confessed his faith in Christ and been immersed. All doubts and "uncertainty" are in regard to what others teach, but no doubts or "uncertainty" about what the church of Christ teaches.

10. All religious people have a form of worship that they observe when they assemble but all do not observe the same acts of worship. No Protestant would join the Catholics in their worship when they burn incense, count beads, pray to the virgin Mary, and such like religious practices. The only reason offered is that the Lord did not command such things to be done as worship in the church he established. When the church of Christ assembles the members engage in the "apostles doctrine" or teaching, "in fellowship" or the contribution, "in prayers," "singing spiritual songs," and "breaking bread" which is the Lord's supper. (Acts 2:41, 42; Eph. 5:19.) The church established by Christ observed these five acts of worship and no more. The church of Christ today observes these five acts of worship and no more. That this is right is borne witness to by both the Bible and all Protestants. Not a single act of Christ is in doubt. All doubts are in regard to acts of worship, observed by Protestants, that the Lord did not command.

11. The church of Christ observes the communion or the Lord's supper every first day of the week, Sunday. All say it is right to observe the Lord's supper. But many say once a

year, or four times a year will do. But none say it is wrong to eat of the Lord's supper every Lord's day. Again, all declare that the practice of the church of Christ is right. Not one says it is wrong. There is not one who calls it in question.

12. Each local congregation of the church of Christ, with elders and deacons, guided by the word of God, manages its own affairs, and is independent of all outside authority. There is no conference, board of bishops, synod, convention, missionary board, or any other form of ecclesiastical organization, formed by uninspired men, to write creeds, make laws and govern believers in Christ, by assuming the law-making and governing authority that belong alone to Christ as supreme king and lawgiver to rule His people. The church of Christ in form of government, laws by which ruled—the word of God— acts of worship, names accepted, and in every other particular is an exact reproduction of the first model congregation formed by Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit that spoke through and guided the apostles. "Even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount." (Heb. 8:5.) God showed Moses a "pattern" and commanded him to make the tabernacle which was a type of the church according to that "pattern." He established "pattern" congregations under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. The congregations of the churches of

Christ today are reproduced to be exactly like the first model. The church of Christ acknowledges Christ as their king and through the apostles as guided by the Holy Spirit, as their only law-giver. Is this all wrong? No one will say it is wrong, but all unite in saying it is right. All questions of doubt are in regard to what others do in these matters. Is it right to form a denomination which in its form and its government is entirely different from that which the Lord formed? Is it right to ignore Christ as our only lawgiver and allow uninspired men to write creeds, make laws and govern believers in Christ? Is it right to form an ecclesiasticism, modeled after that of the Roman Catholics in many particulars, even though in a modified form? The serious question of doubt is in regard to what others teach and practice. Shall Christ rule His subjects by His law—the gospel? Or shall uninspired men legislate and make creeds and laws of their own and rule the subjects of Christ the king?

The word "church," as used in the New Testament, sometimes refers to all the saved in Christ, and sometimes to the local congregation. We refer to the saved in Christ as the church, the church of God and often as the church of Christ. These are the names applied to the church as a whole or to be a local congregation by the Holy Spirit as He spoke and wrote through the apostles. Again every one says this is right; no one says it is wrong.

13. We call the individual members

of the church of Christ Christians. We insist that others should call us by the name Christian. Yet others persist in calling us by a nickname that we utterly reject. All other religious people are treated as they would have others treat them. They are called by the names they call themselves. But others will not treat us as they wish to be treated in the name they wear. Why is this? Should we select any name not taught by the Lord and call ourselves by that name, don't you think others would call us by that humanly formed name? Then why not just call us Christians, the name we call ourselves? Is it because we desire to wear the name of Christ only, while others add another name? It is our desire that all believers in Christ should wear no other name than that of Christian. Is it right to wear no name except Christian? (See Isa. 2:2, 3; Acts 4:12; 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16.)

The only question is whether it is right to reject the name Christian and wear some other name. Is the church the bride of Christ? (See 1 Cor. 11:2, Rev. 21:2.) Will the wife who loves and honors her husband wear any other name than his name? Can a wife honor her husband by adding another name to that of her husband and giving it her preference? At the very least this is just what denominations do in regard to the religious names they call themselves. Ask any one of them by what name they call themselves religiously, and without an execution they will tell you they are Methodist, Baptist,

Presbyterian or some of the other religious names not even mentioned in the word of God, names that the Lord never gave to the members of His church which is His spiritual bride. Do you wish to call yourself by a name the Lord never gave to His people? Is it not enough to wear His name only, just be called a Christian?

Suppose that tonight every book that has ever been written on religion except the Bible should be destroyed. And that every line and sentence, written or printed anywhere, on religion that is not plainly recorded in the Bible should be erased and destroyed. Suppose, further, that every doctrine, practice and name not recorded in the Bible should be utterly forgotten tonight so that it never could be remembered again. Suppose that all this should happen tonight, what would be the religious condition tomorrow? There would be millions of believers in Christ who would not so much as know the religious names by which they had called themselves. They are not written in the Bible, and would have been destroyed and forgotten. Not a single denomination, from the Catholics down, could carry on its religious work and government. They would be in the utmost confusion. Their creeds by which they direct their work and worship and govern themselves would have been destroyed and forgotten. Much of their worship is not recorded in the Bible, and would be forgotten. Their creeds would be no more than blank pages except a few disjointed, misapplied

quotations from the Bible remaining.

Every sentence not recorded in the Bible would have faded and left blank pages. As astounding as it may seem, not a single denomination could establish legal title to a single foot of land. The lines in their deeds where their religious names had been, and in which names they formerly held their title, would be blank, And their religious names would have been forgotten. The lines where their religious names as Methodist Church, Baptist Church, Presbyterian Church, and all other churches whose names are not recorded in the Bible, would be blank, and no legal title could be established.

Destroy every book written on religion except the Bible, erase every sentence wherever found, printed or written, on religion that cannot be read in the Bible, forget every item of teaching and practice not clearly recorded in the Bible—let all this happen as above suggested—and it would not disturb the church of Christ in the least measure. Every item that is taught and practiced by the church of Christ, whether it be how to become a Christian, the kind of church government, the officers and their duties, or how to worship, can be read plainly from the Bible. Their legal title to land would be secure.

No denomination will endorse the creed form of church government, terms of admission into the church, or the name they wear of any other denomination. No two denominations agree on the things just mentioned. Each denomination accepts the

creeds, laws, worship, government and names of its own and rejects all others. No two denominations endorse each other. But none will affirm that any item taught and practiced by the church of Christ is wrong. The teaching and practice that can be read in every item from the word of God and is endorsed as right by all denominations has the seal of "certainty" that it is right.