

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM  
*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*  
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

**Preacher / bulletin editor:**

Kris Vilander, (256) 472-1065

**E-mail:** kris@haysmillchurchofchrist.org

**Website:** www.haysmillchurchofchrist.org

"...Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed..."

—Acts 17:11,12

**Servants during December:**

**Songleader:** Dwight (1), Stanley (8),  
 Larry (15), Dwight (22), Stanley (29)

**Reading:** Stanley

**Announcements:** Larry

**Table:** Mike M, Marty, Stanley

**Wednesday Lesson:** Larry (4), Stanley  
 (11), Kris (18), Larry (25)

**Area Meetings:**

**Eastside (Athens),** Sundays 3pm,  
 various speakers

**Hays Mill church of Christ**

21705 Hays Mill Road  
 Elkmont, AL 35620

# The Bible . Examiner

"Examine everything carefully..." 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

Volume 7

December 15, 2024

Number 28

## Why and Why Not

By R. L. Whiteside

Perhaps none of us can always give a sensible reason as to why we do some things, and as to why we do not do other things. It is not possible for anyone to know all the circumstances, forces and prejudices that control his actions; but usually we can name some reason or motive that we think was the main force that determined our actions. Some men act from motive, yet why some good men do certain things puzzles me. I cannot see why men write creeds, or Confessions of Faith, or Disciplines, even though their intentions are to do good. Much harm has been done by people who intended to do good, but such people are blind to the harmfulness of their course.

People should have good understanding as well as good intentions. Occasionally I see an article headed, "What the Church of Christ Believes." The writer has the items numbered very much after the pattern found in the various other creeds. I use the term "other creeds" advisedly, for when a man, or a group of men, sets forth in a formal way what any group of people believe, the product is a creed or a Confession of


Faith, even though it does not have the authority of a formally adopted Discipline. I object to such creeds, even though nobody attempts to enforce them on any one; for when any man preaches a sermon or writes an article on "What We Believe," or, "What the Church of Christ Believes," he includes me, and I object. I have not authorized any man to state my creed; neither do I think any church of the Lord has authorized him to do so. The preacher has assumed that authority. Well, I am older than any preacher that is younger than I am. Yes, sir; but I have never, so far as I remember, preached a sermon nor written an article on "What the Church Believes." I have said much about what people should believe, but I am not going to assume the authority to tell the world what the church believes. I seriously doubt that the one who sets forth such creeds knows what the church is; he certainly does not know what every member of the church believes. Preachers make mistakes. I have read some articles and heard some sermons, in which there were some things I do not believe. I do not read these small creeds

written by amateur creed makers.

A close companion to "What the Church of Christ Believes" is, "What the Church of Christ Teaches." If you want to preach a sermon or write an article on "What the Church Teaches," then I am not interested. In religious matters I am interested only in what the Lord teaches in the Bible. To put emphasis on what the church teaches is too much like Roman Catholicism and some other groups that sprang from the Roman church. Besides, what is this church that teaches thus and so? And who has been authorized to give an outline of what it teaches?

Why not make some change in our methods of dealing with the music question? Have we not acted too much on the defensive? A defensive fight may sometimes be necessary, but only when attacked; but even then the defense should be turned into attack as soon as possible. A defensive fight never gets an army anywhere. When you preach or write on why you do not use mechanical instruments of music in the worship are you not assuming a defensive attitude? Has anyone attacked you for not using mechanical instruments? Then why so much defense? Why not make an aggressive attack on those who use them? Oh, I know we do some attacking when we preach and write on why we do

not use the instruments, but our theme sounds altogether defensive. Why not announce something like this: The Sinfulness and the Evil Results of Mechanical Instruments in the Public Worship?

And why not also make an attack on much along that line while we are showing that a Christian can do in and through the church all that God intended for him to do. But people need to be reminded over and over of the evils to which such innovations have led—divided churches, open membership, community churches, and skepticism of all sorts. The early advocates of these innovations never dreamed that the younger men whom they influenced would so far depart from the truth of God as some of them have gone. But what has happened was inevitable. People cannot uphold the integrity and sanctity of a principle or a law that they violate. Jesus told the Pharisees that they compassed sea and land to make one proselyte; and when they had made one, they made him tenfold more a child of hell than themselves. And so it has happened to these early advocates of innovations and the people they influence. Those who have not gone so far need to be forcibly and often reminded of the direction in which they are headed. 

Scriptures, and discoursing with a group of Baptists called "reformers," Smith began to study his way out of credalism, and to preach the pure, undenominational gospel of Christ. This led to his rejection by the more "orthodox" Baptists, and expulsion from some Baptist Associations.

Then, after many years away from home, he returned to visit his aged mother. The following is a touching account of their reunion, as taken from "LIFE OF ELDER JOHN SMITH" by John A. Williams; published April 1870.

"...They tell me, John, that you have left us! They say that you deny the good Spirit that once gave you peace, and that you tell poor sinners that water can wash away their sins! For a long time I would not believe them; but why didn't you wait till your poor old mother was dead and gone?"

"Mother," said he, "I confess that my mind has undergone some change in reference to the doctrines that I once held as true; but many of the things that you have heard about me are idle tales. I do not teach nor believe such things. I have never denied the Spirit, nor taught that water can wash away sins."

"But, if you had only lived and preached as you once did, a few years longer, John, it would not have hurt me; I

could have died so much happier;" and she burst into a flood of complaining tears.


He tried, with all his art, to assuage her grief, but his words were powerless. He continued to sit by her side in silence, painfully conscious that he had not the address to wipe away her tears.

"Mother, on your account," said he at length, "I would be glad if I were still a Baptist; but I could not then be true to my convictions of duty. It pains me, beyond expression, to wound the feelings of my mother; and I will now make you, as I regard it, a fair proposition: I will turn back and preach Calvinism as faithfully as ever I did, so long as you live, should I survive you, provided you will agree to answer for me, in the day of judgement, should I be found wrong in so doing."

"Ah, John," she replied, "I can't do that. I shall have to answer for myself in that day, and so must you, my poor boy!"

"Well," said he, "if I must answer for myself then, do you not think, mother, that I ought to believe and act for myself now?"

She mused for some time, and then, wiping her eyes, replied: "I suppose you are right, Johnny; you ought to think for yourself. But you will have to account for it in the great day."

—via *Plain Talk*, October, 1964. 

# Yes, Mother, I have changed!

*By Robert F. Turner*

John Smith, born 1784, nicknamed "Racoon," was a Calvinistic Baptist preacher of pioneer days. For years he preached the creed-bound Baptist

dogmas of that day, and affiliated with regular Baptist Associations.

But John Smith was an independent and critical thinker. Reading the

## Remember in Prayer

**Betty** is having a good deal of pain in her leg; **Mike B and his family** continue to deal with his cancer. **Mark Horton** may begin radiation treatment for prostate cancer in January. **Hazel** is doing well, but would like to go home. Pray also for **Barbara; Betty; Carolyn; Joshua V; Kathy M; Faye;** and **the Pollard Family.**

*Please continue to pray for our local jailors and inmates; also for the safety of our local officers of the law. As we draw near to the inauguration and tensions in the world heighten, please pray for the safety, wisdom, and most particularly the salvation, of our local, state, and national leaders.* 