

**General Topics :: Are we servants of the Holy Spirit or prisoners of the organization?**

**Are we servants of the Holy Spirit or prisoners of the organization?, on: 2017/10/11 21:12**

There is a key aspect of life in Christ, it is the power of the Holy Spirit. Most would acknowledge this but many will not truly know what indeed they are acknowledging. What does it mean to be led of the Spirit as opposed to being prisoners of the organization? Let me give you a Biblical example of what it means to me.

Eze 47:9 And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.....  
.. Eze 47:11 But the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

What we see here in the prophet's vision is the power of the Holy Spirit going forth, flowing out, always moving, always fresh always healing. In comparison we see what happens in the miry places, in the marshes where the water does not flow. It becomes stagnant and in those places there is no healing and it slowly turns to salt and all life eventually dies. This is such a stark difference. On the one hand we have on either side of the flowing river, evergreen trees, like the trees from Psa 1:3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. On the other hand we have stagnant pools that go nowhere and are slowly dying or dead. There is no life in the miry places, there is no life in the marshes. This, to me, represents the Christian organizations of the world, the denominations.

In all things and at all times the Holy Spirit must be preeminent. If He is not then your church or your organization is dying. Now a dying man can look very healthy is that not right? It all depends upon where he is in the dying process. Initially there may be no outward signs at all, yet over time he begins to succumb to death. In regard to organizations this process may take days, months, years or even century's. An unknown author wrote the following which I subscribe to.....

"There are many classifications into which men and women may be divided-upper, middle or lower class; rich, well to do and poor; religious, sceptical and atheist;... and so forth and so on. But as I think, the only categorization which really matters is that which divides men as between Servants of the Spirit and Prisoners of the Organization. That classification which cuts right across all other classifications, is indeed a fundamental one. The idea, the inspiration, originates in the internal world, the world of the Spirit... the idea having embodied itself in the organization, the organization then proceeds gradually to slay the idea which gave it birth.

In the field of religion a prophet, an inspired man will see a vision of truth. He expresses that vision as best he may in words. Upon what his disciples understand of the prophet's message an organization, a church is built. The half understood message is crystalized into a creed. Before long the principal concern of the church will be to sustain itself as an organization."

You see, the moment the vision is shared and the people stop along the way and construct a structure or an organization in honor of the vision rather than simply moving forward on the current of the vision to the next vision, death begins its process in the marshes and the miry static places that many of us now call houses of worship. The preeminence of the Holy Spirit, of Jesus in our midst, is quite simply the current that keeps us moving and brings life to everything that it touches. The vision of a man or organization that usurps the preeminent Christ whether willingly or unwittingly is already in the process of dying.

As the life of the Spirit wanes in the gathering then it must be gradually replaced by the passion of a man or a group. Rather than entering into His presence people begin to be entertained. They become spectators and not participators and begin to slowly. All over the land the gathering places are in the process of death, various stages perhaps, but death none the less. Outside of being a servant to the Holy Spirit and the preeminence of Jesus there is only death, no matter how skillfully it is covered up and masked, it is death by any other name. We shall be servants of the Holy Spirit or we shall be prisoners of the organization but we cannot be both.....bro Frank

**Re: Are we servants of the Holy Spirit or prisoners of the organization? - posted by twayneb (), on: 2017/10/12 8:15**

Frank: I was just reading Frank Bartleman's accounts of Azusa Street last night. His message was exactly what you just said. It is Christ who is the head of the church, and He directs His body through the Holy Spirit.

**Re: Are we servants of the Holy Spirit or prisoners of the organization?, on: 2017/10/12 9:30**

Yes Lord Jesus.

Thanks for the word Frank.

I also think of William Booth, the Wesleyans, Menno Simmons, Calvin, Lutheran, etc. and what we read and know of their life in the Holy Spirit. Then, we see the organizations that followed and were built upon man's foundation and not upon Jesus Christ's foundation. Even today when we attend Christian meetings or conferences we sometimes speak about the speaker and not about what the Holy Spirit and the Head of the body of Christ is speaking.

According to the scriptures let each one take care how he builds upon a foundation:

4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," 20 and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." 21 So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's (1 Cor. 3).

**Re: , on: 2017/10/12 12:21**

Ken writes.....

"I also think of William Booth, the Wesleyans, Menno Simmons, Calvin, Lutheran, etc. and what we read and know of their life in the Holy Spirit. Then, we see the organizations that followed and were built upon man's foundation and not upon Jesus Christ's foundation. Even today when we attend Christian meetings or conferences we sometimes speak about the speaker and not about what the Holy Spirit and the Head of the body of Christ is speaking."

Amen, these are good examples brother.....bro Frank

**General Topics :: Are we servants of the Holy Spirit or prisoners of the organization?**

**Re: , on: 2017/10/12 12:22**

Travis writes.....

"I was just reading Frank Bartleman's accounts of Azusa Street last night. His message was exactly what you just said. It is Christ who is the head of the church, and He directs His body through the Holy Spirit."

Amen, Christ indeed is the head of His Church and must be preeminent.....bro Frank

**Re: Are we servants of the Holy Spirit or prisoners of the organization? - posted by murrcoir (), on: 2017/10/12 17:43**

Sadly some of the first words I heard God speak to me was -

"The church is dead"

Your words reminded of this quote: All over the land the gathering places are in the process of death, various stages perhaps, but death none the less.

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? Rom 6:16

The options are: obedience, which leads to righteousness; or slaves to sin or as you said (prisoners of the organization)

Let us offer ourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness

**Re: , on: 2017/10/12 19:45**

Colin writes.....

"Let us offer ourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness."

Amen brother.....bro Frank

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2017/10/12 20:11**

Quote:  
-----You see, the moment the vision is shared and the people stop along the way and construct a structure or an organization in honor of the vision rather than simply moving forward on the current of the vision to the next vision, death begins its process in the marshes and the miry static places that many of us now call houses of worship. The preeminence of the Holy Spirit, of Jesus in our midst, is quite simply the current that keeps us moving and brings life to everything that it touches. The vision of a man or organization that usurps the preeminent Christ whether willingly or unwittingly is already in the process of dying.  
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Brother,

Of course I agree that if people are just seeking to keep an organization or church traditions going without any personal connection with God, it is death to those people as they are not in contact with the Head. But the organization of the Church itself is ordained of God who wrote by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. So the organization itself is not wrong it is the problem of not being in fellowship with the organizer!

God's intention is for us to follow His commands, the way of Christ. His words are not optional or for our interpretation but obedience. Along with the writings of the apostles by the Holy Spirit we find what God intends for us as the Church (the Kingdom of God).

All groups such as Waldensians followed the Scriptures with Biblical elders, Lords Supper, Head Coverings, Following the Teachings of Christ literally, etc.

**Re: , on: 2017/10/12 20:30**

Greg writes.....

"Of course I agree that if people are just seeking to keep an organization or church traditions going without any personal connection with God, it is death to those people as they are not in contact with the Head."

It is not about "contact with the head." If the Lord is preeminent in anyone's life they will experience His presence. It is about the preeminence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. If men are in charge, and God knows, then whatever the gathering is, whatever the name of the gathering or the denomination is, death is overtaking it. It is not about an organization itself. If being right or wrong, it is about whether one follows the Holy Spirit, is a servant of the Holy Spirit. If he or she is not, then that one is a prisoner to "the organization," whatever organization that is.....bro Frank

**Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/10/12 23:04**

Dangerous words bro Frank: I'd give you about 15 seconds after you read that in a ministerial group before they dismiss you from the pulpit and walked you out.

Men fight hard for organizations,  
Men love the admiration of other men  
Men enjoy the success of numbers, finances, buildings, converts, teens and children in their organization.  
Men do all these things for Jesus, by Jesus and unto Jesus glory...when they ask  
How are we dying when God is building according to the vision he gave us...and your vision is no more than a dismissal of our vision. Tell us how you expect us to believe you?

**Re: Kenneth - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2017/10/13 0:05**

1 Cor. 3:5 -- What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each.

1 Cor. 3:11 -- "For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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William Law (1686-1761) wrote this:

Great, good, and divine teachers, you say, were many of the fathers: I say nothing to it, but that much more great, good, and divine is he, who is always teaching within you, ever standing and knocking at the door of your heart, with the words of eternal life.

You perhaps may ask, why I go on writing books myself, if there is but one true, and divine teacher? I answer, though there is but one bridegroom, that can furnish the blessing of the marriage feast, yet his servants are sent out to invite the guests. This is the unalterable difference between Christ's teaching, and the teaching of those, who only publish the glad tidings of him. They are not the bridegroom, and therefore have not the bridegroom's voice. They are not the light, but only sent to bear witness of it. And as the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease"; so every faithful teacher, as soon as he has led to the true teacher, it must decrease, and end, as soon as it has led to the true teacher.

All that I have written for near thirty years, has been only to show, that we have no master but Christ, nor can have any living divine knowledge, but from his holy nature born and revealed in us -- that dying to self, to be born again of Christ, is the one only possible salvation of the sons of fallen Adam.

**General Topics :: Are we servants of the Holy Spirit or prisoners of the organization?**

**Re: , on: 2017/10/13 1:43**

Marvin writes.....

"Men fight hard for organizations,  
Men love the admiration of other men  
Men enjoy the success of numbers, finances, buildings, converts, teens and children in their organization."

Yes indeed and it is wearisome to the soul and in most cases is the exact opposite of us decreasing and the Lord increasing.....His preeminence. I agree with what you said about 15 seconds and have first hand experience of this which is fine, the truth is the truth and one stands or falls upon what we do with and how we handle the truth.....bro Frank

**Re: Are we servants of the Holy Spirit or prisoners of the organization?, on: 2017/10/13 17:48**

I must examine myself first according to the faith, to Christ, the scriptures and by the conviction of the Holy Spirit of God.

When I and anybody else is commenting about other denominations, churches, etc.; I have to ask myself: Am I (we) holding up a higher standard? Am I (we) demonstrating the power of God in our lives as Paul describes:

"1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2).

"The Book of Acts is original, spontaneous, and powerful. It is a glory. It is utterly unique in every situation, given by God at that moment. We need to be restored to that high and holy standard, even if it costs us everything—our buildings, our programs, our choirs, our amplifiers, and our guitars—all of it!" (Katz, 1977, A Man in Whom the Spirit of God is).

Are we known in hell? Do the demons know our names?

"If I'm not known in hell, I'm not worth a hill of beans much good. The demon said Jesus I know and Paul I know (Acts 19:15). (Is there any better compliment than this?)" (Ravenhill).

"Many pastors criticize me for taking the Gospel so seriously. But do they really think on Judgment Day, Christ will chastise me, saying, "Leonard, you took Me too seriously"(Ravenhill).

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2017/10/13 20:38**

Quote:  
----- It is not about an organization itself being right or wrong, it is about whether one follows the Holy Spirit, is a servant of the Holy Spirit. If he or she is not, then that one is a prisoner to "the organization," whatever organization that is.....bro Frank  
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Brothers,

we have to think hard that the New Testament was not of single believers but of groups of saints with leadership over them. Being led of the Holy Spirit does not mean anti-obedience or anti-structure, as we clearly see structure of the Church in the book of Acts and Epistles.

The Church God desires is an obedient Church following in His ways. I would argue there is "one" organization, it is the Scriptural Church that the Holy Spirit gives us in the New Testament. Remnant groups and in the beginning mainstream Christianity (as all were one in the beginning) have always sought and followed after the true pattern of the Church.

Looking at any group from the Paulicians to the Waldensians to the Anabaptists and onward they were very structured and sought by the Holy Spirit to obey Scriptures and their Lord.

So it can be asked in our day are we willing to obey the Lord and Scriptures and gather as the New Testament Church or are we going to say that all is essentially wrong and not gather with others. My point is that there is always an "organization" the Church is not like the wind or sand, it has structure and godly principles that God led for us to follow. Of course there are those who mis-represent the Church but that is our choice in all generations to follow with "others" in the way that all have followed before, God is not leading to isolation for saints or a wilderness, all remnant groups in the past that God worked in became established and gave testimony for "their generation" of a God who calls out a "Church" (group of people for His purpose).

**Re: , on: 2017/10/13 21:03**

Greg writes....

"we have to think hard that the New Testament was not of single believers but of groups of saints with leadership over them. Being led of the Holy Spirit does not mean anti-obedience or anti-structure, as we clearly see structure of the Church in the book of Acts and Epistles."

That is simply tired old cliches and straw men. The greatest and most precise view that we have of a New Testament church and its structure does not come from the church fathers, so called, it comes from 1 Cor 14. Almost every single gathering today denies the Word of God by their in-actions and disobedience of clearly laid out directions and structure from God Himself. If men want to stick to the structures of men and be prisoners of the organization, that is fine, we do have free will. If saints would be servants of the Holy Spirit they would gather Biblically and meet in obedience to the Word of God, not the notions of men. Greg, you were privileged to be part of such meetings a couple of years ago in Missouri... ..bro Frank

**Re: , on: 2017/10/13 22:38**

There has to be the simplicity in Christ and those who have come to know the person of Christ and have chosen to remain in Christ and fellowship with those who will encourage others in the obedience of the faith, in Christ alone. What we see today in Western churches is confusion, disorder, division and the lack of the Holy presence of God. For those of us who have tasted of the Lord we find it hard to fellowship with those who are in bondage to the organization and not bond slaves of Jesus Christ. I need my brethren in Christ, but do I need to submit to manmade authority, which boasts in man and not in the cross? Christ had promised to build His church and He is building it. However, where can you point me to a local body of Christ who is not a slave to man, does not boast in man, slave to taxes, slave to denominational hierarchy, slave to building expenses, slave to salaries, etc.? But instead a local body who does not fear man, but fears God because they are gathering in His Holy presence. Please point me in the direction of an anointed local body of Christ.

Christ the Wisdom and Power of God

18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God  
. 19 For it is written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that,



as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1).

**Re: , on: 2017/10/13 23:41**

Bro Ken writes.....

"There has to be the simplicity in Christ and those who have come to know the person of Christ and have chosen to remain in Christ and fellowship with those who will encourage others in the obedience of the faith, in Christ alone. What we see today in Western churches is confusion, disorder, division and the lack of the Holy presence of God. For those of us who have tasted of the Lord we find it hard to fellowship with those who are in bondage to the organization and not bond slaves of Jesus Christ. I need my brethren in Christ, but do I need to submit to manmade authority, which boasts in man and not in the cross? Christ had promised to build His church and He is building it. However, where can you point me to a local body of Christ who is not a slave to man, does not boast in man, slave to taxes, slave to denominational hierarchy, slave to building expenses, slave to salaries, etc.? But instead a local body who does not fear man, but fears God because they are gathering in His Holy presence. Please point me in the direction of an anointed local body of Christ."

Amen brother. You can imagine those who worshiped at the temple of Dan, slandering those who refused to join in with something that had clearly mixed in the world with the truth and had come up with something full of idolatry.....bro Frank

**Re: , on: 2017/10/14 3:55**

This is another sad thread with no edification.

Frank, you are just leading us around in a circle and you don't have a balanced scriptural view.

Greg writes....

"we have to think hard that the New Testament was not of single believers but of groups of saints with leadership over them. Being led of the Holy Spirit does not mean anti-obedience or anti-structure, as we clearly see structure of the Church in the book of Acts and Epistles." This is 100% correct !

Acts 2:41 Those who embraced his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to the believers that day. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Paul established congregations and appointed elders.

Quote: "It is Christ who is the head of the church..." I don't think there is anybody here who would disagree. Christ is the head of an organisation which we now call "church". HE has given us instructions how to build it.

Quote: "I also think of William Booth, the Wesleyans, Menno Simmons, Calvin, Lutheran, etc. and what we read and know of their life in the Holy Spirit. Then, we see the organizations that followed and were built upon man's foundation and not upon Jesus Christ's foundation.

As a result of those men and the organisations they started millions were probably saved.

We have no right to sit on our computers and criticising those men while our own churches in the west are divided and full of compromises etc.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:21

**Re: , on: 2017/10/14 6:09**

Markuskiwi writes.....

"Paul established congregations and appointed elders."

Yes he did and no one would deny that, to say otherwise is just silly, but he also instructed us about how we should gather ( see 1 Cor 14)

"Christ is the head of an organisation which we now call "church"

Christ is the head of a Body, not an organization.

"As a result of those men and the organisations they started millions were probably saved."

The error of that statement should be apparent to most.

""We have no right to sit on our computers and criticising those men"

No one criticized these men, quite the opposite. You may want to re-read the original post and see that it is not these men that were critiqued, it was those who followed them or misunderstood them who became prisoners of an organization of their own making. Let us focus on the subject that was raised in the OP and let us not make overarching statements such as "This is another sad thread with no edification." It is just such a statement that is not edifying and merely a personal opinion.....bro Frank

**Re: , on: 2017/10/14 8:53**

There are obviously dear and precious saints in the denominational churches in my local city and cities all across America. However, how many of them are only members of the denomination and/or organization instead of solely bond-slaves of Jesus Christ? Where in scripture does it tell us to submit to an organization? Paul said follow me as I follow Christ and did he not leave the denominations and organizations of his day to follow Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit? Did not Luther, Calvin, Wesley, etc., leave the establishment and organizations to follow after Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit? Do saints today also do the same? Hence, the reason I am posting again on SI for the first time in years is because I love the saints and want to follow Christ and the Holy Spirit as did the saints of old until Christ does as He promised and builds His church in our local community. I testify before the Lord that I am posting to build up and not tear down the body of Christ. As the brother wrote we are [to submit to one another.](#) So I ask brother, please point me to a local body where my wife and I can do the following according to scriptures:

[Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.](#)

[In the same way you younger men must submit to your elders; and all of you must gird yourselves with humility towards one another, for God sets Himself against ..](#)

[Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account.](#)

[Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.](#)

[Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.](#)

[A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.](#)

[Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ... Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.](#)

[For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.](#)

[... But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another...](#)



**Re: - posted by noone (), on: 2017/10/14 10:01**

When one should speak about the sacred cow of organized religion I have learned that it will most often fall on ears that do not understand. Does this put the person speaking on a pedestal and the listeners below? Of course not! That is never the intention of the speaker that believes they have truly seen what the body COULD BE, NOT WHAT IT HAS BEEN, but that will be the perception of the ones that do not understand or think the person is speaking in circles. The ones that do not understand see this belief as a direct hit to the heart of their very life. As a direct hit to Jesus himself because they believe their organization is a direct mandate of Christ.

The speaker sees the organization as the eventual downfall of the life of Christ.

This is a very touchy subject...one that never ceases to amaze me...how one side will defend the organization to their death and the other side that sees the organization as death.

I have been out of the organization (one man in a paid position, clergy/laity, building on Sunday) for about 8 years. I have seen the looks, heard the concerns and have been told I will dry up without the organization. I have pretty much heard every argument on why I should stay in the organization and every argument on why I should leave it.

God has settled in my heart where I should be and where my family should be. I no longer get entangled in trying to PERSUADE someone of what I think about the organization. I will engage in honest conversation as long as no one is getting mad -including myself :)

My only challenge to every follower of Christ: Is Jesus your everything? Is the Holy Spirit teaching you? Are you searching the scriptures on your own? Can you establish your beliefs with just the Bible and the Holy Spirit and nothing else? Are you able to distinguish your beliefs from a man made statement of belief? Have you set down and questioned EVERYTHING that you believe and answer those questions with NO preconceived lens from man's interpretations?

If this is what your life in Christ looks like then HALLELUJAH!

I truly believe that there is no one way to do "church." The secret is: there is no secret. If I were to believe that there is one correct way then I would be going against my very belief that Jesus lives and moves as He sees fit. The body/church takes shape all around me every day. Anywhere where Jesus is living out from me and calling me out to do this or do that, be this or be that then His body is functioning and living. I do believe there is a good, better, best about living in God's will and I truly believe if you are living your life according to the questions I mentioned above then God and God alone will lead you into His perfect will.

I do believe we need each other. I do believe GOD WILL ASSEMBLE believers together. I do believe it is possible to live according to Ephesians about the body being built up in love...Jesus only. There is a season and time and place for all things. The detriment occurs when we settle down and live in a concrete foundation and not tent pegs (spiritually and physically.) Jesus is the only concrete cornerstone.

Blessings!

**Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2017/10/14 10:06**

The problem with such posts are, they are people who stand outside body of Christ and keep pointing fingers at others. Even a non Christian can do it. A famous TV preacher in USA who claims to do healing, came to India, the Hindu unbelievers were throwing stones at him for cheating in the name of healing. One does not need to be a Christian to throw stones. Hence throwing stones at Christian organization and accusing them using Bible, anyone can do. This entire post to me is like how the Pharisees threw stones at the women caught in adultery while they themselves living in Sin!

But only a Christian can do something to build the body of Christ in the locality. If you do nothing to build body of Christ in your locality, not even visit a church in years, then you have no authority to throw stones. At least these organizations are doing something for God instead of these unchurched Pharisees!

I am actively involved in building of Local Churches in the locality I live. But I believe God has a purpose for big denominational churches. I also work with Big denominational Churches in my free time. These denominational churches do not run by God's word, but God still uses them. I was born again in a big organizational Church. How can I speak evil of something that God used to bring me to Christ?

It is better to be slaves to an organizational Church than to be an arrogant unchurched Pharisees.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2017/10/14 11:02**

Well said brother Sreeram.

Quote:  
-----Almost every single gathering today denies the Word of God by their in-actions and disobedience of clearly laid out directions and structure from God Himself.  
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brother Franks words are clear, and we are free to disagree with him. I would like saints to look at them closely, "ALMOST EVERY SINGLE GATHERING TODAY" Does God really look at the body of Christ the same way brother? Have Christians all through history even the remnant groups missed it as they did not meet as 1 Cor 14 but with structure and "organization". Especially the Waldensians. Where are our examples other than modern day america of dis-illuminated hurt christians?

**Re: , on: 2017/10/14 12:49**

I do not agree with the spirit of some of those who are responding to Frank and others on this post. This is one of many reasons that saints do not post on SI anymore, or rarely, and why I will not continue to post unless I am led of the Lord. We are to judge 'righteously' and most of us have no way of knowing the suffering that is being endured by saints who were apart of the established and/or organized church and were fooled by spiritually abusive dogs and wolves, but have decided to step out in faith and follow Christ who led them to be alone for a season. Then we began to search for like-minded saints and we found SermonIndex (SI); then, we began to post on the forums and try to connect with saints and we were shut down. Why not build these saints up instead of tear them down? We do not really know what they have been through, what they are going through or really anything about them other than a post off of a forum where they are oftentimes sharing the fire burning in their bones! It is all throughout the scriptures, e.g.,

"I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock."

"Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh."

"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

"Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

WE can agree to disagree, but it is the spirit that is behind the disagreement that the Lord is concerned and if we do not judge it according to righteousness then God will and is judging it.

All of the men of God that we look up to and are promoted on SI were attacked, yet they were humbly broken, contrite in spirit, rejected, despised, conflicted from every direction, with battles on the outside and fear on the inside, etc., etc., and most all of these men of God followed Christ and we follow them because they followed Christ. Hence, one of the main reasons so many have flooded onto this website because they wanted to follow Christ and not man-made systems, which do not boast in the Lord and the cross of Jesus Christ. "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." And yet when some saints began to post on SI forums the spirit of Christ is quenched:

"But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that is illuminated becomes a light itself."

"For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light."

"By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother."

"Do not quench the Spirit."

One historical example of disagreeing in the spirit of Christ and love of God between saints whom had different views on doctrine is found in John Wesley's and George Whitefield's relationship and fellowship. To read the letters they exchanged to one another in their disagreements is like reading a love letter. I do not have the time to copy all the examples, but it is worth going through their letter exchanges. See examples below:

Below Whitefield writes to Wesley. In his letter he argues against Wesley's Christian perfectionism, universal redemption, and non-belief in the certainty of the final perseverance of the Christian:

Example 1: "The more I examine the writings of the most experienced men... the more I differ from your notion about not committing sin and your decrying the doctrines of election and the perseverance of the saints. I dread coming to England, unless you are resolved to oppose these truths with less warmth... I dread your coming to America because the work of God is carried on here... by doctrines quite opposite to those you hold... I write not this... from heat of Spirit, but out of love... Perhaps I may never see you again, 'til we meet in judgement; then if not before, you will know that sovereign, distinguishing, irresistible grace brought you to heaven."

Example 2:

"WHITEFIELD'S LETTER TO WESLEY

Bethesda in Georgia, Dec. 24, 1740

Reverend and very dear Brother,

God only knows what unspeakable sorrow of heart I have felt on your account since I left England last. Whether it be my infirmity or not, I frankly confess, that Jonah could not go with more reluctance against Nineveh, than I now take pen in hand to write against you. Was nature to speak, I had rather die than do it; and yet if I am faithful to God, and to my own and others' souls, I must not stand neutral any longer. I am very apprehensive that our common adversaries will rejoice to see us differing among ourselves. But what can I say? The children of God are in danger of falling into error. Nay, numbers have been misled, whom God has been pleased to work upon by my ministry, and a greater number are still calling aloud upon me to show also my opinion. I must then show that I know no man after the flesh, and that I have no respect to persons, any further than is consistent with my duty to my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ..."

Example 3:

John Wesley DEATH OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD

SERMON 53

(text of the 1872 edition)

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. MR. GEORGE WHITEFIELD

Preached at the Chapel in Tottenham-Court Road and at the Tabernacle, near Moorfields, on Sunday, November 18, 1770.

John Wesley

SERMON 53

(text of the 1872 edition)

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" Num. 23:10.

1. "Let my last end be like his!" How many of you join in this wish? Perhaps there are few of you who do not, even in this numerous congregation! And O that this wish may rest upon your minds! -- that it may not die away till your souls also are lodged "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest!"

2. An elaborate exposition of the text will not be expected on this occasion. It would detain you too long from the sadly-pleasing thought of your beloved brother, friend, and pastor; yea, and father too: for how many are here whom he hath "begotten in the Lord!" Will it not, then, be more suitable to your inclinations, as well as to this solemnity, directly to speak of this man of God, whom you have so often heard speaking in this place? -- the end of whose conversation ye know, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." And may we not,

I. Observe a few particulars of his life and death?

II. Take some view of his character? and,

III. Inquire how we may improve this awful providence, his sudden removal from us?

1. We may, in the first place, observe a few particulars of his life and death. He was born at Gloucester, in December, 1714, and put to a grammar-school there, when about twelve years old. When he was seventeen, he began to be seriously religious, and served God to the best of his knowledge. About eighteen he removed to the University, and was admitted at Pembroke College in Oxford; and about a year after he became acquainted with the Methodists (so called), whom from that time he loved as his own soul.

2. By them he was convinced that we "must be born again," or outward religion will profit us nothing. He joined with them in fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays; in visiting the sick and the prisoners; and in gathering up the very fragments of time, that no moment might be lost: and he changed the course of his studies; reading chiefly such books as entered into the heart of religion, and led directly to an experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

3. He was soon tried as with fire. Not only his reputation was lost, and some of his dearest friends forsook him; but he was exercised with inward trials, and those of the severest kind. Many nights he lay sleepless upon his bed; many days, prostrate on the ground. But after he had groaned several months under "the spirit of bondage," God was pleased to remove the heavy load, by giving him "the Spirit of adoption;" enabling him through a living faith, to lay hold on "the Son of His Love."

4. However, it was thought needful, for the recovery of his health, which was much impaired, that he should go into the country. He accordingly went to Gloucester, where God enabled him to awaken several young persons. These soon formed themselves into a little society, and were some of the first-fruits of his labor. Shortly after, he began to read, twice or thrice a week, to some poor people in the town; and every day to read to and pray with the prisoners in the county jail.

5. Being now about twenty-one years of age, he was solicited to enter into holy orders. Of this he was greatly afraid, being deeply sensible of his own insufficiency. But the Bishop himself sending for him, and telling him, "Though I had purposed to ordain none under three-and-twenty, yet I will ordain you whenever you come" -- and several other providential circumstances concurring -- he submitted, and was ordained on Trinity Sunday, 1736. The next Sunday he preached to a crowded auditory, in the church wherein he was baptized. The week following he returned to Oxford, and took his Bachelor's degree: and he was now fully employed; the care of the prisoners and the poor lying chiefly on him.

6. But it was not long before he was invited to London, to serve the cure of a friend going into the country. He continued there two months, lodging in the Tower, reading prayers in the chapel twice a week, catechizing and preaching once, beside visiting the soldiers in the barracks and the infirmary. He also read prayers every evening at Wapping chapel, and preached at Ludgate prison every Tuesday. While he was here, letters came from his friends in Georgia, which made him long to go and help them: but not seeing his call clear, at the appointed time he returned to his little charge at Oxford, where several youths met daily at his room, to build up each other in their most holy faith.

7. But he was quickly called from hence again, to supply the cure of Dummer, in Hampshire. Here he read prayers twice a day; early in the morning, and in the evening after the people came from work. He also daily catechized the children, and visited from house to house. He now divided the day into three parts, allotting eight hours for sleep and meals, eight

for study and retirement, and eight for reading prayers, catechizing, and visiting the people. Is there a more excellent way for a servant of Christ and His Church? If not, who will "go and do likewise?"

8. Yet his mind still ran on going abroad; and being now fully convinced he was called of God thereto, he set all things in order, and, in January, 1737, went down to take leave of his friends in Gloucester. It was in this journey that God began to bless his ministry in an uncommon manner. Wherever he preached, amazing multitudes of hearers flocked together, in Gloucester, in Stonehouse, in Bath, in Bristol; so that the heat of the churches was scarce supportable: and the impressions made on the minds of many were no less extraordinary. After his return to London, while he was detained by General Oglethorpe, from week to week, and from month to month, it pleased God to bless his word still more. And he was indefatigable in his labor: generally on Sunday he preached four times, to exceeding large auditories; beside reading prayers twice or thrice, and walking to and fro often ten or twelve miles.

9. On December 28 he left London. It was on the 29th that he first preached without notes. December 30, he went on board; but it was above a month before they cleared the land. One happy effect of their very slow passage he mentions in April following: "Blessed be God, we now live very comfortably in the great cabin. We talk of little else but God and Christ; and scarce a word is heard among us when together, but what has reference to our fall in the first, and our new birth in the Second, Adam." It seems, likewise, to have been a peculiar providence, that he should spend a little time at Gibraltar; where both citizens and soldiers, high and low, young and old, acknowledged the day of their visitation.

10. From Sunday, May 7, 1738, till the latter end of August following, he "made full proof of his ministry" in Georgia, particularly at Savannah: he read prayers and expounded twice a day, and visited the sick daily. On Sunday he expounded at five in the morning; at ten read prayers and preached, and at three in the afternoon; and at seven in the evening expounded the Church Catechism. How much easier is it for our brethren in the ministry, either in England, Scotland, or Ireland, to find fault: with such a laborer in our Lord's vineyard, than to tread in his steps!

11. It was now that he observed the deplorable condition of many children here; and that God put into his heart the first thought of founding an Orphan-house, for which he determined to raise contributions in England, if God should give him a safe return thither. In December following, he did return to London; and on Sunday, January 14, 1739, he was ordained priest at Christ Church, Oxford. The next day he came to London again; and on Sunday, the 21st, preached twice. But though the churches were large, and crowded exceedingly, yet many hundreds stood in the churchyard, and hundreds more returned home. This put him upon the first thought of preaching in the open air. But when he mentioned it to some of his friends, they judged it to be mere madness: so he did not carry it into execution till after he, had left London. It was on Wednesday, February 21, that, finding all the church doors to be shut in Bristol (beside, that no church was able to contain one half of the congregation), at three in the afternoon he went to Kingswood, and preached abroad to near two thousand people. On Friday he preached there to four or five thousand; and on Sunday to, it was supposed, ten thousand! The number continually increased all the time he stayed at Bristol; and a flame of holy love was kindled, which will not easily be put out. The same was afterwards kindled in various parts of Wales, of Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire. Indeed, wherever he went, God abundantly confirmed the word of his messenger.

12. On Sunday, April 29, he preached the first time in Moorfields, and on Kennington Common; and the thousands of hearers were as quiet as they could have been in a church. Being again detained in England from month to month, he made little excursions into several counties, and received the contributions of willing multitudes for an Orphan-house in Georgia. The embargo which was now laid on the shipping gave him leisure for more journeys through various parts of England, for which many will have reason to bless God to all eternity. At length, on August 14, he embarked: but he did not land in Pennsylvania till October 30. Afterwards he went through Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, New York, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina; preaching all along to immense congregations, with full as great effect as in England. On January 10, 1740, he arrived at Savannah.

13. January 29, he added three desolate orphans to near twenty which he had in his house before. The next day he laid out the ground for the house, about ten miles from Savannah. February 11, he took in four orphans more; and set out for Frederica, in order to fetch the orphans that were in the southern parts of the colony. In his return he fixed a school, both for children and grown persons, at Darien, and took four orphans thence. March 25, he laid the first stone of the Orphan-house; to which, with great propriety, he gave the name of Bethesda; a work for which the children yet unborn shall praise the Lord. He had now about forty orphans, so that there was near a hundred mouths to be fed daily. But he was "careful for nothing," casting his care on Him who feed the young ravens that call upon Him.

14. In April he made another tour through Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, and New York. Incredible multitudes flocked to hear, among whom were abundance of Negroes. In all places the greater part of the hearers were affected to an

amazing degree. Many were deeply convinced of their lost state, many truly converted to God. In some places, thousands cried out aloud; many as in the agonies of death; most were drowned in tears; some turned pale as death; others were wringing their hands; others lying on the ground; others sinking into the arms of their friends; almost all lifting up their eyes, and calling for mercy.

15. He returned to Savannah, June 5. The next evening, during the public service, the whole congregation, young and old, were dissolved in tears: after service, several of the parishioners, and all his family, particularly the little children, returned home crying along the street, and some could not help praying aloud. The groans and cries of the children continued all night, and great part of the next day.

16. In August he set out again, and through various provinces came to Boston. While he was here, and in the neighboring places, he was extremely weak in body: yet the multitudes of hearers were so great, and the effects wrought on them so astonishing, as the oldest men then alive in the town had never seen before. The same power attended his preaching at New York, particularly on Sunday, November 2: almost as soon as he began, crying, weeping, and wailing were to be heard on every side. Many sunk down to the ground, cut to the heart; and many were filled with divine consolation. Toward the close of his journey he made this reflection: "It is the seventy-fifth day since I arrived at Rhode Island, exceeding weak in body; yet God has enabled me to preach an hundred and seventy-five times in public, besides exhorting frequently in private! Never did God vouchsafe me greater comforts: never did I perform my journeys with less fatigue, or see such a continuance of the divine presence in the congregations to whom I preached." In December he returned to Savannah, and in the March following arrived in England.

17. You may easily observe, that the preceding account is chiefly extracted from his own journals, which, for their artless and unaffected simplicity, may vie with any writings of the kind. And how exact a specimen is this of his labors both in Europe and America, for the honor of his beloved Master, during the thirty years that followed, as well as of the uninterrupted shower of blessings wherewith God was pleased to succeed his labors! Is it not much to be lamented, that anything should have prevented his continuing this account, till at least near the time when he was called by his Lord to enjoy the fruit of his labor? If he has left any papers of this kind, and his friends account me worthy of the honor, it would be my glory and joy to methodize, transcribe, and prepare them for the public view.

18. A particular account of the last scene of his life is thus given by a gentleman of Boston: --

"After being about a month with us in Boston and its vicinity, and preaching every day, he went to Old York; preached on Thursday, September 27, there; proceeded to Portsmouth, and preached there on Friday. On Saturday morning he set out for Boston; but before he came to Newbury, where he had engaged to preach the next morning, he was importuned to preach by the way. The house not being large enough to contain the people, he preached in an open field. But having been infirm for several weeks, this so exhausted his strength, that when he came to Newbury he could not get out of the ferry-boat without the help of two men. In the evening, however, he recovered his spirits, and appeared with his usual cheerfulness. He went to his chamber at nine, his fixed time, which no company could divert him from, and slept better than he had done for some weeks before. He rose at four in the morning, September 30, and went into his closet; and his companion observed he was unusually long in private. He left his closet, returned to his companion, threw himself on the bed, and lay about ten minutes. Then he fell upon his knees, and prayed most fervently to God that if it was consistent with His will, he might that day finish his Master's work. He then desired his man to call Mr. Parsons, the clergyman, at whose house he was; but, in a minute, before Mr. Parsons could reach him, died, without a sigh or groan. On the news of his death, six gentlemen set out for Newbury, in order to bring his remains hither: but he could not be moved; so that his precious ashes must remain at Newbury. Hundreds would have gone from this town to attend his funeral, had they not expected he would have been interred here.... May this stroke be sanctified to the Church of God in general, and to this province in particular!"

II. 1. We are, in the second place, to take some view of his character. A little sketch of this was soon after published in the Boston Gazette; an extract of which is subjoined: --

"In his public labors he has, for many years, astonished the world with his eloquence and devotion. With what divine pathos did he persuade the impenitent sinner to embrace the practice of piety and virtue! spoke from the heart, and, with a fervency of zeal perhaps unequalled since the day of the Apostles, From the pulpit he was unrivalled in the command of an ever-crowded auditory. Nor was he less agreeable and instructive in his private conversation; happy in a remarkable ease of address, willing to communicate, studious to edify. May the rising generation catch a spark of that flame which shone, with such distinguished luster, in the spirit and practice of this faithful servant of the most high God!"



2. A more particular, and equally just, character of him has appeared in one of the English papers. It may not be disagreeable to you to add the substance of this likewise: --

"The character of this truly pious person must be impressed on the heart of every friend to vital religion. In spite of a tender constitution, he continued to the last day of his life, preaching with a frequency and fervor that seemed to exceed the natural strength of the most robust. Being called to the exercise of his function at an age when most young men are only beginning to qualify themselves for it, he had not time to make a very considerable progress in the learned languages. But this defect was amply supplied by a lively and fertile genius, by fervent zeal, and by a forcible and most persuasive delivery. And though in the pulpit he often found it needful by "the terrors of the Lord" to "persuade men," he had nothing gloomy in his nature; being singularly cheerful, as well as charitable and tender-hearted. He was as ready to relieve the bodily as the spiritual necessities of those that applied to him. It ought also to be observed, that he constantly enforced upon his audience every moral duty; particularly industry in their several callings, and obedience to their superiors. He endeavored, by the most extraordinary efforts of preaching, in different places, and even in the open fields, to rouse the lower class of people from the last degree of inattention and ignorance to a sense of religion. For this, and his other labors, the name of GEORGE WHITEFIELD will long be remembered with esteem and veneration."

3. That both these accounts are just and impartial, will readily be allowed; that is, as far as they go. But they go little farther than the outside of his character. They show you the preacher, but not the man, the Christian, the saint of God. May I be permitted to add a little on this head, from a personal knowledge of near forty years? Indeed, I am thoroughly sensible how difficult it is to speak on so delicate a subject; what prudence is required to avoid both extremes, to say neither too little nor too much! Nay, I know it is impossible to speak at all, to say either less or more, without incurring from some the former, from others the latter censure. Some will seriously think that too little is said; and others, that it is too much. But without attending to this, I will speak just what I know, before Him to whom we are all to give an account.

4. Mention has already been made of his unparalleled zeal, his indefatigable activity, his tender-heartedness to the afflicted, and charitableness toward the poor. But should we not likewise mention his deep gratitude to all whom God had used as instruments of good to him? -- of whom he did not cease to speak in the most respectful manner, even to his dying day. Should we not mention, that he had a heart susceptible of the most generous and the most tender friendship? I have frequently thought that this, of all others, was the distinguishing part of his character. How few have we known of so kind a temper, of such large and flowing affections! Was it not principally by this, that the hearts of others were so strangely drawn and knit to him? Can anything but love beget love? This shone in his very countenance, and continually breathed in all his words, whether in public or private. Was it not this, which, quick and penetrating as lightning, flew from heart to heart? which gave that life to his sermons, his conversations, his letters? Ye are witnesses!

5. But away with the vile misconstruction of men of corrupt minds, who know of no love but what is earthly and sensual! Be it remembered, at the same time, that he was endued with the most nice and unblemished modesty. His office called him to converse very frequently and largely with women as well as men; and those of every age and condition. But his whole behavior towards them was a practical comment on that advice of St. Paul to Timothy: "Entreat the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity."

6. Meantime, how suitable to the friendliness of his spirit was the frankness and openness of his conversation! -- although it was as far removed from rudeness on the one hand, as from guile on the other. Was not this frankness at once a fruit and a proof of his courage and intrepidity? Armed with these, he feared not the faces of men, but "used great plainness of speech" to persons of every rank and condition, high and low, rich and poor; endeavoring only "by manifestation of the truth to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

7. Neither was he afraid of labor or pain, any more than of "what man should do unto him;" being equally

Patient in bearing ill and doing well.

And this appeared in the steadiness wherewith he pursued whatever he undertook for his Master's sake. Witness one instance for all, -- the Orphan-house in Georgia; which he began and perfected, in spite of all discouragements. Indeed, in whatever concerned himself he was pliant and flexible. In this case he was "easy to be entreated;" easy to be either convinced or persuaded. But he was immovable in the things of God, or wherever his conscience was concerned. None could persuade, any more than affright, him to vary, in the least point, from that integrity which was inseparable from his whole character, and regulated all his words and actions. Herein he did

Stand as an iron pillar strong,  
And steadfast as a wall of brass.

8. If it be inquired what was the foundation of this integrity, or of his sincerity, courage, patience, and every other valuable and amiable quality; it is easy to give the answer. It was not the excellence of his natural temper, not the strength of his understanding; it was not the force of education; no, nor the advice of his friends: it was no other than faith in a bleeding Lord; "faith of the operation of God." It was "a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." It was "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which was given unto him," filling his soul with tender, disinterested love to every child of man. From this source arose that torrent of eloquence which frequently bore down all before it; from this, that astonishing force of persuasion which the most hardened sinners could not resist. This it was which often made his "head as waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears." This it was which enabled him to pour out his soul in prayer, in a manner peculiar to himself, with such fullness and ease united together, with such strength and variety both of sentiment and expression.

9. I may close this head with observing what an honor it pleased God to put upon His faithful servant, by allowing him to declare His everlasting gospel in so many various countries, to such numbers of people, and with so great an effect on so many of their precious souls! Have we read or heard of any person since the Apostles, who testified the gospel of the grace of God through so widely extended a space, through so large a part of the habitable world? Have we read or heard of any person who called so many thousands, so many myriads, of sinners to repentance? Above all, have we read or heard of any who has been a blessed instrument in His hand of bringing so many sinners from "darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God?" It is true, were we to talk thus to the gay world, we should be judged to speak as barbarians. But you understand the language of the country to which you are going, and whither our dear friend is gone a little before us.

III. But how shall we improve this awful providence? This is the third thing which we have to consider. And the answer to this important question is easy (may God write it in all our hearts!). By keeping close to the grand doctrines which he delivered; and by drinking into his spirit.

1. And, first, let us keep close to the grand scriptural doctrines which he everywhere delivered. There are many doctrines of a less essential nature, with regard to which even the sincere children of God (such is the present weakness of human understanding) are and have been divided for many ages. In these we may think and let think; we may "agree to disagree." But, meantime, let us hold fast the essentials of "the faith which was once delivered to the saints;" and which this champion of God so strongly insisted on, at all times, and in all places!

2. His fundamental point was, "Give God all the glory of whatever is good in man;" and, "In the business of salvation, set Christ as high and man as low as possible." With this point, he and his friends at Oxford, the original Methodists, so called, set out. Their grand principle was, there is no power (by nature) and no merit in man. They insisted, all power to think, speak, or act aright, is in and from the Spirit of Christ; and all merit is (not in man, how high soever in grace, but merely) in the blood of Christ. So he and they taught: there is no power in man, till it is given him from above, to do one good work, to speak one good word, or to form one good desire. For it is not enough to say, all men are sick of sin: no, we are all "dead in trespasses and sins." It follows, that all the children of men are, "by nature, children of wrath." We are all "guilty before God," liable to death temporal and eternal.

3. And we are all helpless, both with regard to the power and to the guilt of sin. "For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" None less than the Almighty. Who can raise those that are dead, spiritually dead in sin? None but He who raised us from the dust of the earth. But on what consideration will He do this? "Not for works of righteousness that we have done." "The dead cannot praise Thee, O Lord;" nor do anything for the sake of which they should be raised to life. Whatever, therefore, God does, He does it merely for the sake of His well-beloved Son: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." He Himself "bore" all "our sins in His own body upon the tree." He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Here then is the sole meritorious cause of every blessing we do or can enjoy; in particular of our pardon and acceptance with God, of our full and free justification. But by what means do we become interested in what Christ has done and suffered? "Not by works, lest any man should boast;" but by faith alone. "We conclude," says the Apostle, "that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law." And "to as many as" thus "receive Him, giveth He power to become the sons of God, even to those that believe in His name; who are born, not of the will of man, but of God."

4. And "except a man be" thus "born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But all who are thus "born of the Spirit" have "the kingdom of God within them." Christ sets up His kingdom in their hearts; "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." That "mind is in them, which was in Christ Jesus," enabling them to "walk as Christ also walked." His indwelling Spirit makes them both holy in heart, and "holy in all manner of conversation." But still, seeing all this is a free gift, through the righteousness and blood of Christ, there is eternally the same reason to remember, "He that glorieth, let him

glory in the Lord."

5. You are not ignorant that these are the fundamental doctrines which he everywhere insisted on. And may they not be summed up, as it were, in two words, -- the new birth, and justification by faith? These let us insist upon with all boldness, at all times, and in all places; -- in public (those of us who are called thereto), and at all opportunities in private. Keep close to these good, old, unfashionable doctrines, how many soever contradict and blaspheme. Go on, my brethren, in the name of the Lord, and in the power of His might." With all care and diligence, "keep that safe which is committed to your trust;" knowing that "heaven and earth shall pass away, but this truth shall not pass away."

6. But will it be sufficient to keep close to his doctrines, how pure soever they are? Is there not a point of still greater importance than this, namely, to drink into his spirit? -- herein to be a follower of him, even as he was of Christ? Without this, the purity of our doctrines would only increase our condemnation. This, therefore, is the principal thing -- to copy after his spirit. And allowing that in some points we must be content to admire what we cannot imitate; yet in many others we may, through the same free grace, be partakers of the same blessing. Conscious then of your own wants and of His bounteous love, who "giveth liberally and upbraids not," cry to Him that works all in all for a measure of the same precious faith; of the same zeal and activity; the same tender-heartedness, charitableness, bowels of mercies. Wrestle with God for some degree of the same grateful, friendly, affectionate temper; of the same openness, simplicity, and godly sincerity; "I love without dissimulation." Wrestle on, till the power from on high works in you the same steady courage and patience; and above all, because it is the crown of all, the same invariable integrity!

7. Is there any other fruit of the grace of God with which he was eminently endowed, and the want of which among the children of God he frequently and passionately lamented? There is one, that is, catholic love; that sincere and tender affection which is due to all those who, we have reason to believe, are children of God by faith; in other words, all those, in every persuasion, who "fear God and work righteousness." He longed to see all who had "tasted of the good word," of a true catholic spirit; a word little understood, and still less experienced, by many who have it frequently in their mouth. Who is he that answers this character? Who is the man of a catholic spirit? One who loves as friends, as brethren in the Lord, as joint partakers of the present kingdom of heaven, and fellow heirs of His eternal kingdom, all, of whatever opinion, mode of worship, or congregation, who believe in the Lord Jesus; who love God and man; who, rejoicing to please and fearing to offend God, are careful to abstain from evil, and zealous of good works. He is a man of a truly catholic spirit, who bears all these continually upon his heart; who, having an unspeakable tenderness for their persons, and an earnest desire of their welfare, does not cease to commend them to God in prayer, as well as to plead their cause before men; who speaks comfortably to them, and labors, by all his words, to strengthen their hands in God. He assists them to the uttermost of his power, in all things, spiritual and temporal; he is ready to "spend and be spent" for them; yea, "to lay down his life for his brethren."

8. How amiable a character is this! How desirable to every child of God! But why is it then so rarely found? How is it that there are so few instances of it? Indeed, supposing we have tasted of the love of God, how can any of us rest till it is our own? Why, there is a delicate device, whereby Satan persuades thousands that they may stop short of it and yet be guiltless. It is well if many here present are not in this "snare of the devil, taken captive at his will." "O yes," says one, "I have all this love for those I believe to be children of God; but I will never believe he is a child of God, who belongs to that vile congregation! Can he, do you think, be a child of God, who holds such detestable opinions? or he that joins in such senseless and superstitious, if not idolatrous, worship?" So we may justify ourselves in one sin by adding a second to it! We excuse the want of love in ourselves by laying the blame on others! To color our own devilish temper, we pronounce our brethren children of the devil! O beware of this! -- and if you are already taken in the snare, escape out of it as soon as possible! Go and learn that truly catholic love which "is not rash," or hasty in judging; that love which "thinks no evil;" which "believes and hopes all things;" which makes all the allowances for others that we desire others should make for us! Then we shall take knowledge of the grace of God which is in every man, whatever be his opinion or mode of worship: then will all that fear God be near and dear unto us "in the bowels of Jesus Christ."

9. Was not this the spirit of our dear friend? And why should it not be ours? O Thou God of love, how long shall Thy people be a by-word among the Heathen? How long shall they laugh us to scorn, and say, "See how these Christians love one another!" When wilt Thou roll away our reproach? Shall the sword devour for ever? How long will it be ere Thou bid Thy people return from "following each other?" Now, at least, "let all the people stand still, and pursue after their brethren no more!" But whatever others do, let all of us, my brethren, hear the voice of him that, being dead, yet speaks! Suppose ye hear him say, "Now, at least, be ye followers of me as I was of Christ! Let brother "no more lift up sword against brother, neither know ye war any more!" Rather put ye on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, brotherly kindness, gentleness, long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. Let the time past suffice for strife, envy, contention; for biting and devouring one another. Blessed be God, that ye have not long ago been consumed one of another!

From henceforth hold ye the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

10. O God, with Thee no word is impossible! Thou does whatsoever please Thee! O that Thou would cause the mantle of Thy prophet, whom Thou hast taken up, now to fall upon us that remain! "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" Let his spirit rest upon these Thy servants! Show Thou art the God that answers by fire! Let the fire of Thy love fall on every heart! And because we love Thee, let us love one another with a "love stronger than death!" Take away from us "all anger, and wrath, and bitterness; all clamor and evil speaking!" Let Thy Spirit so rest upon us, that from this hour we may be "kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven us!"

AN HYMN

1

Servant of God, well done!

Thy glorious warfare's past;  
The battle's fought, the race is won,  
And thou art crown'd at last;  
Of all thy heart's desire  
Triumphantly possess'd,  
Lodged by the ministerial choir  
In thy Redeemer's breast.

2

In condescending love,

Thy ceaseless prayer He heard;  
And bade thee suddenly remove  
To thy complete reward:  
Ready to bring the peace,  
Thy beauteous feet were shod,  
When mercy sign'd thy soul's release,  
And caught thee up to God.

3

With saints enthroned on high,

Thou dost thy Lord proclaim,  
And still To God salvation cry,  
Salvation to the Lamb!  
O happy, happy soul!  
In ecstasies of praise,  
Long as eternal ages roll,  
Thou seest thy Saviour's face!

4

Redeem'd from earth and pain,

Ah! when shall we ascend,  
And all in Jesu's presence reign  
With our translated friend?  
Come, Lord, and quickly come!  
And, when in Thee complete,  
Receive Thy longing servants home,  
To triumph at Thy feet!

"In order to write this, I retired to Lewisham on Monday; and on Sunday following went to the chapel in Tottenham Court Road. An immense multitude was gathered together from all corners of the town. I was at first afraid that a great part of the congregation would not be able to hear; but it pleased God to strengthen my voice that even those at the door heard distinctly. It was an awful season. All were still as night; most appeared to be deeply affected; and an impression was made on many which one would hope will not speedily be effaced. The time appointed for my beginning at the Tabernacle was half-hour after five, but it was quite filled at three; so I began at four. At first the noise was exceeding great; but it ceased when I began to speak; and my voice was again so strengthened that all who were within could hear, unless an ac

cidental noise hindered here or there for a few moments. Oh that all may hear the voice of Him with whom are the issues of life and death; and who so loudly, by this unexpected stroke, calls all His children to love one another." On the following Friday he repeated the sermon at the Tabernacle at Greenwich to an overflowing congregation. Again, on January 2, 1771, he preached at Deptford "a kind of funeral sermon for Mr. Whitefield. In every place I wish to show all possible respect to the memory of that great and good man."

It must not be forgotten that at this very time Wesley was in the thick of the controversy with the Rev. Walter Shirley and the Countess of Huntingdon's preachers about the famous Minutes of 1770, in which Wesley had laid down clearly the differences between his views and those of the Calvinists. It is much to the credit both of Mr. Whitefield's friends and of Wesley that this was not allowed to interfere with their invitation to him to preach the sermon, nor with his own affectionate and ungrudging recognition of the greatness and goodness of his departed fellow worker. Indeed, their difference of opinion had never, since the dispute in 1741, been permitted to interrupt their mutual love and esteem; they agreed to differ, and still to love one another.

The sermon was at once published in London; and a reprint was issued in Dublin, also dated 1770, with an additional hymn "Glory and thanks and love;" and it was placed last in the sermons in vol. iv (1771). A warm attack was made on it in the Gospel Magazine of February 1771, probably by Mr. Romaine. He first objected to the text. "How improper," he says, "to apply the words of a mad prophet to so holy a man as Mr. Whitefield!" Of course Wesley's answer was obvious: he did not apply the words to Mr. Whitefield, but to himself; and he humorously says, "Nothing would be more suitable than for Balaam junior to use the words of his forefather; surely a poor reprobate may, without offence, wish to die like one of the elect!" The more serious part of the attack was on the statement in iii. (5) that "the fundamental doctrines which Mr. Whitefield everywhere insisted on" were "the new birth, and justification by faith." Romaine, on the contrary, affirms "the great and fundamental doctrines, which he everywhere preached, were the everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son, and absolute predestination flowing therefrom." Wesley answers "(1) that Mr. Whitefield did not everywhere preach these. In all the times I myself heard him preach, I never heard him utter a sentence either on one or the other. Yea, all the times he preached in West Street Chapel, and in our other chapels throughout England, he did not preach these doctrines at all, no, not in a single paragraph. (2) That he did everywhere preach the new birth, and justification by faith. Both in West Street Chapel and in all our other chapels throughout England, he did preach the necessity of the new birth, and justification by faith, as clearly as he has done in his two volumes of printed sermons." Wesley was not ignorant of the differences between himself and Whitefield in regard to predestination; but most properly in this sermon, whilst he recognizes (iii. 1) that there are differences of opinion between the children of God, he emphasizes the points of agreement; and whatever Whitefield may have believed about the eternal decrees, no man ever preached a full and free salvation more constantly and effectively than he did. The only solution of this difficulty is to be found in the recognition that the two opposing views represent the two sides of one truth, which our finite understanding is not able to synthesize; but which we may nevertheless accept, just as we accept the Unity in Trinity in the Godhead, or the divine-human person of our Lord.

Incidentally we learn from Wesley's reply to Romaine that one of the hymns sung at the service was Charles Wesley's "Shrinking from the cold hand of death," from the Short Hymns on Select Passages (1762), now No. 823 in the Methodist Hymn-Book; the other was no doubt the one appended to the sermon, "Servant of God, well done!" written by Charles Wesley for this occasion, and published as "An Hymn on the Death of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield" in the third (post-humous) series of Funeral Hymns. The hymn appended to the Dublin edition of the sermon is No. 42 in the second series of Funeral Hymns, published in 1759 (Osborn's edition of Poetical Works, vi. 285).

The Tottenham Court Road Chapel, or Whitefield's Tabernacle, as it was often called, stood on the west side of the road, between Tottenham Street and Howland Street. The site was then surrounded by fields and gardens, and there were only two houses to the north of it. The foundation stone was laid by Whitefield in June 1756, and he opened it on November 7 of the same year. It soon was found to be too small, and was enlarged in 1759. A vault was prepared beneath the chapel, in which Whitefield meant that both he himself and the two Wesleys should be interred; but his wish was not fulfilled. In 1890 the building was taken down and re-erected. It is now known as Whitefield's Central Mission.

The Tabernacle was originally a wooden shed to the north of Upper Moorfields, close to Wesley's Foundry, opened in 1741; in 1753 it was superseded by a brick building, the one in which this sermon was preached in the afternoon. This was used for over a century, and was then replaced by a Tabernacle at the corner of Tabernacle Street and Leonard Street, Finsbury, which occupied the old site. The old pulpit was retained from which Wesley preached on this occasion. The building is now used for business purposes.

<http://www.piney.com/WhitefSer54Funeral.html>

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2017/10/14 12:58**

Quote:  
-----I am do not agree with the spirit of some of those who are responded to Frank and others on this post. This is one of many reasons that saints do not post on SI anymore, or rarely, and why I will not continue to post unless I am led of the Lord. We are to judge 'righteously' and most of us have no way of knowing the suffering that is being endured by saints who were apart of the established and/or organized church and were fooled by spiritually abusive dogs and wolves, but have decided to step out in faith and follow Christ who led them to be alone of a season. Then we began to search for like-minded saints and we found SermonIndex (SI); then, we began to post on the forums and try to connect with saints and we were shut d own. Why not build these saints up instead of tear them down? We do not really know what they have been through, what they are going through or re ally anything about them other than a post off of a forum where they are oftentimes sharing the fire burning in their bones! It is all throughout the script ures, e.g.,  
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Dear brother,

SermonIndex is for all in the body of Christ and different denominations, we are not exclusive or anti-denominational. Als o the majority of saints on the forums or website who use it "are not" those who do not attend any fellowship though that is a growing segment of believers who use the site. All are welcome, all are given opportunity to share their views and burdens within reason.

I do see the dangerous of aloneism and allowing saints to think it is ok to not be in established groupings of believers. I h ave seen the moral and demise of believers into sin and backslidden state who do not attend or go to any type of fellows hip in person. So this is an issue that is close to home to me. Even a brother who lives very near me recently has fallen into sin affecting his family. It is a terrible thing and I believe is due to a lack of godly fellowship. His opinion before fallin g was that all churches were almost wrong and he had the right view of a non-religious gathering.

I appreciate frank as a brother in the Lord. Though not for me to comment on this type of thinking I believe is allowing G od's people to fall into a place where the enemy can attack and bring much hurt. We need each other in the body of Chr ist. Some what we call denominations are godly (especially over seas). I cannot judge all and think I am doing better be cause I am not.

I am glad to be in a gathering of believers that is associated in heart and spirit with the charity gospel movement. [http://c haritychristianfellowship.org/ccf/confession-of-faith](http://charitychristianfellowship.org/ccf/confession-of-faith) we are gladly submitted under the authority of godly brothers and a brotherhood of saints.

**Re: - posted by noone (), on: 2017/10/14 13:39**

Excellent kmartin.

Sreeram said:  
It is better to be slaves to an organizational Church than to be an arrogant unchurched Pharisees.

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sermonindex  
Moderator

Reply To This Post :  
Well said brother Sreeram.



**General Topics :: Are we servants of the Holy Spirit or prisoners of the organization?**

WOW.....the only slave anyone needs to be to is God the Father.

The above statement from Sreeram is clearly the basis of contention/disagreement for those in the organization and those out of the organization.

**Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2017/10/14 14:08**

Quote:

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WOW.....the only slave anyone needs to be to is God the Father.

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Tina, you quoted only one line of my post, ignoring everything I said above it. If you have read my post unbiased, you will agree in what spirit I said that final line.

Yes, the best thing for us is to be a bond servant of Jesus, like how the Apostles identified themselves.

But given an option of being an unchurched person who only throws stones at organized churches because of their shortcomings, I would rather choose to be a slave to the organization.

Martin Luther did oppose the organized church of his time which was corrupt, but he also did his part in building the body of Christ based on the wisdom given to him. He was not perfect but did his part in preparing a bride.

**Re: , on: 2017/10/14 17:02**

"Martin Luther did oppose the organized church of his time which was corrupt, but he also did his part in building the body of Christ based on the wisdom given to him. He was not perfect but did his part in preparing a bride."

Amen brother!

**Re: , on: 2017/10/14 17:07**

"I do see the danger of aloneism and allowing saints to think it is ok to not be in established groupings of believers. I have seen the moral demise of believers into sin and backslidden state who do not attend or go to any type of fellowship in person. So this is an issue that is close to home to me. Even a brother who lives very near me recently has fallen into sin affecting his family. It is a terrible thing and I believe is due to a lack of godly fellowship. His opinion before falling was that all churches were almost wrong and he had the right view of a non-religious gathering."

Dear brother:

Yes, this is true and a good warning to all the saints who think it is in God's will to remain alone, especially when we are in a country where we still have freedom of religion.

Also, praise the Lord that you have found a fellowship where you are able to submit to one another and the leaders according to the Scriptures and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

**Re: - posted by murrclor (), on: 2017/10/14 17:33**

Quote: I do see the danger of aloneism and allowing saints to think it is ok to not be in established groupings of believers. I have seen the moral demise of believers into sin and backslidden state who do not attend or go to any type of fellowship in person. So this is an issue that is close to home to me. Even a brother who lives very near me recently has fallen into sin affecting his family.

Dear Brother look at Peter and the disciples when Jesus was taken and about to be crucified all of these men failed him in their time of testing, but let's look at what Peter said later.

**General Topics :: Are we servants of the Holy Spirit or prisoners of the organization?**

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ 1 Pet 1:7

You see my dear brother God allows testing and you may fail in it; but that testing is precious and the correction will come. Remember it is the Goodness of God that leads to repentance, pray for the dear this brother

How can I say this - because I left the church; I failed but in it I found God in a new way and deeper way; truly it's God's goodness that leads to repentance..

So let's not assume or try to box God in; let him work in the way he will work and praise him for his goodness and pray for this brother that in his testing his faith will not fail.

**Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2017/10/15 19:49**

Quote:

----- Quote:

You see, the moment the vision is shared and the people stop along the way and construct a structure or an organization in honor of the vision rather than simply moving forward on the current of the vision to the next vision, death begins its process in the marshes and the miry static places that many of us now call houses of worship. The preeminence of the Holy Spirit, of Jesus in our midst, is quite simply the current that keeps us moving and brings life to everything that it touches. The vision of a man or organization that usurps the preeminent Christ whether willingly or unwittingly is already in the process of dying.

Brother,

Of course I agree that if people are just seeking to keep an organization or church traditions going without any personal connection with God, it is death to those people as they are not in contact with the Head. But the organization of the Church itself is ordained of God who wrote by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. So the organization itself is not wrong it is the problem of not being in fellowship with the organizer!

God's intention is for us to follow His commands, the way of Christ. His words are not optional or for our interpretation but obedience. Along with the writings of the apostles by the Holy Spirit we find what God intends for us as the Church (the Kingdom of God).

All groups such as Waldensians followed the Scriptures with Biblical elders, Lords Supper, Head Coverings, Following the Teachings of Christ literally, etc.

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I was raised in a movement that began in great power as they followed the leading of the Holy Spirit. They never formally organized, but all of the churches in the movement held the founder in great reverence. I can take you today to the place where his cowboy boots are on display. This reverence became a hindrance to what God wanted to do. The particular doctrinal beliefs of the founder became more important than the word of God, and the word of God was interpreted through the lens of the founder's unique perspectives, some of which were a little odd. The focus was no longer on seeking God for His move through the organization, but rather on preserving the unique perspectives of the founder.

Not that God never moved. He always moved to whatever degree we will allow Him to do so. But the movement has been dying for years now, and its effectiveness has been severely hindered by following a man or an organization rather than pursuing God.

Unfortunately, we have that tendency. We tend to follow the man following God to the degree that we hold on to the man rather than holding onto the God who uses the man.

**Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2017/10/15 19:58**

I might add. Structure, organization, and submission to authority are necessary to anything that involves men. So too the body of Christ. I don't think anyone would deny that or argue against it. The problem comes when man's organization begins to trump the leading of the Holy Spirit. I have seen this happen, and it always hinders the move of God in the organization. I think we all need to wrestle hard with the motives of our heart where the things of God are concerned, especially if we are in leadership in the body. We cannot afford to become self-willed or focused on following the way of man and not the Holy Spirit. I think none of us do this perfectly, and I am thankful that God is forgiving and gracious. But how much does the body lose when we allow ourselves to get our focus on something other than the direction of the Holy

Spirit.

**Re: , on: 2017/10/15 22:05**

Travis writes.....

"Unfortunately, we have that tendency. We tend to follow the man following God to the degree that we hold on to the man rather than holding onto the God who uses the man."

Almost every single time bro Travis.....bro Frank

**Re: , on: 2017/10/15 22:36**

Travis wrote:

“Not that God never moved. He always moved to whatever degree we will allow Him to do so.”

He always moved to whatever degree we will allow Him: sounds like a covenant relationship between God and man? What will God do if the body of Christ does not keep the covenant?

Noah Webster 1828 dictionary defines covenant as follows:

COVENANT, n.

1. A mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons, to do or to forbear some act or thing; a contract; stipulation. A covenant is created by deed in writing, sealed and executed; or it may be implied in the contract.
2. A writing containing the terms of agreement or contract between parties; or the clause of agreement in a deed containing the covenant.
3. In theology, the covenant of works, is that implied in the commands, prohibitions, and promises of God; the promise of God to man, that man's perfect obedience should entitle him to happiness. This do, and live; that do, and die.

The covenant of redemption, is the mutual agreement between the Father and Son, respecting the redemption of sinners by Christ.

The covenant of grace, is that by which God engages to bestow salvation on man, upon the condition that man shall believe in Christ and yield obedience to the terms of the gospel.

4. In church affairs, a solemn agreement between the members of a church, that they will walk together according to the precepts of the gospel, in brotherly affection.

COVENANT, v.i. To enter into a formal agreement; to stipulate; to bind oneself by contract. 'A' covenants with 'B' to convey to him a certain estate. When the terms are expressed, it has "for" before the thing or price.

They covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. Mat 26.

COVENANT, v.t. To grant or promise by covenant.