

# The Gospel Standard



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“Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people,” Isa. 62:10

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## The Gospel Standard January, 2014 Issue

The Gospel Standard is now a work under the Sharpville, Indiana church of Christ. Please continue corresponding with the present address at 138 Amber Lane. Any question about policy can be answered by the Sharpville brethren. This is the last issue as a work of the Eastview church of Christ at 120 Amber Lane, Selmer TN 38375.

Postmaster may contact us at this issue at 120 Amber Lane, Selmer TN 38375. Following this issue the Gospel Standard will not be mailed but can be downloaded free of cost at [www.booksaready.com](http://www.booksaready.com)

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## Editorial

Who rules the people of God? A very simple question which demands a very simple answer. Who stands between God and man? Another very simple question demanding a simple answer. Who ruled the priests of God in their service in the Old Testament economy?

Some one either has their answers wrong, or their practice wrong! In the Old Testament , the people of God were not content with God's way and God's will. They had to be like the nations around them. They had to have a mortal like themselves ruling over them. They were not content with God being their ruler. They could not see him, nor feel him. They could not even argue with him without severe consequences. So they just rebelled against God and His way and demanded a king.

God gave them a king. Just as God gave the Gentiles up to their own evil thoughts which they thought were too high and mighty to keep God in them, God gave his people up to their thoughts. Samuel, the prophet at that time was highly offended thinking the people were rejecting him and his prophetic office. Not so, they are rejecting me, affirmed Almighty God.

My friends, we had better get this principle squarely fixed in our fickle minds. When people reject the way of God, they reject God. When people reject the word of God, they reject God. When people reject the will of God, they do so because they have a problem with God. That is the absolute truth of the gospel of Christ. The principle runs the gamut of authority. To reject the word, principle, or will of authority is to reject that authority. Saul, first king of Israel learned this lesson the hard way; way too late. It would appear that after all these millennium of examples before us we could learn. We often hear those of old ridiculed because they often had to learn the hard way, and we walk right after their flawed thinking.

But what has that to do with me? What is the application for the people of God today? It has everything to do with me

today; And you as well! It is so common and universal in practice that we have become impervious to what we are doing. That is the way it is with habit; and those given to human traditions are creatures of habit without realizing it. Given to human traditions simply means we are willing to accept the word of a man in whom we have confidence without checking him out. Brother so and so really knows his Bible. I am not going to disagree with his interpretations. Why this is the way we have always done it. What is wrong with it? I don't like brother so and so's Bible study material because he makes us think beyond what we have always known.

These are but a few of the things we have heard for years and the clamor is getting louder. I have even heard: "Why this is what we have the preacher for, to study and tell us what is truth." I have also heard, "I can't help you unless the elders give me permission," and "The elders do not want us reading that paper, etc." These last two are getting down to the point we are making. That point is the substitution of human authority in the place of divine authority.

Oh, but we have to have an authority whom we can see and hear. Folks, that is what ancient Israel argued. They wanted someone they could see, hear, feel, and complain to. They wanted frail flesh like themselves to rule over them. They cared nothing about the feelings of God, nor the will of God. They desired flesh to rule and God gave them flesh. They wanted a fleshly ruler and a fleshly tainted kingdom and that is exactly what God gave them. Are you listening? More important, are you thinking? Is it beginning to dawn on you what we have made for ourselves? Do you realize the monstrosity mankind has made of religion, and God's people have been drawn along clamoring, "We want to be like them. We don't want to be a bunch of odd balls."

No, I am not saying that we must be different for the sake of being different. I have heard it said that there are some who, if they saw a denominational person go through a door, they would walk around the building and crawl through a window.

I knew one fellow like that who, if he heard anyone else was doing it was forever against doing it that way. Early in my preaching life, I went to the elders to see if they would get a projector and some film strips with which to help me to teach some non-Christians. One of the elders said, "Why that sounds just like the Methodist." That ended that meeting so I went to the bank the next day and borrowed the money from the bank to get me one. I had taken a course in using visual aids in Bible classes and saw how it could work in evangelizing. And it did. I did not rely on what the filmstrip offered, but merely used it as an introduction and taught the gospel from that point. The man, and a few others in that era, thought that to do anything, even in matters of judgment, like someone else was to follow that someone else. That is not true!

On the other hand, there are people who are bound and determined to be like everyone else. From a One World Physical Government, to a sameness among all people in religion, we have devotees who seemingly will go to any length to promote a sameness among all religious people. I am not speaking of a unity, but of a sameness for the sake of being alike, bonded by human standards and human authority. I know some like that; men and women who will never be content with simply following the Son of God, walking after his example and living according to the teaching of the gospel. This is where the hard rub comes in. A pressure has been on the people of God for a long time to conform to the looseness of human authority and human lusts. That was what confronted the people of God in ancient days under the prophet Samuel. That confronts us today? Shall we, as did ancient *Israel*, conform to the religions around us?

We do not make blanket accusations, nor condemnations. But we do challenge every believer to prove they are not guilty of wanting to belike the world, using their actions, and not their words only. That is where the rub comes and where the differences lie, in the actions. We challenge any person to show from Scripture where any person has the right to stand between God and me, and presume to tell me what they expect out of

me (what the word does not teach), and if they do not see that produced they will de-church me, to use a term all oldsters understand. We challenge anyone anywhere to show from the Scripture where any mortal has the right to bind his will and his way upon my conscience.

**T**O draw this to a fine point we shall be explicit. Take the Holy Scripture and prove that either preacher or elder, bishop, cardinal or any other mortal has any authority over my conscience to compel me to act in any way other than the way Jesus teaches in his gospel that all men ought to walk. We know many will agree in word, but in practice they talk a different story. In practice some, both preachers and elders, Lord it over the flock of God, contrary to 1 Peter 5:2-3. To Lord it over is to act like a person in authority who speaks and expects to be obeyed. That is generally the way it is done. We expect unbelievers to do things their way. But we expect those who profess to believe in the Father and in Jesus the Christ and profess to accept the Bible as the word of God to conduct their lives in the same manner as they profess to believe; as fellow Christians all under the authority of Jesus the Christ whom God placed upon the throne of their kingdom and over which he alone rules.

Please read the following pages to see more specifically about what we speak. Just who rules the people of God?

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## **TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS**

**Melvin Elliott**

In the book of Matthew, chapter 28 and verses 18-20: are some of the final words of Jesus to his apostles. These, as all of his words, are of utmost importance. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Before we get to the main point of our discussion, we will emphasize two things in these verses. The first, all these words were spoken by Jesus. What we are discussing are not the words of a man or of any agency of men, including man-made churches, but the Lord himself. Therefore, these words are not optional but are bound in heaven and man is obligated to them if he desires to please Jesus. Because of that which Jesus accomplished on earth, God gave him the right to exercise all power. He is now the king of God kingdom. God’s kingdom is his rule in the hearts of men, Luke 17:20-21. Therefore, as he is now the king, those who desire to be his subject, must allow his word to rule in their hearts. It follows that no man can be a disciple of Jesus who does not yield to his word. In John 8:32-33: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” If one must know the truth and continue in God’s word to be a disciple and be free, then it is mandatory for one to be taught the exact words of Jesus.

This passage is really all about the apostles doing those things that will make one a disciple. The original word for disciple is the verb form of the word; so the apostles were to disciple all nations. In this case the definition of the English word disciple can help us to better understand what the apostles were charged to do. Originally, the verb form of the word meant, “To teach, train, educate.” (Oxford English Dictionary) How were they to do this? By teaching the disciples to observe all things that Jesus taught them to teach for one to become a disciple. In the New Testament, a disciple is not only one who learns from their teacher but is also one who puts into practice that which they learn. They were to be taught to observe all things. The word observe has a broad application: It includes to retain in memory, preserve, guard from loss and to submit to the

teachings of the apostles that they might do them. As we saw, this is shown to be the case in John 8:31: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;” The same word is used in I John 3:22: “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”

It is obvious that Matthew 28:19-20 is all about teaching. The apostles were charged to make disciples. We must emphasize that they were to do that by teaching: “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” They were to teach all that Jesus taught them to teach so it does make a difference what you believe! It is not my faith, your faith or their faith but it is the faith, what Jesus taught them to teach. The word teaching in verse 20 is the word for the teacher-student arrangement. So Jesus charged the apostles to teach, train and educate the disciples in the words he taught them to teach the nations in order to make disciples of all ethnic groups. As we showed above, this is not to learn only but to learn in order that disciples might observe all things Jesus taught. We cannot over emphasize the importance of this process. Psalm 103:17-18: “But the mercy of the Lord *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.” It is the doing of, his covenant; and his commandments that procures for the disciple the mercy of God.

In what we call the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches the things that disciples must practice in order to prepare for eternity. They give the principles that are to govern our life. To show how important these things are, we look at some of his closing statements. In Matthew 7:21: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” In verses 24-25 he illustrates this matter in these words. “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods

came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.” Jesus was not talking about building houses but building the character a disciple must have. We saw in our text that Jesus said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” At the close of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew states of Jesus, “For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.” (Matthew 7:29)

The word for power in our text is the same as translated authority in Matthew 7:29. Therefore, Jesus exercised that power when he taught the apostles what to teach because he had the right to exercise that power. There is an interesting statement in John 17:1-3: “These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Did you take note of the statement, “As thou hast given him power over all flesh...” If Jesus has all power no one else has any power in spiritual matters. God specifically said we are to here Jesus. In Matthew 17 when Jesus was transfigured, Moses and Elijah also appeared. So Peter said, “[L]et us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” At one time Moses and Elijah spoke for God but no more. Note verse 5, “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

Further in Hebrews 1:1: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;” There was a time when God spoke through Moses. Note this warning if they failed to listen to God’s word through Moses? Deuteronomy 28:15: “But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy

God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.” Will you now give close attention to Hebrews 10:28-29: “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”

The word of Jesus the apostles preached is called the gospel: what is the sorer punishment those who do not obey the gospel are to receive? Let Paul answer in II Thessalonians 1:6-9: “Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;” These are not my words nor are the words of other men but they are the words the Lord taught the apostles to teach. Of these words Jesus said, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John 12:48) Again we emphasize, it is the words of Jesus that will judge us. It doesn’t mater what men or churches teach; it is what our Lord commanded that is the standard by which we are judged. It follows, if you do not obey the gospel, the vengeance of flaming fire awaits.

All that remains to be seen is what did Jesus teach? In John 8:24 Jesus said, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.” In Luke 24:46: he further said, “...[R]epentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name...” In Matthew 10:32: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.” In our text, Matthew 28:19, Jesus taught the apostles

when they went out to make disciples, they were to baptize them in, "...[T]he name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" It can be further shown this is what the apostles taught everywhere they went preaching the words of Jesus. I must remind you that these words are not my words but they are the words of the Savior. These are the words he commanded that one must do in order to become a disciple. I know that many in the religious world do not accept them but as they are not my words, your difference is not with me but with our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. All of these things are essential to observe to become a disciple. As we saw, a disciple must continue to learn and observe all that God instructed them to do.

Our Lord left you free to choose your own path of life and I would not attempt to take that choice away from you. You are free to follow the teaching of men, churches or other organizations but they have no power to save from sin. Jesus, God in the flesh is the one who knows what is necessary for salvation. The Old Testament warned us that it was not in man to direct his steps. (Jeremiah 10:23) If man cannot of his own direct his steps, how can he direct the steps of others? The wise man in Proverbs 3:6 told us to acknowledge God and he would direct our steps. Do you question God or think he would direct you amiss? We need to heed the advice of the servants of Naaman. He had gone to the prophet of God to be cleansed of his leprosy but he didn't like what God said through his spokesman and went a way angry. What we must remember is; he was still in his leprosy. What he thought or felt did not and would not cleanse his leprosy. In II Kings 5:13-14: "And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Likewise, man must obey the words of Jesus to become a disciple: a learner and one who practices the words he learns. Disciples of Jesus are called Christians.

You cannot be a disciple of Jesus following the words of another. Therefore, following the words of another will not make you a Christian.

I leave you with this question; would it not be better for you to yield to the words of Jesus; become a disciple and be cleansed from your sins?

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## **Who Rules the People of God?**

**Charles A. Pledge**

The question was raised in the editorial and we hope we got your attention there. If not please give me your full undivided attention here. Let us be honest with ourselves and with everyone else, especially with God at this point. In the practical sense, who is actually in charge of the people of God in real life practice? This is not directed to the religious world at large; this is directed directly to those who read this paper. Who is really in charge telling me how to act, how to believe, and how to teach?

In some places it may be the preacher. In other places it may be the elders. In a few places it may be brother so and so who, when he says no, that is the way it is. If he says jump, everyone asks How high and how far? That is just the way it is. If anything needs to be done, everyone looks to brother so and so for approval. He is not the elders, nor the preacher. He is just the boss. This is not stated very attractively, but I have seen the factualness of it in several places. When I was a young man I worked with a congregation where when brother so and so made his will known that was the end of the matter. Needless to say, I voluntarily brought my tenure

to a close there without much delay, after I saw the way things were. This is not a treatise to bad mouth elders, or preachers, or anyone in particular, but to lay emphasis on one fact: every child of God is responsible directly to Jesus Christ our King, and through him to God. We shall prove this in more than two ways, but two witnesses, when credible prove the matter. But we shall be generous in our proof.

- I. Jesus Christ is our high priest, Hebrews 7:11-17; 7:22-28; 8:1-4.
  - A. All Christians are priests under our high priest, 1 Peter 2:5, 9.
  - B. All priests serve under the high priest who is Jesus, Hebrews 10:21, we all are to offer our sacrifices to God through Jesus, Hebrews 13:15.

In the Old Testament, all the priests served under the high priest. They were responsible to the high priest. No man had the authority to stand between the common priests and the high priest and say, you either obey me or you do not serve. I shall determine how you are to serve and with what you serve. No, all the priests were responsible to the high priest. So today, all common priests (each Christian is a common priest), are to submit to Christ in all things. There is not a single responsibility to God that any of us have which is not revealed through Jesus Christ and can not be fulfilled by us through Christ. No, not one single responsibility to God. Why then do men presume to take a stance between a common priest and the high priest Jesus, and say, you either submit to me or else suffer the consequences.

The apostles were given thrones over spiritual Israel to judge, Matthew 19:28. But they did this through the word which Christ gave them to reveal to others, John 17:8, 1 John 4:1-6. The apostles had the authority to chastise when that word they preached was frustrated by actions, Acts 13:4-12. Such was living proof that they were acting and preaching by

the authority of their high priest, and king. Anyone today who claims the type of authority which the apostles had must offer divine proof: a miracle if you please. It was to the apostles which men in the first century were taught to submit and obey, Hebrews 13:7, 17. Elders were by their teaching to feed, lead, and protect the flock of God but we never find them on the same level of authority which the apostles were on, nor were they on the level with Christ. Anyone claiming the authority to chastise in the way the apostles defended their authority, simply wrest the scriptures. I know of one eldership which withdrew from a small group who went to them in brotherly love and explained their disagreement with a matter of judgment. Those elders withdrew fellowship from them for “rebellng against the eldership.”

Christ is king, and he rules through his word which was spoken by the apostles who were the only ones authorized to receive that gospel and reveal it to humanity. The priests of God under the high priest Jesus Christ, must take the word of the high priest as final in all things.

If all the children of God are common priests under one high priest, Jesus the Christ, and we are, then one common priest is not permitted to be Lord over another common priest. Jesus taught that his disciples must not be as the Gentiles who were accustomed to being Lords over one another. Rather he who would be great in the kingdom of God must be servant of all, Matthew 20:28.

II. Jesus alone is king over his kingdom, Acts 2:36. Everywhere the apostles took the gospel, they exalted the kingdom and its new king, Jesus the Christ of God. The book of Acts closes with Paul declaring the kingdom of God. Throughout the book of Acts the apostles and others were declaring Jesus to be Lord, or Ruler; king of spiritual Israel. There is no other king save Jesus. Let us observe it this way.

A. The Scripture teaches that there is no rule in the kingdom of God except that rule which is vested in Jesus the king.

Joe Christian claims to have the authority to rule over me in the kingdom of God.

Therefore Joe Christian claims that there is rule in the kingdom of God which is not vested in Jesus Christ the king.

B. The claim made by some that mortal men may rule over the children of God on earth is a claim based upon misinterpretation of passages of Scripture. The rule of elders is based upon and an outgrowth of teaching the word of God by them. It is not their right to be Lords over their brethren. That is forbidden. Rather they are to be servants. Go back in the Old Testament and study about the elders in the gate. The authority they had was only the authority given them by the people whom they judged in matters to small to be worthy of the attention of the small Sanhedrin. If two had a matter against one another, they might, but were not required by Moses Law to go to the elders for arbitration of their case. If they did, they were in agreement to allow the decision offered bind them. That authority to bind did not originate with those elders. The elders were not rulers in the sense that they had dictatorial powers to enforce their word in every matter.

Elders have a responsibility to be able to teach aptly; that is precisely correctly. I have known elders who were apt to teach. They knew how to lay the scriptures out in an authoritative way so people could understand it and be guided by it. That ability among elders today is very rare. They are to lead, feed, and protect by their teaching. But if they neither know what nor how to preach the truth of God,

how shall they do any of it? Today if they guide, they think they must resort to Lordship. This is not the scriptural way.

III. Jesus Christ is our Prophet, Hebrews 1:1-3. Christ is God's spokesman in this age. A spokesman is literally a prophet, or a prophet is a spokesman; one who speaks for another.

A. Because prophets were the mouthpiece of God, what they spoke were words God commanded. Those words were to be given respectful acceptance by the people of God and submitted to, Those who would not were anathema before God. So, Jesus who is the great antitype of all the prophets of God must be heard and obeyed. In Deuteronomy 18:18-22 God spoke through Moses saying to the people that he would raise up a prophet like unto Moses (that is Christ) and all were to hear him. He further said that all who would not hear that prophet would be cut off. No other than the one God appointed to be prophet was to be heard.

B. Whoever takes it upon themselves to stand between God and man with a word demanding that man heed that word is said in Deut. 18:18-22 to be worthy of death. To put it bluntly, any person; preacher, elder, or other, who will attempt to bind their judgment, or their opinion upon my conscience as being necessary to go to heaven, or to please God here and now, God says is worthy of death if he were in the Old Testament times, but now is worthy of rejection as a part of God's fellowship.

This fact should end the one man rule anywhere, anyplace. It should bring an end to the backroom decision making of elders and preachers, or others in the absence of elders, and announced enforcement of that judgment subject to discipline if not obeyed. It is the gospel (the message) of the Prophet, Christ Jesus, which alone has the priority of life and death. All others are bound to teach and obey that word.

IV. Jesus is the apostle for this age, Hebrews 3:1. An apostle is one who is endowed with the authority and power (ability and tools) to do what they are chosen and sent (anointed) to do. Inherent in an apostle is authority and power to enforce that authority. When an apostle speaks, his word is the word of the one who sent, therefore he is in addition a prophet. Not all prophets were apostles, but all apostles were prophets. Apostle is a greater work and includes the work of speaking forth the word given by the one who sent. The word of the apostle of God is authoritative, transcending every other word. Therefore the words of Jesus, given to his chosen ones whom he designated to be apostles, had the authority to speak, and then when ignored or rebelled against, to use a rod of punishment if they chose. Thus Paul struck the sorcerer blind for a season. Peter struck Ananias and Sapphira dead or lying to the Holy Spirit inspired apostle and others, thereby lying to God who inspired them. Any claiming to be an apostle of God, or to have apostolic rights, have the responsibility to strike me dead for withstanding them and calling them imposters. They are unable to call upon God and have Him strike me dead because they are but fakes. Men may have apostles but in that sense their authority is no higher, nor greater than men. Period!

In first John chapter four in the first six verses John shows the difference between the spirit of error and the spirit of truth. That difference is simple. He who listens to the word of men, and thereby places the world over the word of God has the spirit of error. He who listens to the word of the apostles; the words given to them by Jesus, John 17:8, have the spirit of truth. This my friends is the gospel of truth!

Let all: preachers, elders, writers, Bible Teachers, students, learners, pew warmers, or any other person beware! It is to Christ whom God appointed king over his kingdom, that we give heed. Any person, or persons who attempts to become

Lord over us must be rejected. Any individual or group who would replace Jesus as our apostle needs to be dealt with quickly. All those groups who are giving study periods to doctrine and announcing that they have learned that instrumental music in worship is acceptable to God, therefore that is what this congregation will be doing in worship from henceforth have usurped the position of Jesus. Or, a person, or group which tells me that I have no divine obligation to worship God with my brethren whenever the appointed time to worship occurs with out a scriptural reason for not doing so has usurped the position of Jesus.

This could be continued on and on covering every point of the gospel, but you can clearly see what is involved. Yes, we need men who can lead, feed, and protect the flock because the flock is composed of different levels of knowledge and understanding from beginner to complete. Lambs need that, and others can lend aid to those who lead in a helpers role. But when the leaders become dictators they sin because such is sinful. And brethren who knowingly, deliberately tolerate such also sin.



## **A Change Taking Place**

The Gospel Standard began in the 1970'S and interrupted operation in the 1980's when it was operating on a subscription basis but the treasurer had given nearly everyone subscriptions and we were not able to pay for the printing so we closed it until 2006, and have continued uninterrupted. We have hit a glitch though and some changes are being made. Only a few have generously supported the paper for the most part. We have made special appeals for special issues almost double regular size and increase of mailing a few thousand. The last special issue of September/October 2013 we did not have to make a special appeal but all the funds were depleted with that mailing. Because of death, the economy and other related matters we

lost some of our generous donors. Our first reaction was go to the readers with a request for help. However, I am in the middle of trying to raise funds to make building payments through 2014 when a brother will be able to take over the payments until we can build a congregation here large enough to finish paying the debt on the building.

The postage on third class mailing was raised last year from seventeen cents to twenty nine cents per item. That pretty much sealed the fate for a lot of publications. For years it has been rumored that the Postal Service wanted to eliminate the third class mailing. The last raise did not eliminate that class, but the next will come closer. Churches and publications will be forced to use another type mailing or else close their mailing. Many have already moved into digital only publishing and are doing very well at it. Some continue to sell subscriptions using digital publishing. I did not wish to engage in two separate efforts.

Brother Elliott and I decided it would be better to simply post the paper on the Web Page [www.booksaready.com](http://www.booksaready.com) where all the material is free for anyone to download as much as they like. Most of my writings are there in booklets, books, articles and paper for anyone to read at anytime and whatever quantity they please. Everything is in PDF form which is a universal computer language that everything will read except one reader which has less than one percent of the market the last I heard and by now may have none. To read this all you need is access to the Internet and a small electronic tablet. One is available at the lowest prices I know on Walmart.com. Their Internet sales are as inexpensive as anywhere, sometimes beating places like Nomorerack and Amazon. Their shipment speed is rated number one beating places with great shipping records like Costco and others who have been online for a long time. If you are older and don't have access, you probably have children who do have access, who would be glad to let you use their access to download all you wanted to read during a month. A decent

tablet to read by can be obtained for a hundred dollars or less at Walmart online. If I were in the market for one, I would browse at their store and ask all the questions I needed to ask. Then I would go online, or get someone who would, to go online for me and shop their Internet on which they often have great sales on electronics. I would not buy their cheapest one as it could turn you against tablets altogether. Someone could download for you everything you wanted to read. Turning the device on and off can sometimes be easier than turning on the TV set. This will be far more economical than the continued printing and mailing in a time when the US Postal Service is intent on making itself irrelevant to the American people. Telephone and Internet have gone a long ways toward making letters obsolete with many. Printing is less necessary and in many other ways the USPS, coupled with their inefficiency and pricing, are making themselves unnecessary.

At my age, if I wanted to continue reading a paper under these circumstances, and also a few good books sound in Scriptures, if I could not operate on the Internet, would get a good tablet, or reader which would give me a good readable print, get my son once a month to load it down load for me with the Gospel Standard and free books, come home and read to my heart's content. That would be a good excuse to visit my son once a month and at the same time keep me reading and feeding upon the word of God.

This will be the last issue printed on paper. We have had a great printer and have become good friends with him and his family. We regret leaving this relationship with him, but trust the friendship will continue on.

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## **The Parting Word**

Charles A. Pledge

Some might think our articles slightly on the strong side. However in dealing with critical issues as we did in this

issue, it is time to speak clearly, distinctly, and in a straightforward manner so as to not be misunderstood. The first objective in teaching is clarity. We need to make clear what we wish to be understood. In speaking this writer has not had a problem speaking so people can understand him for more than fifty years. I was helped in this particular more than fifty years ago by a deacon who became a fast friend over the half century since. Although he has passed on to his reward, his memory and his help along the line of making myself understood shall live in my memory as long as this scribe lives. He told me one Sunday night after all the others had left the church building, "Charles, I have my engineering degree from Tennessee Tech, and they don't give those away, you earn them. Yet, I did not understand but little of what you were saying tonight. If I couldn't, I know no one else could. You need to get on our level." We shook hands and both went to our houses. I don't know what he was thinking, but I was mortified that I was so difficult to understand. I then realized that it was the words; not huge big words, but words which would replace two or three words and enable me to say lots more in less time. So, that night a new way began for me; a way of speaking in the words commonly used without the slang expressions. From that point my preaching became clearer to me and to others. But, to make that effective, directness is necessary. Hinting at things will not work. The point has to be clear.

The point in my articles is that the people of God have allowed ourselves to drift away from the old paths in such a slow, indirect way that no one has taken much notice. In this, our last hard copy for a while at least, we wanted to leave some thoughts planted on your minds; thoughts that can help each draw closer to God in a more faithful, devout way, or openly rebel against the will of Almighty God. The direction is up to each individual. May God bless each one of us in our search for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth of God.