

## ***Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns***

"Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them" (Hebrews 2:1, ASV).

The word 'drifting' aptly describes the process of apostasy. It is seldom accomplished by giant leaps; rather it is the result of short steps. The steps appear to be only the slightest variation from the accepted truth and altogether innocent, but each one is used as justification for the next one until truth has been left completely, even by individuals who would never have dreamed it possible.

We have known of congregations where a piano was first allowed in the basement to teach children how to sing. But having learned with it, the children continued to need it in their Bible classes. Once this was allowed, someone asked the difference in young folks and adults -- the difference in Wednesday night and Sunday night. No logical difference could be shown so it was allowed at those times.

Then someone had only to point out the inconsistency in using it Sunday night and refusing it Sunday morning, and from then on it was used at all services, a thing that would have been opposed when the piano was first moved into the basement.

A group of Americans preaching in Africa said they were strongly opposed to churches of Christ operating a hospital in the United States. But they thought churches could and should support a nurse in Nigeria to treat wounds and minor illnesses. But once the nurse was supported, a hospital was proposed. Anyone who objected would be asked, "If you can support a nurse and clinic, why not a doctor and hospital?" No logical difference could be shown, so the hospital was built. Now often heard is a proposal for a Church of Christ Hospital in the United States. The argument: "If we can do it in Nigeria, why not here?" Granted that premise, no sound reason can be given. It all started with letting a church support a nurse.

A church we know has a kitchen. They defend it on the grounds that it costs the church nothing. The kitchen and equipment were in the building when it was purchased and they have a minimum electric and water bill each month, anyway. But a generation will arise that is accustomed to the kitchen. They will want to build a new building and they will want a kitchen. Their argument will be "We've always had a kitchen. If we could have it in the old building, why not in the new?" There will be no chance of keeping it out.

In our town, a kindergarten is beginning in the meetinghouse of one of the churches. In a news item, it is stated, "The kindergarten will be at the church, but will not be operated by the church." This will satisfy the minds of many who would object to the church operating or supporting a school of any kind.

But one of these days another step will be proposed. It may be opening a first grade. If someone objects, the question will be raised, "But what is the difference in a first grade and kindergarten?" There is no difference, so the opposition will be silenced and the way will be clear for second grade, third grade, etc., etc.

But some day the school will need to be subsidized. Those opposed to support of education will rise up to object. But someone will say, "It's true we haven't been contributing from the treasury, but we have been providing a place for the school and it has been using the name of the church. Now if we can contribute facilities and influence, why not money?" That question will be hard to answer, for there is no difference and the opposition will then be silenced.

From this, the next logical step will be to send money to a college, for, after all, what is the difference between contributing to our own school and contributing to one operated by someone else? And it all began with a kindergarten, which "will be at the church, but will not be operated by the church."

Truly, "Mighty Oaks from little acorns grow." The mistake is ever allowing an acorn to get mixed with the seed of the kingdom. Every innovation, regardless of how small, must be rejected, not only for its own sake, but also for the sake of attendant corruptions that will surely follow in its train.

**- by Sewell Hall**

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***Be Careful What You Say***

There are numerous statements in the Proverbs about the use of our tongues. We are warned about the sins we can commit with our words, but we are also encouraged about the good that can be done if we exercise caution in our speech. Consider these important truths:

**15:1,2** *"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness."*

**29:11** *"A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards."*

**12:22** *"Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight"***12:18** *"There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health."*

**16:13** *"Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right"*

**10:11** *"The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked."*

**10:20** *"The tongue of the just is as choice silver the heart of the wicked is little worth."*

**15:4** *"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit"*

**25:11** *"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."*

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### ***'Under New Management'***

. . . so reads the sign on the restaurant door. Why would the folks who run this establishment want to tell us that they are "new" managers? The answer is fairly obvious! Something was lacking in the 'old' managers. For one reason or another, their service or products (or both) were sub-par. The business has suffered from this, and customers have turned elsewhere. Now, with hopes of reviving the ailing enterprise, we are alerted by the sign that new people are in charge. The clear implication is that things will be different, improvements have been made. A sign on the door is easy to install, but only time will tell if the changes are real.

Think of this spiritual parallel - the person who has obeyed the gospel has been "baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Furthermore, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Think of it - we can become "new" creatures by obeying the Lord. Why do we need this? Simple: there was something wrong with the "old" creature! Sin had brought us to ruin and separated us from God (Isa. 59:2). But now, by God's grace we can be made "new". Our wrecked lives can be salvaged.

Just like putting a sign on the restaurant door, it's easy to say that you love the Lord. But it's harder to make the real changes that demonstrate the "new" creature. We must "put off . . . the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts . . . (and) put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24). Will your life prove that you are really "under new management"?

**- by Greg Gwin**