

Drawing Circles

by Bill Crews

Poems, like illustrations, may be used to emphasize or to drive home a point of divine truth, but they may never be used to determine or establish a point of divine truth. I suppose that I enjoy and appreciate good poems about as much as the next person — many I have clipped and pasted in my scrapbook of "Gems." But I am resolved not to use poems in place of scripture and to be sure the sentiments of a poem are scriptural; before making pulpit, class or bulletin use of it. I am disturbed when brethren seem to prefer uninspired poetry over inspired scripture. I am even more disturbed when brethren use a poem that teaches error.

During the past few years, off and on, I have seen a little poem in bulletins published by brethren of liberal inclination which teaches denominational error. The substance of the rhyme is that an acquaintance drew a circle that put me out, but I drew a circle, a larger circle, that took him in. In striking a blow against intolerance and narrow-mindedness, it also leaves the impression that we should never take a position which, in effect, would tell another person that he is wrong, in error, in sin, lost. It sounds exactly like something that a member of a denominational church might want to say in response to a lesson on the New Testament plan of salvation, or the oneness of the Lord's church, or the sin of religious division or denominationalism. Lost sight of is the fact that it is God who draws the circles, or the boundaries, or the limits, and man is not to strive to make them larger — or smaller.

"Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it." (Matthew 7:13-14) "But He answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit" (Matthew 15:13-14). "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ (that refers to the teaching that is from Christ, not just the teaching that is about Christ - BC), hath not God: He that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).

Suppose that a person can remark: "Your position is so narrow and exclusive that it rules me out, but my position is so broad and inclusive that it embraces you"; what does this prove as to what is right or wrong, truth or error? God has "drawn a circle" of salvation and safety — in Christ and the doctrine of Christ; let us enter that "circle" and endeavor to bring others into it.

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