Issues That Have Divided Us:

Attitudes Toward Scriptural Authority

Introduction:
A. Division among “churches of Christ” in America is a historical fact.
   1. The major division in the last half of the 1800's.
   2. The major division in the last half of the 1900's.
B. We need to understand the issues that have divided us.
   1. To understand why different groups exists.
   2. To avoid repeating the mistakes the past.
   3. Hence our series on “Issues that have divided us.”
C. The underlying problem behind the issues that have divided us is two-fold.
   1. Different views about the need for scriptural authority.
   2. A lack of understanding the overall nature of scriptural authority.

Discussion:

I. Two Opposing Different Of Authority.
   A. Conservative view.
      1. A thing is forbidden in religion unless it is expressively authorized.
      2. We must have authority for all that we do in religion.
   B. Liberal view.
      1. A thing is permitted unless expressly forbidden.
      2. We do many things for which we have no authority.
   C. Biblical view
      2. Must have authority for all we do (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11)

II. Three forms of Authority — Commands, Examples and Necessary Inferences.
   A. This is a self-evident principle.
      1. Recognized in secular law.
      2. Recognized in all kinds of authority: Civil, parental, schools, etc.
   B. This is a divinely recognized principle — Jesus used all there.
   C. This is illustrated by Lord’s supper.
      2. Examples: “Upon the first day of the week when...” (Acts 20:7).
      3. Necessary Inference: Every necessarily inference, like Sabbath”

III. The Basic Kinds of Authority
   A. General and Specific.
      1. The principle illustrated (Gen. 22:1-3; Heb. 7:14).
      2. The principle applied: Gopher wood, sing, go, teach, etc.
   B. Rights and Obligations.
      2. May do certain things (1 Cor. 9:1-6).

Conclusion:
A. Understanding authority would go a long way in preventing and solving problems that divide.
B. Only one thing worse than division — unity in error.