

## COMMON-LAW CHRISTIANS?

There are certain laws in our land which are completely contrary to God's laws, and should never be regarded by God's people as being wholesome or right, even though they may be deemed lawful. Our nation grants certain rights and privileges to each citizen, but just because the government allows such does not mean that God smiles favorably upon them. In our nation, one has a right to be a part of a homosexual relationship and in some cases call it "marriage." One has a right to buy alcoholic beverages and use them to do irreparable harm to himself and likely others as well. One has a right to slaughter an innocent child by virtue of an abortion and call it "women's rights." To this list we could add any number of laws that are out of harmony with the will of God. One other such law that I wish to call to your attention is one known as common-law marriage. In some states, a man and woman are considered husband and wife if they have lived together for a certain period of time. In other words, if Joe and Jane wish to "shack up" together and live in fornication, the government of many states will grant unto them the rights and privileges of marriage after a period of time. Such a law sanctions unholy unions, glorifies fornication and denigrates the divine institution of marriage. Imagine a man and woman who have no intention of getting married suddenly waking up one morning to be declared married by a man-made law, thereby being granted all of the blessings and privileges that pertain unto marriage without actually having gone through the process of being married! Just remember Hebrews 13:4!

There are many who file into the church building week after week who must consider themselves common-law Christians. Each Lord's day, there are those who fill the pews who have never rendered obedience to the will of God (Many times, these non-Christians are more faithful in their attendance than those who have put on Christ in baptism). For whatever reason, they sit through sermon after sermon, invitation after invitation, yet never make the decision to become a Christian. What would make an individual continue to come to worship when his worship is not acceptable, when the lessons are aimed at getting him to change, when his prayers are abomination to the Lord? It must be that many believe that simply by coming to church services for a long enough period of time, they then are Christians. They never have obeyed what the Bible says one must do to become a Christian. Having never obeyed, and seemingly with no intent ever to obey, these certainly desire the blessings and privileges that pertain unto the Christian life. By attending, perhaps faithfully, over a period of time, does one then become married to Christ through some common-law arrangement found in God's word? Certainly not! We are married to Christ when we obey his word, such being the ONLY way one can become a child of God, a Christian, married to Christ. If you have never obeyed the gospel, we would implore you by means of this message to do so today. There is no other way to be joined to Christ, to enjoy the privileges of association with the bridegroom than to obey. No one will ever "back his way" into Christianity!

*Patrick Morrison*