

2001 West Virginia Christian Lectures

October 7-11, 2001

"A Plea For The Fundamentals"



Central Church of Christ
2013 Boyd Orchard Ct.
I-81 @ King Street
Martinsburg, WV 25401

THE BIBLE PLAN OF SALVATION

“A Plea For The Fundamentals”

Hear The Saving Gospel – Romans 1:16-17, 10:17

Believe That Jesus Is The Christ – John 8:24; Acts 8:37

Repent Of Sin – Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9

Confess Jesus As Christ – Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

Be Baptized (Immersed) Into Christ For The Remission Of Sins

Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-38; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Peter 3:20-21

Arise And Walk In Newness Of Life In Worship and Service

Romans 6:3-5; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 2:10

COVER DRAWING

The cover drawing of the Central church of Christ building was done by Timothy Everson, a member of the Central congregation. Timothy is 17 years old and a senior at Musselman High School. He is the son of Jim and Cindy Everson.

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August 27, 2001

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LECTURESHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, October 7

Class	Why Restoration Was and Is Still Needed	Basil Overton
10:45 AM	Did Jesus Really Come Forth From the Father?	Basil Overton
4:30-5:30 PM	Singing	(Area Song Leaders)
6:00	The Comprehensive Christ	Basil Overton

Monday, October 8

9:00 AM	Church Growth - Evangelism	Jerris Bullard
10:00	Biblical Authority	Tim Nichols
10:00	Ladies Class	Margie Overton
11:00	Restoration History: Apostasy in Church Government	Basil Overton
12:00 Noon	Lunch served in Fellowship Room	
1:30 PM	Faithfulness in Persecution	Emmitt Channell
2:30	Strong Families	Albert Farley
3:30	Counsel for the Hurting	Tim Nichols
7:00	Congregational Singing	
7:30	I Have a Personal Relationship With Christ	Basil Overton

Tuesday, October 9

9:00 AM	Church Growth - Bible Classes	Mike Reese
10:00	Building Effective Church Library	David Kenney
10:00	Ladies Class	Margie Overton
11:00	Restoration History: Men and Matters In British Isles	Basil Overton
12:00 Noon	Lunch served in Fellowship Room	
1:30 PM	Worship	Albert Farley
2:30	Baptism	Emanuel Daugherty
3:30	United We Stand	Emmitt Channell
7:00	Congregational Singing	
7:30	Mechanical Instruments Used in Christian Worship?	Basil Overton

Wednesday, October 10

9:00 AM	Church Growth - Leadership	Edward Dyche
10:00	First Love	Jim Farley
10:00	Ladies Class	Margie Overton
11:00	Restoration History: Thomas Campbell	Basil Overton
12:00 Noon	Lunch served in Fellowship Room	
1:30 PM	Biblical Inspiration	Don Cooper
2:30	Submission to God	Randy Chapman
3:30	Isaiah's View of God (6:1)	Edward Dyche
7:00	Congregational Singing	
7:30	Bible Answers To Five Important Questions	Basil Overton

Thursday, October 11

9:00 AM	Church Growth - Preacher Training	Emanuel Daugherty
10:00	Preaching Christ	Don Cooper
10:00	Ladies Class	Magie Overton
11:00	Restoration History: Alexander Campbell	Basil Overton
12:00 Noon	Lunch served in Fellowship Room	
1:30 PM	Christ in Hebrews	Jim Farley
2:30	Book Review	David Kenney
3:30	Way of the Cross Leads Home	Sam Bartrug
7:00	Congregational Singing	
7:30	Holy Ghost Baptism and Water Baptism	Basil Overton

Acknowledgements

Our success in the planning and in the conducting of our lectureship is by the grace of Almighty God. We acknowledge His great Goodness and Mercy upon us, and we give Him our thanksgiving and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It would be impossible to list everyone who contributed to this special week. However, we would like to thank the following people:

1. The elders of the Central congregation, Danny Bowers, Don Deitrick, and Mark Everson, for deciding to host the lectureship, and for selecting the theme, speakers, and topics.
2. Warren Kenney for coordinating and directing the entire lectureship.
3. The members of the Central congregation for binding the lectureship books, serving meals daily, and for all the other things that are necessary to make the lectureship a success.
4. Timothy Everson of the Central congregation for drawing the picture of the church building for the cover of the book.
5. The speakers and writers who graciously prepared and sent us their lectureship manuscripts and their articles for the special October issue of *West Virginia Christian*.
6. Bobby Jennings, of the Wilson Ridge church of Christ, who prepared the Biographical section of the book.
7. David Kenney for technical assistance in helping me work through computer program problems.
8. The elders of the Main St. church of Christ in Pikeville, Kentucky, for allowing us to use their printing equipment again this year.
9. Jim and Linda Farley, of the Main St. congregation, who ordered the supplies and printed the pages of the book.
10. My wife, Nancy, for proofreading all of the manuscripts.

A STATEMENT FROM THE ELDERS AND MINISTER

We are thrilled to host *West Virginia Christian Lectures* this year. We have earnestly tried to do our preparatory work well. Hopefully, that will be evidenced by what you see and hear during the week. We are also glad that the lectures are being preserved in permanent form in this volume.

Chosen for this year's lectureship is the theme *A Plea For The Fundamentals*. In the long ago, a king told God's people that it was too far for them to return to Jerusalem. We are hearing much of the same philosophy advocated today. We are being told that whatever life the restoration movement had is all but gone. We do not subscribe to that philosophy.

We do, however, believe it is time that we return to Jerusalem by emphasizing the fundamental themes of the doctrine of Christ. It is only in this way that we shall be able to find ourselves to be living in accord with the gospel message that was first proclaimed in Jerusalem and then throughout the world.

Fundamental topics will be discussed by faithful men throughout the week. We will discuss themes that range from "Isaiah's View of God" to the "Inspiration of the Bible", to "Worship", and "Submission to God". Additional themes of major significance to our day will be indicated in the table of contents.

There will also be special classes during the week. At 9 o'clock each morning we will offer a class on *Church Growth*. Bro. Basil Overton will be teaching a class on *Restoration History* at 11 o'clock. Sister Margie Overton will be teaching a special class for the ladies each morning at 10 o'clock. We will have two sessions on making better use of the church library by David Kenney. One of these will include a review of the life and teaching of the late Foy E. Wallace.

We wanted this lectureship to be relevant to the needs of the church in West Virginia as well as for all others who are influenced by it. We want to thank our speakers for their diligent work in preparation and presentation. We know, at least in part, how this must have strained already busy schedules. We trust that this work will be rewarded as the written speeches and the speeches delivered prove to be of great value to all who read and hear.

Now this volume is placed into your hands as a tool to help you further the cause that we all love so dearly.

Signed,

Don Deitrick

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WHY “RESTORATION” WAS NEEDED AND IS STILL NEEDED

Basil Overton

What do we mean by “Restoration” when we speak of “The Restoration Plea,” and “The Restoration Movement”? Technically speaking, we cannot restore the gospel, or the church, because the gospel has been in the world ever since it was first preached as we read about in the New Testament, and the church that Jesus established on the first day of Pentecost after His resurrection has been here ever since. It is true that there was a massive “falling away” of the church just as the New Testament said there would be. The Holy Spirit guided Paul to prophesy that the church would fall away from the gospel. (1 Timothy 4:1-6; 2 Timothy 4:1-6.) Paul referred to that as “a falling away” in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. “Falling away” in this text is the translation of Greek “apostasia” which comes from “apo” that means “away,” and “stasia” that means “stand.” Our word “apostasy” is the Anglicized (transliterated) form of “apostasia,” which means standing away or standing in another place.

We cannot be certain there was ever a time since Jesus built His church that there were no members of it on the earth. Even if we could prove there was ever such a time that would not mean the church did not exist. If the church did not exist no one could have become a member of it! The church has existed ever since it was established by our Lord on the first day of Pentecost after He was raised from the dead. All that time He has been head of it, and people could become members of it in the same way people about whom we read in the New Testament became members of it.

Perhaps we use the word “Restoration” because of the lack of a better term. We mean by “The Restoration Plea” that we want people to learn what the gospel and the church of the New Testament are.

Many mistakes have been made in “The Restoration Movement,” but “The Restoration Plea” is not a mistake, but it is in complete harmony with what the New Testament requires.

Those who take their religion seriously should enjoy and appreciate learning historical facts that enlighten all of us concerning present religious conditions. Just as a matter of education we should be grateful to those who labor long in the tedious task of learning matters that they can teach us, and which matters will enlighten us.

It is not my purpose in speaking and writing about church history, or any other matter, to insult and offend people that are involved in religious relationships and activities which are not taught in the Bible. My pure motives

and purposes in all that I say are to enlighten and to educate people who may not be aware of the facts which I present.

Someone whom I was teaching in a personal evangelism discussion asked me if the church history I relied on was written by members of the church of Christ. I assured him it was not. Some seem to think some in the church of Christ wrote the history so it would support the religious views of those in that church, but that certainly is not true.

We who preach the gospel of the New Testament should not be shocked if those who have heard us fall away because, after Paul and other inspired preachers preached, there was a massive falling away of the church. That falling away had two phases: (1) many doctrines and practices not in the gospel were introduced over a period of many hundreds of years; and (2) there was a falling away from the New Testament order of church government. Here I present the first phase, and in the next lesson I will present the second.

Introduction Of Practices And Doctrines

1. One of the first unscriptural practices introduced was the use of so-called “holy water” which historians say was begun about 120 A.D. This practice was borrowed from pagan religions which practiced the sprinkling of “holy water” on themselves and their heathen temples of false or mythological gods.

There is nothing in the New Testament about “holy water”!

2. The practice of doing penance was begun about 157 A.D. This was the infliction of temporal punishment on those who sinned even though it was said their sins were forgiven. Another invention of men that followed was the granting of indulgences which meant the sinner did not have to do whatever he was assigned to do as temporal punishment.

There is nothing in the Bible about penance and indulgences!

3. The Lord’s supper was corrupted into being a “sacrifice” instead of a “memorial” about 350 A.D. The New Testament Book of Hebrews stresses that Jesus was sacrificed “once and for all” when he was crucified. Those who administer the so-called sacrifice of the mass claim they perform a miracle and change the bread and the fruit of the vine into the actual body and blood of Jesus, and that is why they call these “blessed” elements “the real presence of Jesus.”

There is nothing in the Bible about “the sacrifice of the mass” or “the real presence”!

4. Praying for the dead came into pretty general practice by 380 A.D. The practice was derived from heathen orators who practiced addressing the dead in their speeches.

There is nothing about praying for the dead in the Bible!

5. Celibacy for priests evidently was begun in 386 A.D. by Siricius, bishop of Rome in the apostate church. He tried to keep the priests in his district from marriage, but marriage for the so-called clergy was not forbidden throughout the apostate church until the 10th century. This doctrine, like most of the doctrines of men introduced, was debated for years by leading church men.

The doctrine of celibacy has caused many to live in an unnatural state, and records prove it has caused much sin.

There is nothing in the Bible that teaches that ministers of the gospel must not marry!

6. Extreme unction was started about 588 A.D. It was the “anointing” of a person’s body when it was thought he was about to die. It is called “administering last rites.”

There is not anything in the Bible about “extreme unction”!

7. The doctrine of purgatory, which says there is a place where children of God who die while guilty of sin go and stay in temporary punishment until the sin is expiated, was introduced about 593 A.D.

There is nothing about purgatory in the Bible!

8. Instrumental music was introduced into the worship of the apostate church hundreds of years after the New Testament was written. It was officially approved by the pope of that church in the latter part of the 7th century. There was controversy over it. The church split in 1054 A.D. into the Western or Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern or Greek Catholic (or Orthodox) church. Not all congregations of the Roman church used instruments in worship, and none of the congregations of the Greek church used it, and with possibly a few exceptions they still do not. The middle ages Italian term “acapella” means singing like they did in church!

There is nothing in the New Testament about using mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church!

9. The word baptism means immersion. In the New Testament baptism in water was immersion. Two or three hundred years after the New Testament was written sprinkling water on some people was called baptism. Later infants

were sprinkled. Those baptized we read about in the Bible were old enough to have sinned, and old enough to repent of their sins and confess their faith in Christ, and were baptized in order to be saved. (1 Peter 3:21.)

There is nothing in the Bible about anyone, infant or older, being sprinkled with water and calling it baptism! There is nothing in the Bible about anyone already saved being baptized (immersed), but those who were baptized were baptized in order to be saved! (Acts 2:38.) Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mark 16:16.)

Reputable historians have for centuries written about the foregoing doctrines and practices and many others that were introduced into the apostate church.

Let us all be excited and concerned about The New Millennium, but more excited and concerned about The New Testament and learning from it!

DID JESUS REALLY COME FORTH FROM THE FATHER?

Basil Overton

Jesus said, "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father." (John 16:28.)

In Volume Three of his eleven volume series of historical works, the great American historian Will Durant says that some have attempted to prove that Jesus Christ was a myth. They denied that Jesus lived.

Among these was Bruno Baer, who in 1840 began his series of passionate controversial works in which he attempted to prove Jesus was a myth. Later in the 19th Century, some Dutchmen laboriously attempted to prove Jesus never lived. Among these were Pierson, Naber, and Matthas.

Durant says that in England J. M. Robertson and W. B. Smith made attempts to prove Jesus never really lived.

It is obvious that Will Durant did not believe that the New Testament was written by men who were directed by God in what they wrote. However, following what he wrote about those who deny Jesus actually lived, Durant said that it would be easier to believe the miracles recorded in the New Testament than it is to believe that a few simple men in one generation invented so appealing a personality as Jesus and the lofty ethic attributed to him, and the inspiring vision of human brotherhood which Jesus is pictured as presenting.

Durant went on to say that after two centuries of "Higher Criticism" the outlines of the life, character and teaching of Christ remain reasonably clear, and that there is no feature in the history of Western man as fascinating as this story of Jesus Christ. (See: Volume III of Will Durant's works entitled: Caesar and Christ, Simon and Shuster, N.Y., page 557.)

An Imposter, And Designing Opportunist?

Other skeptics admit Jesus Christ really lived as the New Testament says he did in the land of Palestine. However they say he was an imposter and a designing opportunist, therefore not what he claimed to be.

This concept of Jesus is self-destructive, because some scholars have pointed out that there never has been a period that offered a more tempting opportunity to a designing opportunist than when Jesus lived in Palestine. C.S. Farber, presents some of the evidence of this in his book entitled: Difficulties Of Infidelity. (See pages 96-201.)

When Jesus lived, the Jews in Palestine lived under the bondage of a Roman military occupational force. They were very restless and impatient because of their Roman oppressors. They were eager to cast off this unpalatable and vexatious suppression. They expected a mighty deliverer. Even the two disciples of Jesus who talked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus told him they had hoped it was he who would redeem Israel. (Luke 24.) Obviously they meant redemption from Roman bondage.

If Jesus was a designing imposter who was seeking an opportunity to be what the Jews were looking for, why did he not play that role?

The Jews expected, not a prince of peace, but a prince of war who would liberate them from Caesar. Had Jesus been a designing opportunist and an imposter, doubtless, he would have fit himself into the expectations of the Jews.

The Jews thought the Messiah would confer on them abundant prosperity and exalt their nation and raise it from the ashes and anguish of ages of destruction and devastation. Why did Jesus not fulfill their expectations?

According to what the Jews expected the Messiah to be, when Jesus was saying, “the foxes have holes, and the birds of the heavens have nests, but the Son of man has not a place to rest his head,” he should have been conducting a financial campaign to raise funds for an army. If he had been like what the Jews expected he would have led a rebellion against Rome under the banner of a heaven-sent deliverer! Instead he taught the Jews to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s!

If Jesus had been an imposter seeking to be what the Jews were expecting, he would have flattered the vain Pharisees for their piety and their religious practices. Instead, he strongly rebuked them for their hypocrisy. (Matthew 23.) Had he been an imposter seeking to please the Jews, doubtless, he would have attempted to entice the Sadducees with offers of temporal abundance. Instead, even though he never said temporal blessings were wrong, he did often warn of the dangers thereof.

Was Jesus Deceived About Himself?

Jesus claimed to be God’s only begotten Son. He said repeatedly he came forth from the Father. (For examples see John 6:38; 16:28.) If he was not what he claimed to be, he was not even a good man, for he told things about himself that were not so. If he told such knowing it was untrue, he was not only not a good man, but he was also a liar. How could a liar and deliberate deceiver have produced a flawless system of morals and standards for living? Reason compels us to say he could not have done so.

Others say Jesus really thought he was what he said he was, but that he was deceived. Reason rejects this because if he was deceived about himself he must have been a deranged and naïve simpleton. How could such a person have done the teaching he did?

His Miracles

Skeptics have tried in vain to do away with the miracles that the New Testament says Jesus performed. His miracles make it easy for one to believe he is indeed the Son of God. John's record of his miracles was designed to convince of this. (John 20:31,31.)

The easiest things to believe about Jesus are the things the New Testament says about him. If one does not believe all these things, he will have to believe the things about him which are much harder to believe.

Conclusion

If you are a lost person, the most reasonable and most profitable thing you can do is to believe in Jesus Christ as God's Son and that he died for your sins. Then turn from your sins. The New Testament calls this repentance. Then for God to forgive your sins, confess that you believe Jesus Christ is God's Son, and be baptized (immersed) upon the name or authority of Jesus Christ in order for God to forgive you of all your sins. In thus being buried in baptism, you will be raised to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38.) You will be a Christian, which means you will be in the body of Christ which is his church.

Read your New Testament and you will see that all of this is taught in it. If I can be of any help to you in your becoming a Christian, please contact me.

THE COMPREHENSIVE CHRIST

Basil Overton

One of the greatest privileges one can have is to tell others about Jesus Christ. Never has the world needed Christ more than now. He is the most colossal figure of history. He is the highest mountain peak of history! We can all see him alike. Look at him from five viewpoints.

The Christ Of The Cradle

Perhaps many think of Christ merely as a baby, especially at Christmas time. He was a baby, and he was born in a barn in Bethlehem, but we do not know the date of his birth.

When Paul wrote the Colossian Christians, they were troubled by what is called “the Colossian heresy,” which denied that Christ was all sufficient as a Saviour. Those who promoted this heresy affirmed that Christ was all right as far as He went. They said there were orders and principalities of angels superior to Christ. Paul answered these heretics in the first two chapters of Colossians. In Colossians 1:15, Paul affirmed that Jesus is “the firstborn of every creature.”

Jesus certainly was not the first one to be born into the world, but he was the first one to be born of a virgin who conceived by the power of Almighty God.

Ancient culture gave special status to the firstborn one in a family. He had privileges, powers, and rights other children in the family did not have. He stood out among the other children. Paul’s statement that Jesus Christ is “the firstborn of every creature” may have reference to our Lord’s standing out above all others. He is chief among all humanity.

In Colossians 1:18 Paul said Christ is the firstborn from the dead. But Christ was not the first one to be raised from the dead. Before his death, He raised Lazarus, and the daughter of Jairus, and the widow of Nain’s son.

When Paul was preaching in a Jewish synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia, he affirmed that Jesus was raised from the dead to die no more. (Acts 13:34.) This is the sense in which Jesus is the firstborn from the dead.

The Christ Of The Creation

One may contend that we should just preach Christ as the redeemer and not spend time talking against the evolutionary hypothesis, and for the creation story in the Bible.

One cannot preach Christ as the Redeemer without affirming with equal emphasis the fact he is also our Creator!

When John started his account of Christ called the Book of John, he said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” (John 1:1-3.)

John recorded accounts of many miracles Jesus did, and he affirmed that Jesus made everything in the beginning! In answering that Colossian heresy Paul said that Jesus is our Redeemer (Colossians 1:14), and then he immediately affirmed that He is our Creator. “For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him and for him.” (Colossians 1:16.)

The writer of Hebrews affirmed that God speaks to us through Jesus Christ. To show that Christ is qualified to be the one through whom the Father speaks unto us, he affirmed in the very beginning of the epistle that God made the worlds by Jesus Christ! (Hebrews 1:2.)

In showing his superiority over angels the writer of Hebrews quoted from a Psalm that tells how God the Father spoke to God the Son and said, “And thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.” (Hebrews 1:10.)

One cannot preach Christ as God’s spokesman without preaching that that same Christ laid the foundation of the earth and made the heavens!

The Christ Of The Cosmos

The Greeks had a word they used to refer to order and orderliness. It was the word kosmos. It was put into English as cosmos.

The Greeks saw order in the universe and in the world. They referred to the world as the cosmos. Our word cosmetics came from cosmos because cosmetics are what we use in setting our faces in order!

Some ask, “What possible bearing can the Bible have on this modern, sophisticated space age?”

The Bible says more in one verse that explains “this space age” than all the words that uninspired men have spoken and written about it! That verse is Colossians 1:1 where Paul, in answering the “Colossian heresy,” affirmed of Jesus Christ, “And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.”

Consist of this verse is a translation of Greek sunesteken. This word is a form of the word that means “to have been permanently framed.”

The word Paul used (sunesteken) means that Christ holds this universe in place. He created it, and He operates it and holds it in place! He is more than a baby in a barn; He is the creator; and He is the operator and sustainer of what he created.

The Christ Of The Cross

If you do not believe that Christ is the Christ of the cross and that He died there for your sins, it will not matter whether or not you believe He is the Christ of the cradle, or the Christ of the creation, or the Christ of the cosmos.

The more one tries to explain and rationalize the awful ordeal Jesus endured in being crucified, the more He senses how incomprehensible that awesome experience really was.

Our sins are so bad before God that the only sacrifice that would suffice for them was the sacrifice of His only begotten Son. “Who his own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.” (1 Peter 2:24.) “We being dead to sins” of this text is from the Greek words which are literally translated, “In order that to sins dying.” When one becomes a Christian he dies to sin by being baptized into Christ.” (Romans 6:3,4.)

The Christ Of The Crown

If we do not recognize Jesus as the Christ of the crown, there is no use in our believing anything else about Him! Before He ascended, Jesus said all authority had been given unto him. (Matthew 28:18.) He was raised from the dead to be crowned King of Kings. (Acts 2:30.) In answering that Colossian heresy, Paul affirmed of Christ, “And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.” (Colossians 1:18.)

Saying Christ is the head of His church is the same as saying He is “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (Revelation 19:16) because the church is the Lord’s kingdom, and He is exalted above all kings by being king of His kingdom. Just as no king or any other ruler is above Christ, even so no kingdom, no nation, no political domain is superior to the church of our Lord which is His kingdom.

To submit to King Jesus one must put His complete trust in Him. He can do this only by repenting of His sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30), confessing his faith in Him (Romans 10:9,10; Matthew 10:32); and by being baptized or immersed in water in order to reach the saving power of the blood our Lord shed in giving himself

for us. To completely rely on the Lord and be saved by God's grace, this is what one must do. When he has done this, he must continue to rely on the Lord by worshiping God in spirit and in truth and serving Him daily.

The Christ Of The Church

One should not try to separate Christ from His church. Some have said, "Preach Christ, not His church." This shows ignorance of God's word.

Both Christ and His church were in God's eternal purpose. (Ephesians 3:10,11.)

Christ and His church were both in God's promise to Abraham. (Genesis 12:1-3; Ephesians 3:1-9.)

The prophecies of the Messiah (Christ) also included His kingdom or His church. (Isaiah 9:6,7; Daniel 2:44.)

The angel Gabriel, in announcing the birth of Jesus to the one who would be his mother, also told her that her son would have a kingdom and would rule upon God's throne. (Luke 1:26-35; 1 Chronicles 29:23.)

John the Baptizer quoted Isaiah who prophesied concerning the Lord Jesus when he said, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." (Matthew 3:3.) John equated "the way of the Lord" with "the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 3:2.)

Jesus preached himself saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life...I am the vine...I am the resurrection and the life...I am the door...I am the good shepherd." But He also preached His church. One way He did this was in all those parables where He taught things about His kingdom which is His church. Even when He said, "I am the vine," he added, "ye are the branches." No doubt this was an analogy of the relationship of Him and His church which He taught even before He actually established His church.

Study the Book of Acts and the New Testament Epistles and see how many times in the preaching of the inspired men they showed that preaching Christ included preaching His church.

When Saul persecuted the church, He persecuted the Lord. (Acts 9:4.) When Philip preached Christ, he preached His kingdom, the church. (Acts 8:5,12.) When Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he preached Christ and His kingdom or church. (Acts 28:31.)

The Book of Acts begins with the story of Jesus preaching things concerning His kingdom to the apostles for 40 days, (Acts 1:3) and it ends with Paul

preaching Christ and His kingdom in his own hired house in Rome. (Acts 28:30,31.)

One cannot preach Christ as Savior without telling He is the savior of His body the church. (Ephesians 5:23.)

If one preaches on the blood of Christ, he must tell that the church was purchased with His precious blood. (Acts 20:28.)

Every gospel preacher should preach on the love of Christ, and a good text to use is Ephesians 5:25 which says Christ loved the church and gave himself for it! This text also is good to use in preaching on the giving spirit of Christ. He gave himself for His church!

If one preaches on the headship of Christ, he must tell that He is the head of the church! (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18.)

One cannot preach Christ without preaching His church!

CHURCH GROWTH THROUGH EVANGELISM

Jerris N. Bullard

God wants lost people to be found (Heb. 12:15; 2 Peter 3: 9). This is His passion...His mission. We have been invited to be God's co-workers in His search for the lost (1 Cor. 3: 9; 2 Cor. 6:1 and 5: 20), but we must remember that it is God who sends, empowers, and produces the results. If we really mean what we say when we sing, "O to be like thee," we too will be passionate for souls. Any Christian who does not have a passion for evangelism should realize he is not like his Father, who is a missionary God.

God the Great Sender

God is the Great Sender. The language of sending describes the range of God's concern and activity in the world. God called and sent Abraham to a land where He would form a people, who, in turn, would be sent out to the world (Gen. 12: 1-3; Isa. 42: 5-7; 43: 10-13; Matt. 23: 15; John 7:35). He sent Samuel to deliver His people, and to anoint Saul and David as kings (1 Sam. 12: 11; 16: 1). God sent Nathan to David to call him to repentance (2 Sam. 12: 1). He sent the prophets Elijah (2 Kings 2), Isaiah (6:8), Jeremiah (1: 7; 7: 25; 25:4; 26:5; 29: 19; 35: 15), Haggai (1: 12), and the greatest of them all, John the Baptist (John 1:6-8). God sent His own Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and He sent His Holy Spirit (Gal. 4: 4-6). God's Son has in turn sent us into the world (Matt. 28: 18-21; John 20:21). He sent His angels (messengers) to the seven churches (Rev. 22: 16). God is a missionary God who does His work through mankind. In most religions it is man who is seeking God, but in the Judeo-Christian faith it is God who comes seeking man (Gen. 3: 8-11; Matt. 4: 19; Luke 9: 23)!

I have difficulty with our traditional concept of the word "missionary." It seems to imply a professional clergy who work outside the U.S.A. Further, it appears to imply that the church is relieved of its mission obligation by simply saying, "Here is our check, i.e. here is our support for missions." The missionary is often in the position of saying, "You give us the resources and we will do the mission work for you." I do not believe this to be a biblical concept. Rather, I would suggest that all Christians are missionaries and the entire world - in whatever place they find themselves - is their field. Mission work must become personalized to the extent that every member understands his or her worth to God in seeking the lost. Each member must use his or her gifts, abilities, and resources to find (in partnership with the Lord) the lost. Mission work is God's global effort (which, of course, includes the U.S.A.) to gather worshippers to Himself. Evangelism must be a part of our everyday lives. All occupations may be used by the Lord in "Mission" activities and can be equally effective in winning souls. For example, a doctor need not quit practicing

medicine to preach. A farmer need not quit plowing to be a Bible class teacher. A homemaker need not forsake her domestic duties and chores to spend her full-time in cottage meetings. Anyone, in any occupation, who gives a cup of cold water in Jesus' name, is a missionary. Our gifts will be used by the Lord to reach people. It is not ability God requires of us but, rather, usability. God so designed His plan for saving the world that the plan cannot be completed without the participation of Christians in all walks of life working as co-missionaries with God.

God Enables Church Growth

It is God who enables church growth. It is not our methods, money, plans, or "right contacts" that cause growth. In fact, if there is any earthly explanation for our ministry, we should close it down. Our ministry should be of such a character that there is no explanation for its continuance apart from the power of God. Even though man often reviles Him, God's love refuses to give up on the soul He has made. In the 1890's Francis Thompson wrote, *The Hound of Heaven*. The shocking metaphor portrays God in unremitting pursuit of the souls of mankind:

The Hound of Heaven

Francis Thompson

*I fled Him, down the night and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped...
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat—
More instant than the Feet—
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

I pleaded, outlaw-wise...
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars...
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue...
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,*

*Deliberate speed, majestic instancy
Came on the following Feet,
And a voice above their beat—
“Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.”*

*“...I am He Whom thou seekest!
As thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.”*

As God provided Himself with a ram in Genesis 22: 7-8, so He will provide Himself with workers - missionaries to seek the lost. How can we be involved in the work of God? I would suggest three ways:

1. We must first discipline our hearts and bodies to be holy (1 Peter 1: 14-16). Holiness implies being full of the word of God, the Spirit of God. Note how the seraphim in Isaiah 6 praised God: “Holy, Holy, Holy.” They did not say, “love, love, love,” though God is love. Nor did they say, “Creator, Creator, Creator,” though Revelation 4 praises God as Creator. But, the seraphim exclaimed day and night, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.”
2. Secondly, we must pray fervently and earnestly for the lost (1 Thess. 5: 17). John Hyde, a missionary to India, became known as “Praying Hyde.” He had calluses on his knees and elbows as a result of spending hours in prayer before the throne of God. He was often heard praying passionately, “Give me souls or I die.”
3. Finally, we must be people who are willing to serve others. Two examples are (1) the services of Elisha, who “poured water on the hands of Elijah” (2 Kings 3: 11); and, (2) the Lord Jesus pouring water into a basin and washing the feet of the disciples as an example for us (John 13: 12-17; Matt. 20: 26-28).

We are co-workers with God and as such we are to evangelize. We have been saved to save others. To evangelize is to tell the story of Jesus’ death, burial, resurrection, and His appearance after death (1 Cor. 15: 3-8). This is our task.

God Harvests His Field

These are exciting times because it is likely that we are experiencing more people coming to Christ on a global basis than at any other time in the history of the church of Christ. There are now more members of the church in Africa than there are in the U.S.A. Additionally, there are also more members of the church in India than can be found in the U.S.A! This rapid advance of the Gospel should cause us to lift up our eyes to see the white fields where God has placed each one of us (John 4: 35). God is the reaper - the harvester of His own field. Our telling the story of Jesus and the plan of salvation does not

infer results ... results are hoped for, but it is God who must give the increase (1 Cor. 3: 7). As workers together with God, we must be aware that there are both a great commission (Matt. 28: 18-20) and a great commandment (Matt. 19: 19). There are spiritual needs, i.e. the need of salvation, and social or physical needs. As one of our favorite songs says, "To love someone more dearly everyday, this is our task." One beaten by thieves does not need a tract placed in his pocket. His physical needs must be provided. Again, how can we teach a starving person? Someone has well said, "An empty stomach has no ears." But fulfill people's needs and then the opportunity for teaching the Word may be presented. We must keep before us the old question, "What would Jesus do?"

The church is God's instrument to reap the fields of the world. The task of evangelizing begins at the level of the local church - wherever that local church is located on the globe. There is no short cut to church growth. It requires ministry, and ministry is the result of a sanctified life. If the Lord would use us to help grow His church, we must first be willing to pay the price of becoming prayerful, righteous, and service oriented people.

The words of Jesus in John 21: 4-6 seem relevant here:

But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

We are all fishers in the kingdom of God, called to let down our nets into the sea of humanity. I say to you, in the words of our Lord, "Friends have you caught any fish? Then, throw your nets on the other side."

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

Tim Nichols

Some accuse us of circular reasoning when we assert that the Bible is the Word of God and then point to passages of Scripture to establish the facts that God exists and the Bible is His Word. This charge would be justified if this were our only method for ascertaining these truths and our only basis for encouraging others to accept them as such. The Scriptures, however, point to abundant proofs that are available for all to inspect that demand the conclusion that God exists; and the Scriptures contain compelling evidences of their own inspiration and authority. The injunctions to "prove all things" and to "hold fast that which is good" while abstaining from all things that are evil (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22) apply to this matter as they apply to others. Our faith in God and in what He has revealed is not some blind leap in the dark, and it will bear up under the closest scrutiny.

God exists. Anyone recognizing his or her own existence has sufficient evidence for this conclusion. Those whose eyes have seen the earth, the moon, and the stars have before them testimony that our Creator is powerful and active. Those who examine elements of creation through the microscope and telescope see even greater complexity and order than the casual observer who is already awed by what is before him. Design proves the existence of a designer who is equal to the task of designing what is observed. For every effect there must of necessity be an adequate cause. "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4). The existence of a hut proves the existence of a builder equal to the task of erecting it. The fact that the space shuttle is real demands that rocket scientists are actual beings rather than figments of our imaginations. The universe is real, and you are an active part of it. It shouts of God's reality, and there is no language in which it cannot be heard. It roars of God's existence 24 hours every day and 7 days every week in every corner of the world:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof (Psalm 19:1-6).

Those who look upon this evidence and, contrary to it, deny the existence of God are accountable for having closed their eyes against the light.

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (Romans 1:19-20).

That the Scriptures are the Word of God is equally subject to investigation and verification. We are impressed by the internal consistency among the various books written over a very long period of time by a great number of different men who could not have conspired together to produce a book without a single contradiction. We note that **none** of its pronouncements are in conflict with any known **fact** of science or history. The accuracy of the prophets can only be credited to Divine guidance. These considerations, along with countless others, are perfectly consistent with the claim of the Bible for itself and the claims of those who penned it that it **is** the product of God's mind. Old Testament passages making this claim are too numerous even to list within the space requirements of this article, but many spoke as David did when he said: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (2 Samuel 23:2). Jesus asserted that God spoke to those living in His days upon the earth through the Scriptures that had been written long before that time: "...have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying..." (Matthew 22:31). Jesus asserted that Old Testament writers had spoken "by the Holy Ghost" (Mark 12:36) and that all of their words "must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake..." (Acts 1:16). Paul attributed the words of Isaiah to the Holy Spirit (Acts 28:25), and he called the Old Testament Scriptures the "oracles of God" (Romans 3:2), saying that they "were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). He recognized that these Scriptures anticipated the extension of themselves into the New Testament age: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8). The writer of Hebrews declared that the Holy Spirit still speaks through His inspired Word and that men still must heed His voice (Hebrews 3:6-19). Peter proclaimed that we must "take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place" to that "more sure word of prophecy" which was delivered to "holy men of God" who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:19-21). Paul's inspired message came to him through the process of revelation:

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth,

but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:10-16).

The facts concerning the Scriptures, their content, the claims of those who penned them, the effect that they have upon man, their close correspondence with what we can observe, and many other testable proofs lead us to conclude that:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

That the Bible proceeds from the mouth of God ("given by inspiration of God" translates a Greek word meaning "God-breathed") is enough to establish that it is authoritative in all that it says to us. The Creator of heaven and earth is speaking to you. You are obliged to listen, to heed, to recognize that His wisdom is vastly superior to your own, to acknowledge that His ways are right ways, to alter your thoughts to conform with His, and to teach others His thoughts rather than your own. To even **think** beyond what God has revealed and to count that thought as being on equal footing with revealed truth is sinful (1 Corinthians 4:6). To presume to **speak** our own thoughts as though they were God's thoughts is equal to elevating oneself to sit upon God's throne. The "man of sin" or "the son of perdition" is he who "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). Respect for what God has said is expressed by both the teachers and the hearers of doctrine. The noble Bereans "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). The reception of **God's** Word produces a "renewing of" the "**mind**" that transforms a man that he "may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" and no longer be "conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2).

In our thinking, and in our spiritual service, we must **limit** ourselves to that which proceeds from God. When God has taught us to believe, teach, or do a thing (individually or collectively) as a matter of spiritual service, then we can know that we **have** Divine authority for it. When God (by means of His Word) has **not** instructed us to believe, teach, or do a thing as a matter of spiritual service, then we can be equally certain that we do **not** have Divine authority for

it. When God **explicitly** commands, or otherwise **explicitly** expresses in His Word that a thing be done or believed, then we are "authorized" by Him to believe or do it. When He **implies** that a thing be believed or done, then He "authorizes" it just as certainly. Jesus told the Sadducees that they had been in error and that they had not known the Scriptures or the power of God because they had failed to believe what God had implied concerning the resurrection of the dead in His statement to Moses from the burning bush (Matthew 22:29-33; Exodus 3:6). They had built a false doctrine composed of their own thoughts.

Brethren, let us acknowledge God and honor Him by bowing before Him and by trusting His revelation. In our individual lives, as we live among men, in our private devotion and worship, and in all our private thoughts and actions may we allow Him to direct our steps. In our families may we follow His ways rather than our own. Collectively, as the church - the family of God - may we worship, work, and fellowship on the basis of - and only on the basis of - His inspired revelation. May we open our eyes and see that our Bible is no common book, but the mind of Christ ready to fill our own minds with truth for living lives that are godly.

SMILE, YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN

Margie Overton

Introduction

Christians should be the happiest people in the world. We should serve the Lord with gladness. (Read Psalm 100.)

Christians Do Have A Lot For Which To Be Thankful And Happy

We can be thankful for forgiveness of sins. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9.)

We have the gift of the Holy Spirit. “ Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

We have the hope of heaven (salvation). (1 Peter 1:3-9 – 2 Peter 1:3-11.)

We can be thankful for fellowship of kindred minds.

These blessings are worth more than all the world, and still some claiming to be Christians go around with long faces.

Someone said, “they look like they could eat oats out of a churn,” or “weaned on a dill pickle.” We should be happy. (Read Psalm 146.)

Remember the smile is the universal language. Everyone enjoys a friendly, pleasant face.

Many people are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges. Smiles help to break down walls.

Being happy helps to get rid of tensions.

If you find yourself tired and looking worn at the end of the day, or most of the time, you had better stop and take a good long look at yourself – put a strong rein on tension.

Doctors contend that there is a connection between the physical heart and the emotional heart. Many of the ailments which affect men are not the results of organic difficulty. They grow out of the fact that people do not think right thoughts, cherish proper emotions, or maintain worthy motives. (Someone has

said that it is more important to know what kind of person has the disease than to know what kind of disease has the person.)

If We Want Happiness We Need To Take Time Each Day To Study Our Bibles

If we want happiness it is very important to believe the Bible. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16-17.)

To be happy we must truly believe the Bible and obey its every command for us in the Christian age.

I believe that after having done these things, that we can then smile and be happy because we are Christians. "If you know these things happy are you, if you do them." (John 13:17.)

We might then ask, why is not every Christian happy? Some have not learned the joys of serving. In serving you can be great in God's sight. (Matthew 20:26-28; Matthew 23:11.)

"Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." (Philippians 2:3.)

We should rejoice in the Lord. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." (Philippians 3:1.) 1 Thessalonians 5:16 tells us to, "Rejoice evermore."

We should rejoice that we have such a Savior. When we think of our sins, we may now rejoice that there is one who can deliver us from them. When we think of the worth of a soul (worth more than the whole world, Mark 8:36) we can rejoice that Jesus can save us. We must do all that we can to help save souls. Teach and give so others can know.

We can rejoice that Jesus has made known to us the way of pardon. He certainly is everything that we want a Savior to be. We need one to make atonement for our sins, and He has done this. We need one to give us peace from a troubled conscience, and He does it. We need one to support us in trials and bereavement, and He does it. We need one who can comfort us on the bed of death and guide us through the dark valley, and the Lord Jesus is just the one to do all this. He is what we need!

When we look at His character, it is just such as it should be to win our hearts, and to make us love Him. When we look at all that He has done, we see that He has accomplished all that we can desire. Then I ask, why should we not be smiling?

The principal joy of the true Christian should be that he is in the Lord. “Without me you can do nothing.” (John 15:3-5.) We cannot find happiness in riches (1 Timothy 6:17-19), or gaiety, or vanity or ambition or in worldliness in any form, but in communion of the Lord and in the hope of eternal life.

Being in His friendship and in his service should be the highest of our joys, and in these we may always be happy and wear a big smile. It is the privilege, therefore, of a Christian to rejoice. He has more sources of joy than anyone else; sources which do not fail when all others fail.

True religion is not sadness or melancholy; it is joy, and we as Christians should never leave the impression that our religion makes us gloomy or morose. A cheerful countenance, a sparkle in the eye, a conversation pleasant and kind should always be the joys of our heart. All with whom we come in contact should readily see that we have a joyful heart.

Psalm 1:1-3 says, “Blessed (happy) is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

“He that handleth a matter shall find good: whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.” (Proverbs 11:20.)

“Where there is no vision, the people perish, but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” (Proverbs 29:18.)

We Should Have Thankful Hearts

If we have thankful hearts we will not be murmuring and complaining. “Do all things without murmuring and disputing.” (Philippians 2:14.) When we moan, murmur, groan, sigh or grumble, we are disobedient to the divine injunction of God’s word.

A Swedish proverb says, “Those who wish to sing can always find a song.” That is true, and it is also true that those who want to complain can always find something about which to complain!

Someone has said that the difference between a woman with beautiful features and a woman with true beauty is her inner glow.

We need to take our hands out of our pockets or get up off the couch and get busy for the Lord. Don’t sit and watch TV all day. I cannot do your work for

you and you can't do mine. The happiest people that I know are working. Work is the remedy for loneliness, worry, etc.

There is a place somewhere that I alone can fill, and if I don't take my place, no one ever will. It's all a part of God's great plan that I a worker be. Somewhere in his kingdom wide, God has a place for me!

Father Where Shall I Work Today

Father where shall I work today?
And my heart flowed warm and free,
Then he pointed me out a little place,
And said, "Tend that for me."
I answered, "Oh no, not that,
Why no one would ever see,
No matter how well my work was done,
Not that little place for me."
The words he spoke, they were not stern,
He answered me tenderly and said,
"Ah little one search your heart,
Are you working for them or me,
Nazareth was a little place
And so was Galilee."
--- Selected

If we fill our hearts with regrets over the failures of yesterday and with worries over what might happen tomorrow, then we have no today in which to be thankful and happy.

Learn to live one day at a time.

I have no yesterday; God took it away. I may not have tomorrow, but I do have today.

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." (Psalm 146:5.)

Look back and give thanks. Look forward and take courage. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13.) Look around and serve. Remember the greatest shall be servant of all. Look up and rejoice.

To be happy add not to your possessions, but subtract from your desires.

Remember we are workers together with God. “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain.” (2 Corinthians 6:1.)

Being fully persuaded of this, I want to be busy for my Lord. That really makes me happy. I have something worthwhile to make me smile.

Ann Landers said in her column Gem of the Day, “You can make more friends in two months by becoming really interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get people interested in you.”

APOSTASY IN CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Basil Overton

It is an impeachment of the infinite wisdom of God to arrange the government of the church of Christ to be anything other than what the New Testament teaches on that subject.

The New Testament teaches that each congregation of God's church had a plurality of elders if there were men in the congregation who had the qualifications which the Holy Spirit gave. (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1.) These are also called in the New Testament presbyters, shepherds, pastors, bishops, overseers, stewards, and rulers or leaders.

If the Lord's order for church government is followed, no one can hold an office or position in the church higher than being one of a plurality of men who oversee one congregation in "the office of a bishop." (1 Timothy 3:1.)

Historians say that within a little less than 100 years from the time Paul predicted the apostasy of the Lord's church, a man was referred to as "the bishop" of a congregation in Antioch in Syria. This was a plain departure from the New Testament order of church polity or government.

This departure grew. It was not long until there were many places where there was "the bishop." Eventually "the bishop" got power over a district or province, and he would appoint an assistant or a chorepiskopos or country bishop to work with rural people.

Eventually, those designated as "the bishop" in various places began to meet together. The Greeks called these meetings Synods, and the Romans called them Councils. These meetings became permanent institutions. Those who presided over them were called Metropolitans. Each Metropolitan ruled in his district without interference from other Metropolitans.

Emperor Constantine Was Involved

In 325 A.D. the Roman Emperor, Constantine called a universal church council to convene at Nicaea, Bithynia in Asia Minor. Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Toleration in 313 A.D. to stop persecution of the church. He became sole emperor in 323 A.D.; then Christianity was officially enthroned and sanctioned by the Roman government.

Dr. Jesse Lyman Hurlbut said this of Emperor Constantine, "He delayed his baptism until just before his death, in the prevalent opinion of his time that baptism washed away all sins previously committed. He was certainly a wise

politician, if not a great Christian; for he had the insight to ally himself with the movement which held the future of his empire.” (The Story of the Christian Church, The John C. Winston Company; page 74.)

Dr. Hurlbut says it was “the prevalent opinion” of Constantine’s time “that baptism washed away all sins previously committed.” It is easy to understand why this was “the prevalent opinion,” because Saul of Tarsus was told by Ananias, “Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16.) There are many passages in the New Testament which clearly teach that being baptized in water is the act of faith by which one gets into Christ and into his body which is his church, where his sins are washed away in the blood of Christ! (Revelation 1:5.)

There Were Five “Patriarchs”

The apostate church leaders referred to above as “Metropolitans,” formed districts much larger than the provinces where the Metropolitans ruled. Those who ruled over these larger districts were called Patriarchs. At first there were three Patriarchs, and later there were five, one each in Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria.

The word “pope” means “papa,” or “father.” “Patriarch” means “chief father.” The five Patriarchs were called “pope” many years before anyone was recognized as “universal pope.”

Dr. Philip Schaff, one of the world’s greatest church historians, wrote an eight volume set of books entitled: History of the Christian Church. There are about 7000 pages in the eight volumes. This set of historical treatises is considered as a classical work. Most of the following information is from Volume IV of this great work.

Gregory I who was Patriarch of Rome was elected “pope” in 590 A.D., but over a limited area. He did not claim to be universal head of the church, but he emphatically denied that he was, and he strongly denounced such a position of primacy. (Schaff, Volume IV, page 219.)

Gregory regarded the four other Patriarchs as on an equal level with him in authority. (Schaff, Volume IV, page 219.)

John the IV (also known as John the Faster) was one of the five Patriarchs in the apostate church. He was located in Constantinople which is now Istanbul, Turkey.

Universal Head Or Pope

In 595 A.D. a church synod in Constantinople confirmed the title of “Universal Bishop” which had been conferred on John IV by the emperors Leo and Justinian as an “honorary title.” Consequently, John referred to himself as “Universal Bishop” in correspondence with Patriarch Gregory I of Rome. Philip Schaff wrote the following concerning Gregory’s reaction to John’s title: “But Gregory I was provoked and irritated beyond measure by the assumption of his Eastern rival, and strained every nerve to procure a revocation of that title. He characterized it as a foolish, proud, profane, wicked, pestiferous, blasphemous, and diabolical usurpation, and compared him who used it to Lucifer. He wrote first to Sabinianus, his apocrisiarius or ambassador in Constantinople, then repeatedly to the patriarch, to the emperor Maurice, and even to the empress; for with all his monkish contempt for women, he availed himself on every occasion of the female influence in high quarters. He threatened to break off communion with the patriarch. He called upon the emperor to punish such presumption, and reminded him of the contamination of the See of Constantinople by such arch-heretics as Nestorius.” (Schaff, Volume IV, page 220.)

Schaff also says, “After the death of John the Faster in 596, Gregory instructed his ambassador at Constantinople to demand from the new patriarch, Cyriacus, as a condition of intercommunion, the renunciation of the wicked title, and in a letter to Maurice he went so far as to declare, that ‘whosoever calls himself universal priest, or desires to be called so, was the forerunner of Antichrist.’” (Schaff, Volume IV, pages 223, 224.)

Obviously, the idea that anyone should be universal head of the church was a new idea at the close of the sixth century A.D.

Sabinianus succeeded Gregory I as Roman bishop in 604 A.D. Sabinianus was succeeded by Boniface III in 606.

Phocus became emperor by killing Emperor Maurice and all the family of Maurice which consisted of a wife, six sons, and three daughters. Schaff describes Phocus as ignorant, vulgar, cruel and a deformed upstart. (Schaff, Volume IV, page 221.)

Schaff goes on to say a compact was made between Emperor Phocus and Bishop Boniface. This compact was that Boniface would recognize Phocus as lawful emperor, and that Phocus would decree that the Church of Rome was over all other churches, and that the bishop of the Roman church was universal head or pope.

Boniface III assumed the title of universal bishop and Emperor Phocus sanctioned it. Under that title the succeeding bishops of Rome held their

“ecclesiastical primacy.” Because of this, Boniface is said to have been the first universal pope.

I feel confident that my dear friends who want to know why I cannot submit to anyone’s authority who claims he is “universal head” or “pope” of the church, can clearly understand from the foregoing why I cannot, and why I believe that no one else should!

PERSECUTION

Emmitt Channell

When the Pharisees closed their ears to Jesus' message, he told them that they were just like their fathers who persecuted the righteous, "from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah" (Mt 23:35). Jesus spoke of persecution in his parables which teach about discipleship. He said that persecution would accompany obedience to the word. After telling his disciples that they were blessed to hear things that prophets and righteous men of ages past had longed to hear, he explained the Parable Of The Sower saying that the seed among the stony places represents the person who receives the word, but "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended" (Matt 13:18-21). He taught that persecution often comes with the blessings of discipleship (Mk 10:28-30). Among the plainest teachings of Jesus are statements concerning persecution. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt 5:10-12). "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets (Lk 6:22-23). "But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them" (Mk 13:9). "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." (Jn 15:20).

Jesus and his disciples faced great opposition as they preached to the Jewish people. The parents of the blind man, whom Jesus healed, expressed what many of the people felt: "... they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue" (Jn 9:22). Even some of the Jewish leaders believed on him ... "but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (Jn 12:42-43). Under the limited commission, Jesus warned his Apostles about persecution. This would become a kind of pattern which would follow them throughout their ministry. Some of the things they were to suffer included: (1) to be as sheep in the midst of wolves; (2) to be delivered up to the councils and scourged in the synagogues; (3) to be brought before governors and kings; (4) to have close relatives who would deliver each other up to be

killed; (5) to be hated by all men; (6) to be servants who suffered like their master. But, in all of this, they were commanded "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt 10:16-28).

Jesus gave the same warnings in foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem (Lk 21:12-17). Jesus suffered much persecution during his life. The Pharisees "held a council against him, how they might destroy him" (Matt 12:14). His enemies accused him of casting out demons by the power of the Devil (Matt 12:24; Mk 3:22; Lk 11:15). They said he was a winebibber, a glutton, a friend of publicans and sinners. (Matt 11:19). The scribes and Pharisees tried to find something in what he said that they could use against Him (Lk 11:53-54). The chief priests accused Him of many things (Mk 15:3). Luke said they "vehemently accused him" (Lk 23:10). They accused him of perverting the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Caesar and calling himself a king (Matt 27:3). After Pilate said "... I find no fault in this man ... they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place (Lk 23:4-5).

Even in his hometown of Nazareth: they tried to kill him by throwing him off a cliff (Lk 4:29). Toward the end of his ministry, when His work was not yet finished, he had to avoid going to Jerusalem because the Jews were trying to kill him (Jn 7:1; Jn 11:53-54).

Finally, they were able to hang him on the cross, but, even there, the persecution did not stop: they "set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth" (Matt 27:37-44). Christ fulfilled all that the prophets had predicted about his suffering (Acts 3:18).

Despite the fact that the Lord had proven his deity by the things he did and taught, after the resurrection, there was great opposition from unbelievers. The chief priests and elders "...gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matt 28:12-14).

When the church was still very young, Paul wrote to Gentile Christians: "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men" (1 Thess 2:14). Thus, the predictions of Jesus that His disciples would suffer as he did came true.

Just as the persecution of Jesus took many forms, so it did also in the early church. Sometimes there was death as in the case of Stephen and James (Acts 8:1; 12:2). Saul of Tarsus, zealous concerning the law and convinced that Jesus was an imposter, began to persecute the followers of Christ. He was involved in the death of Stephen (Acts 7:58). After his conversion, he wrote: "...I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women" (Acts 22:4). The Apostles themselves were often imprisoned and forbidden to preach any more in the name of Christ (Acts 4,5).

We sometimes think that it would have been wonderful to be in the early church to hear the Apostles preach and to be a part of the initial evangelizing of the world. But just imagine how difficult it must have been to for a Christian in the early church! If you were in Palestine, there would have been great opposition from the Jews who rejected the Gospel. If you were in a predominately Gentile country, the persecution would have come from those who were steeped in sin and did not want to hear of message which demanded a change in lifestyle. No, it would not have been easy to be a Christian in the early church!

But what happened to the early church is the norm for those who are disciples of Christ. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim 3:12). Remember, Jesus had predicted the suffering of His disciples and that was not just for the early church. The Parable Of The Sower applies to anyone in any society who hears the Gospel. It speaks of falling away because of "persecution" (Matt 13:18-23).

That leads us to ask: "what would happen if we experienced the kind of persecution that early Christians did?" Most of us are not suffering for Christ. Most congregations can't even get their members to give up weekly trips to the shore or the mountains throughout the summer, programs on TV, athletic events, etc. in order to attend worship. I know several congregations who have given up having Sunday evening services. The rationalization is "Nobody comes anyway, so why have it?"

I fear that, if persecution did come in our society, what Jesus described would happen to most of those who now claim to be Christians: "hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received

seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matt 13:20-22).

We have a lot of "stony ground" and "thorny ground" Christians today. Note that those on the stony ground had no "root in himself." Today, it is hard to get some Christians to come to Bible study and worship often enough to put down any roots! Does that sound like where you attend? Some of those who hear the word and obey the Gospel are soon choked out by the "care of the world" and the "deceitfulness of riches." Paul said, How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom 6:2). It doesn't take much persecution to turn some away from Christ. But here is another question: is there any form of persecution which we might face today? In our day, one might expect verbal abuse and false accusations for faithfully following Christ. Remember, this was one form of persecution suffered by Jesus and the Apostles.

You might be accused of hate if you teach what the Bible says about homosexuality. The battle with the homosexual agenda is going to be one of our great fights of our generation!

You might be called a "legalist" if you insist that Christians ought to obey Heb 10:25 and not forsake the assembly. If you attend a congregation which still has Sunday night services where an invitation is offered, you might not know it, but you are attending a "conservative" congregation. What is wrong with one who would use the word "conservative" in derision? If you believe what Jesus said about marriage and divorce, you might expect to be ostracized. Some who don't want to hear that taught, go off and start their own congregation where anyone is accepted regardless of their marriage status.

You might be ridiculed if you don't believe that alcohol is one of the greatest problems in our society and a threat to the church. The plain facts are that alcohol today is the greatest factor in automobile accidents and family problems. To claim that a Christian can consume it without any harm is unreasonable.

You might be accused of believing that "Church of Christ doctrine," which is so despised, if you don't think that the church of Christ is just another denomination. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jn 8:32) If we don't plant the seed of truth found in the Bible, the result will not be the church of the Bible.

Whatever the form of persecution, we should follow the example of the faithful who have suffered in following Christ. Those in Faith's Hall of Fame chose to "suffer affliction with the people of God" rather than "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb 11:25). The Apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name (Acts 5:41).

Paul was told at his conversion that he would suffer "great things" for the name of Christ (Acts 9:16). Later he wrote about suffering with Christ that we might be glorified with Him (Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 2:12). He wrote about suffering which accompanies the privilege of believing and sonship (Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 3:12). Paul even refused to exercise his rights, choosing rather to suffer lest he should hinder the Gospel of Christ (1 Cor 9:12). He labored, working with his own hands. In obedience to Christ, he said "being reviled we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it" (1 Cor 4:12). He also viewed his suffering as being for the consolation and salvation of his brethren (2 Cor 1:6). Through his suffering, Paul had learned both how to enjoy blessings and suffer needs (Phil 4:12 KJV). He said he labored and suffered reproach because he trusted in the living God (1 Tim 4:10) and he was persuaded that God would faithfully keep that which he had committed unto Him (2 Tim 2:12).

Paul could have compromised and avoided persecution from the Jews, but he chose to be faithful and bear the "offence of the cross" (Gal 5:11) while others gave in and practiced circumcision "lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (Gal 6:12). He taught us to suffer with one another as members of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:26).

Peter reminds us that there is no glory in suffering for our own faults but when we do well and suffer for it and take it patiently, "this is acceptable with God" (1 Pet 2:20; 3:17). He adds, "if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; (1 Pet 3:14). Perhaps Peter's most familiar statement about suffering is in 1 Pet 4:15-16: "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf".

The exhortation to Christians suffering persecution is: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev 2:10) and "let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." (1 Pet 4:19)

STRONG FAMILIES

Albert E. Farley

When the Lord God created our father Adam, in the beginning, He said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet (suitable) for him." The Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, took one of his ribs, and made a woman. Genesis 2:18-25. Later, our Lord Jesus Christ said, in Matthew 19:4-6, "...Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." This is God's divine account of the beginning of the first family. Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled ... Hebrews 13:4. Proverbs 18:22; Psalm 127:3-5.

Thankfully, a majority of Americans express support for marriage and the home. "Almost three-quarters of adult Americans believe that 'marriage is a lifelong commitment that should not be ended except under extreme circumstances.' Even 81% of divorced and separate (sis) Americans still believe that marriage should be for life."¹

This, however, is not supported by what Americans are actually doing with marriage and the home today. Of the more than 120 million who are now married, 10,086,183 are living without their spouses, and another 4,795,275 are legally separated.² Of the more than 213 million men and women alive today who are 15 years of age and over, 21,365,741 or 10 % are divorced. The divorce rate quadrupled from 4.3 million in 1970 to 18.3 million in 1996.³ The marriage rate has fallen about 30% since 1970 and the divorce rate has increased about 40%.⁴ Sixty-five percent of new marriages fail.⁵

When marriages weaken and fail, the innocent children are the most tragic victims. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, more and more children are living with only one parent. In an incomplete count from 35 states and the District of Columbia, the survey reveals that 4.9% of our children now live with

¹ *Rebuilding the Nest: A New Commitment to the American Family*, ed. David Blankehorn, Steve Bayme, and Jean Bethke (Milwaukee, WI: Family Service America, c. 1990), 97-98. Cited on page 8 of *The Abolition of Marriage*, by Maggie Gallagher.

² Census 2000 Supplementary Survey Summary Tables. Data based on twelve monthly samples during 2000.

³ Quoted from Census Bureau's release about its *Marital Status and Living Arrangements*.

⁴ Ahlburg and DeVita, "New Realities," 4-12, Cited on page 5 of *The Abolition of Marriage*, by Maggie Gallagher

⁵ Teresa Castro Martin and Larry L. Bumpass, "Recent Trends in Marital Disruption," *Demography* 26 (1989): 37-51. Cited on page 5 of *The Abolition of Marriage*, by Maggie Gallagher.

the male alone and 19.1% live with the female.¹ Sadly, many children are born outside the bonds of marriage.

Also, a growing number of children are now living with neither parent. In Florida alone, more than 250,000 children live in homes headed by grandparents. This is an increase of 33% since 1990. In West Virginia, there are now 24,276 children living with their grandparents. This is a 10.5% increase since 1990.²

Also, according to data released by the Human Rights Campaign, 2,916 households in West Virginia have reported themselves as same-sex couples in the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau.³ In comparison, the census reported that there were only 307 same-sex couples in West Virginia in 1990. This is an increase of 950% in ten years! Same-sex marriages are now legally recognized in Denmark, France, Norway, the Netherlands, and Germany - and, no doubt, in many other nations of the world.⁴

What is happening to marriages, homes, and families? Why are so many marriages failing? Why are so many families weak? The answer is obvious: we have left God's fundamentals of the family and the home.

The fundamentals for strong Christian families must be sought in the Word. Matthew 7:24-28. The scriptures reveal several fundamental truths upon which every marriage must be built if it would be happy, successful, and strong.

The first fundamental of a strong family is the sacredness into which it is entered and upon which it is built. By sacredness we mean the holiness and purity with which the husband and wife regard their marriage. Jesus said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Matthew 19:6. Marriage is from God; God does the joining and man has no right to separate whom God has joined together! The vows of marriage by the bride and groom are made before God and man, and the commitment is "... till death do us part." There are only two divine ways for marriage to end. Jesus said, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Matthew 19:9. The second way for marriage to end is by death. Romans 7:2-3.

Also, children are a sacred heritage and stewardship; they are gifts from God. Job 1:21; Psalm 127:3-5. The practice of abortion on demand is a sin against

¹ The Associated Press, Clarksburg, *Exponent*, July 25, 2001, p. A11.

² *Ibid.*

³ The Associated Press, *Clarksburg, Exponent*, July 18, 2001.

⁴ The Associated Press, *International Herald Tribune*, August 2, 2001.

the sacredness of human life and has done much to destroy the strength of millions of families.

A second fundamental of a strong family is the love that binds every member together. Our love for God must come before any relationship with man. Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Matthew 22:37-39. Families can be strong only when these commandments are obeyed by all family members.

Paul commanded, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it ... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. Ephesians 5:25, 28. In Titus 2:3, Paul wrote, “The aged women likewise ... That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.”

Love demands that we be kind and forgiving to one another. Paul said, “Charity (love) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth:” 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Friends, this is the fundamental for which we plead. The family that is built upon true love will be a strong family.

A third fundamental of a strong family is faithfulness. In Galatians 5:19-21, adultery and fornication are the first two works of the flesh listed by the apostle Paul. These are perhaps two of the most commonly committed sins, and they are grievous sins against the family and the home. In order to avoid fornication, the Bible says, “...let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” 1 Corinthians 7:2. Unfaithfulness to the marriage vow is the breaking of wedlock. Ezekiel 16:38.

All members of the family must be faithful in the roles given to them by the Lord. Paul speaks of the distinct roles of the husband and the wife in Ephesians 5:22-25. “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing ...” 1 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1.

In strong families, parents must fulfill their duties and responsibilities to their children. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6. Parents are the primary stewards of children. Schools are helpful. The church certainly ought to be helpful. But

the primary responsibility of training up a child is upon the parents of the child! Paul treated this same subject in Ephesians 6:4, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Parents also have a God-given responsibility to provide for the physical needs of their children to the very best of their ability. Paul said, in 2 Corinthians 12:14, “...for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.” “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” 1 Timothy 5:8.

A fourth fundamental of a strong family is honor. Husbands must properly honor their wives. “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them (wives) according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” 1 Peter 3:7. In this regard, husbands must “render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.” This is in reference to the marriage rights and privileges that God has granted to each spouse in marriage. In wedlock, “The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.” These rights and privileges must not be kept back except in times of absolute necessity. Paul declared, “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” 1 Corinthians 7:1-6.

Wives must honor their husbands. “Nevertheless let every one of you (husbands) in particular so love his wife as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” Ephesians 5:33; 1 Peter 3:6.

Children must honor their parents. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” Ephesians 6:1-2.

A fifth fundamental of a strong family is sacrifice. The virtuous wife and mother of Proverbs 31 is a woman of sacrifice. She sacrifices of her time and her strength; she brings her food from afar (14); she rises early – while it is yet night – and gives food to her household (15); she works up into the night (18); she spreads out her hands beyond her own household and cares for the poor and needy (20). When we read of this unselfish woman, we cannot conceive of the possibility that her marriage could fail. Sacrifices strengthen families. Paul said that parents are to lay up for the children – not the children for the parents. 2 Corinthians 12:14. This often involves sacrifice. In 1 Timothy 5:8, Paul said, “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own

house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” Selfishness is the cause of much grief and heartache in families. True love is a love that “seeketh not her own.” All marriages require many sacrifices – from husbands, wives, parents, and children. Sacrifices are often difficult and painful, yet love makes them easier. Perfect loves makes sacrificing a privilege and a joy.

A sixth fundamental of a strong family is discipline. Husbands and wives must be disciplined in their relationships with each other; fathers and mothers must be disciplined in their relationships with their children; children must be disciplined in their responses to their parents and to their brothers and sisters. By discipline, we mean the teaching, instructing, correcting, and the learning necessary to be a faithful disciple of Christ. Our English words “disciple” and “discipline” are from the same Latin root, relating to “a pupil, a learner, a follower.”¹ Discipline involves teaching and learning. Jesus said, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ...” John 8:31-32.

Teaching may be administered through example and in word. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6. This truth remains the hope of children in every new generation. “And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4. Our children need to know the holy scriptures from childhood. 2 Timothy 3:15.

Corrections and punishments are fundamental elements of a disciplined, strong family. When children are disobedient to parents, they require discipline. This oftentimes must involve corporal punishment or whipping. “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” Proverbs 13:24; 23:13; 29:15.

A seventh fundamental of a strong family is contentment. All families exist in circumstances unique to themselves. Our nation is caught up in a never-ending quest for riches, wealth, and worldly gain that has destroyed many families. Paul warned against this in 1 Timothy 6:5-11: “Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content ...”

How many homes have been weakened and destroyed because the parents are in pursuit of the elusive American dream? In too many homes, both parents are out of the house much or most of the time; young children are handed over to pre-school programs, day-care centers, babysitters – or even worse – left to themselves while mom and dad are both working long hours. It is, of course, sometimes necessary for both parents to work outside of the

¹ *Ibid.*

home. But, many times it is because of discontentment. This discontentment often leads to bitter arguments, separations, and divorces.

Dear friends, the strength and survival of any structure – whether physical or spiritual – depends upon the strength of its foundation. When we plea for strong families, we must begin with the foundation – the fundamentals. We have sought to plead for and to discuss some of these fundamentals in this lesson: Sacredness, Love, Faithfulness, Honor, Sacrifice, Discipline, and Contentment. Certainly, other things are important factors in the establishment of strong families. Hopefully, we have touched on some that will encourage and aid all of us in our families. Remember, “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: ...” Psalm 127:1.

COUNSEL FOR THE HURTING

Tim Nichols

Introduction:

Much of this material is condensed from a series that can be located on the world wide web at <http://www.mindspring.com/~tnichols1> and selected at "How to Not be So Anxious, Angry, and Depressed." I hope that this brief summary of this material will help us to learn more about how to benefit from Biblical truth as it addresses the deepest "thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). I hope that many will develop ways to use these truths in helping their brethren who often experience emotional pain that comes from thoughts and beliefs not directed by God's Word.

In the Scriptures are "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). No human thought can equal or displace them. As we consider ways to gain the full benefit of revealed Truth for ourselves and others, let's not lose sight of this central truth. To whatever degree that I might inadvertently stray from it in my comments, to that degree ignore my words. To the degree that I present and apply God's Word to life as it is lived in the real world, please hear it and use it.

We are all aware that the Scriptures teach us not to be overly anxious and angry. I hope to help us to look at Biblical insights to feel these emotions less intensely, to comply with those instructions in order to please God, and for our own well-being. I offer no simple panacea, but a challenge for all to examine thoughts and beliefs about the, sometimes harsh, realities around us.

What is the Source of Our Emotions?

We tend to assume that our emotions are **directly** caused by the events, people, and circumstances that surround us. We use language that betrays this underlying assumption: "He makes me so angry....", we sometimes say; or "They make me so upset when they..." or "This thing has me so depressed...."

Many seem to think that there is some cause behind our every negative emotion over which we have absolutely no control. We seldom look carefully at the **process** by which the events, circumstances, and people have led to our negative emotional responses. Please explore, however, the possibility that something over which you have a **great measure of control** mediates between those things occurring outside of you and your emotional responses to them. Our **thoughts** lead either to distressing or to pleasurable emotions-- or to any point on the continuum between. They can be reformed with God's help. The struggle with depression and anxiety **can** be confronted by applying Biblical

principles relating to your **thoughts**. Your thoughts, beliefs, and interpretations of people, events, and circumstances, for the most part, **create** your emotional responses to them. This is Biblical and consistent with very credible research. This insight **alone**, however, is not enough to bring about helpful change. There are specific, ways to use this insight to overcome the negative impact of external events on your own internal responses; and to increase your experience of positive emotions that will help you to take constructive action in the real world.

This is **not** another statement of the "power of positive thinking." This is about rational thinking that does not attempt to deny the harsh realities of life. It is about taking personal responsibility for believing things that are **true**. It is about disciplining ourselves to go through the process of determining what is and what is not **true**. It is about reaping the spiritual and emotional benefits of going through this process. It is about doing the hard work and genuine self-searching that many will not be willing to do.

This is not a guarantee that all of your negative emotions can be completely erased. In fact, I will argue that such an expectation is, itself, irrational and undesirable. You **need** a certain level of tension to get up in the morning and to accomplish reasonable goals. But the intensity of your unnecessary negative emotions can be reduced to manageable and useful levels. You are, by design, able to deal with reality. God created **you** and the world in which you live. He has provided all the resources you need, including His inspired Word, to deal with the obstacles that the real world throws in your way. These challenges may be difficult, at times, but they are never insurmountable. Reality **includes** struggle, but you are equipped to deal with it.

We are overly distressed more from our distorted views of reality (from our thoughts that do not at all conform to reality) than we are by things that are **true**. Christians enjoy a very clear promise from God that we will not be tested beyond what we can endure (1 Corinthians 10:13). Allow yourself to believe that every situation has options that will allow you to bear whatever may come your way.

God Knows Our Thoughts

God is concerned, not only with the relatively insignificant hairs that grow on your head, but more importantly with the thoughts that are occurring within your head. He is able to see that some of those thoughts are empty and without purpose. He is able to see that many of those thoughts, though they are often highly regarded by our fellow mortals, are not as profound as we sometimes make them out to be. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity" (Psalm 94:11). "And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain (1 Corinthians 3:20).

God Directs Us to Think Rational Thoughts

You are equipped with the ability to reason about events and ideas. God directs you to nurture this ability because He knows that rational thinking will help you to thrive in the environment in which He has placed you and that these will prepare you for heaven. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith" (1 John 5:3, 4).

God Directs Us to Think Thoughts that are True and Right

Truth is objective. Some things are true and some things are false. Directions given by God are right and those thoughts and actions that are contrary to them are wrong. There **are** moral absolutes and God is their Author. We can choose to ignore them because God has created us with the capacity to choose to believe whatever we want. He gives you with the duty to believe truth, however, and He will hold you accountable for your choice (Romans 1:20). "The **thoughts** of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit" (Proverbs 12:5). "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy **thoughts** shall be established" (Proverbs 16:3; cf. Isaiah 26:3-4; 55:7-9; Psalm 119:113; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 2:18; Romans 8:5, 6). Who could be more qualified to design a book that is able to address your every need than the God Who created you and all that is around you? The question answers itself. "Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off" (Psalm 139:2). "For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory" (Isaiah 66:18).

Our Thoughts Exert a Profound Influence Upon our Feelings

Although the psychological literature is full of conclusive proof that this is the case, let's turn our attention to some Scriptures that both teach and illustrate that our thoughts are largely responsible for our emotions. "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken" (Proverbs 15:13). "Anxiety in the heart of a man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad" (Proverbs 12:25 NKJV; cf. Daniel 4:19; 5:6; Luke 4:36-38; Mark 14:72).

You Can Take Charge of Your Thoughts and Change Them

We can learn to harness them and bring them into conformity with facts and evidence. It requires persistent effort, but the Scriptures teach that it **can** be done (Jeremiah 4:14; Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 22:37, 38; 1 Peter 1:13; Ephesians 4:17, 18).

You Can Replace Your Faulty Thinking With Truth

Using your God-given capacity to reason, you can liberate yourself, with the aid of Divine Revelation, from your faulty thoughts and beliefs and from the emotional strain that they cause. In fact, the Scriptures assert that we can arrive at truth and know that we have found it. Having found it, we can place it in the position of our previous faulty thoughts (John 8:31, 32; Amos 4:13; Psalm 139:23, 24; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Ephesians 4:23; Romans 12:2; 2 Timothy 3:6-8).

A Closer Look at the Relationship Between Our Thoughts and Our Emotions

Having ascertained that the Scriptures indeed teach that we are capable of choosing to think rationally and that our thoughts are, for the most part, the cause of our emotional state, let's move on and examine some Scriptures that more directly prescribe the kinds of thoughts that will help us to overcome our anxiety. We often tend to remind anxious people that Jesus taught that we are not to be anxious (Matthew 6:25) without helping them to discover what steps they can take to reduce their anxiety. Sometimes their unsuccessful attempts to stop being anxious by sheer will power alone can actually increase their level of anxiety and feelings of guilt. The Scriptures give us more on this subject than **just** the command not to be anxious. They offer more concrete solutions over which we can exercise a great degree of control. In Philippians 4 the apostle Paul gives both the command not to be anxious and the **means** by which that command can be obeyed (Philippians 4:4-8). To put this prescription in its context, be aware that Paul is writing these words from prison. He has been unfairly confined for preaching the gospel. His circumstances were not those that you would immediately be able to guess from the tone of His Words. His example impresses us nearly as much as the message that he was inspired to write.

He begins with the positive command to rejoice. This is followed by the necessary negative command not to be anxious. He teaches us to pray about our concerns and then tells us that we can come to have the peace of God which will keep our hearts and minds. Other Scriptures clearly point to our ability to rejoice in the midst of unpleasant circumstances (Acts 5:41, 1 Peter 4:13, Matthew 5:12, Luke 6:23, 2 Corinthians 6:10).

In verse 8 he summarizes those things about which we must think if we are to sustain an attitude of rejoicing and peace without anxiety. We are to think those thoughts that are "true" (actual, true to fact, conforming to reality), "noble" (honest, without pretending), "just" (right), "pure" (undefiled), "lovely", "of good report", "virtue" (morally excellent), and "praiseworthy." Some of these are closely related. Those things that are honest, just, pure, and morally excellent would also be true. Those things that are "lovely" are probably less

objective and more subject to personal tastes. Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens may not be lovely to you, but you can choose to focus your thinking, to a greater degree, on those things that are. This does not imply that you ought to ignore the harsh realities of life. They are "true." But ruminating about only those things that you perceive to be ugly without putting them in rational perspective and failing to also focus on the beautiful things will rob you of the more realistic joy and peace that God wants you to have. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul" (Psalm 94:19). "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:3, 4). "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Proverbs 7:22).

The final part of this prescription is to act in ways that are consistent with your rational thoughts. Your emotional well-being is not "all in your head." ***It is also in you hands and in your feet.*** "The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9). You create emotional pain for yourself when you **behave** in ways that are contrary to your rational thoughts. You also create another sort of emotional pain when you behave in ways that are **consistent** with your irrational thoughts. "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts" (Isaiah 65:2). "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:18, 19). "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2:3). "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies of your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight" (Colossians 1:21, 22).

In addition to the comfort that we can give to one another by merely being there and expressing genuine concern, we can help one another by helping one another to meditate about God's promises, to reason about events that surround us, and to plan courses of action that are guided by revealed truth.

May God bless our efforts.

I HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS!

Basil Overton

Yes, I have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This does not mean I have met Him in person. This does not mean I have felt Him touch me. This does not mean He has come to me in person and spoken to me. Those who say they have had such personal experiences with Jesus may be sincere, but they are sincerely wrong.

Someone may ask how anyone could have a personal relationship with Jesus without having such experiences as those stated above.

My personal relationship with Jesus is not by feeling or fantasy, but by faith. What is this kind of faith? It is believing what Jesus and those whom He guided by divine inspiration have said in the New Testament. When one ignores this New Testament teaching, he cannot have a personal relationship with Jesus. He has neither the Son of God nor God the Father! (2 John 9.) One should be very careful not to substitute emotional upsurges and fantasy for the word of God!

What My Personal Relationship With Jesus Includes

1. It is very personal! I am in Christ because I have been baptized into Christ. (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3,4.) Not only am I in Christ (Colossians 1:2), Christ is in me. (Colossians 1:27.) This also means I am in the body of Christ which is His church. (Colossians 1:18; 3:15.) Believing all this makes me feel good, but my feeling good about it is not the proof of it. The proof of it is that the New Testament says it.

I cannot comprehend how Christ dwells in me, neither can I comprehend how I dwell in Christ, but I believe both because of what the New Testament says and because I have done what it says do to get into Christ. If I had to have some kind of feeling to know Christ is in me and I am in Him, it would not be by faith but by feeling!

2. My personal relationship with Jesus means I am a member of His body which is His church. (Colossians 1:18; 3:15.) We know from the New Testament that to be in Christ is the same as being in His body. It follows therefore that being in Christ is equivalent to being in His church.

How wonderfully personal it is to be a member of Christ's body!

I can truthfully, and by faith say that I am a member of the body of Christ because nearly 60 years ago (September 1, 1941) I believed in Jesus as the

most wonderful person that ever lived in this world; I believed in Him as the Son of the living God because He said if I did not do this I would die in my sins. (John 8:21-24.) I repented of my sins and confessed my faith in that most wonderful person that ever lived in this world and was baptized into Him, or into His body, His church. (Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9,10; 6:34; Galatians 3:27.)

3. My personal relationship with Jesus includes my worshipping God just as Jesus said I must do in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24.) Such worship makes me feel good, but my feeling good is not the proof it is right. The only proof I can have that it is right is that the New Testament says do it! There need not be hoopla and ballyhoo, nor can there be, in worship that is in spirit and in truth.

My personal relationship with Jesus does not mean that I worship merely for what I can get out of it, but instead I engage in it to worship and praise and honor God my Father through His Son Jesus Christ. This is a solemn and serious time for me and very personal. It is a time of joy, but the joy need not be and should not be expressed with outlandish gestures and undue outbursts as though it were a circus. This does not mean we should not sing enthusiastically in worship. How could one not sing enthusiastically when he sings about “the wonderful love of Jesus”?

4. My personal relationship with Jesus also involves continually spreading the gospel. I began my preaching work 56 years ago, and still enjoy proclaiming the gospel. Spreading the gospel by writing is one of my chief joys. The World Evangelist is a tool of evangelism. Through it people all over the world have opportunity to learn the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

Not every Christian man can be a public preacher, and no Christian woman is authorized to preach publicly. But every Christian can do something to help get the gospel to others, even if it is inviting people to attend church services where they can learn the gospel.

5. When I help widows and orphans, and the deprived, I am engaged in my personal relationship with Jesus. Such action is so personally involved with Jesus that Jesus said when I do such I am doing it for Him!

“Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? Or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them,

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” (Matthew 25:34-40.)

GROWING THE LOCAL CHURCH THROUGH THE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Michael P. Reese

Every organization has one or more main factors that contribute to its overall growth and success. With Microsoft it would have to be their "Windows" operating systems for several personal computers. With McDonalds it would be hamburgers and french fries. With Little League Baseball it would be the opportunity to play competitive team sports with nationally recognized rules. With Coca-Cola it is their secret formula original "coke." While there are other contributing factors to the success of these companies, these are the products that have "made" these organizations.

One of the main factors for the growth and success of the local congregation is the educational program. Most recognize that the overall work of the church falls into three areas: evangelism, benevolence and edification. A strong, comprehensive, Bible-based education program is essential for and contributes to all three areas of church work. It will be the purpose of this lesson to show how the education program of the local church is essential to its overall growth both numerically and spiritually.

In Ephesians 4:11-16 one finds principles for a working model for church growth. While the various offices listed undoubtedly had miraculous gifts, in principle these offices still have application for the church today in the non-miraculous realm. The apostles and prophets still influence today by their written word, the Bible pastors and teachers still feed the flock of God. Saints still need perfected or equipped for works of ministry (v.12). Although the gospel message from God is complete (Jude 3), mankind's understanding and comprehension of that gospel is incomplete. Thus, the need for continual teaching through the Bible school. It seems as though man has just as much need to be rooted and grounded in the faith so that they are not "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (V.14).

Christian maturity is still the goal and result when the Truth is spoken in love (v.15). Verse sixteen shows both numeric growth (maketh increase of the body) and spiritual growth (into the edifying of itself in love) when the body (church) is functioning properly.

In the Spirit inspired model for the numeric and spiritual growth of the church, one finds leadership charting the course of the local congregation in the vital areas of ministry prescribed by Christ, i.e., evangelism, edification and benevolence. Toward this end, leadership helps the individual Christian discover his or her God given talents for ministry, provides training for the

development and use of those talents then provides opportunities for those talents to be used in service to God.

When congregations operate on this level, growth is experienced numerically, (People want to be a part of a growing congregation) and growth is experienced spiritually (people want to be a part of a congregation where they can serve Christ). Today much of the work and development in this realm is established as a result of the Bible school.

Now that a simple working model for church growth has been established, let us turn our attention to the role of the education program in the overall working of the church.

In Acts 2:14 precedent is set at the onset of the Lord's Church for several teachers teaching the Word of God at the same time. In as much as God is not the Author of confusion and wants all things to be done decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40), it followed that the crowd was quite possibly divided and taught on that occasion. Whatever the exact scene was is irrelevant; the end result was "and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42). Also, these early Christians were "praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47). The early church grew exponentially in number and spirit. All this was fueled by the Word of God being taught! Consider now some specific ways in which the Bible school contributes to the growth of the local congregation.

When speaking of the Bible school the picture that comes to mind is the Lord's church engaged in a thorough and systematic study and teaching of God's Word. Many Bible school curriculums today contain way too little scripture and way too much "filler" and "feel good stories." There is no substitute for a thorough and comprehensive study of the entire Book - both Old and New Testaments. Many cringe at the thought of studying the Old Testament, especially the prophets or Leviticus. But one cannot understand God's complete story - His Plan of Redemption for mankind (which is the theme of the Bible) without understanding the Old Testament. Many New Testament doctrines such as blood covering sins, the atonement, the Passover and many more were first introduced in principle in the Old Testament. Some say that the Old Testament is boring and out of date. Nothing could be farther from the Truth. Many of the Old Testament stories come alive when presented by skilled and talented teachers. They are often chock full of spiritual truths ready for immediate application in today's world. For example, principles found in the story of David and Bathsheba in dealing with lust, passion, conspiracy, murder, cover-up and eventual repentance could very easily be found in Washington, D.C. today.

Micah of old asked the question, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:6-8). Has God changed His mind on these things? Wouldn't the application of these principles make any individual and any society much greater than it already is?

In the New Testament Jesus condemned the Pharisees by saying, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." (Matthew 23:23). Couldn't the world stand more judgment, mercy, and faith? The Bible school serves to present the eternal truths in a "modern" package usable in today's culture.

One role of the Bible school is to convert the lost. It has been estimated that 80 to 90% of those converted to Christ first take part in the Bible school. The Bible school often serves as an easy "entry" into the church for the honest seeker of truth.

The Lord's church cannot compete with the entertainment industry or the sports world. But the "pillar and ground" of the Truth has that for which the masses are hungering and thirsting - God's Word. One main "product" we have to offer is the Bible program. Many are still thrilled to find that eternal truths are still being taught. There are many who are still diligently seeking God. It is the local congregation's obligation to provide an essential link in this chain of salvation by presenting God's Word in its purity and simplicity.

Another purpose of the Bible school is to train those who are already in Christ unto a full-grown knowledge of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13). The word edify literally means "to build" (Vines Expository Dictionary of N.T. words, Vol.11, p.18). Every teacher has a responsibility to teach with this goal in mind. As well, each Christian has an obligation to grow spiritually. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18). "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Peter 2:1-2).

The local congregation experiences growth through the Bible school when she produces fully equipped soul winners who will be the salt and light of the earth, living epistles to those who do not yet know Him. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:13-14). Just as the sunset follows the sunrise the church will grow when this type of servant is produced.

It might be good now to note several suggestions for strengthening the Bible school. It would be good to have a comprehensive systematic study of the Word of God. At first the teachers and the congregation will be overwhelmed by the thought of preparing material and studying the whole Bible. After much encouragement and time they will begin to see the value of a complete understanding of God's Word.

The Bible School will be strengthened if the lessons are supplemented by expository preaching from the pulpit. This serves to reinforce the great truths taught in the classroom. Also, as the congregation becomes more Bible literate, they will enjoy and even demand expository preaching.

Encourage the entire congregation to read through the Bible at least once each year. Many schedules are printed which are readily available. The daily Scripture readings can also be run in the weekly bulletin.

The Bible School is strengthened when the teachers are trained and recognized. It is not only unscriptural but unwise to place a teacher in any classroom without adequate training. Many teacher training helps are available. Also, recognize and honor your teachers. They are at the very heart of the teaching program. Make sure they don't become weary in their well doing.

Recognize the importance of the Bible school. Make it a specific part of the overall work of the church. "Talk it up" from the pulpit and in private. Make everyone aware of the importance of the education program.

An extension of the Bible school would be our Christian Youth Camps. In most camps there is a tremendous emphasis placed on the teaching and practice of God's Word. Usually, for an entire week our young folks lives are saturated with Bible training. At All-Age Week of West Virginia Christian Youth Camp an average of four hours daily is dedicated to the teaching and preaching of God's Word. It is my studied opinion that more can be accomplished with our young folks during a week of Christian Youth Camp than can be accomplished in an entire year back home. For this, and possibly other reasons, our young folks should be encouraged to attend our youth camps. And, our camps should continue to provide sound, wholesome teaching from God's Word so that these young folks can be rooted and grounded in the faith.

This is just the proverbial "hem of the garment" of the importance of the local congregation's Bible program. If churches continue to systematically and comprehensively teach God's Word both numeric and spiritual growth will be the ultimate end result.

May God bless us in our efforts.

HOW TO BUILD AN EFFECTIVE CHURCH LIBRARY

David Kenney

In 1995, I preached at a congregation that had existed for over 100 years. I requested to see the church library, thinking it would have some very interesting books. I was saddened to find only a couple of old pew Bibles and a torn-up, incomplete set of Adam Clarke's commentaries. When I returned home, I immediately requested permission to purchase books for the church library.

When I approached the leadership of our congregation about expanding the library, the idea was enthusiastically supported. Even though the funds were limited, the main hindrance was someone willing to make the effort. We were convinced that even purchasing a book a month was a step in the right direction. Interest in the library grew among those seeking to study, but either did not have the resources or lacked knowledge of sound biblical reference materials. One of the results of the library program, we found, was that people's enthusiasm blossomed to where they purchased the same books for their personal library.

The Value of a Religious Library

Guy N. Woods, in Questions & Answers, Volume 2, eloquently stated the value of good books when asked to comment on what good books meant to him:

A good library is truly a fabulous fairyland, a place of genuine delight, affording a happy haven from the swirling currents of restless world. In it we are in the intimate fellowship of the greatest intellectuals, the most profound thinkers and the greatest reasoners of all time. No barriers have been erected to exclude us; here is one of the few areas of human experience where the rich are at no advantage, rich and poor alike being privileged to drink at will from this ever flowing fountain. Into what other select company of distinguished scholars may one appear at will and there converse to his heart's content? How else may one in life associate with the spirits of the sainted dead and share in the intellectual and mental labors of their lives on earth? [pp. 327-328]

Focusing his attention on religious books, Guy N. Woods went on to write:

Were I, after a long and eventful life of intense activity as a gospel preacher asked to designate what, in my view, are the most vital aims which should characterize all who teach and preach the word, high on the list would be the accumulation of a useful library, the cultivation of

an affection for good books and the formation of regular habits of study. No day should be permitted to pass which does not provide for communion with good books. [p. 328]

Brother Guy N. Woods passed away on December 8, 1993. E. Claude Gardner, writing in the February 1994 issue of the Gospel Advocate, mentioned that Guy N. Woods had donated his library to Freed-Hardeman University several years prior to his death. In that issue of the Gospel Advocate is a photograph of the more than 7,000 volumes that Guy N. Woods had donated from his personal library.

Principles In Building An Effective Church Library

These principles are ones that I use when purchasing books, whether for the church or my personal religious library.

Appoint Someone Who Loves Books. Ideally someone other than the preacher, perhaps a deacon, should be appointed to the service of maintaining a library. This is not to say the preacher would not be an excellent source of information. One reason is to ensure the work continues when the preacher departs from the local congregation. Another reason is the preacher, if he is worth his salt, already has a love of good religious books. Working among good religious books is contagious and should be allowed to infect others as well. Whoever the person is who is appointed should be the type of individual who shares his experiences with others who may pick up the work in case he has to relinquish it.

The One In Charge Should Be Accountable to the Leadership. Books are inanimate objects and can communicate things that are both good and not so good. The elders are the ones responsible for the shepherding of the flock; it is imperative that they oversee this work. If the congregation does not have an eldership, then the leaders of the congregation should monitor what is being purchased. There is a two-fold purpose of overseeing this work. First, to ensure the content is worthy to be added to the church library. Second, to ensure that funds are not either misappropriated or that there is no opportunity for the appearance of inappropriate behavior.

Determine the Focus. There are nearly as many topics as there are books, so one must determine the parameters of the library. Will it focus only on adults? Will it only contain commentaries? Will it only contain brotherhood material? Will it include videos, audio tapes, or computer programs? Will it include counseling or psychology materials? Will it contain programs of wholesome secular entertainment? These parameters need to be defined early on to avoid getting off track.

Have a Designated Area. Spacing does not always permit a separate room; however, it would be best to have an area that is not part of the preacher's office. The area needs to be one that is accessible to all people at all times the building is open. One of the reasons not to use the preacher's office is to avoid disrupting other church business that is typically done in this office. Another reason is to ensure that the preacher's library does not end up being mixed with the church's library. A preacher's books are his tools and are needed by him. We must respect the preacher's personal property as we would our own (Luke 6:31). The same is true for preachers and members to respect church property. It is sad that such would need to be said, but problems in these areas have been known to occur.

One Does Not Have To Start Big, But One Has To Start. Guy N. Woods' library was not accumulated overnight. He was over 85 years of age when he died and had devoted the majority of his life to tools of study. When we began the building of the library where I attend, we had only one small shelf of books. Starting with an original commitment of adding at least one book a month, over six years the congregation has added far more than just seventy-two volumes (which would be praiseworthy in and of itself). In February of 2001, the church purchased three software programs that have expanded the library by over ninety volumes. The point is that a library does not have to start out big, but it can grow incrementally and exponentially. The key is to start.

Learn What Books Are Especially Good. Many books exist on any given subject and some books are better than others. Guy N. Woods estimated that there are over 3,000 books on Romans alone. You want a library that is strong; however, one does not need 3,000 commentaries on Romans. How does one learn what books are good? First, ask your preacher (or other preachers, teachers, or authors). It takes effort to get the recommendation of good books from others; you must take the initiative to do so. Second, study the reference works cited by books that you have greatly profited from. Third, read periodicals that provide book reviews. Fourth, become familiar with catalogs and those who publish them. For example, if I were searching on a topic involving Christian Evidences, one of the first places I would go would be Apologetics Press' catalog.

A Note About Commentaries. This writer has heard grown men (who should know better) criticize commentaries as if they were creed books. Such broad criticisms of commentaries are not a sign of steadfastness but of ignorance. It thrills me to study of the experiences of Alexander Campbell who was one of the leaders of the Restoration Movement. If he wrote his thoughts about the book of Acts, would it not be grand to know what his studies led him to conclude? Well, he did write a commentary on the book of Acts. Will I ignore this book because it is a "commentary"? Why some think it is any different to go ask a preacher a question rather than look in a commentary for an answer puzzles me. When you consult a commentary, you are consulting the study of

the one who wrote the commentary. The commentary is no better than the one who prepared it. Not all of us have time to obtain multiple doctorates in Archaeology, Geography, Restoration History, Greek, Hebrew, Jewish History, Early Church History, Reformation History, etc. Why not read from those who have? Incidentally, one of the men I have heard criticize commentaries is now an elder and values good commentaries now that he recognizes that it is not enough to be persuaded himself but that he must also persuade others (1 Peter 3:15-16).

Kick Aside the Bad. No book made by man is perfect. As my father was told by the senior Tom W. Butterfield in reference to the use of religious books, “You must have the sense of a chicken--to pick out what is food and what is not.” It is up to the leadership of each congregation to determine the contents of its library. I would encourage congregations to support brotherhood printed material whenever possible. It is also important to realize that some of the best material on a subject may not even be among the writers of the brotherhood. Avoid the extreme that only brotherhood material will be part of the library. One would eliminate many Bible translations deemed reliable with such a restriction since those among denominations have had part in the work (e.g., KJV, NASB, NKJV, etc.). Also be careful about using material by wolves among us in sheep’s clothing. Just because a book is written or published by someone that we think is reliable does not make it true. Not all works in a library necessarily have to teach the truth. Some books may be from a false teaching; e.g., Book of Mormon. No one who is true to the Bible can accept the Book of Mormon, but it may be in a church library for reference. If something is glaringly wrong with a book, then maybe adding a note card to the front inside cover detailing the error may salvage otherwise good material. We should examine it before adding it to the church library (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Keep the Congregation Informed. Where I attend we do this in two ways. First, a series of articles is written for the bulletin that tells the congregation about books in the library. Second, whenever someone asks me a religious question I make a determined effort to take them to the library and answer the question using the library rather than my own knowledge. Remember that the concept that the brotherhood should know less than the preacher is the fundamental reason the falling away after the first century occurred and led into Catholicism. Train members to use the library and not to be dependent on you for the answers. Remind them that they will never learn all there is to know from a preacher and teacher, no matter how good they are.

Encourage Participation. Always ask for feedback and suggested topics that could be incorporated in the library. Be careful of requesting specific books because some are still babes and may suggest a work that should not be part of the library. Seeking topics rather than titles would help avoid a hurtful situation. Also, remind the congregation that books can be added to the library in other ways than from the treasury. Remind the congregation that they could

purchase a book in honor or memory of someone (provided it is first approved by the leadership.) If someone is not familiar with books then they could donate funds to have the person in charge of the library purchase the books. A sign in the book should reflect this dedication. It is a simple gesture, but a high honor. I came across a book dedicated to the memory of Olive Hill whom I have never met. She used to date my grandfather, George W. Kenney, whom I also never met, so I had an interest on what made that book unique. This dedication was actually my introduction to one of the preachers I admire the most - Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

Conclusion

The work of building an effective church library is measured in two ways. The first measurement is the resourcefulness of the contents of the library. A good way to test this is by going to the library to answer questions people ask. Many of the ideas for the church's library are not from suggested books but from people's questions that the library did not have sufficient materials to answer readily. The second measure of effectiveness is the actual use of the library. Some way of determining the utilization of the library would assist in the justification for continuance of the program. One does not need to over engineer the transfer of books which may stifle the traffic to the library, but some sort of measurement of its use would reinforce the need for such a resource. We have a simple sign out form on which members write their name, title of book, date checked out, and date returned. Periodically, we put a reminder to the entire congregation that an inventory is being made of the books and to return any they may have signed out. If a book is lost, then we simply replace it. If someone has the book in their personal library and has not returned it, then what is the real harm just replacing it? The point is to get as much valuable religious material into the hands of the brotherhood as possible. It is their responsibility to read it (1 Timothy 4:13). Finally, keep in mind that books convey messages long after we have passed from this life. The earthly investments today may reap heavenly dividends after we have departed and until Christ returns.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Margie Overton

We certainly can make a difference. We can change the world to make it better. People are watching what we do. There is never a time that we are not an influence. Either we are a good influence or we are a bad influence.

We must constantly try to be a good influence if we really want to make the right kind of difference. “You are the light of the world, a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16.)

In order to be a shining light our lives must be filled with good works, and this is because we want to glorify our Father in heaven. Keep in mind that the brighter a light shines at its source, the farther it shines from its source!

We Must Have Faith That We Can Make a Difference

What is Faith? “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1.) Faith is the design of the Christian plan of redemption to help us escape eternal damnation. It is the foundation of all Christian virtues (2 Peter 1:5-11.)

How does one acquire the faith that is needed to make a difference? There is only one way, and that is clearly taught in the New Testament. “So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17.) Therefore, we must hear the divine message before we can have the faith that leads to salvation. This shows us the importance of the message and the fact that we are converted by the truth of God’s word. No other way!

This truth comes by Jesus Christ. “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17.) “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” (John 17:17.)

After having heard the truth and obeying it, we are then ready to meet the challenge of making a difference. (Romans 6:17,18.)

I Must Have The Right Attitude If I Plan To Make A Difference

I will work each day on my attitude. The slogan, “a better world begins with me,” is certainly true.

“I am only one, but I am one, I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do, I ought to do. What I ought to do, I will do, so help me God.” That should be our motto!

If I Want To Make A Difference, Then It Is Imperative That I Begin In My Own Home

1. I will work at being the best wife that I can be. I must practice Philippians 2:3.
2. I have prayed that I would never be a hindrance to my husband in his great work of preaching the gospel.
3. God ordained that the wife be an helpmeet. That simply means someone suited to his needs!
4. Wives must realize that we are to be in subjection to our husbands. (Ephesians 5:20-33.)

True, some husbands do not act as they should, and it would be hard to show such a husband proper respect.

It is easy to be in subjection to a man who loves his wife as Christ loved the church. This kind of love is a self-sacrificing love. Love is doing, sharing, communicating, etc.

5. The good wife is not lazy. She keeps herself attractive, her house and children clean. She will not waste too much time with T.V. She will prepare good meals. She will try to cook foods that please her husband and children.

Learn to accept your husband. Dwell on his good qualities. Magnify them! If he thinks you believe in him, he just might try to measure up to your standards!

“Don’t treat him as he is, treat him as he can be.”

“The best way to compliment your husband is often.”

To Make A Difference We Must Take Time To Train Our Blessed Children

One of our great blessings and grave responsibilities as mothers is that of rearing children.

A godly mother can make a difference. Augustine said, "Give me mothers that are mothers and I will change the world." "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world." (William Wallace) An old Spanish proverb says, "An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy." Someone said, "The greatest gift a father can give his children is their mother's time."

When mothers will realize what God has entrusted to them by placing children in their arms, and when they work at bringing those precious ones up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, then we will see a change in the world. It will make a difference!

Oh how we need godly mothers who will take time to properly train their children!

**We Can Make A Difference By
Being A Good Worker And Encourager
In The Lord's Church**

There are many things that we can do as women. We can teach classes for children and ladies. We can do many good works by visiting the sick and taking food to those in need. We can send cards to the sick or bereaved. We can write letters of encouragement to missionaries. The list of good works goes on and on. Look around and see what needs to be done; then get busy. Don't wait to be told what to do!

**We Can Make A Difference
In Our Neighborhood**

Try to be the very best neighbor that you can be, always looking for ways that you can help others. Be a caring, sharing, giving, helping neighbor. Always be a good example of Christ.

We all know ladies who have made a difference. Oh, they might not have been a public figure, perhaps not known by many. Maybe some would not stand in front of a ladies class and teach, but they were meekly going about their daily activities of service to others, personal evangelism, and bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

"I'm Just A Housewife"

What am I doing with my life?

Well – I am only a housewife.

I'm a homework helper, expert on spelling,

The keeper of secrets without telling;

A Band-Aider, a hurt feelings mender,

A peanut butter-jelly sandwich vender.

I'm a bedmaker, laundry supervisor,

Child disciplinarian, a chastiser;

A baseball catcher, a Girl Scout Leader,
 A hamster breeder, an animal-feeder.
 I'm a rummage-seller, P.T.A.doer,
 Children's piano-practicing pursuer;
 A thermometer-reader, cookie baker,
 A spring planter-weeder, a fall leaf raker.
 I'm a table-duster, vacuummer-mopper,
 Little League rooter,argument stopper;
 A gourmet chef, hamburger fryer,
 A food purchasing agent, clothing buyer.
 I'm a romantic lover, chatty talker,
 Midnight-to-2:00 a.m. baby walker;
 A business listener, a sock-sewer,
 A concert, big game, recital goer.
 I'm a dog-minder, lost items finder,
 Everyone's daily agenda-reminder;
 A nose-wiper, an aching-neck rubber;
 Itching back scratcher, a dirty-head scrubber.
 That's what I'm doing with my life,
 You see, I'm only a HOUSEWIFE.
 ---- Jerry Savage

My mother, Una Medling was such a woman. I cannot recall one time that she did something wrong to anyone. She was always kind and helpful to all with whom she came in contact.

My grandmother, Sarah Frances (Sally) Medling was such a woman. She influenced my life greatly. I can see her in my mind's eye now reading her Bible. She loved the word of God and would tell others about it. Grandma Medling's father was a sectarian preacher who practiced sprinkling for baptism. After she married my grandfather, he taught her the way of the Lord more perfectly. She had a receptive heart, wanting to do just what the Bible teaches. And it is my opinion that for the rest of her life, she tried to do exactly what God's word teaches. She made a difference because she taught her six children God's truths. I am thankful that she took a stand for right. She influenced my dad, Robert Medling to follow Christ. He became a Christian, and in his later years served as an elder of the Lord's church. He died at age 57 with cancer.

Grandma Medling delighted in doing for others. I remember she told me, "It is a joy to do things for someone you love." I have always tried to emulate her example. I feel sure that she influenced the other 27 grandchildren as well.

Bible Women Who Made A Difference

1. The first was Eve, the mother of all living.

2. Think of Jochebed, the mother of Moses. (Exodus 2.)
3. Esther, a Jewish orphan maiden in Persia. Her cousin Mordecai reared her as his own daughter. Ahasuerus, the Persian king, had divorced his wife, and when he sought a queen, Esther was chosen. When the Jews in the Empire were faced with destruction she was able to save them. Read the book of Esther when you have time. It has only 10 chapters.
4. We laud Sarah, Hannah, Ruth, Deborah and many other women of the Old Testament. We are thankful for the examples of women such as these. It gives us courage to do what we can to make a difference.
5. I like to read of Mary and Martha, friends of Jesus.
6. Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist.
7. Dorcas proves to us that helping others will not go unnoticed. She had helped the widows by making coats and garments for them. They loved her very much for these acts of service. If we have such a talent as Dorcas, let us use this to help make others happy.
8. The woman who really made a difference was Mary the mother of my Lord. No one before her nor after her has done so much. "And the angel said unto her, Fear not Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus." (Luke 1:28-31.) We are impressed with the humility and obedience of Mary. And we most assuredly stand in awe of Jesus. Think how Jesus has made a difference. And a woman had a part in bringing him into the world.
9. Lois and Eunice are good examples. We need mothers like Eunice and grandmothers like Lois. (2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 3:15.) This is a clear case of mother teaching daughter, and daughter teaching son. This clearly teaches us that the way we act can be seen in generations to come. This also shows that mother and grandmother play a vital role in teaching the children about God.

Those who are married to non-Christians should not give up, but they should work harder to teach the children and the husband the great truths of the Bible and pray that they will all do the will of God: and by all means set a good example for them.

We Can Make A Difference By Serving Others

If we show genuine interest in others, helping in any way that we can will make a world of difference. This is the way to become great in the Kingdom of God. Do you desire to be great? Then learn to serve. (Matthew 20:26-28.)

Doing for others is a rewarding thing. If you really want to make a difference, try each day to do something nice for someone.

If you choose to go through life miserable, I can tell you how to do it! Just think about yourself, what people owe you, and what they should do for you, and how they ought to treat you, and what they are thinking about you.

Remember this: A person wrapped in herself makes a mighty small package!

How To Be Miserable In 20 Easy Steps

1. Use "I" as often as possible.
2. Always be sensitive to slights.
3. Be jealous and envious,
4. Think only about yourself.
5. Talk only about yourself.
6. Trust no one.
7. Never forget a criticism.
8. Always expect to be appreciated.
9. Be suspicious.
10. Listen greedily to what others say of you.
11. Always look for faults in others.
12. Do as little as possible for others.
13. Shirk your duties if you can.
14. Never forget a service you may have rendered.
15. Sulk if people aren't grateful for your favors.
16. Insist on consideration and respect.
17. Demand agreement with your own views on everything.
18. Always look for a good time.
19. Love yourself first.
20. Be selfish at all times.

This formula is guaranteed to work!

To Make A Difference We Must Have Self-Confidence

We have to believe in our ability to make a difference. Some have very little self-confidence. No one can begin to realize her capabilities until she has really put forth some effort. We must begin!

Did you know that a teakettle singing on a stove was the beginning of the steam engine? A shirt waving in the breeze on the clothesline was the beginning of the balloon? A spider's web strung across the garden path suggested the suspension bridge? A lantern swinging in a tower suggested the pendulum? An apple falling from a tree caused the discovery of the law of gravity?

Little insignificant things can turn out to be something great and wonderful. Little things can become big things, especially if God has a hand in it.

When we use our talents that God has given us, He will increase them according to our abilities. See the parable of the talents. (Matthew 25.)

So it is with the life of a man. Once he has made a beginning of something, no one can predict the end results. Simple, seemingly meaningless beginnings often have wonderful endings.

But the beginning step must be taken.

Christian service is the same way. Only those who begin can become giants in Christian service. Some, because they feel incapable of doing great things in the vineyard of the Lord, never enter the vineyard. No one has ever stepped into great pathways of service. All must begin with the teakettle and spider web of service. Then after having taken the first step no one can predict the end results, but the first step must be taken! My motto: "Lord if I can't do big things then let me do little things in a big way."

True, we will make mistakes. There should be no doubt about that. We all do. But the greatest mistake one can make is the mistake of not trying at all!

Know for sure that the ones who are busy serving the Lord will be scoffed at by the unbeliever.

Be not dismayed, nor be surprised
If what you do is criticized.
Mistakes are made, we can't deny,
But only made by folks who try.

I would have rather tried and failed, than never to have tried at all. It is usually the ones doing nothing who criticize the most.

I have noticed that those who are most critical of others always have a bad attitude. If you find yourself criticizing others, stop and check your attitude. Here are some general rules followed by miserable and unpopular people....

1. Feel sorry for yourself.
2. Worry about things that might happen, but probably won't. To worry about what we cannot help is useless: to worry about what we can help is stupid.
3. Complain.
4. Insist on having your own way all the time.
5. Be sarcastic.
6. Over-react.
7. Be self-centered.
8. Always blame others for whatever bad happens.
9. Talk about others to their backs.

10. Ignore the teachings of the Bible.

How To Make Others Like You!

(From Dale Carnegie's book, "How To Win Friends And Influence People.")

1. Become genuinely interested in others. Especially family members.
2. Smile and laugh a lot.
3. Cultivate the art of remembering names. .. Remembering a man's name is important to him.
4. Be a good listener.
5. Encourage others to talk about themselves.
6. Make the other person feel important and sincerely mean it.
7. Be Christ-like.

SOME RELIGIOUS MEN AND MATTERS IN THE BRITISH ISLES BEFORE THE CAMPBELLS

Basil Overton

Long before Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander, and those contemporary with them, there were religious men and matters in the British Isles that greatly influenced them. In previous lessons I told about the falling away (apostasy) of the New Testament that caused the formation of what we know as the Catholic Church which is very unlike the church we read about in the New Testament. Eventually many other kinds of denominations were started by various men.

John Wycliffe

John Wycliffe was an Englishman who lived from 1324 to 1384 when the Catholic Church was strong in England. Wycliffe was a Catholic priest, and an educator at Oxford University. He began to see that the Catholic Church and the church about which he read in the New Testament were very different. He started a systematic effort of opposition to the Catholic hierarchy. He denied the preeminence of the pope and the doctrine of transubstantiation. He denied that the priests had the power to absolve sins, and he rejected the other rites and rituals and doctrines that were peculiar to Catholicism.

Wycliffe loved the Bible and believed it was the sole authority in religion. This belief caused him and his followers much persecution by the Catholic hierarchy. He was the first to translate all the Bible into English. (The English of his time was much different from modern English.)

In 1428, which was 44 years after Wycliffe's death, his body was exhumed and burned to ashes which were scattered on the River Swift, by the order of Pope Martin.

John Wycliffe was a great leader in a reformation movement without which we might not know about the importance of the Bible and the New Testament order of things.

William Tyndale

William Tyndale lived from 1494 to 1536. He translated the New Testament and scattered copies of it all over the British Isles, especially in the east coastal towns of Scotland. He also flooded the country with tracts that showed the Catholic Church and its doctrines, rites and rituals were not taught in the New Testament. He was arrested at Antwerp, Belgium, strangled and burned at a stake in 1536.

Tyndale's students carried on his assault of New Testament teaching. They denied the veneration of saints, religious relics, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the doctrine that Peter was Pope and had successors, indulgences, and the doctrine of celibacy. They believed in the priesthood of all believers just as Peter said in the New Testament, and they said the Pope of Rome was the head of the church of the Anti-Christ!

Patrick Hamilton

Patrick Hamilton was a priest in the Catholic Church in Scotland. He became very concerned about many of the practices and doctrines of the Catholic Church. He stressed the authority of the Bible, and this got him into much trouble. He was born in 1504.

In Germany, Dr. Martin Luther, a Catholic priest, rebelled against that church in 1517. He started a movement that attracted much attention. Patrick Hamilton went to talk with Luther. When he returned to Scotland he defied Archbishop Beaton and the Catholic doctrine of celibacy and got married. Beaton had him burned at a stake February 29, 1528, at the age of 24.

Patrick Hamilton was a brave young man who loved the Bible. His determination to do God's will regardless of the consequences cost him his life. His example helped to launch a movement in Scotland to go back to the Bible.

George Wishart

Another young priest of the Catholic Church in Scotland was charged with heresy. He was born in 1513. He went to Strasburg in Germany and then to Zurich, Switzerland. Swiss reformers influenced him to reject all beliefs and religious practices for which there was no Bible authority. He denied the so-called sacraments of Catholicism and the doctrines of transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, purgatory, the veneration of saints, and celibacy. He was arrested and put on trial, and he answered all charges of heresy against him by quoting from the Bible! Archbishop Beaton had become a Cardinal, and he had Wishart burned at a stake. This dastardly deed engendered a furious uproar and Beaton was murdered May 29, 1546. According to historians he was a profligate and had nine children out of wedlock.

The murder of George Wishart added fuel to the flames of rebellion against the state religion of Catholicism in Scotland which had long range repercussions there and throughout the British Isles!

John Knox

John Knox of Scotland was a Catholic priest who began to preach reform in 1547, the year after George Wishart was burned to death. Knox was put in prison. After his release in 1549 he went to Switzerland and studied with John Calvin, a reformer. Knox returned to Scotland in 1559 when that country was having a political crisis. Knox and others organized a form of Presbyterianism in Scotland and the Presbyterian church became the state religion of Scotland.

John Glas

John Glas was a well educated Presbyterian minister in Scotland who was determined to let the Bible be his only rule of conduct. He was deposed from the Presbyterian church and organized independent churches. This was the beginning of an independency movement that had a great impact on Thomas and Alexander Campbell.

John Glas emphasized the authority of the Scriptures and rejected human creeds and dogmas. He preached “the restitution of the New Testament order of things.” He stressed the importance of eating the Lord’s Supper every first day of the week. (Acts 20:7.) John Glas died November 2, 1773, at age 78. He had a wife and fifteen children.

Robert Sandeman

Robert Sandeman was another Presbyterian minister in Scotland. He was born in Perth, Scotland, April 29, 1718. He married Katherine Glas, a daughter of John Glas. John influenced Robert with the independency ideas. Robert rejected the Presbyterian concept of predestination. He taught that Christians should eat the Lord’s Supper every Sunday. He believed in having a plurality of elders (presbyters) over each congregation. He emphasized the importance of not being a part of a State religion, so he stressed independency.

Robert Sandeman came to America in 1764. He started a congregation in Portsmouth, N.H. May 4, 1765 which he said was “the first church of Christ in America.” Some of the “churches of Christ” started by Sandeman and those who worked with him were later affiliated with churches of Christ started by Alexander Campbell and others.

Robert Sandeman died April 2, 1771, at Danbury, Connecticut where his body is buried.

David Bogue and Greville Ewing

A strong independency preacher in Scotland named David Bogue published a journal called *Evangelical Magazine*. He influenced many including brothers

named Robert and James Haldane. Greville Ewing published *Missionary Magazine*. He and the Haldane brothers greatly influenced Alexander Campbell who knew them, heard them preach, and talked with them.

The Haldane Brothers

Robert and James Haldane withdrew from the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) November 29, 1798. They stressed the authority of the Bible and the perfect model of the New Testament church. They believed that each congregation of the Lord's people should have a plurality of elders, and that elders were the same as bishops. They were strong in the independency views and that each congregation must be autonomous.

The Haldanes first accepted infant baptism but changed their minds and were immersed. When Robert was immersed the 200 other members of the church where he was the preacher were also immersed.

The Haldanes and the other leaders to which attention has been given in the foregoing had varying views of baptism. They struggled with this subject as well as others as they bravely searched for the truth and worked their way out of the dismal darkness in which most of the religious world had been engulfed for centuries. Some of these leaders were more advanced in the truth than others. We are deeply indebted to them for their bravery and courage in turning to the Bible instead of popery and human creeds to find the right way. We might not be New Testament Christians if they had not done what they did.

Conclusion

For much of the basic information presented in the foregoing I am indebted to Dr. Lynn A. McMillon and his excellent book: Restoration Roots. I have often used his book in college classes and other lectures on Restoration Church History. I recommend that all read brother McMillon's book. It is a very thoroughly documented and scholarly treatise. Brother McMillon is Professor of Bible and Christian History at Oklahoma Christian College of Arts and Sciences at Edmond, a suburb of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

WORSHIP

Albert E. Farley

When our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with the woman at Jacob's well in Samaria, He taught emphatically that worship is intimately connected with salvation. When the woman said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship," Jesus replied, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:20-24. The Samaritans of Jesus' time had rejected all of the Old Testament books except the five books of Moses.¹ In rejecting God's word, they were ignorant of it. Therefore, they did not know God and they did not know what they worshipped.

Today the Holy Word of God continues to be neglected, rejected, abused, and misused. Consequently, multitudes do not know God; they do not know what they worship. The hour of which Jesus spoke in John chapter four has come; the law has changed. Today, we serve God under a new and living way. Hebrews 8. We plead for the fundamentals of true worship under the dispensation of Christ. By fundamentals we mean the basic, foundation truths of God's Holy Word concerning the Who, the What, the Which, the How, the When, the Where, and the Why of worship. Do you know what you worship? Are you a true worshipper? The Father seeketh such to worship Him; our salvation depends upon it.

WHO. Our worship must be rendered unto Jehovah, the Lord God of all. "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker." Psalm 95:6. When David brought up the ark of God to Jerusalem, he said, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." In the New Testament, when Satan tempted Jesus to worship him, Jesus responded, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Matthew 4:10.

We must not worship Satan. Matthew 4:10. We must not worship the angels. Colossians 2:18; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 19:10, 22:8-9. We must not worship men. Acts 10:25-26; 14:11-18. We must not worship idols and images. Exodus 20:3-5, Psalm 97:7. We must not worship the host of heaven

¹ *McClintock and Strong, Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. IX. P. 286.

(sun, moon, stars) Acts 7:41-43). We must not worship mammon (money, wealth). Matthew 6:24, 1 Timothy 6:10. We must not worship pleasure. 2 Timothy 3:4.

WHAT. What is worship? The Bible uses several different words from which our word “worship” is translated. These words are defined as “to depress, prostrate in homage, -bow, fall down, do obeisance, do reverence; to kiss; to revere, adore; render religious homage, to minister.”¹ Young includes the words “serve; give glory, esteem;” and “venerate” in his definitions.²

Please examine these definitions closely. They have nothing to do with entertainment. What have these words to do with “filling felt needs?” What have these to do with “getting something out of the worship?” Our society is quickly turning worship services into “entertainment hours.” The Father’s business is being turned into “Show Business.” Slick, professional performances are replacing sweet hours of prayer and praise. Choirs, quartettes, and solos are replacing congregational singing. Is it any wonder that we are hearing applause in what were the houses of God? Church houses are being converted into theaters!

The New Testament teaches us to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in worship to God. Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16. Denominational historians and church leaders agree that the church built by Christ used no man-made musical instruments in their worship of God.³ Neither did the early church use their human voices to “mimic” the sounds of musical instruments – as some acappella groups are doing today.⁴ God is not worshipped with men’s hands as though he needed anything. Acts 17:25.

The New Testament teaches us to pray in worship to God. Luke 11:1-12; 1 Corinthians 14:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, Hebrews 4:16. Our prayers are to be addressed unto the Father, and asked in the name of Jesus. John 15:16.

The New Testament teaches us to give in worship to God. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9:7. Giving is to be free-will offerings – in proportion with our prosperity and according to how we purpose in our hearts. We are to give - not grudgingly nor of necessity, but cheerfully - on the first day of the week. There is no New Testament authority – in word nor in example – for congregations to raise money through bake sales, yard sales, auctions, etc.

¹ James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Dictionaries of the Hebrew and Greek Words.*

² Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible.*

³ Larry G. Reynolds, “Worship In Song,” *Upon The Rock*, Vol. 4, Issue 7, July, 2001, pp. 13-14.

⁴ Keith W. Kress, “Acappella Singing,” *West Virginia Christian*, Vol. 8, No. 9, September, 2001, p. 4.

The New Testament teaches us to observe the Lord's Supper, the communion, in worship to God. Matthew 26:26-29; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 11:23-34. The bread is, to us, the broken body of Christ; the fruit of the vine is His blood shed for our sins. There is no New Testament authority to observe this on other days – such as at weddings, etc.

The New Testament teaches us to teach and preach the word in worship to God. Acts 2:42. When Paul tarried in Troas in order to meet with the disciples around the Lord's table on the Lord's day, the Bible says he preached unto them. Acts 20:7. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 1 Corinthians 1:21. Drama – the acting out of parts – had no place in the early worship of God. The Greeks were advanced in their knowledge of the theater in the first century. However, the apostles did not incorporate these theatrical skills into the Christian worship services.

WHICH. The Bible speaks of several different kinds of worship. All worship is not equal. All worship does not please God.

Jesus spoke of vain worship. In Matthew 15:8-9, Jesus said “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” The word “vain” mean “to no purpose.”¹ What makes this worship vain? It is based upon the teachings of the “commandments of men.”

The Bible speaks of ignorant worship. Acts 17. Paul said there was a time when God “winked” at ignorance but now he commands all men everywhere to repent because he has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained. 17:30. Ignorance is not bliss. We must know the truth about worship, and the truth will make us free. John 8:31-32.

The Bible speaks of will worship. Colossians 2:18-23. Will worship is a worship which, indeed, has a show of wisdom. It is characterized by a voluntary humility that shows itself in neglecting the body and in not partaking of certain activities or foods that are desired by the body. The problem is that there is no divine authority for doing so! It is the making of laws where God has made no laws. It affects a humility when, in reality, God's word is being presumptuously violated. It has an appearance of “sacrificing” for the Lord. Yet, it is predicated purely upon the “will” of the individual – not upon the commands of the Lord. Lipscomb wrote, “Will-worship is after our own will. It

¹ *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, p. 657.

is self-chosen; and for this single reason is a departure from allegiance to God.”¹

HOW. In John 4:24, Jesus said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” This is the only worship acceptable unto God. This is the worship for which we plead. First, worship must be offered in spirit. That is, it must come from within the worshipper – from the heart. Christian worship is not ritualistic. James said, “...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16. We must pray and sing with the spirit and with the understanding. 1 Corinthians 14:15. We must partake of the Lord’s supper “in remembrance” of him; we must examine ourselves and “discern” (separate thoroughly) the Lord’s body. 1 Corinthians 11:27-30. This involves the mind. Too many are simply “going through the motions;” offering what Fred Dennis called “idle” worship.²

Acceptable worship must also be offered “in truth.” That is, it must be in accordance with God’s holy word, the Bible. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17. Paul said, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name (in the authority) of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” Colossians 3:17. What we do; what we say; what we sing; what we pray – all must be offered and regulated by truth. They must be done decently and in order – according to God’s order. 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40.

WHY. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, He taught them to say, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed (Make holy; venerate) be thy name.” Then, in closing, he said, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” Matthew 6:9-13. Paul said, of our singing, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;” Ephesians 5:19 “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” 1 Chronicles 16:29. We ought to worship God to express our thanksgiving for his goodness and mercy toward us. “Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” Psalm 107:8.

WHEN. Worship ought to be offered unto God always. The congregation at Jerusalem “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts 2:41. Jesus taught of our need to continue in prayer. “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” Luke 18:1. “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things ...”

¹ David Lipscomb, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians*, Vol. IV. p. 287.

² Fred E. Dennis, *Fifty Short Sermons*, Vol. 1, p. 105.

21:36. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,”
Ephesians 6:18.

In Hebrews 10:23-25, Paul said, in connection with the church assembling together, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” We learn from Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 11, and 16:1-2, that the early church came together on the first day of every week to worship.

WHERE. Jesus announced to the woman at Jacob’s well that the hour was coming when men would neither worship at Jerusalem nor at Samaria. That is, the time would then soon come when it would not be necessary for true worshippers to go to either of those places to worship. Today, in Christ, we may worship in any location. After having been beaten with many stripes, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God in the city jail at Philippi. Acts 16:25. Later, Paul worshipped tearfully with the elders of Ephesus on the sea shore at Miletus.¹ Acts 20:36-38. Also, we may worship alone or we may worship with a multitude. Acts 14:21-23. David said, “I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.” Psalm 35:18.

Dear friends, are you a true worshipper of God? Your salvation depends upon it. Do you worship God daily in prayer and thanksgiving? Do you love to assemble with the saints in worship to God around the Lord’s table on the Lord’s day? Do you love to sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord? If you do, then I know you are truly looking forward to going to heaven.

Worship will endure into the world to come. When John was allowed to see the great throne scene in heaven, he saw the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders worshipping God - giving glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne. Revelation 4:1-11. Later he saw a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palms in their hands, crying with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.” Revelation 7:9-12; 15:1-4.

Let us all determine and resolve to be true worshippers of God. God is seeking such to worship him. Let’s ensure that our worship is based upon the

¹ J.W. McGarvey, *New Commentary on Acts of Apostles*, Vol. 2, pp. 193-194.

fundamentals – these basic foundation truths that are revealed in God’s word - and let us say, like David of old, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” Psalm 122:1.

BIBLE BAPTISM

Emanuel Daugherty

Introduction:

A. Baptism is an important Bible topic.

1. Baptism has been much discussed among religious people.

Nearly every religious body claiming to be "Christian" has some rite or ritual centering on baptism.

2. In earlier years debates on the subject were common.

a. **Campbell-Walker** Mt Pleasant, OH (Jefferson County)

June 19-22, 1820

b. **Hardeman-Bogard** Little Rock, AR April 19-22, 1938

c. **Woods-Griffin Lovington**, NM July 15-18, 1957

d. **Elkins-Ross Parkersburg**, WV April 16,17, 19-20, 1979

e. **Cogdill-Jackson** Lufkin, TX December 1946

3. However, in our age of tolerance and live-and-let-live attitudes many are now reluctant to have a discussion of baptism or any other religious subject.

a. There are some in the church now who are saying that if one believes that Jesus is the Son of God they are saved already.

b. Others among us are accepting folks from the denominations on their baptism whether it be sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, or whether it is for the remission of sins!

B. I would like to approach my topic by asking a series of questions:

What? How? Why? Who? When? and Where?

I. WHAT IS BAPTISM?

A. The Greek word for baptism is baptizo and is transliterated in the New

Testament as baptism. This word and its derivatives appear some 101 times.

B. There are seven baptisms mentioned in the New Testament:

1. **The baptism of fire** (Matt 3:11). The context shows it to be the wrath of God that is to come on the wicked.
2. The **baptism of suffering** experienced by Jesus in the events beginning in the Garden of Gethsemane and ending with His death on the cross (Mark 10:38-39).
3. The **baptism administered by John** making disciples (Mark 1:4-5).
4. The **baptism administered by Jesus and His disciples during his earthly ministry** (John 3:22, 26; 4:1-2).
5. The **baptism of the Holy Spirit** that was limited to the apostles (Matthew 3:11; John 1:33). Holy Spirit baptism was a **promise to be received** by the apostles and **not a command to be obeyed** by men everywhere (Matthew 3:11; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4ff; 2:33).
6. The **baptism of Israel in the cloud and the sea** when they were saved from bondage in Egypt (1 Corinthians 10:4). This baptism typified that of the great commission in the New Testament.
7. The **baptism of the Great Commission** recorded in Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; and Luke 24:47.

C. It is the baptism of the Great Commission that is to be administered today.

1. It is the baptism commanded by Jesus to be (1) preached into all the world, (2) to every creature, (3) in every nation, (4) until the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
2. When we consider the commission in Matthew, Mark and Luke we find that the Lord commanded the Apostles to evangelize and baptize, and those who were converted to Christ were to believe, repent and be immersed into Jesus Christ.

3. It is the baptism that is by the authority of the Godhead (Matthew 28:19).
4. It is the baptism that is for salvation from sin (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).
5. It is the ONE baptism of Ephesians 4:5. This is the only baptism required of men since the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, and the only one applicable to taking away sins.

II. HOW ARE MEN TO BE BAPTIZED?

- A. By the word How? we are asking of the action involved. How is baptism administered?
- B. The element in which one is to be baptized is water (Acts 8:36, 38; 10:47; 1 Peter 3:20).
- C. Two avenues of investigation help us to understand the How? of baptism.
 1. First, we want to look at three words: baptism, sprinkling, and pouring.
 - a. **Baptism** is from the Greek word *baptidzo* which the lexicons translate as "to dip, to plunge, to submerge, to immerse."
 - b. **Sprinkling** is from the Greek word *rantidzo* and the meaning is explained by the word itself.
 - c. **To pour, or pour out** is the Greek words *ek* (out) and *cheo* (to pour).
 2. Thus when we speak of one being baptized we are speaking of one who is immersed, submerged in water. When one is sprinkled or has water poured on him, immersing or submerging is not possible, and thus these words do not meet the definition of the New Testament word for baptism.
 3. Sprinkling nor pouring are never used in reference to baptism. Jesus never commanded men to "believe and be sprinkled," or "repent and be

sprinkled." He did not say "believe and be poured," or "repent and be poured." But he did say "believe and be baptized" (Mark 16:16) and "repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38).

4. When you stop to think about it, baptism is the only word that will do. You can baptize (dip, plunge, immerse, submerge) a person, but you cannot literally sprinkle a person (without chopping him up in little pieces!). You cannot pour a person (unless you put him into a sizeable container and pour him out!).

D. Then we look at the practice of those who were baptized in the New Testament.

1. First, we find that **John the Baptizer** "was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there" (John 3:23).

2. Compare the **baptism of Jesus** "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water..." (Matthew 3:16). To come "out of the water" he first had to be in the water.

3. When we look at the conversion of **the Ethiopian eunuch** there was a (1) coming to the water (Acts 8:36), (2) a going down into the water (8:38), and (3) a coming up out of the water (8:39).

B. We find, also, that baptism is described as a burial.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection (Romans 6:3-5).

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are **risen** with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead (Colossians 2:12) (**bold**, my emphasis, ebd)

1. These passages of Scripture show conclusively that baptism

cannot be accomplished by sprinkling water or pouring water on a person.

2. The first act of sprinkling or pouring water on the head of a person was in A. D. 251 on a man by the name of Novatian which was called a "clinical baptism." Sprinkling was not generally accepted until after the time of Augustine in A.D. 450 (F. W. Mattox, **The Eternal Kingdom**, 150-151).

3. Sprinkling and pouring as substitutes for New Testament baptism must be rejected as products of the apostasy that came after the time of the apostles and writers of the gospel.

III. WHY ARE MEN TO BE BAPTIZED?

A. In asking Why? we are trying to determine the purpose of baptism.

B. Religious people offer many widely disparate reasons for being baptized.

1. Some say that baptism is only a symbol; an outward sign of an inward grace, that shows one is already saved.

2. Others believe it to be simply a rite which joins one to a denomination.

3. Some believe that baptism is an act of dedication to God.

4. Some believe water has the power to forgive sins, i.e., baptismal regeneration.

5. Some who claim to be of the Christian religion do not practice any form of baptism (Quakers, Friends).

C. The purpose of one's being baptized is to be saved (Mark 16:16); have forgiveness (remission) of sins (Acts 2:38); to wash away sins (Acts 22:16).

1. When Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, he gave instruction to the apostles that "repentance and remission of sins

should be preached in his name beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47).

2. On the first Pentecost after Jesus ascended, the apostles answered the question of the multitude, "What shall we do?" by telling them to "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:37, 38).

D. The results of baptism are seen in a multitude of passages:

1. We are *in Christ* where we have access to all the blessings that God provides through Jesus His Son (Eph 1:3). Baptism is the only act which puts us in Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27).

2. By baptism we are *added to Christ's church* (Acts 2:41, 47).

3. By baptism we become *citizens of Christ's kingdom* (John 3:3-5).

4. By baptism we become *new creatures* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

E. All the reasons for being baptized can be boiled down into one statement: Why should one be baptized? To be saved from sin (1 Peter 3:21).

IV. WHO ARE TO BE BAPTIZED?

A. This is a very crucial question in regard to baptism.

1. Who are the candidates?

2. Are there any requirements to be met by those who are to be baptized?

B. In the Gospels, Book of Acts, and the Epistles it is quickly seen that indeed there are requirements to be met by those desiring baptism.

1. First or all, we find that Christianity is a taught religion (John 6:44-45).

2. John emphasized: "He came unto his own and his own received him not. But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

(John 1:11-12). NOW NOTICE: Verse 13

3. Which were born,

a. **Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will**

of man - These are to be rejected as sources of the spiritual birth. These have to do with physical birth, e.g., "We be Abraham's seed" (John 8:33).

b. **But of God** - The spiritual birth from God is more elucidated in Jesus' teaching of Nicodemus about the New Birth in John 3:3-5.

c. The privilege of sonship is by God's will and is not a result of parentage, race, or special favor, but of obedience to the will of God (Romans 2:28-29).

C. But is salvation all the work of God or does man have a part?

1. Some believe they are born in such a depraved state that there is nothing they can do to save themselves and are waiting for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit to move them, to give them a sign, etc., to receive divine favor.

2. Others have a "Mourner's Bench" where they pray, beg, and plead for God to save them.

3. Others teach that men are saved "wholly by grace;" Christ has done it all on the cross. "All you have to do is believe and accept the proffered salvation."

D. The New Testament plainly teaches that man does have a part in his salvation.

1. He is to hear the word of God in order to be taught and have faith (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6).

2. He is to repent of his sins and turn to God (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19).

3. He is to confess with his mouth that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37).

4. He then is to submit himself to be baptized into Christ (Galatians

3:27; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16).

E. The churches of Christ do not teach "baptismal regeneration."

1. It is not grace only, faith only, repentance only, nor is it baptism only!

a. Baptism saves us (1 Peter 3:21) only because it is the process ordained by God to contact the blood of Christ (Romans 6:3-4).

b. The saving power is not in the water! But baptism in water is how we are washed in the blood (Matthew 26:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

c. *There 's Power In the Blood!* It is the blood of Christ that is the cleansing power to wash away our sins.

2. Faith, repentance, confession, and baptism are acts by which man appropriates the salvation purchased by the blood of Christ and offered to mankind by grace.

F. Who then should be baptized?

1. Those who have been taught in order to have faith (Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16).

2. Those capable of understanding sin and how it separates us from God, and are willing to repent, turn away from sin, and come to back God (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Acts 17:30).

3. Those who understand the commitment that goes with the confession.

4. These things would eliminate baptizing infants and those mentally incapable of being taught about salvation.

V. **WHEN ARE WE TO BE BAPTIZED?**

A. In the Book of Acts men and women submitted to baptism upon learning what to do to be saved. (Pentecost, 2:37-38; the Ethiopian Eunuch 8:36-39; Cornelius 10:44-48; Lydia 16:14-15; the Philippian Jailor 16:31-33; Saul of Tarsus 22:16).

B. There was no waiting for a revival, a holiday, or special occasion (2

Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7-8, 15).

C. When should one be baptized?

1. When we know we are lost in sin and realize that obedience to Christ is the only way to salvation.
2. Make no delay! Time is the enemy of the soul that is lost in sin (James 4:14).

VI. WHERE DID CHRIST PLACE BAPTISM?

- A. Baptism comes after faith and before salvation (Mark 16:16).
- B. Baptism comes after repentance and before remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- C. Baptism comes after confession of faith in Christ and before one can go on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:39).
- D. Baptism stands between the sinner and salvation.
- B. Baptism is the line of demarcation that separates sinner and saint.
 1. Before baptism one is still lost in sin.
 2. After baptism one is in a condition of salvation, free from sin, converted to Christ.

BAPTISM AND SALVATION

UNITED WE STAND

Emmitt Channell

In the darkest hour, God has given his brightest revelation. Examples would be Jeremiah and 1 Corinthians. When the disciples were divided and competing for prominence, Christ washed their feet (Jn 13). When the church is having great difficulty, then is the time to put forth our greatest effort.

Several years ago, when segregation was common, a gospel preacher gave a speech in chapel at a Christian college. He started his speech by saying "We have a problem." He repeated that sentence several times throughout his powerful speech. The result of that speech and other factors was that brethren took a hard look at our practice and soon the walls of segregation began to be torn down. I pray that speeches like that might be given today on the subject of unity. We have a problem, and to simply divide into camps and shoot at each other only makes the problem greater. It is the obligation of each of us to maintain the *"unity of the spirit in the bond of peace"* (Eph 4).

Unity is the key to survival. When the ship was sinking, Paul spoke to the Centurian and the soldiers and called for them to stay in the ship and work together to reach safety (Acts 27:31). Knowing the importance of unity and the propensity of people to divide, Jesus earnestly prayed for unity among His followers (Jn 17). The importance of that prayer is clearly seen in the history of the church. Many of the New Testament epistles reveal internal problems in congregations and others contain inspired pleadings for unity.

The Jerusalem church, the first congregation of the Lord's church, initially exhibited great brotherly love, generosity, and fellowship (Acts 2:44,45; 4:32). That harmony was soon disrupted by the self-seeking Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). Then came the problem between the Grecian Jews and the Palestinian Jews which would have caused a major division except for the wise handling of the situation by the Apostles. (Acts 6:1-6).

The entire early brotherhood was threatened by the explosive Jew-Gentile question which took a special divine revelation to Peter (Acts 10) and a special meeting of the leadership of the elders and Apostles to diffuse (Acts 15). Even then, the problem remained for years and affected Paul's ability to work with both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul addressed the problems arising from personal convictions in Romans 14-15). In concluding his discussion, Paul declared that peaceful, full fellowship should exist through respecting individual consciences despite strong disagreements. He strongly emphasized the principle of not pleasing

ourselves but supporting our weak brother, using the attitude of Christ as an example (Rom 15:3).

The Corinthian church was divided over preachers (I Cor 1:10). Paul asked: is Christ divided? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? Was Paul crucified for you? The very idea of Christ being divided into parts and handed out to different people is repulsive. Paul, Apollos, and Peter did not preach different Christs. There is but one Savior and one Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9; Eph 4:4-6). How, then, did the Corinthians create this four-way division? Why were there quarrels ("contentions") among them? The answer lies in their carnality (I Cor 3:1-9). That was the basis of all the problems at Corinth. Why were there factions in the church? Why did they "bite and devour" one another? Why were there sexual immorality, lawsuits among brethren, moral defilements, problems of marriage and divorce? What was the basic problem in eating meats sacrificed to idols, the way they ate the Lord's Supper, the exercise of spiritual gifts? These were all problems arising from not crucifying the "old man" (Rom 6:6). Unless we deal with our carnality we will never have unity in the church. As long as we live in the flesh we will produce the "works of the flesh" and not "the fruit of the Spirit". It is easy to be led away from true devotion to Christ and to be identified more with someone else: some preacher or group of preachers, some magazine, some college. Our fellowship is based on our union with Jesus Christ: He died for us; we were baptized in His name; we are identified with His cross. We must not allow anyone to take the place of Christ! *"Is Christ divided"?* or are we divisive?

The Galatian church was threatened by the Judaizing teachers who, teaching "another Gospel", wanted to mix elements of the old law with the new. Clearly, any sort of unity based on a compromise of the Gospel is not the kind of unity God desires.

The Ephesian church received some of the greatest instruction on unity. Paul presented a balance between first principles and daily living. In the first two chapters he describes all the blessings we have in Christ, and in the last three he explains our duties and responsibilities. The key word in this last half of the book is *walk* (Eph.4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15), while the key idea in the first half is wealth. In these last three chapters, Paul admonishes us to walk in *unity* (Eph. 4:1 -16), *purity* (Eph. 4:17-5:17), *harmony* (Eph. 5:18-6:9), and *victory* (Eph. 6:10-24). The seven "ones," which are so familiar, are not in the doctrinal section but in the practical section. Our job is not to make unity. Our responsibility is to guard, protect, and preserve that unity which God has made. To do this, we must understand and practice the first three verses of chapter four. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul used the body as a picture of unity. He uses that same illustration in Ephesians 4:16.

The church at Colossae had serious problems over dietary codes, keeping holy days, asceticism, and worshipping angels (Col 2:16-19). In his discussion

of these problems, Paul admonishes, "forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col 3:13).

Unity was ruptured in the Thessalonian congregation by a group who believed Jesus was returning immediately (2 Thess 2:1-5). These Christians refused to work, expected others to care for their physical needs, and became lazy gossipers (2 Thess 3:6-12).

Second, Peter and Jude discuss at length the problems created in the churches by false teachers. Third, John speaks of Diotrephes, a church leader whose love of power destroyed unity and restricted those who could visit the Christians (3 John 9,10).

The last glimpses of the early church come when the Lord addressed the seven churches in Asia Minor. Ephesus was loveless, Pergamum loved the teachings of the Nicolaitans, Thyatira had Jezebel who taught Christians that fornication was not sinful, Sardis was dead and did not know it, and Laodicea was sick and self-deceived (Rev 2,3).

It may be in Paul's instructions to the great church at Philippi that we find some of the most practical instructions on how we can stand united. Paul urged them to develop the humility necessary for unity's existence (Phil 2:1-4). They were to be like-minded, pursuing the same purpose, as they rejected selfish ambitions and conceit. The mind of Christ was to forge the prevailing attitude of the congregation (Phil 2:5-8).

Phil 2:5-11 is one of the greatest passages ever written about Jesus Christ. It paints the perfect picture of humility. No one has ever come close to humbling himself like Jesus Christ did, and no one ever will. Yet, if the problems of the church and of the world are to ever be solved, we must humble ourselves just as Christ did.

The church today is too often divided, too often rumbling with criticism, murmuring, differences, jealousy, envy, ambition, outside talk, negative feelings, and desires for position and recognition. The only answer is the declaration of this passage: humility - letting the humility of Jesus Christ flow in and out of our minds. The unity of the church depends upon its members walking in the humility of Jesus Christ.

The "mind" of Christ means the "attitude" Christ exhibited. "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5, MV). After all, outlook determines outcome. If the outlook is selfish, the actions will be divisive and destructive. James says the same thing (James 4:1 - 10). What was the attitude Christ had? Paul states that He was "equal with God." That means

that He was God. Other verses such as John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:15; and Hebrews 1:1-3 also state that Jesus Christ is God.

Certainly as God, Jesus Christ did not need anything! He had all the glory and praise of heaven. With the Father and the Spirit, He reigned over the universe. But Philippians 2:6 states an amazing fact: He did not consider His equality with God as "something selfishly to be held on to." Jesus did not think of Himself; He thought of others. His outlook (or attitude) was that of unselfish concern for others. This is "the mind of Christ," an attitude that says, "I cannot keep my privileges for myself; I must use them for others; and to do this, I will gladly lay them aside and pay whatever price is necessary." Christ did not lay aside His Deity when He came to earth. He could not cease to be who He was. No person can ever cease to be who he is. He may change his looks, and he may behave differently; but he is the same person in being in essence. Jesus Christ is God; therefore, He is always God - He always possesses the nature of God. But He laid aside some of His rights as God. He laid aside His right to experience only the glory and majesty, honor and worship of heaven. He laid aside His right to appear only in Heaven and appeared on the earth as a man.

You did not become another person when you became a Christian but your relationship to God and man changed. Like Christ, you must lay aside the old man with his worldly way of thinking and adopt a new lifestyle and new attitudes (2 Cor 5:17).

We expect unsaved people to be selfish and grasping, but we do not expect this of Christians, who have experienced the love of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit (Phil. 2:1-2). More than twenty times in the New Testament, God instructs us how to live with "one another." We are to prefer one another (Rom. 12:10), edify one another (1 Thess 5:11), and bear each other's burdens (Gal. 6:2). We should not judge one another (Rom. 14:13) but rather admonish one another (Rom. 15:14). "Others" is the key word in the vocabulary of the Christian who exercises the submissive mind which we have in the example of Christ.

Jesus Christ is the supreme example of humility. The very same mind that existed in Jesus Christ - that led Christ to give up everything He was and had - that very mind is to be in us. The only way that we can stand united is to let the mind of Christ flood our minds.

Jesus Christ set and focused His mind upon humbling Himself; He took all He was and had and came down where we are and met our need. We must take the mind of Christ and let it be the way we think. Let the mind of humility and lowliness surge through your mind. Take all you are and have and get down where the needs really are. Do all you can to solve the divisiveness and cliques, grumbling and murmuring, selfish ambition and pride, desire for

position and power, greed and selfishness, hurt and pain - both in the church and in the world. Humble yourself and do all you can to solve the awful problems that afflict the church and the world. Humble yourself as Christ did and become part of the solution instead of the problem. The following are some practical suggestions.

First, let us all "...follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Heb 12:14-15).

Second, let us all follow Christ's example and pray for unity among brethren. Make it a high priority in your prayer life. Enlist others to pray with you. Pray for those who are abandoning the faith and for those who are troubling the church. Pray for those who have become our enemies (Matt 5:44).

Third, let us obey the plain teachings in the Bible about solving problems with people with whom we have problems (Matt 18:15-20). Be quick to forgive brethren who trespass against us (Matt 18:35; Lk 17:3-4; Col 3:1).

Fourth, let us all determine to become a Barnabas. Study the life of this great man and imitate his efforts in peacemaking.

Fifth, let us all watch our speech. James was right, "how great a matter a little fire kindleth" (James 3:5).

Sixth, let us all practice admitting that we are wrong when we are wrong. Learn to ask for forgiveness. (James 5:16; 1 Jn 1:9) We must all take heed "...lest being lifted up with pride he (we) fall into the condemnation of the devil (1 Tim 3:6).

Seventh, let us all rebuke with love and kindness those who are divisive in teaching or practice. Help them to see that to be converted means that we are to have the mind of Christ. (Lk 17:3; 1 Tim 5:20; 2 Tim 4:2; Titus 1:13)

Eighth, let us all be truly concerned about every person in the body of Christ. When one becomes unfaithful let us "... restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself; lest thou also be tempted" (Gal 6:1). Let us make every effort to win back the erring before they enter eternity in a lost condition.

As we stand united in one accord, being of one heart and one soul, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, may the Lord "add to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:46-47; 4:32; Phil 1:27).

SHOULD MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC BE USED IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP?

Basil Overton

The absence of instruments of music in the worship services of churches of Christ astounds some visitors. However, instruments are just as conspicuously absent in the New Testament's instructions for Christian worship.

There is not in the New Testament an account where mechanical music was used in the worship of any congregation of Christians.

Church historians, such as Eusebius, Neander, Mosheim, Jones, Schaff, and Fisher, make no mention of the use of instruments in worship for hundreds of years after Christ.

It is recorded that a head of the apostate church, Pope Vitalian, introduced organs into some of the Western European churches about 670 A.D. But, the earliest trustworthy account is that of an organ presented by the Greek Emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, King of the Franks, about 757 A.D. This organ was placed in the church of St. Corneille at Compiègne. (See: *The American Cyclopaedia*, Volume 12, page 668, and *Chambers Encyclopedia*, Volume 7, page 112.)

Erasmus, a contemporary of Martin Luther (early 16th century) and the most accomplished classical scholar of his time, said this commenting on 1 Corinthians 14:19: "We have brought into our churches a certain operose and theatrical music: such a confused, disorderly chattering of some words, as I hardly think was ever heard in any of the Grecian or Roman theaters. The church rings with the noise of trumpets, pipes, and dulcimers; and human voices strive to bear their part with them. Men run to a church as to a theatre to have their ears tickled. And for this end organ makers are hired with great salaries, and a company of whining tones."

Many religious scholars since Erasmus, such as, John Calvin, John Wesley, Adam Clarke, Theodore Beza, and Alexander Campbell, gave their voice against the use of mechanical music in worship. They based their objection on the fact that the New Testament order of worship does not include the use of mechanical instruments of music. To use them is to ignore Christ's authority.

F. M. Green wrote a book entitled *The Life And Times of John F. Rowe*. It was published by F. L. Rowe in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1899. Brother Green included in the book an argument by one he called Mr. Ayers on why mechanical instruments should not be used in Christian worship which follows.

“1. Instrumental music was as common in the days of the Apostles as in the present day. It was used everywhere; in the temple, in the camp, on both festive and funeral occasions, and in the domestic circle, both among Jews and heathen; and, together with singing, was cultivated as an art by all nations and all people. It was ordained of God as a special part of the Temple worship at Jerusalem, and its cultivation and performance was especially assigned to the tribe of Levi and the sons of Aaron. (2 Samuel 5:5; 1 Chronicles 15; 25; 27:11-13; 2 Chronicles 5:12-13; 29:25; Matthew 9:23), and for the domestic circle (Luke 25:25), all this showing the vast number of musical instruments and the multitude of performers to play on them in Jerusalem and in all Judea.

“2. The Apostles in their writings alluded to this art as one of universal prevalence, not only among Jews, but also among the Gentiles; and to its practice and utility as a fact with which mankind were generally acquainted, insomuch as that, in illustrating certain points of church decorum and edification, they spoke of it thus: ‘And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall we know what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet shall give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?’ (1 Corinthians 14:7-9.)

“3. Not only some of the leading men of the church, eminent among the Apostles, had been connected with the musical department of the Temple service, as Barnabas, who was a Levite, the tribe consecrated of God to sing and play on musical instruments; but soon after Pentecost ‘a great company of priests (sons of Aaron) became obedient to the faith,’ who also were divinely appointed to blow on trumpets during the solemnities of the sacrifice. (Numbers 10:8,10; 2 Chronicles 5:12,13; Acts 4:36; 6:7.)

“4. It was, furthermore, then, as now, that instrumental music was regarded universally as more agreeable and delightful than singing; and that at least singing, to have its best and most inspiring effect, must have its instrumental accompaniment. (1 Samuel 26:16-23; 1 Chronicles 15:16-18; 2 Chronicles 5:12,13.) All these being the verities of inspired history.

“5. And yet that the Apostles, under all these circumstances, with all the allusions made to the universal practice of instrumental music in their writings to the churches, and with all the above enumerated musical facilities at their command, should never in the whole sixty years of their labor and worship in the churches have played themselves, or had played by others on any instrument a single tune, either alone or as an accompaniment to Christian song; that they should also, by their several epistles in regard to the musical service of God, ignore the whole affair of instrumental music, pipe, trumpet, harp and organ, and specifically enjoin them to ‘sing, making melody in their

hearts to the Lord,' prescribing the simple, plain, unaffected congregational singing, 'grating and discordant' as it might be to the 'cultivated ear,' – that the Apostles should have thus acted is wholly irreconcilable with the idea that they ever intended instrumental music to be used in Christian worship.

"These facts, then, fairly considered, bring us to these two conclusions, from which there is no escape:

"1. That, though we may think it 'very bad taste,' 'very old-fogyish,' and 'far behind the times,' and 'calculated to drive the young people away from the church,' and all that, yet that there was something about instrumental music which the Apostles regarded as improper, either in leading or accompanying Christian praise; and that their treatment of it thus (leaving 'parlor accomplishment' out of the view) amounts to nothing short of absolute prohibition so far as Christian praise is concerned – yesterday, today and forever!

"2. And that, in all questions of 'expediency' as to lawful use of modern appliances to improve Christian singing, in the church or in the family, such as notebooks, tuning forks, troches, lozenges, etc., however these may be disposed of the matter of instrumental music is wholly out of the question, since the art was everywhere present before the Apostles, and about them in Jerusalem, in all Judea and the uttermost parts of the earth; and they calmly, quietly turned away from it, and persistently ignored it in all its forms and utilities, not swerving from its course toward it in a single instance during their sixty years' superintendence of the music of all the churches.

Worship And The Social Gospel

The Christian religion is not just a "man to man" affair; it also embraces a "man to God" responsibility. By interpreting Christianity to be only a "man to man" religion, some have reduced the Christian religion to nothing but a social affair. The gospel of salvation from sin has been interpreted by some to be nothing more than a "social gospel." Such is blasphemy!

Some critics attempt to pass off lightly the matter of music in worship as if it were a matter of no significance. These critics insist that we ought not to be concerned about such, but that we should be concerned about treating our fellowmen properly; living a good clean life; etc.

We should be deeply concerned about living good moral lives; about loving our neighbors as ourselves, etc. However, we should not overlook the fact that the Christian religion also demands that we worship God in the way that he directs.

God is a jealous God; he demands and seeks worship that pleases him. (John 4:22-26.) To overlook this is to reduce the religion of Christ to nothing more than a social system. But, it is more than that.

To go to heaven men must be more than good people socially and morally; they must worship and serve God as he says, or be lost. One of the most deceptive and subtle weapons of the devil is the doctrine of the “social gospel”; the doctrine that says that all that is important and vital is the good moral and social life, and that heaven awaits those who are socially and morally adjusted.

This doctrine is deceptive because the Bible abounds with instruction for men to worship God, and in the way he directs! The person who does not believe this has not a ray of hope. Those who do believe this all important truth will not look lightly on the matter of music in worship; they will instead be concerned about the kind of music God has prescribed for worship.

Remember, what satisfies you or me is not the issue; what pleases God is the primary concern of those who “fear God and keep his commandments.”

With What Are We To Sing?

Christians are commanded to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.) If this command embraces playing on instruments, all who are commanded to sing are commanded to play! But the command to sing does not include playing instruments.

Christians are taught to sing with a number of things. They are taught to sing with grace in their hearts. (Colossians 3:16.) They are instructed to sing with their hearts. (Ephesians 5:19.) Christians are to sing with the spirit, and with understanding. (1 Corinthians 14:15.) But, God’s word does not tell Christians to sing with a piano, or an organ, etc.

When the Jews used mechanical instruments in worship they were not used as “aids,” but their use was worship! (2 Chronicles 29:25-28.) Observe in this passage that the worship service included singing, playing on instruments, and offering burnt offerings.

The inspired historian says that those who played on instruments, worshipped, just the same as the singers worshipped, and just the same as the ones who offered the burnt offerings worshipped. They all worshipped! If we use instruments in Christian worship because the Jews used them in Jewish worship, we will not use them as “aids” but as worship.

If we use the Old Testament as authority for the use of instruments in Christian worship, to be consistent we will have to offer burnt sacrifices in

worship. Were we to use the law of Moses as authority for any conduct in Christian worship we would fall from grace. (Galatians 5:4.)

Some contend that the Psalms are no part of the law of Moses, or the law that the Jews lived under. For this reason some say that Christians can use instruments in worship because of the instruction in the Psalms concerning the use of instruments. Those who say this err, not knowing the scriptures. Jesus said that the Psalms are a part of the law of Moses. (John 10:34; 12:34; 15:25.)

CHURCH GROWTH THROUGH GODLY LEADERSHIP

Edward E. Dyche

Introduction

The need for godly leadership in the Lord's Church is always a pressing matter, and there are never enough men to serve either as preachers, elders or deacons! And those three designations do not exclude the need for godly brethren and the various works they do. The church of our Lord struggles as much today as ever to seek men who desire to serve and to be appointed to the task of leadership. According to Earle West, there are 13,309 churches of Christ in New Jersey. The average church membership is 107 with a median of 60 members. Of the 13,309 congregations only 26% have elders and 33% have full time ministers. The need for elders and preachers continues to be a necessity. Furthermore, I heard brother Flavil Yeakley speak at the Inman Forum a number of years ago, and he made this statement regarding young preachers: "We loose 40% of our preachers after their first work." This bit of information only serves to bring the seriousness of godly leadership into focus.

Although the works of preacher, elder, or deacon may be described as "leadership," my desire in this lecture is to focus on the eldership as the pivotal point of leadership and church growth.

The words of Paul to the Thessalonians are appropriate at this point: "We beseech you brethren, to know them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them highly in love for their works sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (I Th. 5:12-13 KJV). How significant are these words as we contemplate godly leadership and church growth. The issues we will deal with are Why must there be godly leadership, What is godly leadership, How does it apply to church growth, and How can we enhance godly leadership?

Why Godly Leadership?

Why do we need godly leadership? Very simply because the Lord has ordained no other kind! There are always leaders in some fashion in the church, and, in many cases, these "leaders" are nothing close to what God calls men to be. The church must have leaders or God would never have given such words and instructions to the church concerning them. See again I Th. 5, 1 Tim. 3, Tit. 1, and Heb. 13. The very concept of "shepherd" or "pastor" indicates the need and function of godly leadership. Congregations can function without such "shepherds" but they will not be doing so the way God ordained. The business meeting approach may be an "expedient," but in no

way can it be a "substitute" for God's way. Leadership is indeed a crucial factor in our growth both numerically and spiritually!

God has always called leaders today by the word of the Gospel. We certainly would consider Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Ezra, Nehemiah, Peter and Paul, among many others in the both the Old and the New, as leaders. These men were called and used of God to accomplish His purposes. One cannot read the New Testament without coming to the conclusion that God would have the same today. Why such passages as "remember them which have the rule over you," "obey them that have the rule over you," and "salute all them that have the rule over you" (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24) if leaders are not a must for God's people?

A tremendous illustration of the need for godly leadership is that of Moses recorded for us in the 18th chapter of Exodus. It is this situation that helps us to see what can happen when leaders do not learn what leadership is all about. Moses is certainly a leader, but this incident shows that he spent so much of his time dealing with the people's problems that it would seem nothing else could get done. Had it not been for the advice of his father-in-law to divide the people into thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens with capable men over these divisions, Moses would surely have become "worn out" quite soon. Leadership must learn that it cannot do the job alone.

How well this is also illustrated in Acts 6:1-6 with the Apostles serving the needs of the brethren to the exclusion - or at least the diminishing - of the primary work they were to do. On this occasion they likewise selected (with the participation of the church) capable men to serve the tables that the Apostles might give themselves to "prayer and the ministry of the word (v.4)." These two simple illustrations from both the Old and New express the need for godly leadership.

What Is Godly Leadership?

Just what is the leadership that we so desperately need? None of us deny that it is qualified elders (of course preachers and deacons can be included). But what do we mean by "qualified elders?" Most of us take it to mean men that meet the qualifications given in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Of course, this is correct, and it certainly is the beginning point. Most of us would agree that such men ought to reflect the spiritual life of a "shepherd" so that they would see their task as "pastoring" God's flock (Philip. 1:1 & I Peter 5:1-4). The primary function of such leadership in the Lord's church encompasses this shepherding.

The word chosen by Paul is that of "bishop," and it conveys the idea of "one who gives attention to something or one who oversees a work." It is used of one who oversees a house or one who manages a house. This very idea is used in I

Timothy 3:4 with the word "rule" (from *proistemi* - "to rule, manage, or lead"). The bishop or overseer is one who is aware of the on-going of the household and is responsible for its well-being and orderly function. In order to do this it is obvious that one must be aware of the functions and purposes of the home (or here in the bigger picture the church). These matters are under the direction of the "bishop." In this particular aspect of the work of elder, we would classify the matter of "managing," and certainly much work is involved here. This does not negate the larger point of "visualizing" the work and calling others to participate.

How Does Godly Leadership Apply To Church Growth?

The "goals" of the church determine how godly leadership will function. I find the words of Paul to the Colossians the most appropriate for determining the goals of the church. In chapter 1 verses 28-30 the overall picture of the goals of the church are presented. Paul wants the church to know that Christ dwelling in it is the hope of glory. As a result of this ultimate purpose, Paul says we preach "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Here then is a two-fold vision or goal that must always be before the church. There is 1) evangelism - preach, warning every man and 2) teaching every man in all wisdom - the spiritual growth of the members so that every man could be presented as "perfect" to the Lord. These words of Paul can be formulated in various ways that any congregation cares to designate. It is the over all objective of godly leadership to see that the Gospel is preached to every creature and to nurture those converted into healthy spiritual people. This same picture is given to us in Ephesians 4:11-16 though stated in different words.

One of the larger pictures we therefore need to see in godly leadership is that of the over-all vision and how to apply it. There is a world of difference in "visualizing" and "managing." Warren Bennis stated it better than anyone that I have read after. In his book, Leaders: The Strategies For Taking Charge," he puts it this way - "Managers are people who do things right, and leaders are people who do the right thing (p. 21)." What we need to see in godly leadership, then, is that leaders keep the vision ever in their own work and ever before the people of God. As "shepherds" they endeavor to fulfill the second vision of Colossians "present every man mature in Christ" and as "overseers" to keep the over-all function in a harmonious manner.

In this formulation of the vision of the church from Colossians 1:28-30 (and Eph. 4:11-16 as well) is encompassed every work of the church. As was briefly mentioned above there are evangelism and spiritual growth. However, let us break it down even farther. There are evangelism, edification, benevolence, and discipline. Edification is both the teaching program and activities that bring about "fellowship." Benevolence, of course, is that part of the work which aids

both the body and others in need. Finally, there is the discipline of the body. This work has a two-fold purpose to it. It is exclusive and inclusive. Exclusive in the fact that "fellowship" with some must be excluded. Inclusive in that it defines faithfulness in the body. Godly leadership is instrumental in church growth when seen in light of Colossians 1:28-30 and Ephesians 4:11-16.

Furthermore godly leadership does not function like the leadership of the world. Yes, there may be principles of good communication, articulating the vision which is formulated into specific goals, and the people skills for good relations, but in the end the church must function responsibly as a whole. There is not a "top-down" understanding unless it is simply Christ as head and we as the body. Jesus reveals this very thing as recorded in Luke 22:24-30. The contrast is between the "gentiles" and His "disciples." The gentiles exercise "lordship", "authority", and are called "benefactors," and some are "kings." Jesus said "but it shall not be so among you, but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Godly leadership is servanthood! The church will grow when this takes place.

Observe this very understanding in the work of Paul recorded specifically in I Corinthians 3:6-7. Notice the functions of those who plant and water but who it is that gives the increase. All of this helps us to understand church growth is not without the hand of God. When we go about planting and watering, God will do His part. Jesus said God was at work in bringing mankind to faith in Christ (John 6:29). Godly leadership will not allow the people of God to consider the accomplishments as by their own efforts, but rather by the power of God working in them.

Things We Can Do To Enhance Godly Leadership In The Church

The final matter that we need to spend some time addressing is what can the church, as a whole, do to enhance godly leadership? Let me consider three matters: 1) the need to understand followership, 2) the need to mentor others, and 3) the need to see the difference between the church and the world. These matters are inherent in the understanding and practice of "unity." The body is one and must function as one. If humanity becomes "one in Christ," then the practice of this "oneness" becomes imperative. Let us do as Paul exhorts in Eph. 4:3 "... endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"Follower-ship" is not always easy in our day because of our intense "individualism." This seems to be the very essence of the American way of life. However, in the church this must not be! How often does the New Testament use the word "submit"? At least sixteen times! "Submit yourselves one to another" - Eph. 5:21, "submit yourselves"- Heb. 13:17, "submit yourselves unto the elder"- I Pet. 5:5 are just some examples. The church needs to learn again what it means to submit to Christ and, hopefully, then to be in submission to

"one another." Submission to godly leadership will be no difficulty when this kind of spirit is manifested.

Mentoring is a word that is not much in vogue. The early centuries of our Lord understood this concept quite clearly. In fact the idea of "disciple" or "learner" comes from such an understanding. The schooling was quite literally learning under a "master." The teacher gathered his pupils around him and in a sense "lived" in such association. Observe this with Jesus and His disciples. He called twelve and lived and worked with them to prepare them for the task of taking the gospel into all the world (Matt. 28:18). This is mentoring at its best. Godly leadership needs to seek out the "younger" men (and women as well) and see that in some way they are "under" someone experienced in the work to be done. That work can be teaching, personal work, building work, benevolence etc. Under this kind of development there will always be servants in the local church.

Finally, the single greatest challenge the church of our Lord faces at the beginning of this millennium is that of understanding the uniqueness of the church in light of the religious world around her and the "other world" nature of who she is. If the church is not to function by way of leadership like the world, then she certainly cannot live like the world. The church must live both doctrinally and morally above the world. The denominational world does not appreciate nor does it seem to care about "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" nor the obedience "to the faith." Likewise the moral tone of secular and religious people is not all that distinguishable. The church of the Lord must again be led by godly people and especially of those duly appointed as "shepherds" to be the people God called. These particular matters when applied by a congregation and her leaders can only bring about the blessing of God and genuine growth both numerically and spiritually.

Conclusion

This lecture has focused on godly leadership in the church and what it has to do with church growth. By understanding the need for godly leadership, what it encompasses, how it is applied to church growth, and finally what are some things all of us can do together have been matters addressed in this time together. May God bless us as His people to continue in the quest to be a people for His own possession.

FIRST LOVE

Jim Farley

The Establishment Of and The History Of The Church of Christ At Ephesus

The church at Ephesus was, in many ways, a strong church. The church had been established through the apostle Paul's efforts. (Acts chapter 19). We read of how Paul came there and found twelve men who had been baptized with the baptism of John. These were probably influenced by the eloquent Apollos before he had been taught "the way of God more perfectly" by Aquila and Priscilla. (Acts 18:24-28). Paul convinced these twelve men that they needed to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 19:1-7). He then went to the synagogue of the Jews and "spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." (Acts 19:8). Some believed the gospel, but others did not; so Paul left there with the disciples of Christ and began teaching and "disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 19:9-10).

As a result of Paul's bold preaching against the false religion of Diana, "...there arose no small stir about the Way." (Acts 19:23). In fact, it resulted in a riot. The silversmith, Demetrius, called together the other silversmiths of the city, and called on them to do away with this Paul who was so boldly persuading and turning away many from the false religion of Diana. When this tumult was ended, Paul called together the members of the church, embraced and exhorted them to faithfulness, and left for Macedonia.

While at Miletus, Paul sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus and reminded them of how the church of Christ was established in that city. He spoke of the great hardships that he underwent there at Ephesus, and how he had kept nothing back from them, but that he had declared unto them "all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:17-27). He then exhorted and encouraged them to take care of and to feed the church of the Lord there in their city, warning them of the danger that was to come upon them when "grievous wolves" would enter in among them, and how some from among their own selves would arise to speak a perverted gospel. (Acts 20:28-31). The great apostle then commended them to God, and "to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Acts 20:32). Paul admonished them to "remember the words of the Lord Jesus." They all prayed together, and wept with and for each other, sorrowing for the fact that they would not see each other again.

The Lord's church at Ephesus was established in the midst of great trial, persecution and turmoil. As a result, the members were well established in the faith and in love for God, for Jesus, for the Word, for one another as brethren, and for the souls of men and women everywhere. The apostle wrote to them at a later date saying, "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers..." (Ephesians 1:15-16).

In this Ephesian letter Paul wrote reminding them of the time when they "...were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, have no hope, and without God in the world..." He told them that they, who had been "far off" had been made nigh by the blood of Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:11-22). He warned these Christians about being "...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive..." (Ephesians 4:14). The great apostle also warned and admonished them to allow no man to deceive them with "vain words." (Ephesians 5:6). He wrote to them about having no fellowship with "the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Ephesians 5:11). These Christians were "children of light" and they were to walk as such; alert and aware. (Ephesians 5:12-17). They were to put on the whole armor of God and fight the good fight of faith! (Ephesians 6:11-20).

Yes indeed, the Lord's church at Ephesus was initially made up of folks who were dedicated to standing for the right and folks who truly loved God and His Word. They loved each other, and they loved Paul, God's servant for their sakes. They had been admonished by the apostle to speak "the truth in love..." (Ephesians 4:15). Paul wrote to them about being "...kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us..." (Ephesians 4:32 – 5:2). Paul ended his letter to them with these words, "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." (Ephesians 6:23-24).

There seems to have been, from the start, a real balance among the Ephesus church of Christ. These loving people were dedicated to sound doctrine, and even to the point of looking for and watching for those who would teach false doctrines. They had been warned about them and were on guard! They loved God's Will and hated every false way. (Psalm 119:104-105).

The Letter From Jesus To The Church Of Christ At Ephesus Revelation 2:1-7

In these verses we learn something more of the Lord's body at Ephesus. The letter we have before us in Revelation 2:1-7 comes from Jesus Christ

Himself. He is the one who is in control. He has the seven stars in his right hand and walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. The candlesticks are the seven churches of Asia, so Jesus is simply saying that he is there with them, and Revelation 2:2 expresses clearly His point... "I know thy works..."

The Lord KNOWS! "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:13). He knows us ... He knows our hearts ... He knows our motives ... HE KNOWS! What is it that the song expresses? "There's An All-Seeing Eye Watching You ..."

Yes, the Lord knew all about the brethren at Ephesus. He praises their toil, hard work, patience and steadfastness. He praises them because they did not condone evil, nor evil men. In fact, they tested some who had come to them claiming to be "apostles" and found them to be liars. These were people who hated false doctrine! They hated the works of the Nicolaitans. As you and I read this wonderful commendation from the Lord we may say, "Now that's a strong congregation!" We wonder if anything could be wrong with such a group of disciples. In the face of persecution and tribulation, they faced difficulties with patience, and rejected false teachers. But the Lord KNOWS! He sees with those eyes "... as a flame of fire." (Revelation 1:14). He looked and saw a great flaw among these brethren.

Revelation 2:4-5 reads, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

They had not lost their hate for false doctrine, but they had lost their first love! They were indeed carrying on the work of the church and were faithful in it, but their motive was no longer right. They were faithfully attending to business, but for a different reason than at the beginning of their faith.

Donald R. Taylor, in his *THE APOCALYPSE: A REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST*, writes, "Like a doctor who continues his practice because that's his job, or the married couple who no longer feel the deep tenderness one for the other, the Ephesians were plodding on, faithfully discharging their duties, abiding by the apostles' teachings, but the love was no longer there."

It seems we can sum up their problem by saying that they had forgotten the words of the Lord when He said, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this,

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. ***There is none other commandment greater than these.*** (Mark 12:29-31 – Emphasis mine, JEF).

When one forgets these, nothing works out the way it can and should. The Ephesians seem to have forgotten the words of the Lord, even though they were admonished not to forget but to remember. (Acts 20:35). When one stops preaching and teaching the truth in love ... defending the truth with love ... loving God and one another ... they become as “ ... sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal ...” (Compare I Corinthians 13:1-13).

In his *APOLOGY* 39, Tertullian wrote of the heathen’s observation of Christians, “See, they say, how they love one another.” This is certainly an outward sign that one is a follower of the meek and lowly One. The Lord said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.” (John 13:35).

Some Practical Applications Of These Things For Us

First of all, when we say “us” this implies a self-examination. 2 Corinthians 13:5 commands such! We must make sure that we are where we should be; that we are growing “... in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18). It is as possible for us to leave our “first love” as it was for the Ephesians to leave theirs!

It is right and proper for us to stand firm and defend the gospel of Christ. (Philippians 1:17; Jude 3). We are soldiers of Christ, and we must fight the good fight of faith. (I Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3; 4:7; 2 Corinthians 3:3-6; Ephesians 6:11-20; etc.) However, we do not fight because we love to fight! Physical soldiers must never get to the point where they fight for the love of fighting. That is detrimental to their work as soldiers. They fight for love of country and for the love of freedom and the principles that their country stands for. We must contend for the faith (Jude 3), but we must never develop a contentious spirit. Debating has proven to be very worthwhile in the cause of Christ as long as proper spirits and attitudes are maintained. Have you noticed some, even among us, who have developed a “debating spirit” and how this seems to wither them spiritually? Some have developed a “witch-hunt” attitude in the name of “doctrinal accuracy” and “orthodoxy”. Let us determine to be doctrinally sound, but let us also resolve to have a spirit of true love for God, for Jesus who is Christ, for the church of the Lord, for the Word of God, for each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, and for the souls of men and women everywhere...even for our enemies! If our motivation for doing what we do and for saying what we say is not love, then we have drifted; we have left our “first love.”

And let us also resolve to never leave our original fervor for the Lord. Say to yourself, daily if need be, that you are not going to quit ... you are not going to

“burn out.” The world is filled with trials and it is possible for people to grow weary of fighting against sin and evil. (James 1:1-2; Romans 12:21; Galatians 6:9). The world is filled with alluring and tempting things, but we must not give in to the temptations. (I John 2:15-17). We must not allow the cares nor the pleasures of the world to “choke” our Christianity out. (Luke 8:14).

There are some signs of leaving ones “first love” in this fashion. When things of the church begin to become unimportant and take second place to the things of the world, you are drifting. The assemblies of the church are forsaken by those who leave their “first love.” (Hebrews 10:25). The work of the church in evangelism, helping the poor, and building up the saints, is looked upon as insignificant by those who leave their “first love.” Worship is viewed as only a “duty”; a yoke to be borne rather than a privilege to be enjoyed. You hear some say, “I just don’t get anything out of the worship service.” That has always amazed me. How can anyone in his proper spiritual mind come before the very presence of Jehovah God, the Creator of the Universe and all it contains, and say, “I didn’t get anything out of that.” They have lost their zeal, and fellowship with others of like precious faith is not enjoyable nor exciting to them anymore. Those who are losing or who have lost their “first love” find fellowship with those of the world more enjoyable than fellowship with Christians.

How Can We Correct The Problem?

First, **REMEMBER** – (Revelation 2:5). There is great power in memory. The writer of the Hebrew letter used memory to help his readers to come home. “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions...” (Hebrews 10:32).

Secondly, **REPENT** – Here is the hard part - for our stubborn wills often get in the way of the Will of God! Repentance means a change of mind that leads to a change of action or change of life. Remember how it was and decide to change and go back to that good time. The Lord says that unless people are prepared to repent they will perish (Luke 13:3, 5). However, He is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). Therefore, He commands all men, everywhere, to repent - looking toward the day of Judgment (Acts 17:30-31).

Thirdly, **DO THE FIRST WORKS** – If you want to be saved, there is something for you to DO. (Matthew 7:21; James 1:21-25). We must love again as we did in the beginning. Pray often to God. (Luke 18;1). Read and meditate upon His Word (Psalm 1). Enjoy worship with other Christians (Colossians 3:16-17; Ephesians 5:19). Take the gospel to all the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Reach out to your brothers and sisters who are in error (Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:19-20). Be faithful unto death. (Revelation 2:10).

SELF-ESTEEM

Margie Overton

Webster's dictionary defines self-esteem as: (1) belief in one's self, self respect; (2) undue pride in oneself.

Jesus taught that we should love our neighbor as ourselves. Who is my neighbor? (Luke 10:25-37.) This clearly lets me know that I am to love myself. (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:43,44; 19:19; 22:36-39.)

In Romans 12:3, Paul said, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Others can esteem us. "Let each esteem others better than self." (Philemon 2:3.) "And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves." (1 Thessalonians 5:13.)

Why did Humble Oil spend 200 million dollars to change all its stations to Exxon?

Why did Cities Service Company spend 20 million to come up with Citgo?

Why do businesses rise and fall according to their names?

The answer to these three questions is image.

A person's self-image or self-esteem is the most powerful tool for success that he has.

Some will say, and I'm sure you have heard it said, "You have no idea what a poor opinion I have of myself, and how little self-confidence I have." Have we not all felt this at one time or another? It is a common ailment of society. It is responsible for the defeated attitude, so common in our day in all walks of life.

How do we develop this poor self-esteem?

Low opinions of ourselves are not produced so much by deliberate self-hate as by ignorance of our real self.

Most ignore the philosopher's advice to "know thyself."

If you have poor self-esteem it is because you have accepted suggestions telling you how limited you are, how imperfect, unsure and unable you are.

You need to reject these remarks. Now! They have no power of themselves to harm you or bring to pass the attribute with which you have been tagged. The same mind - your mind - that accepted them also has the power to reject them.

No one can make you feel inferior unless you agree to it.

Winning Through A Positive Spiritual Attitude
By J. J. Turner

Brother J. J. Turner asked, "What do you think of yourself? Do you see yourself as a radiant, self-confident person? You can be this person if you will affirm right now, once and for all, that you are going to improve your self-image. Will you do it? It is possible for every person to improve his or her self-image."

Brother Turner gave in one of his many books the 15 following suggestions for improving your self-image.

1. Believe that you can change your poor self-image. Until you do, it will not change. Do you believe that you can change it?
2. Accept the great truth that you are created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:26,27.) This raises you above the level of the animal and gives meaning and direction to your life. You are a creature of choice.
3. You must realize that you are responsible for your thoughts and attitudes. (Your attitude determines your altitude) They do not come from some external source. You are in control. Ask yourself, "Why am I permitting these thoughts (i.e. low self-image thoughts) to come into my mind?"
4. Remember your worth is not dependent upon eternal values or remarks.
5. Take a few minutes out of the day and picture in your mind (close your eyes) the person you want to be.
6. Pray for strength, wisdom, and power to be a winner. You must give God an opportunity to work for you.
7. Groom and dress yourself as if you were already a 100% winner – because you are. Believe it!
8. Say to yourself I am not a failure: God doesn't create failures. I can and I will be the best.
9. Read. Fill your mind with positive thoughts and information. Use what you learn.
10. Write a detailed description of the person you want to be. Be specific.
11. Take affirmative steps each day toward becoming a better you.
12. Never forget this truth: You are not better or worse than anyone else - You are you. This is an exciting truth.

13. Help another person who has a poor self-image to overcome his negative thinking. You help yourself by helping others.

14. Pay a compliment each day to another person. It will pay big dividends.

15. Don't make the mistake of comparing yourself with some other person. They are probably doing the same thing too.

“Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?” Everyone!!! Meaning you are. “I will give thanks to the Lord, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are thy works and my soul knows it very well.” (Psalm 139:14.) “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...” (1 John 3:1.)

Confidence in God, and knowing how much he loves and cares for me can bolster my self-esteem. It can bring value to our self-worth.

We can think, “God loves me so much that he sent his Son to die for me. I became a part of that body”(by being baptized into his body which is his church.) Then I can rejoice at being his child.

We don't have to worry about the past anymore, and we don't have to worry about what others think. Sure we want to be accepted by others, but our primary concern is to be pleasing to God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

We can live the Christian life, because being in Christ has given us new meaning.

We are now heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. (Romans 8:16,17.) If God is for us, who is against us? (Romans 8:31.) Read Matthew 6:25-34.

Knowing that we are children of the King should make us realize that we're something special. Just because man was created first does not mean that woman is inferior. She just has a different job description: a unique roll which no man can fulfill.

I like the following quote by Clyde M. Narramore.

Womanhood

“You have a special place to fill by just being a woman. When God created a companion for the first man in the Garden of Eden, He endowed her with the attributes of beauty, gentleness, love, a sensitive nature and an understanding heart. These have become a symbol of womanhood. They form the framework for development for every little girl as she grows and matures and then blossoms into a lovely young lady.

“You are the inspiration, the world over, for story, song, poem and painting. You are the symbol for hospitality and service. You were the last at the cross, and first to the tomb, first to tell of the resurrection, first to proclaim redemption to the Jews, first to greet the Christian missionaries, and the first European convert. (Lydia, convert of Thyatira. Acts 16:14.) You contributed to the comfort of our Lord; you washed the Savior’s feet and anointed His head with ointment. You were the mother of Christ, our Lord.

“You hold a place of honor. You are the image of queenliness and the essence of virtue. Because of this you have won men’s respect.

“God thought so highly of woman that he placed the one dearest to His heart in her arms as a tiny babe, to be loved and cared for. What greater honor could there be – the mother of the Son of God?

“The greatest trust in all the world is in the hands of a woman. It becomes her responsibility to mold and to shape human lives in her role of motherhood. Her influence has no limit. A godly mother may mark the pathway of generations to follow, and in this way sway the destinies of the world.”

Knowing that God created us as unique individuals and with a special work in life to fulfill gives us a foundation on which to build. When we sincerely think of the importance of women, we should say “Thank God I am a woman.” That should cause our self-esteem to rise several points.

Augustine said, “Give me mothers that are mothers and I will change the world.” William Wallace said, “The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.” An old Spanish proverb says, “An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy.” Someone said, “The greatest gift a father can give his children is their mother’s time.” And I say, “Amen!”

Work at having a positive attitude.

I have noticed that those with a negative attitude usually have low self-esteem. Better still, work at having a good positive spiritual attitude.

Positive is defined by Webster as, having the mind set or settled; confident; assured (e.g., a positive person). This disposition is commanded of all Christians, “...that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled in spirit, nor by word, nor by letter...” (2 Thessalonians 2:2.) “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man.” (Ephesians 4:23.) Positive, therefore, is the opposite of negativism or pessimism. The Christian’s mind is settled and confident because of Christ and His word, and the fact that with Christ he can do all things. (Remember Philemon 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

Spiritual is defined by Webster as “...of spirit and soul...concerned with the intellect, showing much refinement of thought and feeling.” This is the inward man that has been redeemed and renewed by Christ, and as Paul said, “...the

inward man is renewed day by day.” (2 Corinthians 4:16.) Spiritual is the opposite of carnal: “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (Romans 8:6.) The spiritual person thinks on things above; his mind is above the things of the world. His spiritual mind will help him build good self-esteem.

Attitude is defined by Webster as “...a manner of acting, feeling or thinking that shows one’s disposition, opinion. This is what Solomon was talking about when he said, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” (Proverbs 23:7.) Jesus put it this way, “...that which cometh out of the mouth, that defileth the man. From within, out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts.” (Mark 7:20,21.) Thus you are the way you are because of the way you think. You should have a great outlook on life because you are a child of God.

Some desire to wear brand new clothes, drive new cars and live in fine houses to build their self-esteem. Some who can afford such things, have such an attitude that makes those who don’t have and can’t have feel inferior thus creating in them low self-esteem. This ought not so to be!

A list of five things that are sure to change the world. Let’s call them

“5 Tips For The Busy “B” Ladies.”

- Be a good, true, trustworthy wife.
- Be a good mother.
- Be a happy homemaker.
- Be a teacher of classes. (1) children (2) ladies
- Be a person who will do all you can for your neighbors and friends.
Especially your brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10.)

THOMAS CAMPBELL

Basil Overton

The work of the restitution of New Testament religion in the British Isles was so widespread that it is not possible to report on it thoroughly in a few relatively brief lessons. Those who call the church of Christ “the Campbellite Church” thereby betray their gross ignorance and misunderstanding. An example of the reasons for my saying this is in a report by William E. Young of Denver, CO. He published a report that included an item from a bulletin published in Duncan, OK containing the following quotation from a documentary research paper by Dr. Robinson, the Principal of Overdale College in Birmingham, England.

“In the Furness District of Lancashire, in Northwest England, there existed in 1669, during the reign of Charles II, a group of eight churches of Christ. Most of them are not now in existence. An old minute-book has been found of the year 1669 and it shows that they called themselves by the name of church of Christ, practiced baptism by immersion, celebrated the Lord’s Supper each Lord’s Day, and had elders and deacons. There was also a church of Christ in Dungannon, Ireland in 1804 and in Allington, Dengighshire. In 1735, John Davis, a young preacher in the Fife District of Scotland, was preaching New Testament Christianity twenty-five years before Thomas Campbell (Alexander Campbell’s father) was born.”

William E. Young commented as follows after giving the above quote by Dr. Robinson.

“Churches of Christ have always traced their origin to the 1st Century, approximately 33 A.D. The Restoration Movement, historically indigenous to America does indeed owe much credit to the fervor and leadership of men like Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, and others, but the principle of New Testament Christianity, Biblically and historically roots within the soil of Old Testament prophecy and apostolic authority.”

Many Others To Also Remember

Telling you about Thomas and Alexander Campbell does not mean we need not be aware of, and informed about, the other brave and noble men in early America who were leaders in reform and restoration efforts which were designed to identify the ancient order set forth in the New Testament concerning Christ and his church and how to get into and live in that church. Some of these worked in the cause of Restoration in America before the

Campbells did. Some of these were Dr. Abner Jones and Elias Smith in New England; James O'Kelley; and Barton Warren Stone.

Thomas Campbell was born in County Down in Northern Ireland February 1, 1763. He developed a great respect and love for the Bible. He attended Glasgow University in Glasgow, Scotland, for three years. He became a licensed preacher in the Presbyterian Church.

Thomas married Jane Corneigle, and they settled in Market Hill in County Armaugh.

Presbyterian Church At That Time

The Presbyterian Church at the time of Thomas Campbell was a classic demonstration of the blight and bitterness of the conglomeration of contradictions and confusion of religious division that was so rampant in the land! In 1732 the Presbyterians divided into Seceders and Non-Seceders. In 1789 Seceders split into Burghers and Anti-Burghers. In 1799, eight years before Thomas Campbell came to America, both Burghers and Anti-Burghers divided into Old Lights and New Lights. Thomas Campbell had become an Old Light, Anti-Burgher, Seceder Presbyterian. He was an intelligent and well-educated gentleman. He knew that such division and confusion and contradiction were not taught in the Bible! He sought to bring himself and his family closer to God.

He Came To America

Thomas became sick with stomach illness. No wonder! All the strain of the mass confusion may have contributed to his illness. His physician told him to go abroad. In 1807 he sailed to Philadelphia. He presented himself in that city before the Presbyterian Synod of North America, and that Synod assigned him to the Chartiers Presbytery in Western Pennsylvania.

He Got Into Trouble

After Thomas Campbell settled in Washington, PA he began to preach things from the Bible that were contrary to the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, the creed book of the Presbyterian Church. The Presbytery took away his preaching appointments for two months because he was telling people there was only human authority for creeds and confessions of faith.

After struggles with the Chartiers Presbytery and the charges against him, that Presbytery suspended Thomas from the ministry in the Presbyterian Church. This was a great blessing for Thomas Campbell; it was a strategic turning point for him that turned him into a great work of pleading for the Lord's way as found in the New Testament.

Not Sure Of What They Should Do

Thomas Campbell and those who took their stand with him were not sure of what they should do. They formed what they called the Christian Association of Washington on August 17, 1809, while Thomas' family were coming across the Atlantic to America. They erected a log meeting house on the Sinclair farm.

Thomas wrote a book in Mr. Welch's home near the log meeting house. He entitled the book: *Declaration And Address*. It is a classic treatise on the sacred, divine principles of the unity taught in the New Testament.

After the family of Thomas Campbell arrived in New York City on September 29, 1809, they went to Philadelphia a week later. Two days after arriving there, they started on the long trip to Washington, PA in a wagon. Thomas knew they were coming. He rode a horse to the middle of the state and enjoyed a happy reunion.

The horse Thomas had ridden followed the wagon, and he rode with his family in the wagon. He and Alexander discussed their changing religious views, and they were pleased that they were thinking in the same direction. Alexander read his father's *Declaration and Address* and he was pleased with it and pledged himself to proclaim the restoration principles in it. He and his father discussed the lamentable partyism and discord and division and realized the great need to return to the New Testament in order to have the unity taught therein.

BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

Don Cooper

Before addressing this important subject I have been given to discuss, I wish to thank the elders of this congregation and brother Warren Kenney, the preacher, for inviting me to be one of the speakers on this Lectureship. Brother Kenney is a close and dear friend of our family. I consider it an honor to have been chosen to participate in this series of studies "A PLEA FOR THE FUNDAMENTALS". I can think of no subject more urgently needed in the church than the one you brethren have arranged. It is humbling and challenging to stand before this knowledgeable audience and speak on such an important subject as "Biblical Inspiration".

It behooves us to find a proper definition of the word "Inspiration." Perhaps we can find some help from the reliable Daniel Webster. He notes that it involves "breathing in," the opposite of "expiration." He also says that it involves influence of some thing or somebody. Perhaps closer to the definition that better satisfies my subject is his suggestion that theologically "inspiration" is a supernatural influence which qualifies men to receive and communicate Divine truth.

This should help us to better appreciate Paul's writing of 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God ..." When one reads the Bible, he is handling a Divine product, one which came "by supernatural influence" exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God. Thus, we can trust them because they are a Divine product. They came not from the mind of men, but from God through holy men who were led by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21).

"All scripture" (2 Tim. 3:16) includes the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. In fact, Paul was defending the prophets of previous dispensations, just as Christ also did during His personal ministry (John 5:32-39). The prophets foretold of Christ's coming, His death, resurrection, ascension back to the Father in heaven, and of the final judgment. At least 300 distinct prophecies relating to Christ are found in the Old Testament. From His birth to His death Christ fulfilled many prophecies concerning Himself in the Old Testament. Was this mere coincidence? No! Someone once calculated the possibility of all these prophecies being fulfilled in one lifetime by one person to be one chance in 84, followed by 131 zeroes. Christ is the very center of Biblical prophecy which came by Biblical inspiration.

Another interesting study concerning Biblical Inspiration results from a close examination of Hebrews 1:1: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets ..." How did God speak to our forefathers?

Sometimes God spoke through Angels. Examples of this are found in Genesis 18 and 19 when He spoke to the Father of the faithful, Abraham, and to his nephew Lot. Were not the words these angels (Heavenly messengers) "inspired of God"? Of course, they were. Abraham believed their words because he knew they were the words of God, not man.

In the case of the great and beloved prophet, Daniel, God spoke through dreams (Daniel 7:1). The student of God's word has to be impressed with Daniel's ability to not only interpret dreams, but also to actually recount the dream without the help of the one who had the dream. These were not ordinary dreams like the ones we sometimes have. It was God inspiring (breathing into) Daniel's mind with what He wanted spoken.

Also in the book of Daniel, and closely related to dreams, are visions which God used to inspire holy men. And, the great Messianic prophet, Isaiah, describes his prophecies as being the result of a vision (Isaiah 1:1). Also, Ezekiel describes some wonderfully extraordinary journeys he took through visions (Ezekiel 8:3; 11:24) which he called "visions of God (1:1).

On more than one occasion God used miracles in speaking to men, as in the case of His appearance to Moses on Mt Sinai (Exodus 3) and to Jonah (Jonah 4:6ff). In the former, an angel appeared first; but, when Moses decided he would investigate the matter more closely, God forbid him, telling him that he was treading on holy ground. Moses hearkened unto the voice of God, hiding his face, afraid to look upon God (v 3-6). Jonah's experience shows what can happen when one chooses to ignore God's message. Another great Old Testament prophet to whom God spoke audibly was Samuel, a beloved man of God, an answer to a godly mother's prayers, whose writings are the favorite of so many (1 Samuel 3).

The prophets' message was God's message; their voices were really God's voice. They were saying what God wanted said. It was God's word through the prophets' mouths (2 Samuel 23:2; Jeremiah 1:9).

In 1971 the late and beloved brother, Thomas Warren, then Chairman of the Bible Department at Freed-Hardeman (College) University, published a little booklet entitled "*A Time For Sound Doctrine In A Day Of Liberalism.*" In Chapter X (page 50) he wrote under the title,

"The Bible Is God's Word"

"We must recognize the place that the Bible holds in God's scheme of things. Note these facts about the Bible. (1) The Bible is authoritative! We must not allow ourselves to degenerate to the modernistic viewpoint that such matters as feelings, conscience, visions, mere common sense,

the trends of men, or the traditional religions can be accepted as the standard. Authority inherently resides in God (Romans 9). Authority was given unto Christ (Matthew 28:18-20); authority was delegated to the apostles (Matthew 16:16-18; 18:18); authority was given to the prophets by the laying on of the hands of the apostles as they were guided by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:15) The apostles and prophets have written the word we now have. Thus, the Bible is as authoritative as if God Himself was speaking to us."

In addition to the above, brother Warren urged his readers to recognize the Bible as inspired, word for word by the Holy Spirit, God breathed. It is not the words of men but has been given by God through the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13).

As stated at the beginning of our lesson, inspiration relates to receiving and communicating of Divine truth (2 Peter 1:20,21). God has revealed truth to holy men. This is revelation. These men received it, spoke it and/or wrote it. This is inspiration. Revelation on God's part, inspiration involves men. The prophets, apostles and other holy men wrote the Bible upon receiving from God what He desired to have related to man.

Repeatedly, the Bible claims that its words are of God. How many times do we see the phrase, "It is written"? Over and over we see God's will being written by the guidance of the Holy Spirit! As one writer has well stated, "Spirit moved men" (2 Peter 1:20,21) have produced "Spirit breathed writings" (2 Timothy 3:16).

True and honest Bible scholars accept the Bible, word for word (verbal inspiration). They accept it as being full and complete (plenary inspiration). Only fools would dare accuse the Bible of being full of errors, myths, etc. One who follows the Master will settle all religious questions in the same manner as He did, by consulting the Scriptures, Old and New Testaments. An interesting thought concerning the writing of the Bible involves truths recorded hundreds of years after the fact, as in the case of Moses' writing of the Pentateuch. How was he able to write authoritatively about events that happened ages before his time? Only by inspiration could he have done so. From Genesis through Deuteronomy Moses "wrote all (only) the words of Jehovah" (Exodus 24:4).

How were men like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others able to foretell events that would occur hundreds of years after their passing from this life? Only by accepting "inspired of God" can we answer such questions (Isaiah 8:1-8; Jeremiah 30:2).

It is no mystery to God-loving people that the Bible, one of the oldest books in the world, is still a "best seller". The Bible is the most influential book in the history of mankind. For 3,500 years the message of its writers has been of

tremendous significance. The writers of the Bible were giving us the words of God. So many times statements like "the word of the Lord came unto me saying ..." or similar claims over and over serve to remind us of the origin of the Bible. How can one, in good conscience, reject God's word?

A word of caution seems in order at this point. Those of us who believe in the inspiration of the Bible, but fail to give ourselves diligently to it (2 Timothy 2:15), are really no better than one who denies its inspiration. And, the Lord issues a solemn warning in John 12:48, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

In closing I would like to offer what someone has written about Scripture. I'm sorry I cannot know the origin of this writing. It has found its way into many of our bulletins over the years, and holds a profound message for us all:

"This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character. Here paradise is restored, heaven is opened, and the ways of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good its design, and the redemption of man its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. It is given you in life, will be opened in the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibilities, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents."

SUBMISSION TO GOD

Randy Chapman

At the very heart of biblical doctrine is man's relationship with God (Matthew 22:37-40.) After giving careful consideration and actual involvement in every aspect of life, Solomon decided: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole *duty* of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13). The NKJV says "for this is man's all." From these two passages we conclude first that our relationship with God is of great importance, and secondly that we are to be in submission to Him and not He to us.

The history of man from Genesis 3 until today has been one of man's rebellion against God's will and God's scheme of redeeming man to Himself. It is not surprising that alien sinners choose to defy God. It is alarming that so many Christians have become friends with the world and thus choose to be at enmity with God. James commanded us "submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (4:7-10). Yet, people bristle at the thought of submitting to God. It may be best illustrated by the words of Pharaoh in Exodus 5:2, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice? ...I know not the LORD..." Let us begin observing some answers to Pharaoh's question.

REASONS FOR SUBMITTING TO GOD

He is Our Creator. Since it is in God that we "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28), we owe Him our allegiance, even our very lives. In Romans 9:20-21 Paul drew on the Old Testament passages of Isaiah 29:16; 45:9; 64:8 and Jeremiah 64:8 when he wrote: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Whether we like it or not, we belong to God by creation and should do what He intended us to do.

He Has Redeemed Us. Paul wrote that Jesus "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14). That is to say that Jesus paid the price with His own blood (Acts 20:28) to buy us back from the slavery of sin. This, even though we were already His by creation! God illustrated this to the Jews with the story of Hosea when the prophet bought his own wife at the auction

block after she had been caught in the act of being unfaithful to him. Such is God's love for us. The story is told of a little boy who carved a ship. He lost it while playing in the water by the curb during a sudden storm surge. Later, he saw it in a pawn shop window and had to work and save to get the funds to buy it. After paying for it, the clerk overhead the lad say the following to the ship as he walked out the door, "You are mine twice. Once, because I made you, and twice because I bought you." That is the Christian's situation before God.

God Is Trustworthy. More will be given on this matter later in the message. Suffice it to say here that it is always difficult to submit oneself to another, but that it is always easier when one knows that he can trust the other party to have his best interest at heart in what the other party expects him to do.

It Is Best for Us. Because God is trustworthy and has agape love for us, we can know that He only wants what is good for us. He is not interested in teasing or torturing us with capricious rules. The perfect illustration of that is the gift of Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins (John 3:16; Revelation 1:5-6; Philippians 2). Further, this gift was made "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:6-8). Satan would have us believe otherwise. That is how he deceived Eve, but we should know better.

God Will Reward Us for It. This has always been so. Proverbs 11:18 informs us "The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward." Not all reward comes in this life. When Jesus wrote to the seven churches of Asia through John, He promised rewards in eternity to those who would overcome (Revelation 2-3). Paul addressed this in Romans 8:16-18, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Refusal Will Result in Punishment. There may be some momentary pleasure in sinning against God (Hebrews 11:24-26), but it is short lived. Such a life brings great heaviness to those who live for self-gratification. "For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out." (Proverbs 24:20). Instead of joy in sin, there is punishment. "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; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to

be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

Let us now look at some things that are essential to submitting ourselves to God.

Submission Is Based On Trust

As mentioned earlier, God is worthy of our trust and we can submit ourselves to Him with the assurance He will only act in our best interest. Trust is at the heart of every good relationship. Take the marriage covenant as an example. A woman who commits her heart and life to her husband must trust him. Even her love for him is based on trust. God does indeed expect her to submit to him, but God also expects the man to fulfill her trust by loving her as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5).

Whom do you trust? Do you rely on God to direct you from His Word or in the counsel of man and his so-called wisdom? Multitudes put their confidence in what *they think* will bring joy and happiness to their lives, just as Eve put her trust in Satan instead of believing what God had told her. When Samson confided in Delilah, he had no reason to rely on her because of her pattern of betrayal. He was actually choosing to trust Satan instead of God. Satan is not trustworthy, but he effectively disguises himself and his temptations so that *we think* we are making a good choice. They think, we think, he thinks, I think... "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jeremiah 10:23).

Joshua knew that the Israelites had a heart of unbelief and had failed over and over to trust God in the wilderness. Before his death he challenged them to subject themselves to God and not to idols. He said, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15).

We are warned to "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." (Hebrews 3:12). To do this we must "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Proverbs 4:23). May we be diligent to "watch and pray...for we know not the hour when the Lord shall come."

Submission Requires Repentance

Paul informed the Athenians in Acts 17:30 that at "the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Jesus advised a multitude of Jews "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye

shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3). Those Jews who refused both Jesus and penance did meet such doom in A.D. 70. God means what He says. In spite of a multiplicity of such examples in the Scriptures, most will not repent.

A common misconception of the masses is that repentance is being sorry for the wrong you have done. Since godly sorrow leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10), it is not repentance. True repentance demands a change of mind and thus a change of habit (action). That is why John the Baptist demanded that the Pharisees and Sadducees "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." (Matthew 3:8). True penance will be verified by a change in lifestyle.

Accordingly, God made repentance a part of His scheme of redemption. Peter wrote, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9). This requirement was expected of the Israelites (Acts 5:31) and the Gentiles (Acts 11:18).

Repentance is still required of all men today. Even the church with its individual Christians must repent of sin if they turn away from God. Peter said as much to Simon the sorcerer in Acts 2:22-23. Revelation 2-3 records Jesus' instructions to the seven churches of Asia. There are eight commands for them to repent...seven churches and eight commands! It is indisputable that God will not accept those who will not repent.

What sense would it make to not require it? Realizing that the Roman Christians might think that God's abundant grace was a license to continue in iniquity, Paul asked them: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2). Peter addressed the issue after listing the Christian graces in 2 Peter, "For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you." (1:8-11).

Submission Demands Obedience

Can you think of any other way for someone to show submission to God than by obedience? We must be compliant to God's will, and that demands obedience. James speaks of this when he wrote "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will

shew thee my faith by my works." (James 2:18). His conclusion is that faith is made perfect (complete) by works and that without works, faith is dead.

Jesus said during His earthly ministry, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work." (John 4:34b). To accomplish the work of the Father, Jesus had to learn obedience. Consider Hebrews 5:8-9, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." So James is right, faith (even our Lord's) is made perfect by works. But also note that Jesus' obedience was learned by what He suffered. Submission to God requires that we obey Him even when we do not understand why He asks us to do it, when it is not convenient to do so, and even when it hurts us to do so. Only obeying God when it pleases us, and not obeying when we do not agree with Him is not obedience at all. That is merely doing as we please all the time.

When we find ourselves not obeying God, we must repent and yield to Him again. James wrote: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (James 4:7-10). Peter joined James in this sentiment when he said, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." (1 Peter 5:6-7). Let us long for the approval and exaltation of the Lord rather than making friends with the world, which is enmity with God (James 4:4).

Submission Is Motivated by Love

For our submission to God to find His approval, we must not only obey, but obey from a heart motivated by genuine love and devotion. God has always wanted the hearts of His people. In Proverbs 23:26 He says, "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."

Jesus quoted Isaiah in rebuking the Jews in Matthew 15:7-9 because they honored him "with their lips, but their heart is far from me." When asked what the great commandment of the law was in Matthew 22:36-37, He answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Can we doubt that Jesus thought that obeying God properly requires a heart motivated by love?

Paul also emphasized obeying God from a loving heart. He told the church at Corinth that his actions were constrained or controlled by the love of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14). He wrote to the church at Rome and reminded them of their conversion, saying, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but

ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." (Romans 6:17). He also wrote, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." (Galatians 5:6). Love is what makes our submission honorable and respectful to God.

Submission to God Means Submission to One Another.

Finally, we must understand that acceptable obedience requires that we not only submit to God, but to others as well. Paul instructed the Ephesians that they be "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." (Ephesians 5:21). To the Christian slaves at Ephesus he instructed that they obey their masters, "not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." (Ephesians 6:6). Paul recorded concerning those who "have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." (1 Corinthians 16:15-16)

How dare we appear before God if we have been rebellious to the leaders of His church? We are told to "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17).

Surely, we can see that having a servant's heart and being submissive is at the heart of the Scriptures. We must love God foremost and our brother as ourselves if we will be true to God and His word. May we endeavor to do just that. Let us "humble ourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time: casting all our care upon him; for he careth for us." (1 Peter 5:6-7, adapted).

ISAIAH'S VIEW OF GOD

ISAIAH 6:1-13

Edward E. Dyché

Introduction

We begin this lesson with the purpose at hand and that is to discover Isaiah's view of God. We will find immediately that it is the holiness of God, the majestic nature of God, and the relation of God to that of man, as we will observe in this text. With the theme "Fundamentals of the Faith" before us in this lectureship, we need to be reminded again of the holiness of God. As Peter wrote so long ago: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (living) because it is written, BE YE HOLY; FOR I AM HOLY" (I Peter 1:15-16 KJV)."

The setting of our study is in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isa. 1:1). The time frame is from 790 BC to 695 BC. The sixth chapter begins with the death of Uzziah (739 BC) whose life is recorded more fully in 2 Chronicles 26:1-23. Having lived and served the Lord, his greatest tragedy comes when he enters the temple to burn incense on the altar (2 Chron. 26:16). Why he does this is not recorded (what is recorded is his heart was lilted up), but it brought about the wrath of the priests and God against him. As he was led from the temple he became leprous and remained so for the rest of his life! It is in light of this incident that Isaiah's vision of God will have tremendous meaning for his ministry and for the nation of Israel (here Judah since the division). Thus we begin.

Isaiah Sees the Holiness of God

The scene is heaven! The King of Kings sits on His throne. He is high and lifted up as the Only One of all creation. The majesty of the Holy One is the beginning point of this vision. According to several Psalms we catch a glimpse of this exaltation:

Psalm 9:7 "He hath prepared His throne for judgment."

Psalm 11:4 "The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven."

Psalm 47:8 "God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness."

Psalm 89:14 "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne."

He is high and lifted up, declaring that nothing is above the God of the universe. With these two major views, Isaiah lays before us the Supreme Being

of the Universe. The kings of the earth with all of the authority they seem to possess, are nothing in comparison to the Living God. Uzziah is dead but not the King of Kings!

At this point there is an extension of the majesty of God. Isaiah sees the "train" of God filling the temple. Is the temple heaven or is it the temple in Jerusalem? I would suggest that it is the temple of Jerusalem, and, that being the case, the "train" is significant. It reflects the presence of God in heaven and on earth, especially in the dwelling place of His choosing i.e. here the temple (and if we were to apply it today it would be the church). In Ezekiel 43:6-7 God reveals that the temple is the place of the "soles of His feet" and where he dwells in the midst of His people. Even the earth is His "footstool" (Isa. 66:1, Matt. 5:34-35), indicative of the relation of God to His creation. So, we have here the climax of the first part of this vision - the Lord is Lord of heaven and earth!

The introduction of the "seraphims" is a challenge. The basic word has the meaning of "fiery ones" and is only used here in Isaiah, although the Hebrew word is used five other times to refer to snakes. Num. 21:6, 8, Deut. 8:15, Isa. 14:29, 30:6. Here the "seraphims" are to be seen as either similar to or equated with the "cherubim" used some sixty-four times in the Old Testament. Of the significant uses of "cherubim" would be the garden scene (Gen. 3:24), the mercy seat (Exo.25: 18), and again in Ezekiel's picture of the temple (Eze. 10:1-3, 5, 7-8, 15-16 etc.). With that in mind, what are they above? The King James does not give us an indication but the RSV says "him." That is they are above God as far as the position they are occupying (not to be misunderstood as above "God" Himself). They have to do with the holiness of God, for they cover His eyes, His feet, and by them God moves! There may be a similar concept as we look at the book of Revelation with the "four beasts" (called "living creatures" RSV- Rev. 4:6, 8-9). Above all that, we perceive one thing is certain here: they declare to one another the holiness of God -"holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Isaiah Sees the Justice and Mercy of God

The voice of God must have been heard, for at the sound of it, the "posts of the door moved"; or as the later translations would have it "the foundations of the thresholds shook," indicating the awesomeness of God's presence. That presence was manifested in this shaking and in the smoke that filled the house. This is quite reminiscent with Israel in the wilderness (cloud by day and fire by night, Exo. 13:21), with God when He came into the tabernacle (Exo. 40:38f), and with the temple that Solomon built (I Kings 8:10-11). This experience of God causes Isaiah to see his sinful ways as well as those of Israel. His cry is one of despair, for he is a man of "unclean lips," signifying his sin and the reason for it: "mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

One of the seraphim flies from the altar of burnt incense with a live coal. The cleansing that comes to pass has to be understood in light of the holiness of the materials in the house of God. To touch any of these was to bring about death (remember Uzzah), but in this case it is one of the seraphim who does the touching. Isaiah is not guilty of profaning the temple (as was Uzziah), and thus he is "holy" by means of this "touching." He is now declared to have his "iniquity taken away and thy sin is purged." In all of this we need to be reminded that God gave specific instructions as to who was to handle all that pertained to the tabernacle. Found in numerous places from Exodus (29:37, 3:29; 40:9-10), Leviticus (5:15-16, 6:16-18), to Numbers (4:4, 15, 19-20) we learn that all of this was a matter of HOLINESS as designated by God. According to Ezekiel 44:19 the priests were to change their clothes when coming out to the people lest they "communicate holiness to the people with their garments."

At this point there is a commission from God but who will fulfill it? It is the response of Isaiah out of the cleansing he experienced that his motivation will be to fulfill whatever it is that God would have him do. Some of these experiences are reflected in Psalm 51 (certainly not the background here). There are the understanding of sin (v.3-5), the desire to still be acceptable to God (v.6-12), from which will come a mission to "teach transgressors" (v.13-17), and will end in the blessing of God on Jerusalem (v.18-19). One truly desires to be of service when the understanding and cleansing of sin has taken place! How reminiscent of Paul as he writes in I Timothy 1:12-17!

Isaiah Sees the Sovereignty of God

The message Isaiah is responsible to bring to Israel is a prophetic one. Israel will continue in rebellion and disobedience. Hearing but not understanding, seeing but not perceiving, fatness of heart, ears heavy, closing of the eyes, are all indicative of a people who do not want to hear the truth! Should they desire to turn or be converted, they would find healing. The emphasis, of course, is on what God is going to do, and He declares this to Isaiah! Is this without remedy? Can there be any response on the part of the people? Certainly there can. The pronouncement is given so that Isaiah may realize that his words are not going to produce repentant hearts but hearts of continued disobedience. What is important for us to see is that God reigns as Sovereign! Did not Paul say in Romans that God "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth (Rom. 9:18)"? Surely this is the case here!

Let's observe this briefly in the experience of Pharaoh as recorded in Exo. 5-11. Pharaoh declared that he neither knew the Lord nor would he let Israel go (5:1-2). God said to Moses that He would bring Israel out with a strong hand (6:1). It is not until we come to chapter nine that God declares to Pharaoh "I have made thee to stand, to show thee my power." Now observe some texts with this in mind. Pharaoh hardens his own heart: 7:13, 22, 8:15, 19, 32,

9:35. However, there is also the hardening of his heart by God: 9:12, 10:20, 27, 11:10. Only a Sovereign God can do so. Such a hardening is not arbitrary. Man makes his choices in serving God.

God declares that Israel's lack of seeing, hearing, and fatness of heart is her own doing. Israel could have heeded to the message and repented, but she refused. These verses and the information in them are a recurring theme in the New Testament. Jesus used these words in Matthew 13:10-15 (also Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10, & John 12:39-41) and so did Paul as recorded in Acts 28:26-27. They are important for our understanding. The message for people, be they the people of God or the erring sinner, is to heed the word of God. When refusal manifests itself, there can only be the condemnation of God. This is the application Paul made in his use of Isaiah 6 in Acts 28:26-27! It is an important application.

We conclude with a discussion of the application of the prophetic words of Isaiah and the challenging words of verses 11-13. Isaiah asks how long? Does he mean the length of time before the fulfillment or the length of the fulfillment itself? It seems better to see the words in light of the length of the fulfillment. "Until cities be wasted without inhabitant." etc. The meaning is the hardening will be there until the punishment and discipline of God be accomplished. There will be houses without inhabitant and a desolate land. In addition, the Lord will have removed men far away and with a great forsaking in the land.

Verse 13 provides a special look. It seems to be a conditional statement: "if there be yet a tenth in it (ASV) it shall be "eaten up" (ASV) or "burned again" (RSV). In other words if the RSV is accepted it seems to indicate that if but a tenth would remain even it will be destroyed. This would signify the complete destruction of the city of Jerusalem. The additional comparison is that of the "teil" tree and the oak. The "teil" is really the "terebinth" tree. In Hosea 4:13 Israel was accused of burning "incense" under these two trees among others. How significant this is in light of Uzziah's sin in the temple. Here Israel is compared to these trees as being cut down yet having a stump to remain. The stump is "the holy seed"(RSV) or the "holy seed shall be the substance thereof" (KJV). The meaning of this must relate to the promise of God to preserve a "remnant." The "remnant" theme is a recurring theme in Isaiah as well.

Conclusion

So, we have a magnificent picture of the God of the universe displaying His majesty and His holiness in such a way that Isaiah becomes a changed person. When sin is forgiven, one is ready to be called upon to serve! This was certainly the case with Isaiah, and, hopefully, it is the case with all of us as the people of God. One is reminded of the words Jesus spoke concerning a sinful woman and this very matter: "I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little" (Lk. 7:47). May we

always be ready to speak the word of God to the lost and dying world around us even if we realize the words are falling on "eyes that will not see", "ears that will not hear", and "hearts that are hardened." In the midst of so many, there will be those who will see, hear, and be converted!

BIBLE ANSWERS TO FIVE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Basil Overton

The New Testament epistle named Galatians was written by the apostle Paul to the churches of Christ in Galatia which was a province in what is now known as Turkey. Paul wrote the letter to counteract the bad influence of Judaizing teachers who were trying to bind on the Galatian Christians some of the laws and rituals of the law of Moses.

The following portion of Galatians contains the answers to five of the most important questions that can be asked.

“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

(Galatians 3:22-29.)

Probably many do not think those five questions and the right answers to them are important, but, when considered realistically, no questions are fraught with implications more worthy of our attention. Each of these questions and their Bible answers are inseparably connected with where every accountable person will be in eternity. Those who might not agree with this now will agree with it when they leave this world! Things of the world that seem so important to such people now, will then be as nothing compared to the eternal matters pertaining to these questions and the right answers to them!

Study carefully with me those five questions and their Bible answers.

1. Are we under the law of Moses?

Answer: We are not under the law of Moses, and we never have been under it. Paul was referring to himself and the rest of the Jews when he wrote in verse 24 “the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,” because they were the only ones who were ever under the law of Moses.

The word “schoolmaster” is the translation of Greek “paidagogos.” This word is Anglicized in the word “pedagogue.” It is the combination of Greek “paidos” that means “child,” and the Greek infinitive “agein” that means “to lead.” So, Paul used the word that means “child leader” to illustrate how the law of Moses lead the Jews to Christ. In verse 25 he says, “But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster,” which means they were no longer under the law of Moses. This truth cannot be stated any plainer than Paul stated it. In Galatians 5:4 Paul taught that Christians who try to justify their religious practices by the law of Moses thereby fall from grace!

2. Whom did Paul address in the Galatian epistle?

Answer: They were children of God. This means they were in the church of the Lord which is God’s family. (1 Timothy 3:15; Galatians 1:2.) Nothing is more important than being a child of God! (1 John 3:1-3.) Accountable people are either children of God or children of the devil. It makes no sense to be a child of the devil. He does one harm only! It is altogether sensible to be a child of God. He does one only good!

3. How were those whom Paul addressed children of God?

Answer: They were children of God by faith. (Galatians 3:26.) The Greek text shows that Paul said “by the faith.” This was the faith that Paul preached. (Galatians 1:23.) In many places in the New Testament the faith obviously means the gospel. Some obeyed the faith. (Acts 6:7.) There is one faith, or one gospel. (Ephesians 4:5.) The faith came after the law of Moses was abolished. (Galatians 3:24,25.) How precious is the gospel, or the faith! One cannot be a child of God without it.

4. Where are people children of God by the faith?

Answer: In Christ Jesus! (Galatians 3:26.) In Christ Jesus in the Greek of the text is en Christo Iesou. Christo is in the locative case which means the place where. People are children of God, by the gospel, in Christ Jesus!

5. Why are people children of God by the gospel, or by the faith in Christ Jesus?

Answer: Paul answered that question in the next verse by saying: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Galatians 3:27.) How did the people who were children of God by the gospel in Christ Jesus get into Christ? They were baptized into Christ!

That should settle the question so many ask, which is “Does one have to be baptized to be saved?” One might as well ask “Does one have to be in Christ Jesus to be saved?” “Clothed yourselves” and “have put on” are good

translations of the Greek verb enedusasthe in Galatians 3:27. “Clothed yourselves” is a very literal translation because that Greek verb is a middle voice verb and means the action of the verb is upon the person doing the acting.

Enedusasthe is the second person plural indicative form of the verb enduo. The world renowned authority on Greek words, Mr. Joseph Henry Thayer says of this verb: “In a literal sense to put on, clothe with a garment.” (See Mr. Thayers Greek-English Lexicon, page 214.)

Illustration

In public discussions and in preaching sermons I have often illustrated the truth that Paul expressed in Galatians 3:27 by putting on my coat. After each time I put on the coat, I always said, “I am in the coat, and the coat is on me.” That is what Paul meant. When one is baptized into Christ, he is in Christ, and Christ is on him.

Already My Coat!

Each time I have demonstrated in public discussions the meaning of the word Paul used, preachers have replied by saying, “The coat was already yours before you put it on; and Jesus is already one’s Saviour before he puts him on in baptism.”

Such discussions centered around the doctrine that alien sinners are saved by Christ before and without being baptized in water. The preachers who affirmed this made appeals saying that Christ is one’s Saviour before he puts Him on in baptism. To this appeal, I have always responded with a hearty agreement that Christ is one’s Saviour before his being baptized!

Christ is everybody’s Saviour. He tasted death for every man. (Hebrews 2:9.) He is the Saviour of the whole world. (1 John 2:2.)

After showing that Christ is everybody’s Saviour, then I always stated that even though Christ is everybody’s Saviour, He only saves those who get into him and put him on, or clothe themselves with Him by being baptized.

I always asked the men with whom I engaged in these public discussions this question: “If one owns a coat and never puts it on, of what value would it be to him? I never got a sensible, satisfactory, or scriptural answer to that question! Christ is everyone’s Saviour, but He does not benefit one who does not put Him on.

Why Paul Wrote It

If one reads the context of Paul's statement in Galatians 3:27, he can easily see why he wrote what he did in that verse. He had already affirmed some important truths. He answered some important questions.

Implications

Mr. Henry Thayer commented on the concept of clothing oneself with Christ as follows: "To become so possessed of the mind of Christ as in thought, feeling and action to resemble Him, and, as it were, reproduce the life He lived." (See his Greek-English Lexicon, page 214.) Paul stated the same truth in another way when he wrote to the churches of Christ in Galatia the following. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20.)

Greatest Need

In all our preaching, teaching, and editorializing, we cannot deal with a subject more vital than people clothing themselves with Christ. We deal with many problems and needs in the church. The greatest need of all that are not Christians is their need to clothe themselves with Christ by being baptized into Christ. The greatest need for those who have clothed themselves with Christ is for them to "grow up into him in all things." (Ephesians 4:15.) "In all things" of this text is also translated "in all respects."

A Christian's greatest challenge is the challenge to grow into a better likeness of him with whom he has clothed himself, and to become more and more like Christ in all respects!

Another great need of those who have clothed themselves with Christ is for everyone of them to know how to explain to those who are not Christians how they can clothe themselves with Christ.

PRODUCING CHURCH GROWTH BY TRAINING MEN TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

Emanuel Daugherty

Introduction:

A. I am thankful to Albert Farley, Warren Kenny, the elders and to others on the lectureship committee for the invitation to speak on this **Second Annual West Virginia Christian Lectureship**. It is indeed an honor to appear on such a program where God's word is being lifted up, Christ is exalted, and Christians edified. I believe that the *West Virginia Christian* is sound, practical, and faith-building. The paper, her editor, and writers deserve our diligent support.

B. My subject this hour is Producing Church Growth by Training Men to Preach the Gospel.

1. Everyone wants the church to grow-from the Godhead three to the newest convert, we all understand that the church is designed to grow.

2. In the early church we see 3,000 baptized and the Lord adding daily to the church (2:41, 47)

I. PREACHING IS GOD'S POWER TO SAVE

A. One can never over estimate the power of the pulpit!

"A word in due season, how good is it" (Prov 15:33)

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov 18:21)

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a network or silver" (Prov 25:11)

"The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and life" (Jn 6:63)

"And the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized" (Acts

18:8)

B. The church began with gospel preaching (Acts 2)

"Men and brethren hear these words" (22)

"When they heard this they were pricked in their hearts" (37)

"They that gladly received his word were baptized" (41)

"They continued steadfast in the apostles doctrine..." (42)

"And the Lord added to the church daily" (47)

C. Paul said "It please God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" 1 Cor 1:21

1. Jesus was a preacher (Matt 4:17).
2. John the Baptist was a preacher (Matt 3:1-2).
3. The apostles were preachers along with Timothy, Titus, Silas, Barnabas, etc.
4. The church is propagated from generation to generation by preaching (2 Tim 2:2)
5. The word of God is the seed of the kingdom and it must be sown by preaching (Luke 8:11).
6. Paul said "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel ..." (1 Cor. 9:16)

II. BUT MEN HAVE GIVEN UP ON PREACHING!

A. Many in the Lord's church don't want Bible preaching anymore. What once was considered to be a lofty and noble profession has fallen on hard times.

1. Skits, plays, and drama are in! Preaching is out!
2. Entertainment is in! Bible authority is out!

3. Many want praise directors, but not preachers!
4. In many places it is not a "Thus saith the Lord" that we hear, but what does Andy, Barney, and Aunt Bea have to say.
 - a. Congregation of Lord's people in Dayton, OH; Movie clips of The Matrix and Star Wars being shown in worship on Lord's Day morning. Preacher asks audience, "What does Yoda have to say about this?"
 - b. How far will we go? Baptist preacher in Akron wore his Superman costume to worship and preach!
5. Men want to be youth ministers, golden-age ministers, music ministers, office managers, but not evangelists and preachers of the gospel!
6. Mothers and fathers have given up on preaching. They want their sons to be doctors, lawyers, and Indian chiefs, but not preachers!

C. But the Scriptures still say, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom 10:15).

1. Can we join today with Paul and say "I am debtor ... I am ready ... I am not ashamed"? (Rom 1:14-16).
2. Or has the preaching of the cross lost it's power in our time? (1 Cor 1:18).

III. WHAT THE CHURCH MUST DO

A. It is not what the church can do, but what it must do!

B. Some startling statistics:

J. J. Turner gave the following statistics from 1995: 800 preachers stopped preaching due to death, retirement, ill health, frustration, lack of financial support, etc. All these quit preaching, while only 200 men

entered the ministry via our colleges, universities and schools of preaching (*Uplift*, A Publication of Bear Valley Institute, Vol. 18, Number 4 July/August, 1997).

Harding University in 1989 had 200 men in their Bible majors program but only one (1) said he was going to go into full time pulpit work with a congregation!

Ohio Valley College 1993 had 9 Bible majors who graduated, none went into full-time preaching work. They went into youth ministry, counseling, and music ministry. In an article in *Old Paths*, November 1995, **Don Laughary**, stated that the enrollment at **Oklahoma Christian University** was 1508. Of this number only eighty-two were Bible majors, less than 6% of the university enrollment, and not all of them would be pulpit ministers.

According to **Everett Huffard, Jr.**, Dean of the **Harding Graduate School of Religion**, more than six hundred (600) men are leaving the ministry every year. All of our schools combined are producing less than one half that many per annum, leaving a shortfall of three-hundred (300) per year

Mac Lynn, Editor of the *Directory of the Churches of Christ*, tells us there are 13,000 congregations in the United States and her territories. At present there are a couple of hundred congregations, large and small, seeking preachers who cannot find them. If the current trend continues, forty-four years from now not a single congregation will be able to hire a full time minister. (Last two quotes from Bill McDonough's bulletin).

IV. WHOSE JOB IS IT TO TRAIN PREACHERS?

A. How do we get preachers? Where do preachers come from? Are men born to be preachers? Do they grow on trees?

B. Preachers come from godly, spiritually minded parents who love the Lord and understand that there is more to life than "things."

1. Parents who are concerned with the spiritual welfare of three generations: Theirs, their children's, and their grandchildren's.
 - a. Are you concerned about the church today and how problems developing today are going to affect your life, and that of your children and grandchildren?
 - b. Are you concerned enough to guide your sons and grandsons into preaching the gospel?

C. Preachers come from churches whose elders, preachers, deacons, Bible class teachers and members know that they have a responsibility to get the gospel this generation and the next and are urging and encouraging young men to preach.

D. Preachers come from churches whose elders, preachers, deacons, Bible class teachers and members love God and His Son, His word and His church.

E. Preachers come from churches whose leadership and "followship" take care of the preacher monetarily, with adequate raises commensurate with the wage earners of the local church.

1. Most preachers are still living on wages that border on the poverty level.
2. When young men and their parents know that their congregation is tight-fisted and stingy about paying their preacher and supporting him properly, their sons will not be interested in becoming a preacher.

F. Preachers come from churches and individuals who support schools of preaching who are dedicated to training men to preach the gospel.

1. WVSOP is tuition free. But men coming to us must have adequate help to live and support their families.

V. CHURCH GROWTH COMES WHEN WE DO GOD'S WILL

A. Churches must get back to the God-ordained method of church growth.

1. God's way is by teaching!
2. There are no short-cuts, no 'just-add-water' formulas.

B. Jesus said, "They shall all be taught of God..." (John 8:44-45).

1. The emphasis in the great commission is upon teaching, preaching (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:16; Luke 24:47).
2. The Book of Acts shows that preaching and teaching was done prior to baptism (Acts 2, 8, 18:8; etc.)

C. Preaching, teaching, changing, converting souls, doing the work of an evangelist, and making full proof of one's ministry is hard work.

1. It takes time, patience, Bible skill, speaking skill, people skill, sweat and tears to change men and women of the world in to godly, loving, loveable folks, from sinners to saints!
2. Because it takes such effort, perhaps this is the reason that we get few responses from men as to preaching.
3. When talking to men about attending WVSOP, telling them of the books to read, papers to write, sermons to preach, scriptures to memorize, many lose their interest in coming to our school.

D. Preaching plays a great part in God's plan. If the church is going to grow it is going to have to get away from the Show Business approach and seek again the old paths (Jer 6:16).

1. It is true that preaching and worshiping God in spirit and in truth

is not as exciting and appealing to the fleshly heart of man as is the glamour, lights, sound effects, and glitz of the entertainment world.

2. Our preachers, elders, Bible teachers, etc, need to call men and women, and our youth back to living soberly, righteously and godly in this world (Titus 2:11-12).
3. It is "the good news" that men need and not "the good time"! It is Christ and Him crucified that will save today, as it has in time past.
4. A new gospel for a new age? Please, save me from this ignorance! This has been the cry of shallow-minded people through the ages who are not satisfied with doing God's things God's way.

Conclusion:

A. Some suggestions in closing:

1. Let us think seriously, soberly about the role preaching plays in God's plan.
2. Let us honor and praise our preachers where we honestly can and give them the financial and moral support they need.
3. Let us encourage men to preach - seek out those who have an interest and help them to go to a school where they can be properly trained in the Bible.
4. Let us lift up the hands of those who are presently engaged in soul-saving.
5. Let us restore the church again to its God-given mission which is fulfilled by preaching the gospel.

B. The church will grow with true conversions when we do God's will.

PREACHING CHRIST

Don Cooper

Again I wish to express my appreciation to the elders and preacher of this congregation for inviting me to be one of the speakers during this series of lectures. The theme, "A Plea For The Fundamentals," is one that lends itself well to the needs of the church in the 21st century. My subject, "Preaching Christ," represents the challenge to all who would serve the Lord. In one sense all Christians are to preach Christ. But, I presumed that the brethren who planned these lectures had in mind those of us who publicly proclaim the gospel, so that is the approach I have chosen to take.

First and foremost, I want to say that preaching is serious business, and one who isn't willing to acknowledge that fact should not be preaching. Souls are literally saved or lost, depending on what one preaches. The apostle Paul took great pride in a young evangelist by the name of Timothy and gave him sound advice that would make him useful to man and God. In 1 Timothy 4:16 Paul wrote, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee." The responsibility that rests on the shoulders of one who desires to preach is awesome. The preacher is responsible for the souls of others as well as his own. Those of us who enter the pulpit on a regular basis must never lose sight of the purpose for mounting the pulpit. We have a tremendous obligation to man and God. Souls will spend eternity in heaven or in hell. Much depends on what kind of preaching they are exposed to and, of course, on their willingness to obey the truth when it is preached.

It may seem almost elementary to some that we would be examining the subject that we are. However, in looking around the brotherhood and listening to some preaching (???) that is being done, I think the brethren here are wise in assigning the topics they have.

A few years ago, in a church bulletin, a certain preacher announced his resignation to the congregation, explaining that he intended to enroll in one of our Universities and prepare himself to preach in the 21st century. I have no idea what he meant by that statement, but wondered at the time what he had been preaching all those years. If he had been "preaching Christ," why would he need to change? Christ does not change, His message does not change (Hebrews 13:8).

We who preach would do well to imitate the apostle Paul who declared to the brethren at Corinth, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him

crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1,2). The gospel preacher must preach Christ. But, what do we mean when we say "preach Christ"? What did Paul mean? When Philip "went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them" (Acts 8:5), what did he preach? What did Paul mean when he described himself as one devoted to preaching "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8)?

Basic to "preaching Christ" is preaching what Christ wants preached. Clearly, He wants the gospel preached (Mark 16:15). What is involved in fulfilling this command? Again, may I direct you to the apostle Paul, who wrote, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The one who feels embarrassed to preach the first principles of the gospel of Christ has lost his sense of mission in preaching.

The central chapter of the Bible (Acts 2) gives us an example of scriptural preaching, beginning at Pentecost. We have the first gospel sermon being preached after the resurrection of Christ by the apostle Peter. The audience was comprised of those who were guilty of the blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Not far into the sermon they became "pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Thank goodness they were not asking some who preach in our day and age. Peter knew the answer to their needs, and he wasn't hesitant in his reply. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin... (vs 38). Peter, and the rest of the apostles, had preached Christ (vss 21-36). The result was the salvation of about 3,000 souls (vs 41), and the establishing of the New Testament church (vs 47).

That same pattern is oft repeated in the book of Acts. As mentioned previously, Philip went to Samaria to preach Christ, and with great success (Acts 8:5,6). Later on in the same chapter we find the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. This is one of the simplest examples of New Testament conversions we have recorded for us by Luke. The man was religious, but he was not a Christian. How do we know this? Because, even though he had been to Jerusalem to worship (vs 27), and was reading from the scriptures as he rode toward home (vs 28), he didn't understand the words of Isaiah, the prophet whose writings he was reading. At this point Philip joins him and asks a very bold question: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (vs 30). The eunuch humbly admitted that he did not understand, nor would he understand until someone explained it to him. He invited Philip into the chariot. Philip seized the opportunity and "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (vs 35). The result? Conversion to Christ! The eunuch was baptized after learning about Christ and making the good con-

fession, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (vss 36-39). What did Philip preach when he "preached unto him Jesus"? I submit to you that he preached the same thing that was preached at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, and the same thing he preached in Samaria, and the same thing that Paul later preached at Corinth. Obviously, he taught the eunuch about the miraculous birth of God's Son, His personal ministry, His death, burial, resurrection and ascension. Though his sermon is not recorded in its entirety, we can rightly conclude from the eunuch's response that this, indeed, was included in Philip's preaching.

I repeat, "preaching Christ requires that we preach what He wants us to preach, not always what man wants to hear. May we look again at some advice from the old soldier of the cross (Paul), given to the young evangelist, Timothy. Paul's life was nearly over (2 Timothy 4:6-8) when he declared to his son in the faith, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word.... (vss 1,2). Paul further cautioned Timothy that there would be times in which this would be a difficult task, that his message would not always be welcomed (vss 3,4). But, Timothy was to preach the word under all circumstances, good or bad, "in season, out of season" (vs 2). It's easy to preach Christ when the "picking is ripe." But, not so easy when you are facing a hostile audience like the one Stephen faced (Acts 7). Or, like Peter and John faced (Acts 4). How many preachers do you know who have faced trials like Paul, and served time in prison like he and Silas (Acts 16). Yet, as you study their lives and their preaching you come to greatly appreciate what it means to "preach Christ and him crucified" even if it means being beaten, imprisoned or otherwise mistreated (Acts 16:16-31). Did Paul resent being treated meanly? No, he thanked God that he was considered worthy to suffer for Christ. Read his epistle to the Philippians, and you will see evidence of this. And, a favorite passage of scripture, Galatians 2:20, one which we sometimes put to music, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

The only regret that Paul ever disclosed was concerning some brethren who preached falsehood, a perverted gospel, which resulted in some departing from the faith. And, Paul strongly warned with these words, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). Even a second time did he issue the same warning (vs 9). Therefore, we ought to realize the solemn responsibility that is ours when we get up to preach.

The prophet of old, Ezekiel, warned that the blood of sinners is on the hands of one who does not warn him (Ezekiel 33:8).

"Preaching Christ" has its rewards, here and hereafter. No greater joy is there on earth than being instrumental in leading a soul to Christ or seeing a brother or sister restored to the Lord after a period of living apart from Him and the saints. However, there are times of disappointment and despair in the life of the one who preaches the gospel. The preacher's heart is often heavy because his efforts seemingly fail to move sinners to repent and come to the Lord. But, we must remember that we are not accountable for those who refuse to obey the gospel. We are commanded to "preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15). Those to whom we preach are commanded to believe and obey the gospel (vs 16).

Above all, don't become ashamed of your calling, but echo the words of the apostle Paul, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

A word of advice to those who are just now starting out to preach: Don't consider your work as an evangelist as a "career" per se. And, don't allow yourself to become a mere "professional" preacher. The church is burdened down already with too many of these. "Preaching Christ" is our vocation. Walk worthy of it (Ephesians 4:1). Don't allow man to dictate to you what to preach or when to preach it. God's word is our book of instruction, given by holy men as they were guided by the Holy Spirit. Take seriously your charge as an evangelist and "be faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10). Preaching will provide for you what no other work can offer.

Let us close with Romans 10:13-15, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring good tidings of good things!"

May God's richest blessings come to those who are "preaching Christ."

GOD NEVER PROMISED A BED OF ROSES

Margie Overton

Introduction

God never told us to follow him so we would have a life of ease.

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4.)

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” (Matthew 5:10-12.)

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” (James 1:2,3.)

There Are Many Reasons Why Men Suffer

1. Sometimes we suffer because of our own sins. David and Bethsheba suffered because of their sin. The child died. (2 Samuel 11:2-12:1-23.)

2. Sometimes we suffer because of the sins of others. Our children do things that they shouldn’t do. Sometimes those we have confidence in betray us.

3. We should not blame God for the bad things that happen. But whatever happens we should depend on God to see us through the valleys.

Remember Hebrews 13:5,6, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, (with good courage) the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” “...I will be with you always, even to the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:19,20.) We must build on the Rock. (Matthew 7:24-27.) The rains descended, floods came, winds blew. We need to fortify our lives.

Suffering Can Be A Blessing If We React As God’s Children

The consequences of suffering depends upon how the sufferer reacts to it. Suffering drives some away from God into discouragement and despair. But, it is also possible for suffering to cause the sufferer to turn to God. If one does not react properly, suffering can result in terrible spiritual and psychological scars. But if one does react as a Christian should, suffering can be the source of wonderful blessings.

I know what suffering is. I have gotten over many hurdles. I could not have done this on my own – but with God’s help, and Basil’s, and a stable family, also my church family, I knew I could hold on.

1. Suffering helps the sufferer to know himself.

One of the most vital needs of man, is to know himself. The Psalmist, David, prayed in these words. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23,24.)

The apostle Peter, before he was actually involved in the severe test (which he failed) viewed himself as a tower of strength. (Read Matthew 26:31-35.) But the actual testing introduced Peter to himself. He found that rather than being strong, he was weak. He denied the Lord three times. (Matthew 26:69-74.)

Paul suffered. (See 2 Corinthians 11:21-33.)

2. Suffering helps the sufferer to attain a proper set of values.

It is easier for a man in the midst of great suffering to see what is really important and what is not so important.

A man with good health may think, "Wealth, popularity, position, and pleasure are the most important things in life. He must have these things. He will work long hours in order to have them." Some may even miss worship to make money to buy things. But to a man who realizes he may be dying, there is little appeal to wealth, pleasure, etc. Those things fade away into oblivion. Then we will ask, am I prepared to meet my Maker? The treasures we have laid up in heaven will be our utmost concern.

3. Suffering helps the sufferer to be thankful for his blessings.

A lot of people seem to take for granted the wonderful blessings what they have, such as, a loving husband, children, brethren in Christ, and all the many, many physical blessings: the rain, sunshine, air, water, a roof over our heads, food, clothes, etc.

What a wonderful privilege and great blessing prayer is. And isn't it a wonderful privilege to be able to worship? If you doubt this, just ask the faithful Christian who is unable to go to worship because of illness.

4. When properly reacted to, suffering helps the sufferer to avoid self-pity.

This may seem paradoxical, but even from those in the midst of severe suffering, it is usually not very far to others whose suffering is even more severe.

You may have heard, "I complained because I had no shoes, until I saw a man who had no feet."

Whatever happens to you, and believe me "things" will happen, please try to use it as a stepping stone to a higher plain. Try focusing on someone that really needs your encouragement. You will be helping that person, but I guarantee it

will help you even more. That is what I did after the death of my beloved son Timothy.

Being truly concerned for and praying for the welfare of others serves as a guard against self-pity. Both gratitude and self-pity cannot fill the heart at the same time.

Lean on Christian friends. Share your hurts with them. They really care.

5. Suffering helps the sufferer to see the value of prayer.

When one is enjoying good health and is prospering financially, it is easy to drift away from a dependence on God.

We have examples in the Bible, men such as Manasseh and others. Read 2 Chronicles 33:10-13. Israel's unfaithfulness – Malachi 3:7-10.

6. Suffering helps the sufferer to understand what a blessing it is not to be able to see what the future holds.

Some burdens of life would be more than one could stand, like, if we had full knowledge of the future. But each person is given his own load of life one day at a time, and we must learn to carry only the load of each day as it comes, trusting in the Lord not to allow us to have thrust upon us more than we can bear. I have no yesterday, God took it away. I may not have tomorrow, but I do have today.

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13.)

7. Suffering helps the sufferer to better understand the Fatherhood of God.

The relationship of God to Christians is that of a Father and children. Jesus emphasized this relationship. (Matthew 7:7-11.)

He taught that if earthly fathers, who are subject to lust, greed, selfishness, and malice, know how to give good things to their children, how much more can the Heavenly Father give good things to his children. (See Psalm 103.)

Malachi 3:10 says, “... prove me now herewith saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

8. Suffering helps the sufferer to better understand his love for others.

Most husbands love their wives and likewise the wife the husband. Parents love their children. And we love our brothers in Christ, also our friends.

But acute adversity, and especially such suffering that causes one to face the possibility that through death he will have to leave the loved ones, helps him to

understand his love for them better. If you were asked, “What would you fear most in death?” What would you say?

9. Suffering helps the sufferer to overlook the faults and see the good in those whom he loves.

We all have faults, weaknesses and shortcomings.

Suffering helps a person to see this fact, better than it could be seen otherwise.

Because of this, the one who suffers comes to minimize those shortcomings and to emphasize and dwell upon the good in their lives.

This is not to say that we condone their sins. (Matthew 5:43-48.)

10. Suffering helps one to better understand the value of a kind word.

When a person is hurting, he will appreciate every kind word or kind deed. With what tenderness and thanksgiving the sufferer remembers the person who spoke a kind word to him or who said “I’m praying for you.” Just being there will let them know you care.

11. Suffering helps one to see that the darkest hours may precede those which are brightest.

Someone has well said that cowards die a thousand deaths before they really die. Men of great faith and courage “die but once.”

While those of little faith and courage often give up in despair when, without realizing it, they were on the verge of victory. And some people of utter despair, have taken their own lives, when, if they had just had the faith to hold on a little longer, the darkness of despair would have vanished with the brightness of better things to come.

The story is told of a man who, on an intensely cold, dark night during which a blizzard was howling through deep drifts of snow with a driving, bone chilling north wind, finally, after looking and looking for some kind of shelter, in despair and discouragement, sank to the snow covered ground and drifted into sleep. The next morning a farmer opened his door and saw the man’s outstretched fingers, now frozen in death only a few feet from the door through which he would have found warmth, food and continued life – only if he had traveled two feet farther! He gave up a few seconds too soon. (Revelation 2:10.)

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Proverbs 3:5.)

12. Suffering helps the sufferer to realize that some “mountain heights” can be reached only by going through the valley which is in front of the mountain.

Paul taught that some spiritual heights are reached by way of the valley of affliction and tears. (Read 2 Corinthians 4:17,18.) Moses plainly taught the children of Israel that their affliction would cause them to return to God. (Deuteronomy 4:40.)

Affliction causes many to desire intensely to know the word of God. The Psalmist, David said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." (Psalm 119:71.)

Instead of reacting in bitterness against God (as some have done), each sufferer should recognize that because of suffering he may be richly blessed.

Remember Job who suffered. His wife said, "...curse God and die!" (Job 2:9,10.)

Job said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." (Job 13:15.)

Brother Adron Doran in his article "I'll Never Forsake The Lord" which appeared in the March 1999 issue of The World Evangelist said, "Most of us in time of deep sorrow, severe illness, economic reverse, and major surgery find ourselves drawing closer to the Lord and asking Him to draw nigh unto us."

Remember God Has Not Promised A Bed Of Roses

We do have a lot of roses along with the thorns of life. If everything were roses we would not know how to appreciate it. We would take all the good for granted.

We tend to take good health for granted. It sometimes takes a major illness to wake us up.

"Into each life some rain must fall." I heard that quoted, then the person said, "but too much has fallen into mine." How can we know how much is too much?

Let us be thankful for all the good things (the roses) that God has given to us. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17.)

Work hard doing whatever you can to help and encourage others. As Churchill said, "Never, never, never, never, never give up."

Remember "A Christian is like a teabag – not worth much until he has been through some hot water."

"Obstacles are those terrifying things we see when we take our eyes off the goal."

Those of us who are older should work at helping those who are young and immature.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

Basil Overton

Thomas and Jane Corneigle Campbell had several children. The most famous was Alexander who was born in County Antrim in Northern Ireland. His birth date is controversial. Some say it was September 12, 1788. He was raised on a farm. Many a preacher came from the plough!

The principle reason for knowing about and studying Alexander Campbell is the bearing this knowledge has on our attitude toward and our appreciation of the Restoration Plea and the work he did in pleading for the New Testament order of things.

Studying great preachers is profitable. Preachers that care not about studying great preachers will not likely become great preachers. I heard someone say that the reason modern astronomers see farther into space than their predecessors is because modern astronomers “stand on the shoulders of giants.”

Naturally, Alexander Campbell had faults. He made mistakes. Despite these he did many works and preached and published many things which we need to stress.

Alexander said his parents taught him great respect for the Bible and encouraged him to memorize much of that blessed Book.

The Religious Conditions In America When The Campbells Came

The Campbells came to America when it was emerging as a nation. When they came, the population of the new nation was approximately seven million. The new republic was strongly religiously oriented. An overwhelming majority of the population believed in the divine origin of the Bible; they believed in the divine creation of all things by Almighty God as recorded in the Bible; they believed in the existence of heaven and hell as taught in the Bible.

When the Campbells came to America, the Congregationalists and Unitarians were the leading religious groups in New England. In New York, the Dutch Reformed, the Episcopalians, the Baptists, and the Methodists were all strong. In Pennsylvania and New Jersey the Lutherans, Moravians, Quakers, and Episcopalians were all established. In the far South the Baptists, Methodists, and Episcopalians were all numerous. In the west the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians were the leading religious groups. There were many Jews along the Atlantic coast.

The people of America at the time Thomas and Alexander Campbell came to this country generally felt that religion should be encouraged and endorsed by the state. In many states belief in God and the Bible as God's word were necessary to holding public office. A few years before the Campbells came to America, the new nation's constitution was formed. Of that constitution, even Benjamin Franklin, who had little use for what he called "formal religion," wrote,

"I must avow that I have so much faith in the general government of the world by Providence, that I can hardly conceive that a transaction of such momentous importance [as the Constitution] to the welfare of millions now existing should be suffered to pass without being in some degree influenced, guided and governed by that omnipotent, omnipresent and beneficial Ruler, in whom all inferior spirits live, and move and have their being." (Harry J. Carman and Harold C. Syrett, A History Of The American People, page 228.)

Comments On Alexander Campbell By Some Outstanding Men

1. George Prentice, Editor of the Louisville Journal: "His intellect is among the cleanest, richest, profoundest ever vouchsafed to man. Indeed it seems to us that in the faculty of abstract thinking, in the sphere of pure thought, he has few, if any living rivals....He grasps and handles the highest, subtlest, most comprehensive principles as if they were the liveliest impressions of the senses."
2. David Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister of Great Britain: "A very large part of the economic and social principles I am pressing upon the people of England, I obtained from reading the writings of Alexander Campbell."
3. Robert E. Lee, the champion of the lost cause: "He was a man in whom were illustriously combined all the qualities that could adorn or elevate the nature to which he belonged; knowledge the most varied and extended; virtue that never loitered in her career, nor deviated from her course. A man who, if he had been delegated as a representative of his species to one of the many superior worlds, would have suggested a grand idea of the human race."
4. President James Madison: "It was my pleasure to hear him very often as a preacher of the gospel, and I regard him as the ablest and most original expounder of the scriptures I have ever heard."

Other Important Matters

Alexander married John Brown's daughter, Margaret, March 12, 1811. John Brown was a wealthy business man at Bethany (then in Virginia). His home was called a mansion because it had glass in its windows. That was a rare luxury in that wilderness land. "The mansion" later became the home of Alexander and Margaret. Several additions were made to the house. It has been a tourist attraction many years.

Margaret died when she was very young. Alexander married Selina Bakewell. By his two wives he had 14 children. He not only buried Margaret, he also buried nine or ten of the 14 children. I know of no preacher of the gospel who suffered more grief than Alexander Campbell. He was indeed a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief!

My Margie and I have four children. Three are living. The firstborn, our beloved Timothy, died at age 26. He would now be 54. Naturally we have endured great grief even though he died in the Lord. We cannot imagine the grief of burying nine or ten children that were ours!

How Alexander's Knowledge Of Koine Greek Blessed Him And Others!

The Christian Association of Washington, which Thomas Campbell and others organized in 1809, became "The Brush Run Church" May 11, 1811.

After Alexander and Margaret's first child, Jane, was born March 13, 1812, Alexander studied the Greek New Testament to determine whether or not baby Jane should be sprinkled. He not only learned that little Jane should not be sprinkled, he also learned he should be immersed. He got a Baptist preacher Matthias Luce to immerse him. Before long nearly all in the Brush Run Church were immersed.

Before coming to America, Alexander studied in Glasgow University under Dr. Young in Greek; Dr. Jardin in Logic; and Dr. Ure in Philosophy and Physics. Ure and Jardin had taught his father 25 years before. Alexander's knowledge of Koine Greek (New Testament Greek) was a great blessing indeed for him and his family and others!

Alexander's Preaching

Alexander preached some for two to three years before he was immersed. His first time to preach was a brief talk he made in Jacob Donaldson's house in the Spring of 1810. His first full sermon he presented in a grove on Major Templeton's farm eight miles from Washington, PA July 15, 1810. His text was Matthew 7:24-27. There is an outline of it in Dr. Robert Richardson's classic

book entitled *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*. There are two volumes of this work and my copy has both volumes bound as one. This great work contains many other items regarding Alexander's preaching before he was immersed.

After his immersion, Alexander's preaching was more and more effective and far reaching. He confronted head on a world of ignorance and confusion regarding the scriptural and inseparable connection of preaching the gospel of Christ and the kind of obedient faith that saves people from their sins! He believed that preaching was at a very low level in the new nation of America! He contended not for creeds of men as the source for preaching, but the word of God in the Bible!

Brother Campbell labored long and hard in his preaching to show the vast gulf between saving faith and foolish frenzy, and that denominational schisms and sects have no place in the one body of Christ which is his church. (Colossians 1:18; 3:15.)

Arminians and Calvinists had generated the widespread concept that faith was a mysterious matter not connected with plain gospel preaching, but they taught that it was shrouded in "a mysterious direct operation of the Holy Ghost!"

Much of the preaching on the American Frontier was identified as inducing "emotional orgies" that were attributed to great "outpourings of the Holy Ghost!" Screaming, jerking, shaking, swooning, laughing, and shouting were wide spread practices among about all groups except the Episcopalians. Alexander Campbell said it was "their good breeding" that restrained them from these emotional demonstrations, and outbreaks, not their knowledge of the Bible!

All of these ridiculous orgies which were attributed to the power of the Holy Ghost, afforded Deists and Skeptics an abundance of "bombastic artillery" against "revealed religion." They charged that Christianity was founded on ignorance and superstition.

Like a giant, Alexander Campbell stood in a valley between the hill of the perversions, errors, and emotional orgies of religion on one side, and the hill of infidelity, skepticism and atheism on the other side and wielded skillfully the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17) against both hills!

The major task of the "Sage of Bethany," as Campbell has been called, was to shed all the light of holy truth that he could through the clouds of religious mystery and frenzy, until faith could be seen, not as the product of foolish emotional upsurges, but instead as a sane and sensible and rational belief in the credible testimony given by the Holy Spirit guided writers of the Bible. On

this matter there is no indication that the Sage of Bethany ever wavered! He was accused of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost for preaching that the Holy Ghost by direct action apart from the Bible did not cause people to jump, and jerk and squall and scream, and did not thus save them from their sins. Instead, Campbell preached that the Holy Ghost operates in converting sinners and in consoling saints by their believing and following what the Holy Ghost guided the writers of the Bible to write. Brother Campbell said where that word of God does not go, people do not have Spiritual ideas. (See Campbell's *Millennial Harbinger*, Volume VI, pages 355, 356.)

Brother Campbell's feelings about the Bible are well summarized in the following by him in his book on Baptism. He said, if the Bible is not true,

"There is not a credible history in the world, because no history possesses so great a number or variety of the attributes of truth or reasons of faith as the gospel history....(The writers of the Bible) had nothing to gain, but everything temporal to lose by the proclamation of these facts. They made themselves of all men the most miserable.... Their life, if their doctrine be not true is more marvelous than their doctrine: no men ever gave stronger evidence of truthfulness than they. If they cannot be believed, no historian can. There is then no credible history in the world. (If the Bible is not true!)

"If the Bible is not true, there is no connection between goodness and truth... The reason is obvious --- The Bible is either true or false. If false, those who believe it believe a lie. But that lie has done more to civilize, refine, purify, and adorn human nature, than all the atheism, infidelity, and philosophy of Egypt, Chaldea, Greece, and Rome. Surely then the Christian lie is better than all the philosophic truth of all ages of all nations. Hence we infer that if the Bible be false, error and fraud work better for mankind than honesty and truth!"

Time and space do not allow me to present many other important matters about Alexander Campbell, including his five major debates, the two journals he produced and edited, and his founding Bethany College and guiding it where he trained many preachers.

CHRIST IN HEBREWS

James E. Farley

The book we call “Hebrews” is one that is written to Christians who had been converted from Judaism. It is obvious that the author understood that his readers were people who had a good handle on the Old Testament. These Christians were in danger, and there is, therefore, a real sense of urgency throughout the book of Hebrews. The danger they were in concerned their souls’ salvation. They were drifting from faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and were drifting back into the Jewish system from which they were first converted. (Hebrews 2:1-4).

The reason for the letter is to admonish and encourage these drifting Christians to stand fast in their faith in Jesus as the Christ. Hence we see the theme of the book is “JESUS IS BETTER.” The writer of the book (God is its author) strongly makes this point at the very beginning of the letter. (Hebrews 1:1-4). Jesus as the Christ is a central theme, therefore, throughout Hebrews.

Jesus Christ The Creator And Sustainer Of The Universe

The writer’s unwritten question throughout the book is “WHY?” ... “Why do you want to reject Jesus. He is GOD! He is the CREATOR and SUSTAINER of all that exists.” The Hebrew writer rebukes and reproves these Christians strongly, and admonishes and exhorts them lovingly not to harden their hearts to their Creator ... not to depart from the living God. (Hebrews 3:12-13).

God spoke in times past through the prophets, he tells them, and He did this in various ways. However, today He speaks through His Son, Jesus Christ, who is, in fact, the very image of God; the Creator and Sustainer of all there is. (Hebrews 1:1-4).

Isaiah had prophesied that a child would be born to a virgin, and that He would be called “Immanuel”. (Isaiah 7:14). Then we read in Matthew 1:21-23, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

The second person of the God-head, the eternal Word (*logos*) “... was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14). John said of Him,

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” (John 1:1-3).

The Hebrew writer, therefore, begins with this strong point. “...by whom also he (God) made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power...” (Hebrews 1:1-4). Jesus is God...the Creator...the Sustainer... (Compare Hebrews 1:8).

Jesus Christ is Better

Better Than The Prophets & The Angels

These people were leaving their Savior. The writer urgently reminds them of Jesus’ superiority to those things contained under the Jewish economy. He does this by contrasting Jesus with the prophets and angels of the Old Testament dispensation. God spoke through the prophets during that past time, but now speaks through THE PROPHET (Acts 3:22-23; Hebrews 1:1-4).

Angels played an important part in bringing about the Law of Moses. Stephen reminded the Jews that they had “...received the law by the disposition of angels...” and did not keep it. (Acts 7:53). Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia and said that the law of Moses had a real purpose. “It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” (Galatians 3:19). The Jewish people rightly held angels, those special messengers of God, in very high esteem. The Hebrew writer tells these Jewish Christians that Jesus is better than the angels, though He was made “...a little lower than the angels” for a time, so that He might be crowned with glory and honor through the suffering of death for every man. (Hebrews 1:4 – 2:18).

The argument he uses to establish Christ’s superiority over angels is an argument from silence. He says that Jesus has “...obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?” (Hebrews 1:4-5). The obvious answer to those questions is, “He didn’t say it to any angel.” Therefore Jesus is better than the angels for the Father DID say it to Jesus!

Better Than The Great Law Giver Moses

There is no question that Moses was special and a great deliverer and law giver. He had been God’s spokesman under that dispensation. (Acts 3:22-23). It is even said that he had spoken to God “face to face” (Exodus 33:11). The

law was given through Moses. (John 1:17). In fact, this law of God is referred to in the Bible also as “the law of Moses” (Luke 2:22-23).

Oh yes, Moses was certainly great, and the “law of Moses” was glorious while it was in force! (2 Corinthians 3). However, even Moses understood that there was another Prophet that was to come on the scene. (Acts 3:22-23). He realized that there was Someone and something to come after his dispensation. He may not have been totally clear about all the details, but he did understand.

The law of Moses was given to the Jews. (Deuteronomy 5:1-5). Jesus said that He had come to “fulfill” the law and the prophets and that the smallest part of that law would not be destroyed “till all be fulfilled.” (Matthew 5:17-18). The law and prophets were fulfilled completely when Jesus came, died on the cross, was buried, and was raised from the grave by the power of the Father! “All” of it was fulfilled then! (Luke 18:31; John 4:34; John 5:36; John 17:4; John 19:30; Luke 24:44-48). The Hebrew writer quotes from the Psalms and attributes the quote to Christ. Hebrews 10:9 reads, “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” (Compare this with John 4:34). Yes, He fulfilled the law and the prophets; He is “...the author and finisher of our faith...” (Hebrews 12:2).

Galatians 3:16-26 reveals clearly that the law that was given through Moses was only to be a temporary law. It was to last “...till the seed should come to whom the promise was made...” (vs. 19). The “seed” is identified in verse 16, “...He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Therefore, the law of Moses was to last only until Christ came. Paul refers to it as a “schoolmaster” and then says, “...we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” (Galatians 3:23-25). In fact, he is even more adamant concerning this point as he writes to the Galatians. He tells them that if they attempt to be “...justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” (Galatians 5:4). Indeed, the law of Moses was “nailed to the cross” (Colossians 2:14). Today men are “dead to” the law (separated from the law) so that they can be married to Christ. (Romans 7:1-4).

Therefore the Hebrew writer tells these drifting ones that Jesus is better than Moses and that His law is a better law! He says Moses was faithful as a servant in God’s house, but Jesus owns the house! (Hebrews 3:1-6). He is therefore “...counted worthy of more glory than Moses...” (vs 3).

While the law of Moses was for the Jews, Jesus’ law (the “perfect law of liberty” – James 1:25) is for all men (Galatians 3:26-26). It is the means whereby all men can become heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:14-17).

Better Rest Provider Than Joshua

Hebrews 4:8 reads in the King James Version, “For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.” The obvious meaning here is “Joshua”. The context makes no sense unless this is so. The names “Jesus” and “Joshua” are the same name and mean “savior or deliverer”. Remember Matthew 1:21.

The writer to the Hebrews reminds his readers that the rest Joshua led the people into in the land of Canaan was only temporary. If this is not so, he says, then why did God speak of another rest after the children had come into the land of Canaan? (Look at the context of Hebrews 4:1-9). The conclusion he rightly comes to is “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” (vs 9). He further establishes the fact that Jesus is the one who will give this rest in heaven! (Hebrews 4:1, 9, 11). Those who “die in the Lord” (Revelation 14:13), rest from their labors!

Better High Priest Than Aaron

Moses’ brother, Aaron, was the first high priest of Israel. The people went through the priests, through the high priest, to God. The priests of the Old Testament system were just men, and were therefore imperfect. They had to offer sacrifices for themselves as well as for the people. But Jesus is a priest who offered up himself; He offered His own blood and not that of bulls and goats. (Hebrews 7:27-28; 9:12-14; 10:1-4).

It is true, and the writer of the letter to the Hebrews knew his readers would know the truth of it, that Jesus could not be a priest under that Old Testament system. (Hebrews 8:1-6). In order to be a priest under the Mosaic system one had to be born in the tribe of Levi, for this is the tribe God specified as the priestly tribe. So, Jesus (from the tribe of Judah) could not be a priest under that system and law. Therefore the law had to be changed. (Hebrews 7:11-17). The old law of Moses is passed away, and Jesus is our high priest now. He will not die as the Old Testament priests died, but He went into the “holy of holies” and sat down. He “ever lives to make intercession” for us. (Hebrews 7:25). We have this “... great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God ...” Since this is true, “... let us hold fast our profession ...” (Hebrews 4:14-16). He is one through whom we may draw nigh unto God. (Hebrews 10:21-23).

Jesus Christ The Same Yesterday, and Today, and Forever

Jesus Christ is the great and wonderful “changeless one”! (Hebrews 13:8). The writer wanted his readers to understand that as Jehovah had taken care of those in the past, he would certainly take care of them if they would but humble themselves under His mighty hand. (I Peter 5:6-7). He had listed the

great “honor roll of faith” in Hebrews chapter 11. These faithful ones, even though they had to endure hardships on the earth, and even though some of them had to die for the Cause, were rewarded by a faithful God! At Hebrews 12:1ff he writes about this “... great cloud of witnesses ...” that can give us encouragement and help us as we run the race. He tells his readers to look to the goal ... set your eye on “... Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ...” who endured and overcame the cross, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 2:2; Revelation 3:21-22). This changeless God will take care of His children! He will do what He says He will do. He cannot lie, and he has promised eternal life. (Titus 1:2).

He is changeless because He is God. “For I, Jehovah, change not” (Malachi 3:5). “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth, and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” (Psalm 90:1-2). “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last...” (Revelation 1:11). God is changeless for He is eternal. As brother Otis Gatewood once wrote, “God is the great, uncaused, original.”

This is a wonderful thought for us who live in an ever changing world. It seems that sometimes we are in a whirlwind of change. We grow older and more feeble. Our friends and our loved ones become sick and die. We lose some to terrible accidents. The wealth of this world is fleeting and uncertain. Nations rise and fall. Politicians lie to each other and to us. And, as the poet said, “...then the changeless Christ shines as the pole star in a firmament of darkness, an unchanging hope in a sea of troubles.” It is indeed wonderful to know that we can “...hold to God’s unchanging hand.”

Though He changes not, the law has indeed changed. (Hebrews 7:11-12). We need to make this point yet again here. However, his New Testament, this new system He has delivered to us, is also changeless. The gospel of Christ is the same today as it was 2000 years ago.

Burton Coffman wrote concerning Hebrews 13:8 with the following, “How fortunate, then, are Christians who may find amidst the ‘wreck of atoms and the crush of worlds’ the changeless and invariable glory of the Son of God! His throne is eternal; he was present, and a participant, in creation itself. The heavens are the work of his hands; they can, and will, perish; but he changes not. They shall wear out like an old garment, and he shall change them and roll them up; but in the words of this author in 1:12, concerning Christ, ‘Thou are the same, and thy years shall not fail.’”

Conclusion

There is the possibility of apostasy. The Bible is clear that Christians can fall from grace. The entire book of Hebrews is dedicated to this point in

admonishing those drifting ones to repent and stay true. We can and must “take heed lest we fall” (I Corinthians 10:12). We can and must be faithful to the Lord. “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” (Hebrews 10:38-39).

HOW TO BUILD INTEREST IN READING & BOOK REVIEW

David Kenney

When asked how to build interest in reading some say “you either have it or you do not”; however, this fails to consider that our tastes and habits change with time and effort. It may seem odd, but books can be a great source of encouragement. For example, J.W. McGarvey wrote Lands of the Bible based on his visit to the Holy Land in 1879. Before he went on his journey he spent time with his books as if they were friends. Guy N. Woods related this incident and agreed that relationships grow between books and those who treasure them.¹

While it is important to study the Bible, it is also important to realize that there are many books available to enrich our understanding. Dr. T.W. Brents, who wrote The Gospel Plan of Salvation, once stated “If you will show us a man who reads nothing but the Bible, we will show you one who reads and understands very little of that.”² Let’s look at how to build interest in reading from two points of view. First, by building interest in reading in ourselves then in others.

Building Interest in Ourselves

The fundamental principle to remember is that you cannot build interest in others if you are not interested yourself. One lesson I learned was that once I started to gather information about religious books, my interest in them grew exponentially. The first step is to commit to cultivate an interest in reading religious books to improve your knowledge of the Bible. The second step is to dedicate time to reading. One of the most avid readers I know is Winford Claiborne who was my professor for General Epistles at FHU and also a friend. When answering the question “Where can I find time to read?” he replied, “You cannot find it; you have to make it.”³ If you cannot clear any time, consider getting up earlier. Your mind will less likely be full of things that will break your concentration. These are some suggestions to build interest in reading.

Spend Time With Those Who Love to Read. I am thankful for those who are avid readers; two in particular are Steve Miller and Annette Kenney. Steve and I would shop for books all over Ohio and compare each other’s treasured finds. Annette, my wife, makes it easy to read because she cannot help but read. If she has one free moment, you can be sure she is reading something.

¹ Guy N. Woods, Questions & Answers, Vol. 1, 1976, pp. 327-328.

² As quoted by Wayne Jackson, A Study Guide to Greater Bible Knowledge, 1986, p. 83.

³ Winford Claiborne, “Read Any Good Books Lately?” Manuscript, p. 8.

This makes it easier to schedule time to read and enjoy the company of one with the same interest.

Read Biographies. Biographies can be a good source of information and inspiration about great people and events. For example, if one wanted to learn more about the Restoration Movement, I would suggest The Fool of God, a novel based on the life of Alexander Campbell. When I finished reading it, my interest in his life was renewed. Before long I was reading everything I could find on Restoration History.

Read Opposing Works. Sometimes the quickest way to build interest is to read from those on the opposite side of an issue. This should rally us to study the matter further. One great source of building interest along this line is reading public religious debates. Prior to 1820, Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone shared negative sentiments about debates. Campbell's attitude changed due to being persuaded to debate John Walker, a Presbyterian, on the issue of baptism at Mount Pleasant, Ohio, on June 19-20, 1820. After the debate Campbell offered a challenge to debate anyone on the subject of infant baptism. W. L. McCalla, Presbyterian from Kentucky, accepted this challenge, in May 1823. After these two debates, Campbell wrote:

There are not a few who deprecate religious controversy as an evil of no small magnitude. But these are either ill-informed, or those conscious that their principles will not bear investigation. So long as there is good and evil, truth and error in this world, so long will there be opposition; for it is in the nature of good and evil, of truth and error, to oppose each other. We cheerfully confess that it is much to be regretted that controversy amongst Christians should exist; but it is more to be regretted that error, the professed cause of it should exist.¹

Campbell's experience led him to believe that "a week's debating is worth a year's preaching."² He also stated "This is, we are convinced, one of the best means of propagating the truth and exposing error in doctrine or practice."³ It is also a good way to build interest in reading.

Attend Lectureships. This is a good way to meet many that have written books in our brotherhood. Some may say, "my employer will not let me take time off to attend a Bible Lectureship." In that case, why not go to a lectureship on one of your vacations? My family strives to attend the FHU Lectureship each year. One of the highlights for me is to meet individuals who

¹ Earl I. West, The Search for the Ancient Order, Vol. 1, 1990, p. 66.

² Ibid.

³ James DeForrest Murch, Christians Only: A History of the Restoration Movement, 1962, p. 77.

have written some of the books I own such as Leroy Brownlow, Perry Cotham, Curtis Cates, Garland Elkins, Alan Highers, Tom Holland, Wayne Jackson, Jack Lewis, Basil Overton, Bert Thompson, Earl West, Clyde Woods, and others.

Shop for Religious Books. One of the greatest tools to build interest in others is getting good religious books in their hands. If one wants to build his interest, then he should go where good books are sold. My father has long been a seeker of good books. We spend nearly every visit together looking for good religious books. Even if we do not find books to purchase, I am always rejuvenated. This is not only because he is my father, but also the thrill of hunting books that I can use. A word of caution, purchasing religious books can be habit forming!

Visit Historical Sites. The first weekend in August, the church in Lexington, KY hosts the Cane Ridge Restoration Workshop. This is where the restoration movement spread due to the efforts of Barton W. Stone. I first attended this workshop as a boy. My interest in Restoration History was ignited from that one workshop. I am so thankful that my parents took the family to this workshop. If attending this does not pique one's interest in reading, then I am at a loss for words.

Seek Those With Similar Interests. Most of us are familiar with this passage: "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'" (1 Corinthians 15:33, NKJV). We also need to remember that good company helps cultivate good habits. Be advised that those who appreciate hard to find religious books are sometimes uncomfortable about loaning them. Keep in mind you are sharing information, but you should work to purchase your own books.

Building Interest in Others

The best method to build interest in others is to build interest in yourself. After preparing yourself, you will then be prepared to use the greatest tool to motivate others—enthusiasm.

Ira North was one of the most enthusiastic preachers among churches of Christ. When he was located at the Madison Church of Christ there were approximately 400 members. Within his 32-year ministry, the congregation grew to about 5,100 with a record Sunday School attendance of 8,410 in 1982.¹ He had these words to say about enthusiasm:

Enthusiasm is powerful as dynamite and contagious as measles.
Enthusiasm will build buildings and influence people. It will turn

¹ Ira North, Balance: A Tried & Tested Formula For Church Growth, 1983, Introduction by Willard Collins.

multitudes to righteousness. Never underestimate the power of genuine enthusiasm. And it is as contagious as it is powerful. It rubs off on you.¹

Never underestimate your influence for good—“*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*” (Matthew 5:16, NKJV). The following book review is an attempt to build interest in you based on my preparation.

Review of Foy E. Wallace, Jr.—Soldier of the Cross²

Foy Esco Wallace (1896-1979) was one of four sons of Foy Edwin Wallace of Texas. They both used the terms “Senior” and “Junior” in spite of different middle names. Foy Esco was involved in the major controversies confronting the church from 1930s to the 1960s.

Soldier of the Cross chronicles Wallace’s life with photos, essays, and articles. Terry Gardner provides an excellent series of articles reprinted from Faith and Facts, which covers Wallace’s life. Articles are included about song leaders Wallace would take with him on gospel meetings including: Tillit Teddlie, Austin Taylor, Basil Doran, L. O. Sanderson, and Marion Davis. He would split the salary with song leaders to ensure they were treated equally (but not always equitably). There are articles relating to people close to Wallace; e.g., R. L. Whiteside. Also included are reflections from the family and an interview with Wallace’s wife, Virgie.

Foy E. Wallace will always be remembered for his assault on premillennialism. R.H. Boll, who was the front-page editor of the Gospel Advocate, started the controversy. Boll was asked to cease his speculative writings, but he would not and was eventually replaced. Boll went on to write for The Word and Work and caused division. Wallace accepted a debate challenge by Charles Neal, an associate of Boll. The first debate was in Winchester, KY and has been published. The second debate was in Chattanooga, TN, but Neal abandoned the debate. Through the debates and writings of Wallace, premillennialism was stopped in its tracks.

Foy E. Wallace served as editor or staff writer for the Gospel Advocate (1930-1934), *original* Gospel Guardian (1935-1936), the Firm Foundation (1936-1937), The Bible Banner (1938-1949), and Torch (1950-1951). Wallace also wrote several books including:

Neal-Wallace Discussion

¹ Ira North, You Can March for the Master, 1971, p. 19.

² Nobel Patterson and Terry J. Gardner, Editors, Foy E. Wallace, Jr.—Soldier of the Cross, 1999.

The Story of the Norris-Wallace Debate
God's Prophetic Word
Bulwarks of the Faith
Number One Gospel Sermons
Christian and Government
Sermon on the Mount and the Civil State
The Book of Revelation
A Review of the New Versions
Plain Truth About the RSV
An Evaluation of the NIV
The Present Truth
The Current Issues
The Mission and Medium of the Holy Spirit
The Instrumental Music Question
Certified Gospel, later expanded to The Gospel for Today

Two volumes were printed posthumously from Wallace's notes: The One Book Outlined and Analyzed and Commentary on Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians. All of Wallace's works are now available on compact disc.

In the 1940s several congregations held cooperative gospel meetings. One meeting was from January 21-28, 1945, in the Houston Music Hall Auditorium on the theme of "Exposing Modern Millennial Theories." These lessons were published in God's Prophetic Word and became one of the most complete works exposing the fallacy of premillennialism. Wallace returned in 1946 for another meeting on the theme of New Testament Church versus modern denominations, which would be published in Bulwarks of the Faith.

Wallace would defend the truth even at the expense of personal friendships. Wallace was close to Roy Cogdill and even performed his wedding ceremony. Cogdill promoted a new party called "Noninstitutional" which denounced cooperative meetings and churches supporting colleges and orphan homes (among other things). Wallace, while opposed to colleges forcing their way into church budgets, was not opposed to supporting of orphan homes and cooperative meetings. This party tried to claim Wallace was one of them; however, The Present Truth and The Current Issues leaves no doubt that Wallace was not part of the new party.

Foy E. Wallace was known for delivering long and extensive sermons lasting 2-3 hours with people traveling great distances to hear him. Hugo McCord reported driving 450 miles to Washington, NC to hear Wallace only to have Wallace insist Hugo preach that night!

Foy E. Wallace, Jr., participated in several public debates on other topics such as the Sabbath Day Or Sunday as the Day of Worship, Eternal Punishment, Instrumental Music, Baptism, Grace, Apostasy, and Anglo-

Israelism. Wallace accepted Frank Norris' challenge to churches of Christ for a second debate after Norris falsely claimed he had beaten Wallace in the first debate. Norris refused to debate again once he learned Wallace was chosen. Those at the first debate say the reason was the complete defeat of Norris by Wallace. Harry Rimmer had agreed to debate Wallace; however, he backed out when he heard of Wallace's reputation.

Wallace conducted gospel meetings across the country putting over 300,000 miles on a 1966 Buick Skylark. His last meeting was at the Berclair church in Memphis, TN in September of 1979. Wallace's impact can be seen on a birthday card for his 83rd and last birthday that was signed and reads like a "Who's Who Among Preachers for the Churches of Christ."

One of the finest examples Wallace left was his devotion to his wife who suffered from a rare cerebral stroke in 1952. Wallace took his wife on all his meetings and would bathe, dress, and care for her. Some say the memory of an old white haired man pushing his wife in a wheel chair will be forever etched in their memories.

Foy Wallace made mistakes which are chronicled in a balanced way. Possibly his greatest regret was harsh words exchanged with N. B. Hardeman. They eventually reconciled; however, they would not be reunited due to the death of Hardeman. This is a lesson to weigh words carefully before going to print and quickly resolve disputes with the person who has offended you.

Foy E. Wallace, Jr., is buried in Hereford, TX. His stone reads "Soldier of the Cross." His wife is buried along his side with the inscription "Faithful Companion." I never met him, but he is one of my heroes, and I hope someday to meet him after this life is over. I highly recommend this book to all that will read it.

Note: A list of valuable books for church libraries is located in the appendix.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS LEADS HOME

Sam Bartrug

If one ever doubted the centrality of the cross to the Christian faith, Paul would seem to address it forcefully in Galatians 6:14 when he writes, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Clarence DeLoach once observed concerning the cross: “The cross is the focal point of the Bible. All roads in the Bible lead to the cross. The cross is the center point of time, history, humanity and eternity.” (*Bound to Abound*, pg. 117)

There are too many passages of Scripture portraying the importance of the cross for any to deny its importance. Three times in John’s Gospel Jesus points to the impact of his being “lifted up” (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32). It was the preaching of Christ as crucified that Paul felt, as foolish and weak as it may have seemed to some, held the power of God to save man from his sin (1 Corinthians 1:18-29; Romans 1:16-17). On the heels of his impressive, but relatively ineffective, oratory at Athens Paul returned to the simplicity of “Christ and him crucified” upon arriving in Corinth (Acts 1-18; 1 Corinthians 2:1-4). The author of the Hebrew epistle is adamant about the importance of the death of Jesus and its place in the effectiveness of Christianity (2:14-18; 5:7-9; 6:4-6; 9:11-28; 10:12-14; 12:1-4).

Given the aforementioned insights on the matter from God’s Word, I assert that Jessie Brown Pounds was correct in writing the moving words, “I must needs go home by the way of the cross: There’s no other way but this; I shall ne’er get sight of the Gates of Light if the way of the cross I miss.” This assertion, however, raises a couple of questions that must be addressed. One question might be, “What do you mean when you speak of a home?” Another would be, “What is involved in saying that the ‘way of the cross’ can lead us to that home?” I hope to address those questions successfully by resorting to God’s Word and what it has to say in these matters.

Question number one can only be answered through the exhortation to remember that this world is not our home! As much as we may enjoy life down here, it is obvious that we are not going to live here forever. Solomon wrote, “...because man goeth to his long home...” (Ecclesiastes 12:5). The wise man recognized that living in this world is not living at “home” as it were (although by “long home” he probably was referring to the grave). The great patriarchs of early mankind were often men of deep faith. They realized that this world was not to be viewed as one’s home. It was said of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that they sought a “city which hath foundations” (Hebrews 11:8). They viewed themselves as “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13). They were desirous of a “better country, that is, an heavenly” (Hebrews 11:16). In

response to this faith they exhibited, it is said that God had “prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:16). Jesus reminds us, in Matthew 7:13-14, that our time down here is a journey which will end either in a place of destruction or a place of life depending upon what road we might choose to travel. The sum of all of this is that this world is not our home; our true home is eternal; and, if we wish for that eternal home to be a place of blessing (heaven), then we must travel the right road.

This brings us to the second question. What do we mean when we speak of the “way of the cross” being our way to a home of eternal joy and peace? Jesus speaks to this, in part, in John 14:6 when He says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” It is obvious from this statement that not every road leads to a heavenly home. It cannot be true that we are “all headed for the same place, we are just traveling different roads to get there” as so many are apt to say when defending their denominational leanings. Unless we travel home through Jesus we will not get to the desired destination! To travel through Jesus, involves the cross, for the cross was a pivotal point in His life. The rest of this lesson will address how the “way of the cross” leads us to an eternal home with the Father.

It was the “way of the cross” that allowed Jesus to return home, and as His disciples, we should expect no less in our own experience! The Hebrew author reminds us that, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Hebrews 9:12). He adds in Hebrews 10:12, “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God. It is said of Jesus, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Hebrews 5:8-9). Jesus traveled back to the home that He had left (Philippians 2:6-8) via the cross! He reminded those who would follow Him that it would be the “way of the cross” that they too would travel as they made their way homeward. In Matthew 16:24 Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” What did He mean by this? Any one who saw a procession in that day in which a man was carrying a cross knew exactly what was about to happen. Someone was going to die! Jesus wants us to understand that there is no guarantee that the road home will be an easy one. It will be a road of self-denial. It will be a road in which we must die to self in order to live through Him (Galatians 2:20). That death may be figurative as is described in Matthew 16:25 in which the idea seems to be that of submission of self to the will of Jesus. It may also be literal as is revealed to the church at Smyrna in Revelation 2:10. Either way the message is unmistakable: it is only the “way of the cross” that leads home. Jesus had to travel that road, and so must we!

It is also taught in God's Word that the "way of the cross" is the road-marker which ever stands before us to keep us on the right road home. Peter speaks frankly to those of "like precious faith" about the growth process Christians are to experience on the way home (2 Peter 1:1-9). In order to be "partakers of the divine nature" (vs. 4), we must diligently seek to expand our faith by incorporating into it the areas Peter enumerates in verses 5-7. The ultimate aim of this is to make our knowledge of the lord Jesus Christ a lush and fruitful thing (vs. 8). To fail in this regard is to give evidence that we are walking in spiritual blindness and have taken our focus off the fact that we have been forgiven (vs. 9). It is as if Peter is saying that every Christian who keeps the cross clear in his mind will possess a faith that expresses itself in such matters as virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (love). Every Christian who loses his focus on the cross will fail to possess such a faith and will be sidetracked from the road he must travel.

Do you think that it would make it easier to say "NO" to temptation if, at the very moment a decision has to be made, God would roll back the curtains of time and give us a glimpse of His Son on the cross? Would it not be difficult to give in if the freshest image in our minds was the suffering of our Lord? Since we are told that unfaithfulness on our part results in our crucifying the Son of God afresh (Hebrews 6:6), does it not stand to reason that a continual awareness of what that entailed would serve to keep us more focused upon traveling the right way home? Of course, God is not going to do that in a literal sense. We can, however, keep that image fresh in our minds by centering our preaching and teaching more frequently upon the cross. If what we are appealing to as we attempt to sway our congregation to righteousness is not the cross, then we should get out of the pulpit and let someone who will hold the cross before the congregation step in. Like the fire and cloud that led Israel through the wilderness, it is the cross that goes before us to mark our way home.

We cannot get to our heavenly home by any other way but the cross! No matter how hard we try, no matter how sincere our efforts may be, no matter how desperately we wish to arrive on the eternal shores of heaven; it won't become a reality apart from the cross. Without the blood Jesus shed there, without the recreation of his death, burial, and resurrection through our repentance and baptism, without the self-denial and willingness on our part to die to self (or die period), without a continual focus upon the cross and how it saved such a worm as I, heaven will always be an unreachable goal. But with the above, heaven is well within our reach!

Allow me to close these thoughts with a reminder from the apostle Paul about having to travel home by "way of the cross." He pointed out to the Romans that the road to heaven would often be accompanied by suffering; but he wanted them (and us) to know that, "...the sufferings of this present time are not

worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). No matter how rugged the way of the cross may prove to be as we wind our way home toward heaven, it will be more than worth it when we open our eyes to the glory of our eternal home. By God’s grace may each of us one day bask in its beauty!

HOLY GHOST BAPTISM AND WATER BAPTISM

Basil Overton

The Lord said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:16.) Some say they believe that baptism is essential to being saved, but that it is Holy Ghost baptism that saves. But, the baptism of the foregoing scripture is not Holy Ghost baptism. In this lesson I will prove this from the New Testament.

Not many people were ever baptized with the Holy Ghost. The twelve apostles, and Cornelius and his household were overwhelmed, or baptized with the Holy Ghost. (See Acts 1:1-6; 2:1-5; 11:15.)

Baptism in the Holy Ghost was such a rare occurrence even in the days of the apostles that Peter was amazed at its occurrence at the house of Cornelius. The fact that Peter said that the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and his household, “as on us at the beginning” is evidence that it was not a common event. (Acts 11:15.) (The “beginning” was the Day of Pentecost; the “beginning” of the Christian dispensation; the beginning of the church.)

If Holy Ghost baptism was a common event, why did not Peter compare the case at the house of Cornelius with cases more recent than the one that had happened about ten years before in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost?

Holy Ghost baptism was designed for special purposes in the apostolic age. By it, the apostles were guided into all truth. (John 16:13.) By it, Jews were convinced that Gentiles were gospel subjects. (Acts 10:45.)

No one was ever baptized with the Holy Ghost to be saved. The Lord saves men when they follow the directions of the Holy Ghost as given in the Bible.

Holy Ghost baptism was a promise of the Father to certain ones for certain purposes. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,5.) The baptism of the Great Commission of Christ (Mark 16:16) is a command of God to be obeyed by people that they may reach the blood of Christ and have their sins remitted. (Acts 2:38.) A thing cannot be a command and a promise both!

Men were to administer the baptism of the Great Commission, and they did administer it, and it was baptism in water! (Acts 8:35-39.) Only our Lord administered Holy Ghost baptism. (Matthew 3:11; John 1:33.)

Holy Ghost baptism had ceased when Paul wrote the Ephesian letter, which was about A.D. 64, for he said: "There is one baptism," referring to water baptism. (Ephesians 4:1-6.)

Baptism In Water

There is a baptism mentioned in Matthew 28:19,20 that is obviously the "one baptism" that is to last "always, even to the end of the world." (Ephesians 4:5.) What is the baptism of the Great Commission of Christ? "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into 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 to the end of the world. Amen."

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15,16.)

The day that the apostles began to carry out this commission was the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection. (Acts 2.) On that day the Holy Spirit guided Peter to say to the crowd that was convinced that Jesus was divine, and that God had raised him from the dead: "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.)

Therefore the baptism of the Great Commission was a command of God to be obeyed by those who needed the remission of their sins. But, neither from the Great Commission, nor from the record in Acts 2:38 can we determine what element was employed in that baptism. Luke says that they who gladly received Peter's message were baptized (Acts 2:41), but he does not say what element was used in their being baptized.

The book of Acts is a record of the work of preachers who diligently carried out the Great Commission of Christ. In Acts chapter eight Luke tells us that water was the element used when people were baptized in keeping with the command of the Great Commission. For he tells about a man who heard the gospel, believed that Jesus is the Son of God, and was baptized in water. This proves that the baptism of the Great Commission is water baptism.

Baptized By One Spirit

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ..." (1 Corinthians 12:13.) The one body of this passage is the church. (1 Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 1:18.) The word church in the New Testament means the saved.

So, by one Spirit are we all baptized into the saved! As has already been stated, the baptism of the Great Commission is water baptism, and its design is that people who are thus baptized are baptized to be saved. This proves that the baptism by one Spirit into one body is water baptism! One follows the Holy Spirit when he is baptized in water to get into the one body which is the saved!

Not My Opinion

I have been told this: “It is just your opinion that baptism is essential to being saved from sin.” However, those who say this are wrong, for it is not my opinion. Jesus said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mark 16:16.) And that is not my opinion!

Through the apostle Peter, the Holy Spirit said: “Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38.) And that is not my opinion! I do have some opinions about various matters, but I would not use precious space here to present them. I must use this space to tell you what God’s word says, and not what my opinions are. My opinions could not redeem one soul from sin, but God’s word is able to save the souls of men. (James 1:21.)

BIOGRAPHIES

Sam Bartrug

Sam is a native of Burton, West Virginia and graduated from Hundred High School in 1969. He holds both the AA and BA degrees in Bible from Ohio Valley College. Sam is married to the former Marty Yost of Racine, Ohio. They are the parents of three children, and they have one grandchild. Sam has done located work since 1973 and is currently the pulpit minister for the Woodsfield church of Christ in Woodsfield, Ohio. Sam is active in gospel meeting work and has spoken at several lectureships and youth functions through the years. His hobbies include hunting and gardening, but his first love is preaching the gospel as often as the opportunity presents itself.

Jerris N. Bullard

Originally from Snyder, Texas, now living in Manassas, Virginia, Jerris, 57 years old, attended and graduated from Lubbock Christian University, Abilene Christian University, and Sunset School of Preaching. He did local work for 19 years serving congregations in Grassland and Loraine, Texas; Bradford and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and, Great Falls, Virginia. In 1985, Jerris became a full-time missionary, under the oversight of the Elders at the Manassas, Virginia church of Christ, to India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. He has made 38 mission trips to India since his first mission in 1978. He and his wife Juanita, who has gone to India 7 times, make two campaign trips to India each year, staying eight weeks (January-February) and (August-September).

Randy Chapman

Randall (Randy) Chapman was born to Clinton and Genevieve Phelps Chapman on July 2, 1946, in Huntington, West Virginia. His father served as a deacon and then an elder at the church which met at 10th Ave. and 21st St., which later moved to Norway Ave. Local ministers he sat under include Paul Gray, Sam Hill, Everett Alexander and Pat Gibbons, and he was baptized by brother Alexander in 1960.

Randy graduated from Huntington East High School in 1964 and attended Ohio Valley College from 1964 to 1966. He received a BA degree in Bible from Harding University in 1969. He has also taken 27 hours of classes on a Masters level.

On June 8, 1968, Randy married Jeannette Heid of Strasburg, Ohio, whom he met at Harding. They have three sons. Kevin and his wife, Stacey, are expecting a third child next spring. Mike and Brigitte live in Zurich, Switzerland, where Mike is working on his doctorate in Electrical Engineering. Matt and Jennifer live in Xenia, Ohio where Matt serves as the youth minister. Their son, Levi, should be born by the time of the lectures.

Randy has preached for churches in St. Albans and Pennsboro, West Virginia, Dover and Beallsville, Ohio, Morganton, North Carolina, and has been at Winchester, Virginia, for over twelve years. He also supported himself and preached in Gaffney and Spartanburg, South Carolina, for five years. He has held Gospel Meetings in West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. He has been on lectureships for the Broad Street church lectures in Morganton, the Ohio Valley College lectures, and the Pottstown, Pennsylvania lectures. He has enjoyed working at summer camps in South Carolina, Ohio, West Virginia, and Virginia.

Randy enjoys fishing, hunting, camping and teasing Jeannette.

Emmitt Channell

Emmitt is a native of Mississippi, and he is married to the former Betty Cooper. They have four children and eight grandchildren. Emmitt began preaching in 1954 while still in high school. He attended Freed-Hardeman, Lipscomb, and did some work at Harding Graduate School. He has done local work in West Virginia, Mississippi, Michigan, Illinois, Florida, Alabama, and Pennsylvania. The Channells have lived in the Pottstown, Pennsylvania, area since 1978 where Emmitt preaches for the Coventry Hills church of Christ and directs the annual Southeastern Pennsylvania Bible Lectureship.

Don R. Cooper

Donald R. Cooper was born and reared in Parkersburg, West Virginia, the second son of Jesse R. and Sarah Cooper. He is an alumnus of Freed-Hardeman (College) University, Henderson, Tennessee, and began preaching June 15, 1952.

He and his wife, Jan, were married March 7, 1954. They have four children, four grandchildren, and one great grandson.

The Coopers have served churches fulltime in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, and Ohio. They have resided in Wadsworth, Ohio, since June, 1985, where Don serves as the evangelist and is also one of the elders.

Emanuel B. Daugherty

Born: Philippi, WV January 12, 1939

Baptized: February, 5, 1950 by Miris Wright in Warren, OH

Married: Judith R. Null, July 16, 1958

Children: Bruce, preaches Beville Rd church of Christ Daytona Beach, FL; Mrs. Ramona (Stephan) Haynes, Alkire Rd church of Christ, Grove City, OH; Mrs. Rachel (Maken) Cornell, church of Christ, Alkire Road, Grove City, OH; Mrs. Rebecca (Bradford) Poe, husband preaches Northridge church of Christ, Dayton, OH

Grandchildren: Eight

Education: Graduated from Braceville HS, Trumbull County, Ohio 1956, Memphis School of Preaching 1968, Alabama Christian School of Religion (Southern Christian University) 1982

Preaching: Alkire Road Grove City, OH 1968-1989; Dewey Avenue St Marys, WV 1989-1994

School of Preaching: Taught nine years at Central Ohio School for Preachers and Teachers, Columbus, OH; Currently serving as Director, West Virginia School of Preaching since February 1994

Gospel Meetings: West Virginia, Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee

Edward E. Dyche

Born and raised in Cumberland, Md., he was converted in the military in 1959 while stationed at Fort Monmouth, NJ. After the service, he went to Abilene Christian College and graduated in 1965. He moved to Carlisle, PA at that time and this has been his only full time work for these thirty-six years (working on the thirty seventh at the present). He has also served as an elder for the congregation for nearly fifteen years. He is married (36 years) and his wife and he have three children and six grandchildren. All of their children and their mates are faithful members of the Lord's church. The religious background of both his wife and him is that of Methodism from which they were converted many years ago.

Albert E. Farley

Albert Farley was born at Crum, WV April 26, 1942, the son of William H. and Clista Spaulding Farley and was raised at Longacre, WV. He graduated from Montgomery High School in 1960 and served four years in the U.S. Navy. He attended Ohio Valley College 1964-66 where he met and married Nancy Ann Brewer. They have four children: Scott, Clista (Heintzman), Rebecca (Ragle), and Elisabeth; and four grandchildren: Bethany and Darren Heintzman, and Aaron and Andrew Ragle.

Albert preached his first sermon in 1964 at Red Bush, OH. He began full-time preaching in 1966 at Belington, WV. He has worked with congregations in WV at Chesapeake, Weston, Crum, Webster Springs, and Salem, where he has lived since 1982.

He is a graduate of Glenville State College, with a BA in Elementary Education, and taught the fifth grade at Crum. He completed ten hours of graduate work with the Alabama School of Religion. He spoke five days each week on the "Gospel Minutes" radio program on WHAW, Weston, 1972-76 and on the "Bible Study Program" 1980-82. He has edited *WEST VIRGINIA CHRISTIAN* since 1993.

James E. Farley

James Farley currently preaches for the Main St. Church of Christ in Pikeville, Kentucky, where he has worked since November 1997. He is a native of Fayette County, WV, the son of William Howard and Clista Farley. He is married to the former Linda M. Talbott and they have two children, Timothy and Jennifer. Jim began preaching while stationed with the U.S. Army in Germany. He attended the Frankfurt School of Preaching and preached weekly for small military congregations.

Upon returning to the U.S. and being honorably discharged from the Army, he enrolled at Freed-Hardeman College. While a student at Freed-Hardeman he preached full-time at Clifton, TN. Following graduation, Jim has served congregations of the Lord's church in Tennessee, Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia. He holds several gospel meetings each year.

David R. Kenney

David was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1966 to Warren and Kay Kenney. His father has faithfully proclaimed the gospel full time for over thirty years. David is a 1991 graduate from Freed-Hardeman University with a BBA in Business Management. He is also a 1993 graduate with a MBA from Kent State University. He has been married to the former Annette Strunk since 1991, and they have one son, James, born in 2000.

David has written articles that have appeared in *World Evangelist*, *Firm Foundation*, *Gospel Advocate*, *The Restorer*, *The Informer*, *Power*, and is a frequent writer for the *West Virginia Christian* on books of value for church libraries. He appeared on the Pottstown, Pennsylvania, Bible Lectureship in 1999. He preaches part-time for the East Side Church of Christ in Mount Vernon, Ohio.

David works at OfficeMax Corporate Headquarters as Manager of Store Planning Replenishment. He has purchased books for the Church of Christ in Streetsboro, Ohio, since 1995. David, Annette, and James reside in Bedford, Ohio.

Tim Nichols

Tim was born in Barberton, Ohio. He served three years in the U.S. Army and attended the University of Maryland (European Division). He graduated with a B.A. in Bible from Harding University and with a M.S. in Counseling Psychology from Frostburg State University. He passed the National Examination for the Professional Practice of Psychology in 1989 but has chosen to continue preaching rather than to go into practice. He has been an Adjunct instructor at Potomac State College of West Virginia University since 1989 (currently teaching Bible courses in the “Religious Studies Division” and “Critical Reasoning/Logic” in the Philosophy Department).

His wife, Libby, works for the college and is currently the President of the West Virginia Alumni Directors Association. Their daughter Ashley is a student at West Virginia University; their son Rob is a student at Freed-Hardeman University; and their son Eric is a Sophomore at Keyser High School.

Basil Overton

Basil Overton was born to Raymond and Mary Overton in Weakley County, Tennessee December 3, 1925, where he grew up on farms with two brothers and three sisters. He served two years in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He has preached the gospel since 1945. He has done “local work” in a number of places, and work in “mission” fields seventeen years. He has preached in about six hundred series of gospel meetings. He has spoken on lectureships of most of the colleges affiliated with the churches of Christ.

Brother Overton is editor of *THE WORLD EVANGELIST*, a gospel journal he started in 1972. He has been Vice President at Heritage Christian University (formerly International Bible College) since 1972, the year he started teaching there.

Basil has been married to the former Margie Medling since 1945. They have four children (one deceased), eight grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

Brother Overton attended Freed-Hardeman College 1946-1949, and was graduated with the highest honor conferred by the school. He attended Abilene Christian College (now university) two semesters. He has a B.A. Degree from Eastern Kentucky State University; an M.A. from the University of Kentucky; and a Doctor of Humanities Degree from Morehead State University.

Basil is the author of more than 50 gospel tracts, and of the following books: (1) *What Happened to the Body*; (2) *Religious Discussion Notes*; (3) *Seven Score Short Sermons*; (4) *Evolution or Creation?*; (5) *Evolution in the Light of Scripture, Science, and Sense*; (6) *Conversions in Acts*; (7) *Mule Musings*; (8) *When Christ was Preached to Christ and 51 Other Sermons*; (9) *The Highest Peak of Human Performance* (26 Sermons); and (10) *Gems from Greek*. He is in the process of publishing another book entitled: *A Book About the Book*.

About 2,000 articles written by brother Overton have been published.

Margie (Mrs. Basil) Overton

Margie was born in Weakley County, Tennessee. She is the wife of Basil Overton, Editor of the *WORLD EVANGELIST* and Vice President at International Bible College. They have been married 56 years. Margie and Basil have three living children, and one deceased. They have eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Margie has spoken for many years to many women's groups. She served several times as President of the Florence Chapter of International Bible College Women, who are now called Heritage Associates, because International Bible College became Heritage Christian University. She has organized other Chapters.

Margie and Basil worked as a close team for many years in mission work. She has been a great asset to her husband who has been preaching since 1945. Margie taught classes at International Bible College on the "Role of Preachers Wives and Church Leaders Wives." In May 1995 the college conferred upon her an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters Degree. For 25 years Margie has written a column every month called Woman To Women in *THE WORLD EVANGELIST*.

Michael P. Reese

Michael P. Reese was born in Parkersburg. He graduated from Parkersburg High School in 1977, Freed-Hardeman University with a BS in Bible in 1981, and Fairmont State College in 1983 with a BS in Biology. He received his MA from Southern Christian University in 1989, and his Masters of Divinity in Bible in 1994 from Southern Christian.

He married the former Linda McCullough of Canton, Ohio, in May, 1980, and they have two children: Sarah Elizabeth (15) and Benjamin Michael (13).

His hobbies are hunting, fishing, and especially training and raising hunting dogs.

He worked with the Oakwood Road church of Christ in Fairmont, WV from 1981 – 1989. He has been with the Mannington church of Christ since 1989.

He has done mission work with Campaigns Northeast/Southeast in the summer of 1979, and with the Singapore, Malaysia Campaign in the summer of 1981.

Valuable Books for Church of Libraries
compiled by David R. Kenney

Concordances

- *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
- *Young's Analytical Concordance

Bible Dictionaries

- *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary
- *Oxford Companion to the Bible – Metzger and Coogan
- *Smith's Bible Dictionary

Word Studies

- *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words
- *Treasures From the Greek New Testament – Wayne Jackson
- *How to Read the Greek New Testament – Guy N. Woods
- *Word Meanings in the New Testament – Ralph Earle
- *Gems From the Greek – Basil Overton
- *Thayer's Greek Lexicon
- *Brown Driver Briggs Hebrew Lexicon

Christian Evidences

- *Essays in Apologetics and bound volumes of Reason and Revelation (all)
- *Creation Compromises – Bert Thompson
- *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict – Josh McDowell
- *Who Moved the Stone? – Frank Morrison
- *The Case For Christ – Lee Strobel
- *Fortify Your Faith – Wayne Jackson

General Brotherhood Books

- *Gospel Plan of Salvation – T.W. Brents
- *Systematic Theology – Rex Turner
- *The Christian System – Alexander Campbell
- *Sound Doctrine – Nichol & Whiteside
- *Scheme of Redemption – Robert Milligan
- *God's Prophetic Word – Foy E. Wallace
- *Bulwarks of the Faith – Foy E. Wallace
- *Fundamentals of the Faith – Rex Turner
- *Handbook on Baptism – J.W. Shepherd
- *Christian Baptism – Alexander Campbell
- *Familiar Lectures on the Pentateuch – Alexander Campbell
- *Why I am a Member of the Church of Christ – Leroy Brownlow
- *Piloting the Strait – Dave Miller
- *50 Years of Lectures (2 volumes) – Hugo McCord

- *Change Agents and Churches of Christ – William Woodson
- *What is the Church of Christ – V.E. Howard
- *The Bible Only Makes Christians Only and The Only Christians – Thomas Warren
- *Sound Doctrine (5 volumes) – C.R. Nichol and R.L. Whiteside

Archaeology

- *Archaeology and Bible History – Joseph Free and Howard Vos
- *Backgrounds of Early Church History – Everett Ferguson
- *Biblical Studies in the Light of Archaeology – Wayne Jackson

Denominations and Cults

- *Kingdom of the Cults – Walter Martin
- *Handbook of Denominations – Frank Mead
- *The Universe Next Door – James Sire
- *The Empty Pew – Thomas Reeves
- *Ashamed of the Gospel – John MacArthur

New Testament Commentaries

- *Both the New and the Original Commentary on Acts – J.W. McGarvey
- *Gospel Advocate Series on New Testament
- *Romans – R.L. Whiteside
- *Revelation – W.B. West Jr.
- *Worthy is the Lamb – Ray Summers
- *Commentary on Matthew and Mark – J.W. McGarvey
- *John: The Gospel of Belief – Merrill Tenney
- *Jesus Christ Today (Hebrews) – Neil Lightfoot
- *The Four-Fold Gospel – J.W. McGarvey
- *The Parables in Profile – Wayne Jackson

Old Testament Commentaries

- *The Living Way Commentary on the Pentateuch – Clyde Woods
- *Preaching From the Prophets – Kyle Yates
- *Daniel – Rex Turner
- *Firm Foundation Handbook on the Minor Prophets – Eddie Whitten (editor)
- *The Genesis Record – Henry M. Morris
- *Major Prophets – Jack Lewis
- *Minor Prophets – Jack Lewis
- *Isaiah – Wayne Jackson
- *Jeremiah and Lamentations – Wayne Jackson

- *The Book of Job – Wayne Jackson
- *Power Lectureship Books on Major & Minor Prophets
- *Works by John Kachelman, Jr.

Commentaries on the Bible

- *Barnes Notes
- *Matthew Henry's Commentary
- *The Great Texts of the Bible – James Hastings (editor)
- *Handfuls on Purpose – James Smith & Robert Lee
- *The "Be" Series – Warren Wiersbe
- *James Burton Coffman Commentaries
- *Clarke's Commentary – Adam Clarke

Instrumental Music in Worship

- *Instrumental Music in Worship – M.C. Kurfees
- *The Instrumental Music Question – Foy E. Wallace

Holy Spirit

- *The Spirit and the Word – Z.T. Sweeney
- *Mission and Work of the Holy Spirit – Foy E. Wallace
- *The Holy Spirit – H. Leo Boles
- *Lectures on the Holy Spirit – Gus Nichols
- *The Holy Spirit: Person and Work – Owen Olbricht

Books of Sermons

- *Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons (all volumes) – N.B. Hardeman
- *New Testament Christianity (3 volumes) – Z.T. Sweeney
- *The Second Coming and Other Sermons – Guy N. Woods
- *Shall We Know Each Other in Heaven – Guy N. Woods
- *The Gospel for Today – Foy E. Wallace
- *The Sermon Outlines of H. Leo Boles – B.C. Goodpasture
- *Fred Dennis' Sermon Outline Books (3 books)
- *Seed For The Sower – Leroy Brownlow
- *Bradfield's Sermon Outlines – W.A. Bradfield
- *Sermons on Salvation – Guy N. Woods
- *Any by Thomas Holland

Encyclopedias

- *Pocket Bible Encyclopedia – C.R. Nichols
- *McClintock & Strong's Cyclopedia
- *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia

Bible Atlases

- *Baker's Bible Atlas
- *Hurlburt's Bible Atlas

Biographies

- *Foy E. Wallace Jr.: Soldier of the Cross – Nobel Patterson
- *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell – Robert Richardson
- *Life of Elder John Smith – John Rogers
- *Life of Walter Scott – William Baxter
- *The Biography of J.T. Johnson – John Rogers
- *The Enchanted Knight – Earl West
- *W.W. Otey: Contender for the Faith – Cecil Willis
- *The Christian Scholar: The Biography of Hall Laurie Calhoun – Adron Doran and J.E. Choate
- *J.D. Tant: Texas Preacher – Fanning Yater Tant
- *Roll Jordan Roll: The Biography of Marshall Keeble – J.E. Choate

Debates

- *The Neal-Wallace Discussion
- *Campbell-Rice Debate
- *Campbell-Purcell Debate
- *Campbell-Owen Debate
- *Any by Guy N. Woods
- *Hardeman-Bogard Debate
- *Hardeman-Boswell Debate
- *The Story of the Norris-Wallace Debate
- *The Elkins-Ross Debate

Bible Handbooks

- *Biblical Analysis – Walter Straub
- *Hailey's Bible Handbook – Henry Hailey
- *DeHoff's Bible Handbook – George DeHoff

Questions and Answers

- *Open Forum Volumes 1 & 2 – Guy Woods
- *Notes From the Margin of My Bible (Old and New Testaments) – Wayne Jackson
- *Difficult Texts of the Old and New Testaments Explained – Wendell Winkler
- *Hard Sayings of the Bible – Kaiser, Davids, Bruce, Brauch
- *Exegesis of Difficult Passages – Jack Lewis
- *Reflections – R.L. Whiteside

Church History

- *History of the Christian Church (8 volume set) – Philip Schaff

- *The Search for the Ancient Order (5 volume set) – Earl West
- *History of Reformatory Movements – John F. Rowe
- *Josephus
- *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire – Edward Gibbon
- *Heresies – Harold O.J. Brown
- *Early Christians Speak – Everett Ferguson
- *The Church: The Falling Away and the Restoration – J.W. Shepherd
- *Foxy's Book of Martyrs
- *The Eternal Kingdom – F.W. Mattox

Bible Translations and Versions

- *The Bible in 26 Translations
- *The Handbook of Bible Translations – The Shenandoah Lectures
- *History of the Bible in English – F.F. Bruce
- *The Books and the Parchments – F.F. Bruce
- *How We Got the Bible – Neil Lightfoot
- *Questions You Have Asked About Bible Translations – Jack Lewis
- *Hugo McCord's New Testament Translation of the Everlasting Gospel
- *The Outline Bible – Harold Wilmington
- *Know Your Bible – Frank Dunn

Introductions to the Bible

- *The New Testament: Its Background Content and Growth – Bruce Metzger
- *General Introduction to the Bible – Geisler and Nix
- *An Introduction to the Old Testament – Edward Young
- *A Study Guide to Greater Bible Knowledge – Wayne Jackson
- *An Introduction to the Apocrypha – Bruce Metzger

Restoration Movement

- *Restoring New Testament Christianity – Adron Doran
- *Christians Only – James Deforest Murch
- *The Disciples in Kentucky – F.W. Fortune
- *Buckeye Disciples – Henry Shaw
- *Foundation Facts and Primary Principles – G.C. Brewer
- *Attitudes and Consequences in the Restoration Movement – Homer Hailey
- *Early History of Disciples in the Western

Church Leadership, Relations and Discipline

- *Bigger Men For Better Churches – Cleon Lyles
- *Church Discipline for Caring Christians – Robert Usrey
- *Leadership Questions Confronting the Church – Jack Lewis
- *Balance – Ira North
- *You Can March For The Master – Ira North

Lectureship Series

- *Annual Denton Lectureship Series
- *Freed-Hardeman Annual Lectureship
- *Spiritual Sword Lectureship
- *Power Lectureship
- *Shenandoah Lectureship
- *West Virginia Christian Lectureship

Hermeneutics

- *Rightly Dividing the Word (2 Volumes) – Shenandoah Lectureships 1990, 1991
- *Logic & the Bible – Thomas Warren
- *When is an Example Binding? – Thomas Warren

Marriage and the Family

- *What Every Family Needs – Carl Brecheen and Paul Faulkner
- *Letters to Karen/Philip – Charlie Shedd
- *The Act of Marriage – Tim & Beverly LaHaye
- *His Needs/Her Needs – Willard Farley
- *Dare to Discipline – James Dobson
- *Parenting Isn't For Cowards – James Dobson

NOTE: This list is by no means complete and not all content in the above titles may necessarily be true. One must "prove all things" and "hold fast to what is good."