

1957  
Lipscomb Spring Lectures

*VOLUME ONE*

*SERIES OF ADDRESSES DELIVERED  
at David Lipscomb College  
during the second annual  
Lipscomb Spring Lecture Series*

*April 21-25, 1957*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This book is being published in response to many requests from those who attended the Lipscomb Spring Lecture Series last year. Due to lack of space, all the material presented in the lectures could not be printed in the book. However, each author prepared his own manuscript.

As director of the Lipscomb Spring Lecture Series, I wish to thank the Gospel Advocate Company and its president, B. C. Goodpasture, for publishing this book. We predict that these messages on a much discussed theme, "According to the Pattern," will have a wide distribution.

The following Lipscomb faculty members served as an advisory committee in the preparation of the lecture series: Batsell Barrett Baxter, Carroll B. Ellis, Ira L. North, Joe E. Sanders, Howard A. White, and Thomas C. Whitfield.

**Willard Collins**

*Lectureship Director*

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# THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

## (JOHN H. BANISTER)

Many perplexing problems confront today's world. Some are political, some social, some ethical, while others are moral and spiritual. So serious are they that some have concluded there are no real and permanent solutions for them. This has created a state of pessimism and cynicism in the minds of many who wonder if there is really any hope for the world today. Basically, the problems facing today's world are moral and spiritual. We have learned how to harness the atom, and unleash tremendous physical power, but we have not learned how to govern ourselves! The problem of the world today lies in the human heart and no solution will be found adequate until this is taken into account.

There are many conflicting ideas which seek the solution of the problems confronting today's world. In the political realm, Communism is believed by many to be the hope of the world. Yet, experience and history prove that this false ideology exalts the State at the expense of both God and man. It enslaves man to a ruthless state system which considers him little better than a cog in a gigantic political machine. Military balances of power are thought by some to be the hope of today's world. Yet, history teaches us that such have never prevented war nor solved the basic problems of human society. There is a tremendous arms race going on today as nations, especially Russia and America, bend all their efforts and energies to outdo each other in the construction of atom and hydrogen bombs! Scientific achievement is thought by some to be the hope of today's world. We live in an age of great scientific advance, as is demonstrated by the many devices and gadgets that make physical living easier. We have harnessed the atom and created the hydrogen bomb. Yet, all our advance in science has in no wise solved the problems of the world. Science has never been able to solve problems that are primarily moral and spiritual. Human philosophy is thought by some to be the hope of the world. Human intellect is exalted to a position of absolute authority and many feel that moral and spiritual values are relative and are subject to whatever changes man's learning dictates! These things have never solved the problems of the world, nor can they ever do so. The hope of today's world lies not in more scientific achievement, stronger military might, nor greater balances of political power. The world's only hope lies in a thorough moral and spiritual transformation. The world can be made better only by making men better. The problems of the world

can never be solved until we get at the root of the trouble which is the sinful heart of humanity.

## I. The Hope of the World Is God.

1. **God is.** This is the greatest fact of human history. Nature, reason, conscience, intellect, and the Bible prove his existence and personality. We must accept him as a real, personal, and loving Father and submit entirely to his will if our problems are to be solved. As long as men and nations ignore God and his will, so long shall their schemes and devices come to nought.

2. **God is Governor.** God is the Governor of this world because he created it and owns it. He upholds all things by the word of his power. In spite of our boasted independence of God, this world is still under his control. He runs it and rules it. “None can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Dan. 4: 35.) In spite of what we think, say, or do, God will decide the destiny of this world and have the final word.

3. **God has Revealed Himself.** God has revealed himself to man as Creator, Saviour, Father, Benefactor, and Friend. He has revealed himself in nature. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.” (Psalm 19: 1.) He revealed himself through human conscience in times past according to Rom. 2: 14-15. He revealed himself in the Bible, in and through which his mind, will, and way are made known. The supreme revelation of God, however, is Christ. The Bible is the written word, but Christ is the Living Word. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and the Word 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... No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (John 1: 1, 14, 18.)

In the Bible we read of God; in Christ we see God. “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” (John 14: 9.) It pleased God that in Jesus “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” should dwell (Col. 2:9) and in Christ “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). Since Christ is the supreme revelation of God, through whom the Father works in the world, we know that

## II. Christ Is the Hope of the World

“Christ is our hope,” declared Paul in 1 Tim. 1: 1. This is true because it is through Christ that God operates in today’s world. To reject Christ is to

reject God (1 John 2: 23) and to receive Christ is to receive God (Luke 9: 48).

1. **Christ our only Hope of Salvation.** This is a lost and sinful world. Our problems will never be solved until we make peace with God. We can never be right with one another until we all get right with our Father. God sent Jesus to be our Saviour. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. (Luke 19: 10.) He came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim. 1: 15) and give us life more abundantly (John 10: 10). To effect this, he went to the cross and there died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God. He became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor. 5: 21.) In dying, he atoned completely for the sins of all mankind. He tasted death for all men. (Heb. 2: 9.) Because of his sacrifice, the saving gospel is now offered to all. If we will believe in Christ, trust the merit of his shed blood, repent of and renounce all our sins, confess him to be the Son of God, and be baptized, we shall be saved. (Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 38; 8: 37; 17: 30.) Above all else, the world needs salvation from sin and Christ is our only hope for this. If the world would but accept Christ as Saviour, all of our national and international problems would vanish overnight. When Christ lives in the hearts of men, nations will then live in peace and harmony!

2. **Christ our only Hope for a Perfect Example.** The world needs a sinless life, a perfect example, to inspire it to high and noble living. Christ is the only hope for this. Since he did no sin, he has left an example that we should walk in his steps. (1 Pet. 2: 21-22.) We should do as Christ has done, since he left us such an example. (John 13: 15.) Our hope for today lies in being changed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3: 18) and reproducing his life and example in our own lives. We must have the Spirit of Christ, without which we are none of his. (Rom. 8: 9.) We must possess the mind of Christ in all things (Phil. 2: 5) if we would solve our moral and spiritual problems. Self must be crucified and Christ, the hope of glory, must ever live within our hearts. (Gal. 2: 20; Col. 1: 27.) Christ is the answer to all of life's questions, the solution to all of its problems. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (Rom. 14: 7-8.) Only by walking in the footsteps of Jesus, our Lord and Master, can we have peace and good will among men and nations.

3. **Christ our only Hope for Guidance.** It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps. History proves, over and over again, that we are not able to direct our own lives successfully. We need not only a perfect

example to inspire us to holier living, but a guide to direct our lives. Christ is the Good Shepherd. (John 10: 14.) He leads, protects, and defends us. Since he is our great Shepherd, we shall not want. If our lives are committed unto him, he will make us to lie down in green pastures, lead us by the still waters, often restore our souls, and lead us always in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Psalm 23:1-4.) Christ has promised to be with us always, even unto the end of the world. With our hand in his hand, we need not fear for we shall be led aright! He will never leave us nor forsake us. When others forsake us, he will stand by us. (2 Tim. 4: 16-18.) When weak, he will strengthen us (Phil. 4: 13); when needy he will help us (Heb. 4: 16). Yes, Christ is the hope of the world and of every individual. Only he can guide this world unto God and make of it what it should be. Only as we follow him will we find the solution to our world-wide and personal problems.

4. **Christ our only Hope for Intercession.** Christ is more than a Saviour, Example, and Shepherd. He is also our great High Priest who ever lives to intercede for us before the Father's face in heaven. (Heb. 7:25.) Since he lived on earth, he is a merciful and faithful High Priest. He is indeed touched with the feelings of our infirmities. (Heb. 2: 17-18; 4: 14-16.) He is our only mediator (1 Tim. 2:4) and no man, be he priest, preacher, elder, or bishop, stands between us and God save Jesus Christ. When we sin, as we often do, we have in Christ an Advocate who intercedes for us. This is what we need and what the world needs. In Christ the world can be saved, and through him it can have constant access to the throne of grace where it can obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. This today would do the world more good than all military power, financial strength, and political influence. Would that all men of the world could but realize this and come to Jesus Christ. He is the only Hope of the world.

5. **Christ our only Hope in Death.** It is appointed unto men once to die. This is a solemn fact of history. Man has never been able to face death alone, nor solve the problem of what lies beyond this vale of tears. The world, with all its boasted intellect, power, and wealth can never find an answer to the awful mystery of death. But God, through Christ, has given an answer. God raised Jesus from the dead and demonstrated that it is possible for us to die and live again. He is the first fruits of the dead and his resurrection is a guarantee of our own. Though we die, we shall indeed live again! Because he lived, we shall live also and this, friends, is the hope of the world. (John 14: 19.) "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15: 22.) We need to get into Christ, live in Christ,

and then die “in the Lord” (Rev. 14: 13), for he is the Hope of the world as it faces the tragic reality of death.

6. **Christ our only Hope of Immortality.** In his resurrection, Christ “brought life and immortality to light.” (2 Tim. 1: 10.) He has conquered death and guaranteed our own victory over the grave. Though we die, we shall be raised to live forevermore! This is the hope of the world today. When we die, our bodies shall be sown in corruption, but they shall be raised in incorruption. Though sown in dishonor, they shall be raised in glory. Though sown in weakness, they shall be raised in power. Though sown as natural bodies, they shall be raised as spiritual bodies. (1 Cor. 15: 42-44.) There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. Though we now live in our earthly bodies, we shall one day live in our heavenly bodies. “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” (1 Cor. 15: 49.) What a glorious climax to our earthly existence! What a grand consummation of the world’s hope! Yes, Christ is the hope of the world in life and death, in time and eternity. Let us preach the gospel and bring the world to Christ for therein lies its only hope.

“My hope is built on nothing less,  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.  
On Christ, the Solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.”



# **THE PLACE OF THE BIBLE AT LIPSCOMB**

## **(BATSELL BARRETT BAXTER)**

In the fall of 1891 David Lipscomb and James A. Harding launched the Nashville Bible School, a Christian education enterprise, destined by God to become one of the greatest influences for good in the modern world. In the sixty-seven years of its growth, this school, now known as David Lipscomb College, has increased from the little handful of students which met on that October morning of 1891 to more than 1600 students in 1957. Among the myriad facts of interest in this long and wonderful growth, one of the most significant is that today each of the more than 1600 students is still studying the Bible every school day.

### **The Purpose of the Founders**

It is interesting to read the following words from the original appeal for funds to build the school: “The supreme purpose of the school shall be to teach the Bible as the revealed will of God to man and as the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice, and to train those who attend in a pure Bible Christianity, excluding from the faith all opinions and philosophies of men, and from the work and worship of the church of God all human inventions and devices. Such other branches of learning may be added as will aid in the understanding and teaching of the Scriptures and as will promote usefulness and good citizenship among men.”

This purpose was further set forth in the deed conveying the property on Spruce Street for the use of the school as follows: That the property shall “be used for maintain a school in which in addition to other branches of learning, the Bible as the recorded will of God and the only standard of faith and practice in religion, excluding all human systems and the opinions and all innovations, inventions, and devices of men from the service and worship of God, shall be taught as a regular daily study to all who shall attend said school, and for no other purpose inconsistent with this object. This condition being herein inserted at the request of the founders of the proposed Bible School, the same is hereby declared fundamental, and shall adhere to the premises conveyed as an imperative restriction upon their use so long as the same shall be owned by said Bible School, or its Trustees, and to any and all property which may be purchased with the proceeds of said premises in case of sale or reinvestment, as hereinafter provided.”

This means that every student of David Lipscomb College studies the Bible every day and that the college has no authority to suspend this program for any student. This was the plan in the beginning. This is the plan today. We believe that the great influence for good which the school has had has come very largely from this central fact in its history.

## **Fundamental Questions**

In one sense, that is the place of the Bible at Lipscomb. This, however, leaves several questions yet unanswered. After sixty-seven years of the onslaught of higher, destructive criticism, do we still conceive the Bible to be the same kind of book which the founders of the school conceived it to be? After all these years, do we still recognize the Bible as the supreme, final authority in religion? Exactly what do we who teach Bible in the second half of the twentieth century mean by the word “inspired?” In other words, are we still living up to the spirit of the founders’ wishes, or are we merely keeping the old forms which they established? To ask these questions is within itself to suggest the direction in which the answer is to be given.

The crucial issue concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures is whether the Bible came “down from God” or “up from man.” There are those in the modern world who hold the view that the Bible is merely the record of the Hebrew people in their search for God. Even though they hasten to add that the Bible is the record of a highly developed, unusually enlightened, and spiritually sensitive people, the fact still remains that the Bible in this view is merely the record of man’s feelings and man’s experiences. While it may be better than the feelings and experiences of the Hindu or the Buddhist, it is a matter of degree rather than of kind. At the opposite pole is the view which we hold, that the Bible is the authoritative revelation of God to men. Although he used the instrumentality of man to write the various books of the Bible, God provided the message. Between these two positions there is a little possibility of compromise. Either the Bible is man’s book, or it is God’s book. There have been many theories that would fall somewhere between these two positions, but when analyzed every view of the Bible must fall on one side or the other of this watershed.

## **Meaning of Inspiration**

Some have held that the *experiences* which the Hebrews and early Christians had were inspired, but that their writings about those experiences

were the mere writings of men. Others have said, “The Bible *contains* the word of God.” They were not willing to say “It *is* the word of God.” They would compare the Bible to a baby’s cradle. The Bible contains the word of God, as a cradle contains a baby. All of this is very different from our belief.

One of the most acceptable definitions of inspiration is that of L. Gausson of Geneva in his book *Theopneustia: The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*. According to him it is “that inexplicable power which the divine Spirit put forth of old on the authors of Holy Scripture, in order to their guidance even in the employment of the words they used, and to preserve them alike from all error and all omission.” He used both the words “plenary” (or full) and “verbal” in his explanation.

Our word “inspiration” literally means a “breathing in,” coming from the Latin words *in* and *spiro*. In Greek the word *theopneustos* is used. It means God-spirited, or “filled with the breath of God.” According to Miller, “The word implies an influence from without, producing effects which are beyond natural powers.” Christ promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would enable them to know “how” and “what” to say (Matt. 10: 19) and that he would guide them into all truth (John 16:13). Hence, the words (the “how”) and the thoughts (the “what”) are both inspired. Paul said that he spoke “not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth,” but in words “which the Spirit teacheth.” (1 Cor. 2: 13.)

## **If the Bible Were Not Inspired**

We need to remember that there are several things that cannot be true if the Bible is not inspired. First of all, its authority is not binding. In the second place, its statements of fact are not to be regarded as inerrant. In the third place, we cannot rely upon its promises. In the fourth place, its prophecies are not really prophecies at all. We must work out some method of dating the books whereby those statements which seem to be the foretelling of future events are explained as having been written after the events which they purportedly foretell. If the Bible is not inspired, man must look for some other ultimate authority—either his own reason, or the authoritative pronouncement of the church, or human experience (either his own or that of the group), or something else. There results a kind of anarchy or chaos of values when one removes the Bible from its place as the central and final authority.

## **What Is Not Required**

While there are many things that are true in regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures, there are also some things that are not required by the definition that we have given. For example, God's use of certain men to write the Bible did not make these inspired writers omniscient or all wise. In matters of private life and in matters of personal feelings and attitudes they were still men. God only guided them when they wrote his inspired word. To say it another way, God did not make these inspired writers incapable of sin. Remember Peter and David. He did not change the background, style or vocabulary of each man, but used the man's own distinctive qualities. Moses, David, Solomon, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and the prophets all retained their individuality of style and vocabulary, though the message that God channeled through them is not individual nor distinctive but one central message from God.

Yet again, we must recognize that the Bible does not insure the truth of all the statements that it quotes. For example, the Devil lied in his statement to Eve, in the sense of telling her only a partial truth. The advice of Job's friends, likewise, is certainly not true in every respect. It is also important that we recognize that the inspiration of God applied only to the original manuscripts of the various books of the Bible.

We do not claim inspiration for the various versions or translations, for these are the works of uninspired men. We can be grateful that on the whole they are carefully and accurately done, but we would not claim infallibility for anything but the original writings of the God-inspired men.

## **The Bible's Own Testimony**

The Bible itself repeatedly claims inspiration, in the Old Testament there are more than 2,000 statements which specifically and clearly attribute the message to God. Jesus gave his endorsement to the writings of the Old Testament in passages such as Luke 24: 44, "And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me." The apostles also endorsed the Old Testament and expressed their confidence in its inspiration. Such passages as the following indicate their faith in it. "God, having of old times spoken unto the fathers and the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath in the end of these days spoken unto us through his Son ..." (Heb. 1: 1-2.) "From a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are

able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 3:15.) “For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Pet. 1:21.)

The claim of inspiration is also made for the New Testament, as in the following passage from Paul, “And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it, not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.” (1 Thess. 2:13.) “Which things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words.” (1 Cor. 2: 13.) Earlier, Christ had told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come to guide them, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth; for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these things shall he speak; and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.” (John 16: 13.) “But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you.” (John 14: 26.)

## **Conclusion**

There are seventeen men on the Lipscomb faculty at the present time who teach Bible in formal classes. These men come from various academic fields and have been chosen to help in teaching the Bible because of their consecration to the Lord, their knowledge of his word, and their skill as teachers. We confidently believe that, far beyond these seventeen, every teacher at Lipscomb teaches the Bible. The teacher of chemistry, the teacher of biology, the athletic coach, the teacher of business and all the rest of our faculty are faithful members of the church and are on this faculty expressly to help train young people to be faithful Christians.

Every student takes a Bible class every day. Every fourth class at Lipscomb is a Bible class. Add to these facts, the fact that the entire school stops for a twenty-minute period of worship in Chapel each day. And remember that every teacher in the college is a Christian. All of these facts convey some idea of the place of the Bible at Lipscomb.

# THE PATTERN FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

(E. G. COUCH, JR.)

*“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” (1 Pet. 2: 2.)*

When we become Christians, we are babes in Christ. Babes need milk in order to grow physically. Babes in Christ need the “sincere milk of the word” in order to grow spiritually. Several years ago I was preaching in Ohio and baptized a young lady whose heart had been touched by God’s love. On the next Sunday, she stopped me and asked very sincerely, “Brother Couch, what am I supposed to do now?” That essentially is the question we are concerned with this morning.

In God’s word we learn that conversion to Christ is a real change—not something superficial. It involves faith—really trusting God to save us and to use us to his glory. Such faith promotes love, humility, and obedience. Conversion involves repentance—a genuine sorrow for our sins and a real turning from them. It demands a submission of our will to his in being baptized into Christ. In John 3: 3 and 5 we learn that such a conversion is spoken of as being born all over again, thus emphasizing the wonderful change that is wrought. In God’s word we are told how such converts to Christ are to grow spiritually, developing personalities that show the fruit of the spirit, that allow men to see Christ in us, and fit us for eternal life. Thus we can say that the Bible contains the pattern both for conversion and for the development of Christian personalities.

As we look about us, we can see human bodies of many shapes and sizes. Scientists tell us that such physical development is, to a great extent, determined by the food we eat. Likewise as we look about us we see many different personalities —some Christian and others the very antithesis of all that is Christian. These, too, have been determined by the spiritual food we eat. Many persons live by a secularistic philosophy, their perspective of life being limited to the here and now, with no thought as to what lies beyond the immediate. Others live by a humanistic philosophy, thinking in terms of what is for the good of the human race—better living conditions, improved social relationships, etc.—with no consideration given to the fact that we are but strangers and pilgrims here below. Still others think along pragmatic lines—the workability of the thing is the test of its truth. Will it deliver the goods? We can readily see the disharmony between such philosophies and our Christian faith.

But let me ask you to think with me: what are the specific factors that are influencing our personal development? Customs undoubtedly influence us in such important areas as work and morals as well as in clothing, housing and daily personal habits. Television, radio, movies, newspapers, magazines, and comics—all these are having their influence upon our lives, either for good or for evil. The associates we have are a vital factor in our personal development. The training of the home is the first and perhaps the most important single factor contributing to our personal development. I would to God that Christian mothers could appreciate the worthwhileness of the task of training their own children and not feel useless as I often find them feeling. School, with its teachers and schoolmates, with its stimulation to grow mentally, physically, and even spiritually, is a potent force in our lives. One of the greatest influences today in the moulding of character is the influence of outstanding persons. Find out who is a person's hero or heroine and you can predict to some extent the development of his character. Whom do you young people look up to? Elvis Presley, James Dean, or Marilyn Monroe? Or Pat Boone, Bobby Morrow, or Jonas Salk? Certainly everyone here today is keenly aware of the influence of the Bible and the church in our personal development.

How wonderful it is to see people succeeding in various fields of endeavor who have put their faith in the Almighty and who are seeking to pattern their lives according to his word. How challenging it is to see men like Bobby Morrow, Byron Nelson, Pat Boone, George Benson, Omar Bursleson, Bernie Sisk, George Pepperdine, and A. M. Burton, to mention only a few, who have achieved success in their respective fields and remained faithful Christians. How wonderful it is to see Christians chosen for outstanding citizenship awards, outstanding mothers of the year, and receiving recognition in scholastic, cultural, and humanitarian fields.

But such is to be expected if we practice what we preach. For as Christians our desire is to follow Jesus, to whom we belong. We hold him, and no man, as our ideal. The Apostle Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11: 1.) Recall the difficulties that Christians have fallen into when they have turned from following Christ and have said, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas." (1 Cor. 1:12.) As in the past, so today when we as Christians follow men, even the best of men, we will find eventually that they have but feet of clay.

So let us come back in our consideration of personal development to the pattern that God has given us—God's holy word. We can be so grateful to God that he understood our frailties to such an extent that he did not merely give us his word in written form but that "the word was made flesh and

dwelt among us.” (John 1: 14.) Yes, the word of God came alive and lived as flesh and blood in Christ. And that is exactly what must take place again and again in our lives as Christians—God’s word must again become alive as we live it out day by day. Truly, as Jeremiah foretold, God’s covenant today does not become our covenant until it gets off the pages of the New Testament and is written into our hearts and lived out in our lives. (See Jer. 31: 31-34.) Real Christianity is not just theory—it is practice! New Testament Christianity includes baptism for the remission of sins, the weekly observance of the Lord’s supper, and the possibility of apostasy, but it is these things translated into vital action in our lives. We are interested in the pattern God has given—a pattern for the church. Building churches is our business, we feel. But if we build Christians, will not the church inevitably follow? The Lord adds daily to his church those who are being saved. (See Acts 2: 47b.)

If we are to develop along Christian lines, then our lives must be in imitation of Jesus. We must, as Paul admonished, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 2:5.) In succeeding verses we learn that if we have the mind of Christ in us, we will humble ourselves before God and before each other, even as Christ humbly accepted the Father’s will. Perhaps no trait is more needed by soul-winners for Christ than humility, not exalting ourselves but Christ. Again Paul tells us “Whatsoever things are true ... honest ... just ... pure ... lovely ... of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Phil. 4: 8.) Why think upon them? Because if we think upon them, we will act upon them. For truly the wise man spoke, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” (Prov. 23: 7.)

O, to imitate our Savior as we study his life: the unselfish love he exhibited in giving up his life for others, even for us; the compassion he showed toward poor, troubled, diseased, sin-sick humanity; the spiritual life he demonstrated in his personal prayer-life, in his quotation of the scriptures; the willingness to serve—saying that he came not to be ministered unto but to minister. George Tyrrell has aptly spoken of our shortcomings today in these words: “It is our feeling that Christianity consists in going about doing good, especially the kind of doing good which involves a great deal of going about.”

A Christian psychologist has said, “The best way a church can promote the development of Christ-like character in children is to have members with Christ-like character.” But what are we doing in the churches from which we come to develop Christ-like character? Have we become so concerned with the church as an institution that we lose sight of the



individual and his need for growth? As preachers, do we become so involved with classes, meetings, sermons, bulletins, correspondence, travelling, schedules, finances, entertainments, and social responsibilities, that we have little time left for helping individuals work out their problems and build their lives in imitation of Christ?

What makes the difference? Here's Richard: unprincipled, not interested in spiritual things, nor in community improvement, keeping the laws so as not to be punished, faithful to his wife only when she is around. Here's Bill: high principled, interested in spiritual things, interested in the good things of his community, keeping the laws because he is aware of their intent, faithful to his wife because he loves her and the God who gave her to him. What is the difference? It is in what the two have been taught and have learned. It may be that one had Christian parents and the other did not. It may be that one attended Bible school and the other did not. It may be one had a godly teacher in school and the other did not. It may be in the associates they had; or the clubs they joined; or the wives they married. But basically we know that it lies in the influences for good or bad that have been brought to bear in their lives and their reaction to these influences.

We are all blind until we see That, in the human plan,  
Nothing is worth the making if It does not make the man.  
Why build these cities glorious If man unbuilted goes?  
In vain we build the work, unless The builder also grows.  
—Edwin Markham

## FACING DENOMINATIONAL TRENDS (CARROLL B. ELLIS)

One of the most persistent warnings of the New Testament is to be on guard against error. John says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4: 1.) Jude says, "But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how they told you there should be mockers in the last times who should walk after their own ungodly lusts." (Jude 17, 18.) Peter says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. 5:8.) Paul says, "Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." (1 Tim. 4: 1, 2.)

Such warnings are given because there is a difference between right and wrong, truth and error. We never doubt the objective nature of truth in our dealings with the physical world. Scientific law is but a description of what nature has given. The Christian maintains that spiritual truth is just as objective. It is no mere feeling, no human discovery. The Bible is God's word, God's revelation grounded in objective reality.

Man is essentially spiritual with an instinct for faith and a capacity for God. He must have something beyond himself in which to believe. Yet, if his faith is not founded in the revelation of God, it becomes a superstition which is not only useless but damning. Much religion today, as in the time of the prophets, is not only irrelevant to the needs of the people, but it is an ecclesiastical dry-rot. A Christian with candor and honesty is a truth seeker. If a person is righteous without truth, he is a bigot. If he has hope without truth, he is a dreamer. Faith without truth brings deceit, and zeal without truth leads to fanaticism. It is only truth which will make one free. (John 8: 32.)

Those associated with the movement to restore New Testament Christianity have imbibed the spirit of the prophets and apostles in seeking to destroy error in order to discover truth. Their attitude was not iconoclastic, as some have charged, but it was for the purpose of spreading the truth of God's love. Alexander Campbell chose for the masthead of his publication, *The Christian Baptist*. (Jer. 1: 10.) "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to pluck and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." It was evident in his day

and in ours that religious divisions solidified into denominations distort the message of Christ and tend to defeat the purpose of the gospel. While we must never forget the vast throngs who have no denominational affiliation, sectarian barriers must be broken down so there will be unity in Christ. Christ is not divided. The gospel message must always be, "Now I beseech ye brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1: 10.)

The political, economic, radical, and human degeneracy which has caused denominationalism cannot be defeated by smooth speeches and sly insinuations. There must be a frontal attack. True soldiers of the cross have never lacked the heroism which has been demanded. Yet it is time to re-examine the position of the enemy, so as not to fight as one beating the air.

Like everything else in America, the religious climate is undergoing vast changes. While the same error which existed at the beginning of the restoration movement is still present, many of the issues have changed. Many of the denominational leaders no longer believe the erroneous doctrines written into their creeds. Though the practice lingers on, the doctrinal foundation is forgotten. For example, few people today would support infant sprinkling on the basis of baptismal regeneration as did N. L. Rice in 1843. While the doctrine of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit is still found in many denominational handbooks, it is not found in the practice of the group. The theology of the mourners-bench is still present, but the application has gone out of style. The doctrines of Luther and Calvin are more academic than they are convictions. To be sure, this is an oversimplification, for in some places these specific points are matters of issue; but in the main, they are not. The older and larger denominations have changed battle lines and are concerned about other matters.

Many of us, however, have been attacking beliefs of a generation ago, to the neglect of the real issues which face us today. Perhaps we have gotten our sermons from preachers of the past instead of studying the word of God and applying its teaching to the needs of our generation. We have been content to preach the same sermons against the same errors which were attacked by the pioneers. Many of us are like the preacher who was described by his little daughter. "Sadie," asked the deacon, "Don't your Daddy ever preach the same sermon twice?" Sadie indulged in a moment's reflection and then replied, "Yes, I think he does, but I think he hollers in different places."

My plea is for continuing evaluation of the real issues which face us in the denominational world today. New occasions teach new duties. We must

recognize the new trends and shifts which have taken place in the thinking of many people. This is not to be done so that we will glory in mistakes of others; but in an effort to avoid them ourselves, and, like Aquila and Priscilla, to teach them the word of God more perfectly. As T. S. Elliott said upon one occasion, "My qualification is the eye of the owl rather than that of the eagle," for my experience has been limited. Yet here are some trends which must be faced. The theological and social causes will be left to another. I will content myself only with manifestations.

**Security at the Expense of Surety** There is a tendency abroad in many places today to make Christianity man-centered. The natural craving for peace of mind and a good life are reduced to the lowest common denominator of social acceptance, business success, and self-confidence and complacency. Job said in irony, "No doubt you are the people and wisdom will die with you." But this statement is retreated today with an application never intended by the servant of God. Christianity is presented in many circles as a weak and superficial way of dealing with the immediate problems of mankind. Instead of discussing the action of God, they are treating the wounds superficially, like a faithless physician, soothing the patients with false assurance of well-being. A California preacher announced he would not preach sermons any more but would apply the psychological approach to personal problems. Thus, he announced as some of his topics, "Help Yourself to Serenity," "Leave Your Worries at Church," and "Religion Can Conquer Nervous Tensions."

The definitive work in this field is Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking*, which up until March 1, 1957 had sold a total of two million, one hundred thousand copies in all editions. This book is the statement, "Every day in every way I get better and better," with illustrations. It is an attempt to make Christianity into a couch for comfort. God is pictured as a cosmic bellhop to be summoned by the buzzer of prayer. It seeks to make man self-satisfied, complacent and successful. There is a newly published book which, the title would lead one to believe, goes even a step farther in a selfish approach to religion. It is by a Houston Presbyterian minister, Charlie S. Shedd, called *Away Your Weight*. The minister, who lost 100 pounds (from 300 to 195) had tried pills, exercise and starvation but decided to try prayer. Self-interest, whether "enlightened" or simply crass, is the permanent foe of Biblical faith.

This approach has no place for the incarnation, atonement, salvation, sin and judgment, or for a fair statement of the sorrows which come in life.

As easy as it is to ridicule this way of thinking, it must be admitted that thousands of people have committed themselves to this racket of confident

living with disastrous results. Peale alone receives as many as 5,000 letters in a single day. The results will be disastrous in an immediate way and in an eternal way. There is a place today for positive preaching on the subject of facing the problems which we meet in life. Much attention needs to be given to the problem of human suffering and to the Biblical answers. These will immunize us against religious quackery and will give us a basis upon which to appeal to the conscience and intelligence of those who have been misled.

**Style Rather Than Submission** A second tendency which is obvious is the drift toward style and social acceptance as an end in and of itself. Ralph Inge said, "Civilization is a disease from which nations seldom recover." Every religious movement goes through three stages. The first is moral, the second doctrinal, and the third aesthetic. Many of the older religions in America are now on the third step because they have become staid, formal, and ritualistic in their approach to religion. Many of the traditional, non-liturgical churches are fast approaching their more liturgical brethren. This is seen in the presence of written prayers, robed choirs, ministerial gowns, and sermons which seek to interpret the news of the day and recent cultural developments. Their soloists are hired, not because of religious convictions, but because of vocal skill. Doctrine is cast aside as unworthy of consideration because it would cause difficulty. The attitude becomes, "Think what you like, but refrain from positive assertions or denials." Even the liberal Harry Emerson Fosdick said, "Modern Christianity has grown soft, sentimental, and saccharine. It has taken on pink flesh and lost strong bone. It has become too much flute and too little trumpet. Its preachers have become too commonly religious crooners."

It is easy to describe the situation which most will admit does exist. The problem must be faced that many denominations today are not concerned about a revealed religion but only with a religion which is a part of a cultural pattern which they enjoy. Decency and order must prevail in worship to God, but a religion which is concerned with beauty, symmetry, and culture as ends in themselves cannot elevate the truth of God. This cannot be combated by a recourse to vulgarity, but by doctrinal preaching coupled with demonstrating the beauty of holiness.

**Statistics as a Measure of Success** As a nation, we are a statistically minded people. We allow conclusions drawn from questionnaires and polls to masquerade in the garb of pure science and bow to them with astonishing meekness. By the number of questionnaires which I receive to fill in, I sometimes think we have both government and education by the questionnaire method. There is, admittedly, a certain value in information obtained in this way; yet it is limited and inexact, and sometimes it may be

misleading. The statistical approach to religion is found in denominational circles today. The successful church is the one which has the best statistical records. They have a large membership, huge collections, and boast of how many new members they have received during the previous year. The basis upon which the members were received is unimportant. Those who are assembled upon a given occasion are not so much a congregation but an audience to be entertained and counted. There is nothing wrong with reaching as many people as possible, but numbers for their own sake as a matter of pride or as a standard of judgment become self-defeating.

**Surrender of Some Sectarianism** There is an indication in some circles today of the surrender of some sectarianism. A Presbyterian, Congregationalist, or Baptist minister will not feel the least an alien in a Methodist pulpit, nor will he be treated as such. Denominational divisions have little or no meaning to most Protestants. This is partly because of indifference, and partly because there is a feeling that denominational demarcation needs to be erased. For the most part, denominational loyalty is like that of a student to his school. In the past, it was not unusual to hear a man thank God for the different denominations. This is seldom the case now. There is an attitude of repentance and of shame on the part of many denominational leaders for the conditions which exist in the world today. The Ecumenical Movement which is now in progress has affected many religious groups. The 1954 meeting in Evanston, Illinois was widely publicized and attended by denominational leaders from all over the world. Such a movement certainly leads to the charge that the various religious groups are findings themselves hard pressed by hostile agencies and are attempting to meet the threats by adopting the stratagems of the world. There can be no real unity until the Bible is accepted as the foundation of unity. "Shall two walk together except they have agreed?" (Amos 3: 13.) Unity in a few generalizations which are given no concrete expression is superficial. Yet, we must be aware of the change in the thinking which presents an excellent opportunity to show the true basis of unity. This must not only be taught through words, but it must be shown in a unity which exists in the church today. There is nothing more compelling and more challenging than the plea for New Testament Christianity. In the past, many people have been so poisoned by denominational distinctions that they have been immunized to teaching. With these gradually fading away, there is an opportunity to do more than we ever have. We cannot do it by becoming a denomination ourselves, by joining in denominational movements, or by reducing the gospel of Christ to human traditions. We must accomplish our

purpose by a faithful adherence to the revealed truth in the Bible, and by a forceful and courageous approach to the situations which exist.

Our task is not an easy one. It calls for fair play, freedom from narrow partisanship, humility about one's own judgment, good sense, and a conscientious effort to be understood. Above all it calls for a living loyalty to the church as the divine institution which is the realization of God's redemptive purposes. The church is Isaiah's remnant, Jeremiah's people of the New Covenant. It is the body of Christ, the family of God, and the colony of heaven. The church must be adamant against a mere religiosity by proclaiming the eternal plan of the ages. It is not enough to shout old shibboleths without fairly meeting the issues. By effective opposition to denominational-ism in every form, in our age the church will make known the manifold wisdom of God.

## **THE SCRIPTURES—OUR PATTERN**

(REUEL LEMMONS)

The mistakes of man are so many, and his future fraught with so much uncertainty that there is inherent within him a tendency to seek a ready-made pattern for his actions. The relentless hand of time is between his shoulders, forcing him forward into a future filled with so much uncertainty that he dare not tread it alone.

And, indeed, he need not. He can have expert advice for directing his life. God should be an expert at living—he has been at it a long time. He never made a mistake and his patterns for human action have been by six thousand years of human experience proven infallibly right. God's word is in a class by itself. Even among infidels, no other work has ever been held in such high esteem.

Its central theme transcends time and eternity. It embraces the whole duty of man here and the destiny of man hereafter. It presents the ideal in every realm. The facts it states—though simply stated—are almost if not altogether beyond human comprehension. Its commands provide for the ideal in human behavior. The promises it extends have awakened more burning desire and greater zeal than ever were inspired by silver-tongued eloquence or poetic fire. It has been the unanimous verdict of all those who have ever studied the Bible that, compared with other books, it is a diamond among common rocks—a single star in a firmament of comparative darkness.

I believe with all my heart that the Bible is the divine revelation of an Almighty God, given us in loving kindness, as a lamp for our feet and a light upon our pathway. I believe that it provides the divine pattern and framework within which, and within which alone, human action acceptable and well-pleasing to God may take place. I believe that every word of it is couched in divine wisdom. I believe that it is a perfect rule of faith and practice. As Paul wrote to Timothy: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

The world recognizes the need for leadership. A business concern must have its president; a kingdom must have its ruler; an army must have its general; and petitioners must have their spokesman. The same need must be recognized in the spiritual realm. Israel had its Moses and its Joshua; Egypt



had its Pharaoh; and in the New Testament, the scriptures say that “Peter stood up with the eleven” on the day of Pentecost.

All human leadership is fallible. The best of men make plans and yet those plans go awry. Herein is proof to the skeptic and the infidel; through six thousand years, the plans of God have never shown mistake. Deeds were mentioned before they occurred as though they had already happened. Prophecies were fulfilled to the letter. In such things God gave notice to the whole world that his plans were perfect.

No nation has ever arisen except by the practice of the principles advocated in the Bible. No government which left those principles has stood the test of years. Greece and Rome, with all their power, lasted but a thousand years, while Israel lasted twice that long, and the church has been with us twice that long. The rise and comparatively early fall of these mighty powers, and the rise and continued permanence of these relatively small ones, is proof that God directed the one while men directed the other. Leave out the fact that God fought with Israel and the very existence of the little nation is a miracle. Leave out the fact that God works with a Christian and the continued existence of the church through the ravishes of twenty centuries is a miracle.

The attempts of man to make patterns for his own conduct have dotted the pages of history with one dismal failure after another. Nations have gone to war and have conquered each other, and yet constant rebellion results. Nations have striven to avoid war, and have failed. All peace treaties are but scraps of paper. We have sunk our battleships, and blown up our powder factories and allowed our plants where war machines are built to rust; and yet the threat of war is with us, and in our sleep we hear the rumble of distant guns. So long as men set the patterns of human conduct these things will continue.

Jesus of Nazareth laid down the pattern of peace two thousand years ago when he said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind: and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” When the pattern of Jesus is followed by the sons of men, then, and then alone, will men beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Society seeks to destroy crime by prison and punishment, but so long as hate and greed rule the hearts of men we will always have crime. Men go to law with one another. The court renders a verdict, but it cannot right the wrong. The pattern of God is designed for the inner man, from which the outer actions spring. And only the pattern of God can provide an atmosphere where the lion and the lamb can lie down together and a child can put its hand on the hole of the asp without harm.

The apostle Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, marked this very principle as the thing that would destroy the efficiency and the purity of the New Testament church, and plunge it into a great apostasy. He said, during his lifetime, “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” Paul knew well the tendency of man to reject the patterns of human conduct which are divinely set, in favor of patterns of human origin.

By the power of God’s almighty word order came out of chaos in the beginning, and by that power alone can the chaos of modern religion be dissolved. By the pattern established before the foundation of the world order is maintained in the universe. By divine pattern the spiritual world keeps order; for even the angels are subject to law. Every breach of law is sin. And the way of the transgressor is hard. The wages of sin is death. The law of God provides the pattern within the framework of which human action must be circumscribed if it is to be without adverse repercussion.

God’s law for the spiritual world has been incorporated into words, directed to the intellect of man. Man, made well above the rest of God’s creation, and possessor of an immortal soul, must obey the divine pattern from the heart as well as by the hand. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. God has given us a pattern for obedience; a pattern for the church; a pattern for worship, and a pattern for work. Strict compliance with that pattern produces Christians only; the church of Christ only; scriptural worship and scriptural work. The real legitimacy of Christianity rests in strict adherence to the pattern.

Either God’s word is the pattern or there is no pattern. Since God gave us one, I deny the right of any man to make a pattern for me. I believe that all men are created free and equal, and that neither I nor my mind was created to be slave to any man, or to his pattern.

If God’s word is intended to be a pattern it is a perfect pattern, for God cannot be charged with imperfection, and following it is important—yea, absolutely essential. If God’s word is not intended to be a pattern, then it doesn’t matter what we are, or what we do, in religion. Nor, does it matter whether we are anything, or do anything.

Since all religion is patterned, it follows that all religion is patterned either after human or divine pattern. Human religious pattern is an usurpation of my liberty, an enslavement of my religious urge, to the human who made the pattern. By the freedom I reserve for my soul I will own allegiance to none save the true and living God. I will not even be in bondage to orthodox opinions!

It is but natural, when we allow other people to do our thinking for us, that we will follow them off, if and when, they go into error. When one has to filter all his thinking through the mind of another he becomes a slave. God gave you a mind, and he made it so independent of every other mind that no man can read your thoughts, nor you his. God directed his book to your mind. It is your message from God as if it had been written in heaven especially for you and sent to you by special delivery. It is your pattern. With God's Book open in your lap, and with the good mind God gave you, you are able to "receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your soul."

God inspired some especially selected men to write a book for you. When the last man had laid down his pen, and the ink was dry upon the page, you had received your greatest legacy. Nothing has ever equaled it; nothing ever shall. It is a perfect pattern for human conduct. Upon its pages are written truths of immortal nature and worth. Its every word is couched in divine wisdom, and its every command is as forceful as if he, personally, had stood upon the earth to deliver it. Its final verse closes God's revelation to man, and the last chapter is a warning to the race so long as the ages roll never to add one jot or tittle to its words of life, nor to subtract a single syllable from its tens of thousands. In the midst of it is God's admonition from the pen of Paul that whosoever preacheth any other doctrine, let him be accursed.

It is the one book in all the earth that deals with spiritual man completely. The fact that the scriptures are a revelation from God should command profound respect. He is a God whose will cannot be changed and whose law cannot be ignored. There is but one Bible. The fact that human mind has never fathomed it is proof that human mind never conceived it. The attempts to destroy it have been sufficient to establish it. So convincing are its proofs that even the devils believed and trembled.

As the carpenter goes to his blueprint, and as the housewife goes to her cookbook, so the spiritual man goes to the Bible for his pattern. When man has written his last treatise and earth's wisest have exhausted their wisdom on the subject of how to live, God's word will still be the only infallible pattern for human conduct. Men need to go back to the Bible. From the path to glory which its heavenly light illuminates, our wandering feet have carried us far afield. Our only hope lies in complete abandonment of any and all human patterns in favor of the divine one.

Religion based upon human pattern invariably degenerates into idolatry. This is evidently God's way of reducing to foolishness the wisdom of men. All the idolatrous religions of earth started with following a man and the

patterns of men. There is much idolatry in so-called “Christianity.” The worship of objects, dead saints, and relics is but idolatry which has crept in to contaminate the worship of Jesus Christ. When man begins to interfere with the divine pattern he starts religion on the degenerative route to idolatry.

When the divine pattern is accepted there is no need for any other. Human patterns have sprung up in recent years by the dozens. There is no religious order that does not have its own peculiar creed. It is the purpose of that creed to circumscribe the peculiar pattern of that particular sect.

The making of human patterns in religion is really an insult to the Almighty. One must first doubt God’s ability to guide the apostles in the statement of understandable truth, or else doubt His ability to set a pattern for human conduct. If a human pattern contains more than the Bible, it contains too much; if it contains less, it contains too little; and if it contains the same, it is superfluous.

When the apostles went out under the great commission, they preached Jesus—that was all they knew—and they made converts to Jesus. They never converted a person to a sectarian doctrine or human pattern. They did not teach denominationalism for they were not taught denominationalism by Jesus. Today, the things that divide people religiously are not the things the apostles taught, but are, rather, the commandments of men that have crept in since the apostles’ day.

Within the church there is the same tendency to bind human opinion where divine pattern has not bound, and to look leniently upon flagrant disregard for divine pattern where the human desires of the brethren run counter. It is a constant struggle to keep the spirit of denominationalism and sectarianism out of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church was so ordained and established, and its simple form of government was such, that it could be planted in every nation and grow under any form of ruler ship. The cooperation between the churches was wisely left to the individual congregations themselves, and nobody dictated to them what they should or should not do and what they should or should not believe.

In Eph. 4 the apostle says: “He gave some to be apostles and prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the faith; for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

The Lord set in the church, first, apostles and prophets; secondly, evangelists; thirdly, pastors and teachers. He put them there for these three purposes: first, the perfecting of the faith; second, the work of the ministry; third, the edification of the body of Christ. The aim and purpose of such a pattern was first, that we come in the unity of the faith; second, unto a knowledge of the Son of God; and third, unto a full grown man in Christ. In organization and worship the church must fit this pattern.

Since Pentecost, there have been reformers of churches, and numerous reformers of reformed churches, but none has ever attempted to reform that church which Jesus built. Reformations cannot take the place of that which needs no reformation. No man, nor group of men, has ever been given the right to write a law, apply a rule, or make a pattern, for governing the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is possible to set aside all the troublesome questions that arise concerning conflicting patterns, when we go directly to the Bible for the one that is infallibly right. What a blessed thought it is that we do not have to accept some man's opinion, or private view of what the scriptures teach. We are not asked to trust either an infallible man or an infallible church. What the scriptures teach, and what any one of us thinks the scriptures teach are not necessarily the same. Each can, however, go directly to the Bible for the divine pattern. It is a compliment to the dignity of man that God has not set among us certain infallible ones, whose wisdom is sufficient to guide the rest of us.

In all the apostasies of all the groups through the centuries there was no destruction of the divine pattern. As Israel dug its ancient law from under the debris of its crumbled city and re-read it in its ancient purity to a people at last willing to hear, so also did a remnant of stalwart souls dig out from under the debris of human creeds and patterns the ancient law of our Lord and Savior. The divine pattern is just as sharp and clear today as it was in the day in which it was given.

My brethren have struggled against mighty odds to rebuild the walls of the ancient city of Zion. They study carefully the divine pattern and urge men and women to follow it. They are unwilling to do in religion that for which they find no divine pattern. They speak where the Bible speaks, and they are silent where the Bible is silent. The divine pattern, without deviation, is their sole standard of faith and action.

Until such a time as we can drop our distinctive patterns, and all of us measure ourselves and our religion by the divine pattern, we can expect to have the denominational strife and division that has become the ridicule of the world. We plead with all men everywhere to go back to the Bible, back

to the divine pattern, which is without fallibility; that all our actions and worship be governed by it, in order that we may really be one in Christ.

## THE PATTERN—THE BIBLE

(JIM BILL McINTEER)

In approaching the task assigned by our mutual dear friend, Willard Collins, to speak on “The Pattern, an Address about the Bible,” there is a willful impossibility to separate words and flesh. The words of which we speak are the divine words by inspiration given. The flesh we contemplate is that which “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) who was “*made* of the seed of David according to the flesh and *declared* to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1: 3-4), verily the Son of God—Jesus Christ our Lord. So in an assignment so vast, we approach our task by offering the parallelism found in Jesus himself.

Peter affirmed, “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” (2 Pet. 1:16-19.) From this marvelous testimony our key words that summarize our speech on the Bible shall come. They are: (1) “a voice from heaven,” (2) “we heard,” and (3) “take heed.” As the Bible is the message of God to man, the veritable pattern that came from heaven, there are these salient features: God spoke, man heard, divine-earthly union is effected in obedience. In that manner of division we discuss “The Bible.”

Marvelous is the thought that in my hand I hold the word of God. Letters come from various persons, and we sometimes measure the significance of the letter by consideration of the ability and esteem of the writer. Letters from Presidents become a valuable legacy of any family—age all the more enhancing their worth. But did you ever hear of one more signally honored than to have in his lawful possession a message from the God of glory himself? Over 2,000 times this Holy Book shouts its claim that it is the word of God. Psalm 119 praises God’s word in every verse with “thy.” Every Scripture owes its origin to God’s breath. This same God who “by the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them

by the breath of his mouth” (Psalm 33:6), has now given man the greatest book in the world. His breath is in every word as your breath is in every word of yours. “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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. 3: 16-17.)

Those ordinary events of life—birth, marriage, disappointments, successes, happiness, frustrations, sorrows, sickness, finance, disease, death, hope—all are treated—not by mortal man, but the immortal God. Thank God he spoke! And that the terms of his speech are understandable. Were this not so—of all terrestrial inhabitants, man’s lot would be most miserable. Here in fashion unexcelled, the Almighty God—our help in ages past, our help in years to come—has given the remedy for the ills of sin. The Hindu becomes tediously absorbed as in his fanciful speculation he wrestles with the problem of the origin of sin. Thanks be to God, he was more interested in its remedy! Relief and deliverance are its characteristics as the theme of salvation is magnificently portrayed by the Lamb of God himself. Then glory in this revealed will, beautifully described in this well-known selected quotation.

## **The Wonder of the Bible**

“This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, and the happiness of believers.

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 charter.

Herein Paradise is restored, heaven is opened and hell is disclosed.

Christ is its grand object, our good is its design, and the glory of God its end.

It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully.

It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure.

It is given you in life, will be opened in judgment and remembered for ever.

It involves the greatest responsibility, will reward the highest labour, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.



It offers happiness for childhood, inspiration for youth, strength for maturity, assurance for old age, comfort for death, and salvation and riches and glory and reward for eternity.”

It is now with joy that we come to that second inspiring truth — “we heard.” As Jesus was transfigured before that inner three—they heard that voice from the more excellent glory. In our times, with utter clarity, God speaks and “we hear”!

It sometimes is a little amazing men are so interested. Here’s a book about people who lived not generations but centuries ago. Two, three, four and on *thousands* of years ago the characters of this holy drama played their parts. Sixty-one generations have passed since the last of these sixty-six books was completed. Yet the names Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, Paul, Peter, John come with the same freshness of Eisenhower, Mantle, Churchill, Sinatra, or Wilt the Stilt of modern day usage.

Not only are its personages arresting and of interest, but even its mechanical make-up. Here is a library of sixty-six books, falling into two major divisions called Old and New Testament. Thirty-nine books belong to the Old, twenty-seven to the New. 1,189 chapters comprise it; with 929 such divisions in the Old Testament and 260 in the New. Of course, it was not originally divided into chapters and verses. Some accredit Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of King John, whereas others say Cardinal Hugo was the one who made these chapter divisions. Although the chapter marker may be debated, it’s agreed that in A.D. 1200 these divisions were first used. In 1551, Robert Stephenson, on a long ride from Paris to Lyons, divided it into verses and the Geneva Bible of 1560 was the first whole Bible to be so divided into chapter and verse. Thus, before making laws where God made none in demanding that men always give numerical citing of “chapter and verse” for every reference used in didactic discourse, it might be well to recall that the gospel was preached 1500 years before anyone could attempt such a presentation.

These 1,189 chapters are divided into 31,101 verses, 23,144 in the Old Testament and 7,957 in the New Testament.

6,000 different English words were used in earlier translations to convey the meaning of the 8,674 different Hebrew (the language of the Old) and 5,624 Greek (the language of the New) to our native tongue. Even then some of the words are perplexing.

Dorris Billingsley one time stopped in a Mississippi restaurant for breakfast. He ordered “Toast, two eggs, bacon, please.” After the order had been taken, he realized his eyes were greater than his ability to consume. Summoning the waiter he said, “Eliminate those eggs.”

A long, long wait occurred.

After a while a polite waiter returned with this valuable suggestion, “Boss, does you care if we just poach yo’ eggs—our ’liminator’s broke.”

Not only has man an assignment of great task to master these 6,000 words, but the physical appearance of them in the ancient manuscripts presents a real problem. Can you read this? HTRH-

TDNSNVHHTDTRCDGGNNGBHTN! Substituting English letters for the original Hebrew, this is what the first verse of Genesis was like when it was written. Read it from right to left, add the necessary vowels, separate the words and you should get “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

So even with our 6,000 English words we often need many more to grasp the Bible vocabulary.

By all standards, it’s a little book—more accurate, a tiny library, so far as volume is concerned. One-half of the sixty-six books can be read in twenty minutes. It is said there is no one book requires one hour of constant reading to cover. Thirty to thirty-five hours would take you from Genesis to Revelation, yet it’s tragic so few “have the time” to hear the word of God. A little boy most adequately summed up the use many make of the Bible. It seems the teacher was asking some preliminary questions in the class. “Johnny,” he said, “can you tell me a few things that may be found in the Bible?” “Yes,” came the enthusiastic reply, “lock of my hair when I was a baby, the ticket for Pa’s watch, Ma’s recipe for vanishing cream, and a clipping about Pa and Ma getting married.” And when these folk read the Bible I imagine they were a little like Abraham who “went out not knowing where he was to go.” (Heb. 11: 8 RSV.)

Yes, one issue of the SATURDAY EVENING POST contains more “copy” than the entire New Testament.

But in spite of the ignorance of some, it still makes the greatest of impact on present day society. Titles of 200 novels and plays in the U. S. in the last ten years are from the Bible. Two-thirds of all U. S. Presidents wear one or more Bible names. I’m glad the lady who objected to Shakespeare’s “Hamlet” because “It’s too full of quotation” hasn’t decided to be such a critic of the Bible. She might on seeing expressions like “apple of the eye” “drop in bucket” “powers that be” “labor of love” “salt of earth” “sign of the times” “thorn in the flesh” “I’ll tell him a thing” (and we’ve added “or two”) decide the Bible also was “full of quotations.”

From the time it became the first message from the printing press in the middle fifteenth century, the Bible rightly so has never relinquished its position as the best seller in every age. In the English speaking world more

copies of the Bible are sold than any other book. “Some parts of the Bible have been published in 1,059 languages and dialects, as of December 31, 1952, according to a report issued by the American Bible Society. Ten languages were added to the list last year.

The whole Bible, the report stated, has now been published in 197 languages. A complete New Testament has been published in 257 languages and at least a Gospel or other whole book in 605 languages.”

The New York Public Library reports that the book most in demand is the Bible. They keep seventy-five copies in active circulation, replacing them often within the year.

No book comes with a message more sublime. Its purpose is crystal clear. “But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might *live* through his name.” (John 20:31.) It opens the New Testament era with glorious words “the book of the generation of Jesus Christ” (Matt. 1:1), and it never departs from that central character even as it closes Rev. 22: 21 with “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.” Thus, through the pages of sacred story man has heard the glorious triumphal “I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. *For unto you is born* this day in the city of David *a Saviour*, which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10- 11.) Sin destroyed that comradeship, in Eden’s precious bowers, that existed between God and man. The reestablishment of that glorious honor when man might speak to God face to face is the end result of this Book.

Let man glory in this amazing legacy. Opponents have arisen to truth—but it still shines undaunted. Tom Paine came back from Europe making this boastful statement:

“ ‘In five years from now there will not be a Bible in America. I have gone through the Bible with an axe and cut down all its trees; they are no longer timber, but lumber to be put with all other lumber on the shelf. The Bible is a tissue of absurdities and falsehoods which I will expose to the ridicule of the world.’

This brilliant, but deluded, American was a poor prophet. Now seven-tenths of the population of the world have Bibles in their own language. And God’s Word, in America and elsewhere, continues to be a best seller.”

Thus, our freedom and our heritage are directly attributable to the acceptance of the Bible and not by the economic theories and systems of men. For—

*Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again: The eternal years of God are hers;  
But Error, wounded, writhes with pain And dies among his worshippers.*

And now we come to our last section. We've seen two things—God spoke; man heard. What remains? “Take heed”! For after all, can you think of any other valid reason to have the Bible but to obey it? Its purpose is to bring us those words whereby man might be saved. God, Christ, the Holy Spirit have done their work well—will man heed?

God saw the trouble of man. Sin was crushing him. Like the woman taken in adultery (John 8) accusers ready to stone sat on every side. Yet there came one who “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa. 53:4-6.) The Lord saw him become sin for us. “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” (Isa. 53:11.) That glorious one can say to us, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” (John 8:11.) The Star of Bethlehem shines brightly. Follow it! And thereby navigate the sea of life, finding calm and sure repose in the haven of eternal joy.

This book comes with the gospel of Christ of which “I am not ashamed: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written the just shall live by faith.” (Rom. 1:16-17.) What shall we do with it? Believe it! Heed it! Obey it!

Learn its precious truths. Was it not John Bunyan who, centuries ago said,

“Read the Bible, and read it again, and do not despair of help to understand something of the will and mind of God, ... neither trouble yourself, though you have not commentaries and expositions; pray and read, and read and pray; for a little from God is better than a great deal from man.”

Here, in heeding, is the panacea the world needs. It lets man see himself as he really is. Not in the carnival of mirrors bringing us distorted features as we are either Mr. 5 x 5 or else Jack, the Bean Pole. But here man sees himself as he really is. Don't you recall hearing this story ?

“A few months ago I read the story of an old shepherd in the hills of Idaho, who was a faithful listener to one of the finer musical programs on the radio. One night after listening to the concert he wrote a rather amusing letter to the broadcasting station in which he made a most unusual request. He said: ‘I enjoy your program from New York every week, and I am writing to ask you a favor. It's rather lonely up here in the hills, and I

haven't much to entertain me, aside from the radio. No other human beings are near. Now I have an old violin which I used to play, but it has gotten badly out of tune.

I wonder if you would take just a moment on your program next week to strike 'A' on the piano, so that I may tune my violin.'

Well, at first they only smiled about that letter. But then they began to see something more than humor in it. Was it perhaps a symbol of what they should be able to do with good music on the air? They decided to use the letter on the broadcast. And so that night they actually interrupted the program long enough to strike 'A' on the piano in New York, while the old shepherd in the hills of Idaho got the right pitch for his violin."

Let the Bible bring us to the desired change. Hear Paul: "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. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:17-18.)

As when the world came to be the celestial music of the morning stars who sang together in heavenly accord, and the sons of God "shouted for joy," let it so be now that obedience to the eternal word of God shall put harmony in our hearts that men from every nation and kindred and tongue and people shall swell the anthem of Moses and the Lamb as forever we sing the "new song."

I beg you, let God speak, hear his truth, and earnestly obey it. Glorious promises are made. Thrilling utterances are ours to hold. Will you hear it?

"Now through patience and comfort *of the Scriptures* ... hope"; then "*face to face,*" "*for we shall see him as he is*"

## CHRIST, OUR PATTERN IN TEACHING OUR YOUNG (WYATT SAWYER)

Every teacher has his own favorite method of teaching. Some prefer to lecture. Some like the question and answer type of discourse, while others enjoy the discussion method. Your speaker would like to use still another. If I may be permitted to I would prefer to use a Case History as my approach to this lesson. I do so because I do not know of any better way to make us vividly aware of the grave problems before us today and of the fearful situation we are in.

In my case history I shall mention true incidents and real people, but for obvious reasons will omit identifying correct names and places.

Some months ago a very sad event took place in a certain large city. An elderly man was brutally beaten to death by three youngsters. Two non-Christian boys held the old man's arms behind his back while the third boy, a Christian, bludgeoned him to death with a 2 x 4 board. Their motive was robbery. Their reward was less than a dollar.

When horrifying events like this take place around us we ask, "How can human beings drop to such a savage level?" But when an *active* Christian boy is one of the chief instigators in the plot, we are astonished beyond measure and ask ourselves, "Why?" and "How?"

The purpose of my message is to try to explain the "Why" and "How" of this particular case and to also remind us that had Christ's pattern for teaching our young been used here, this tragedy would never have come about.

The main character in this case history will be called "Johnny" though that is not his real name. He was a Christian boy and was trying to do right. This being true, this illustration is not as far-fetched as some might think. Certainly, all cases of improper teaching will not lead to murder, as in this instance. But this pattern of violent behavior on the part of supposedly faithful young Christians is becoming too evident to be ignored.

Johnny was a very confused young man. You might want to say that he had a split personality or a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde disposition, but I think not. I honestly feel that he was a good boy, but lacked competent guidance. To illustrate this I would cite the fact that he spoke at the Men's Training Class of a certain church of Christ on a Tuesday night after he had helped kill the old man on a Saturday night. He spoke on "Christian Responsibility." Those who heard him complimented the speech and remarked about his sincerity. He was trying to say something to those boys

present—perhaps, in an indirect way, tell them how to stay out of the trouble he was in. The following Saturday night he was arrested during another burglary attempt. The questioning about this and other burglaries produced his confession that he had helped kill the old man.

At his trial Johnny pleaded “guilty” and was given a term of life imprisonment. Had he pleaded “innocent” the District Attorney intended to send him to the electric chair and all evidence was that he could have. Both God and man were merciful to him. This was more than he had been to the old man.

Obviously, something was wrong with this boy’s training program. He was called a “crazy mixed- up kid” and the facts seem to verify this.

Something vital and fundamental was missing in Johnny’s philosophy of life. And our study will be to find what this was by comparing his life pattern with that which is prescribed for young people by Christ.

The key to this whole problem is this: Had Johnny been taught the proper respect for God he would never have mistreated his fellow man. (1 John 4: 20.)

## **Divine Arrangement of the Home**

But how is a youngster taught about God ? How can he know him ? Christ provides for the teaching of our young through several arrangements. The church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth, is one. This is why steady church and Bible School attendance is so vital to every youngster’s later life. Too, Christ teaches respect for God and man through the divine home arrangement.

We are told that there are three basic needs in every life, whether young or old. First, is to be loved and to know how to love. Second, is proper respect for authority. Third, is a positive program of life. God established the home to fulfill these needs.

RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY is best taught by the father since he is the child’s first image of God. The father represents the bigness and greatness and power which characterizes God. He is the head of the home as God is the head of all things. A child usually learns quickly to respect such bigness and power. Then it is not hard to understand the impression a child gets of God when he sees his daddy on his knees in prayer before him. If daddy bows before God, as big and mighty as daddy appears, then God must be the biggest thing there is anywhere! And this is true.

In Eph. 6: 4 fathers are commanded to “... bring them [the children] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” This is the solemn obligation of

the father to his children, and every father to every child. I do not read anywhere where this same charge is spoken to the mother. This is primarily the father's work then. It suggests that he is most competent to create the wholesome respect for God which every child needs. But should the father neglect his duty, and millions of American fathers are, and even many Christian fathers, then the mother must step in by the authority of the great commission and make sure that her little ones learn the saving gospel of Christ.

Our friend, Johnny, was one of the youngsters who was neglected in this matter. He attended church services regularly but that helped little it seems, because he had never learned to respect his father, nor his God.

TO LOVE AND BE LOVED is generally more clearly taught a child by its mother. This is not to say that the father and friends do not have a part also, but it seems that love's tender touch is more effectively conveyed to the child's heart through the mother's tenderness and kindness and patience. Mothers are commanded to "be sober, to love their husbands, to love their *children*, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed." (Tit. 2: 4-5.)

Johnny never knew much about love. His sister said recently, "We children never loved our mother much. She was too cold and distant and haughty. Her pleasure was to show how smart she was and how dumb we were. She claims to know more than God. My husband and I go to a marriage counselor regularly in my effort to overcome this loss." Such was the plight of these children. This sister is trying to learn how to love her husband and her children but it is quite a struggle for her. Johnny has not learned how to love yet. His sister does feel, however, that there is still a small ember of love in his heart somewhere and we are trying to fan it into a flame through Christian kindness.

## **Divine Arrangement of the Community**

Everyone readily admits, I suppose, that parents are directly responsible for the rearing and educating of their children. Such is Christ's provision through the divine arrangement of the home. But what if such a condition does not exist? What if parents are not doing this, or will not take care of their own? What then? Are we to ignore the situation and "walk by on the other side"? Or, should we offer what help we can as Good Christian Samaritans I think we have no choice in the matter if we would be faithful to our calling as Christians. The scriptures teach us that "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who



are of the household of faith.” (Gal. 6:10.) Therefore, should parents neglect their children, Christians should rally to their cause in every way possible to help teach them love and a wholesome respect for God. This may be done in a Bible School class, in everyday neighborhood contacts or one or many other ways.

## **Christ’s Precepts and Examples**

When reading Mark 10:13-16 we learn something of Christ’s position regarding young people and their needs. By precept and personal example Jesus taught us three things which are necessary to the successful rearing of our children. Without these essentials no child can enjoy a happy and balanced life. He must know that he is loved, that he must respect authority and will have help in charting his course in life. A POSITIVE PROGRAM FOR LIFE then is taught by Christ in this passage.

In this scripture reference we see children coming to Christ while he is teaching a great throng of people. However, they were being stopped by the disciples and would have been sent away. At this point Jesus took command and *made* time for them. In doing so he taught parents and Christians to “take time to understand youngsters.” I think he would have said it just about that way. As we study further we find why this setting aside of time is so important to them and to us. Next, Jesus said, “forbid them not” suggesting that children are due some place in our lives and should by no means be hindered from enjoying this place. Then, the Master tells us why we must take time to understand our children, “... for of such is the kingdom of God.” They are our children or our friends, but they are God’s too, and perhaps more his than ours! These children in Christ’s midst were eternal souls and future workers in the Lord’s vineyard. He looked at their potential worth to God and would not turn them away. Jesus was the king of the kingdom and saw to it that his little ones did not feel rejected.

Obedience to this example of Christ by those who reared Johnny would have spared him a lifetime behind the “walls” as he is not eligible for parole. Had they taken time to know where he was and who he was with they would have soon learned that he was headed for tragedy.

Jesus did something else for these children. He took them up into his arms and blessed them. How this must have changed their little lives! Hereafter, these youngsters could exclaim, and breathlessly so, “Jesus loved me! He set me in his lap and blessed me!” Such attention and attachment undoubtedly gave these youngsters something to live for. They had a

kingdom to help build. They had a way of life to spread. Thus, Jesus gave these young people an aim in life and a goal to achieve.

The goal for every child is heaven. To get there he must learn to love God and also his children. Once a child has learned to love God supremely and his neighbor as himself he is well on his way toward his destination. But he must pass through this world first, and Christ teaches us how to help him along the way. The Bible is our guide and the rest is up to us. Every child needs faith, courage and convictions. The parents begin the training program. Then Bible School teachers and preachers render assistance. Classmates and friends add their bit. Instructors at our Christian Colleges further strengthen their virtues. Finally, a marriage to a fine Christian mate aids immeasurably in leading one safely to the Father above.

Somewhere along the way Johnny failed to learn respect for God and man as he should. Now he is separated from society forever. What his life will be hereafter, only God can foresee! But he cannot expect to marry or have a home. He cannot expect to help build a better world. At seventeen he virtually stopped living.

There's not much we can do for Johnny. I'm persuaded that all that can be done now is being done. But there are many more Johnnys growing up around us every day. They are in our own homes, in our congregations and in our communities. If they are properly taught of God they will live in freedom in this world and in the world which is to come. Let all parents teach their own children the supreme love of God. Let all Christians be on the lookout for neglected youngsters and supply their needs as far as possible ... "for of such is the kingdom of God."

# **THE PATTERN IN SOUND DOCTRINE**

(REX A. TURNER)

## **Introduction**

The subject assigned for this evening lecture is, “The Pattern in Sound Doctrine.” The subject is a pertinent and serious one, and it deserves a carefully studied and well prepared treatment.

Christianity is a system of sound doctrine. If the people of the Lord lose the true perspective of sound doctrine, they will forfeit their spiritual relationship with Christ. Such forfeiture would be spiritual death.

## **Definitions of the Terms “Doctrine,” “Sound,” and “Pattern”**

The term “doctrine” means teaching. Sound doctrine is sound teaching. The term “sound” means healthy, firm, and trustworthy. The term “pattern” means a thing worthy of imitation, a guide or model, a design or form, a mold. The subject under consideration, therefore, demands the setting forth of a pattern—a guide, form or mold—that is right before God and that will promote, sustain and guarantee the prevailing force of a healthy, firm, and trustworthy doctrine among the people of God.

## **The Pattern of Sound Doctrine**

The pattern of sound doctrine embraces certain basic and fundamental concepts which must be held in focus if the church is to fulfill its mission. Brethren must hold in focus:

1. The unity of the Lord’s people, a condition precedent to the evangelization of the world.
2. The undenominational character of the church.
3. The autonomy of the local congregation.
4. The primary principles of the gospel, the worship, and the Christian life.

These basic concepts must be understood, accepted, and acted upon in good faith. They are absolutely essential to the spiritual well-being of the church.

*The Unity of the Lord's People a Condition Precedent to the Evangelization of the World*

One principle that must be held in focus is that the unity of the Lord's people is a condition precedent to the evangelization of the world. Jesus prayed that all who believed on him might be one that the world might believe that God did send him. (John 17: 20-21.)

The pioneers recognized that the unity of the Lord's people is a condition precedent to the evangelization of the world. Thomas Campbell set forth in his *Declaration and Address* some principles which were destined to become the basis for unity in the restoration of simple Christianity in this country. Those principles are:

1. In matters of faith, unity.
2. In matters of opinion, liberty.
3. In all matters, charity.

Only through a recognition and application of these principles today may the Lord's people maintain that unity that is necessary to the evangelization of the world.

*In Matters of Faith, Unity.*

In matters of faith brethren must be united. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Matters of faith are established by the authority of the scriptures by means of commands, necessary inferences, and approved examples.

(i.) A command is an authoritative direction, an order. It must be obeyed. A command may be generic or specific. "Go teach" is a generic command, while "sing and make melody with your hearts unto the Lord" is a specific command. Obedience to every command is a divine obligation.

(ii.) A necessary inference is an inescapable conclusion based on the implications of evidence, facts, or premises involved. The baptism of Paul in the Holy Spirit is a case in point. The New Testament does not state that Paul was baptized in the Holy Spirit, but it does state that he imparted spiritual gifts and that he came not behind the "very chiefest apostle." The necessary inference is, therefore, that Paul was baptized in the Holy Spirit. The beginning date of the kingdom of God can be ascertained only by logical inductive and deductive conclusions which constitute the principle of necessary inference.

Emphasis should be placed upon the distinction between a possible inference and a necessary one. If an inference may be drawn, by the same

logic it may not be drawn. If an inference may or may not be drawn, one cannot prove that it should be drawn; and the respondent is required to do nothing by the principle of logic except to deny it. A possible inference should never be made a condition of communion among Christians. If logic demands that an inference must be drawn, it is a necessary one. The conclusion is inescapable, and it must be admitted, therefore, as of divine obligation.

(iii.) An approved example is the conduct of a person, or an event, or a course of action that is suitable or worthy of being imitated. Whether or not the example must be imitated depends upon the obligation and/or circumstances from which the example or action stems.

Any example, for instance, may be said to be an approved one, be it ever so incidental, if it does not conflict with any Bible principle, and if it is stated without censure by an inspired person concerning a Christian or Christians in any matter relating to the Christian life. An incidental example may be defined as an act or course of action that is subordinate, or subsidiary, or auxiliary to the performance of the purpose or charge at hand. In the case of an incidental act or course of action, some other act or course of action could be substituted; and yet, the same purpose or charge at hand would be accomplished.

When the pioneers spoke and wrote of approved examples, they had in mind, no doubt, those examples that establish precedents, or point up principles, or cooperate with facts and circumstances so as to constitute necessary inferences that are absolute and binding exclusively under all conditions and in all circumstances.

Examples, by way of explanation, other than incidental ones, standing alone, may establish precedents, or they may simply point up the existence of a general principle of divine truth. A precedent is a proceeding or course of action that will serve as a general rule to be followed in similar cases. Precedents give direction without setting forth an explicit and exclusively binding procedure that cannot be altered or deviated from under any circumstances. The divine economy of the scriptures provides for such, else God's laws would fall into conflict with each other.

The example of how the Jerusalem church proceeded in the selection of seven men to provide for the needs of the Grecian widows (Acts 6) serves as a general precedent for the selection of elders and deacons in the respective congregations today. This example gives direction without binding a set method for such appointments.

The example of Paul's making tents for a livelihood while he preached the gospel to the Corinthians (Acts 18) points up the general principle that

preachers, in cases of necessity or expediency, may or should engage in gainful occupations or professions in order to maintain themselves financially so that they may continue to preach the gospel.

The question often arises as to when an example is exclusively binding. The problem has been discussed considerably of late throughout the brotherhood by competent men. No example, standing alone, may be said to be explicitly and exclusively binding. While emphasis may be given to the preponderance of examples, no example or pattern of examples may be affirmed to be binding exclusively unless that example or pattern of examples is coupled with facts and circumstances so as to demand the inescapable conclusion that Christians must follow that example or pattern of examples to the absolute exclusion of all other things. The observance of the Lord's supper on, and only on, the first day of the week is a classic illustration of this principle.

The example, for instance, of the disciples' coming together at Troas on the first day of the week to break bread, standing alone, does not bind upon Christians the obligation of meeting on, and only on, the first day of the week for such an observance. The facts and circumstances connected with their coming together do establish the inescapable conclusion that Christians must come together on, and only on, the first day of the week to break bread.

The facts and circumstances which induce such an inescapable conclusion are: first, the manner in which the meeting is presented; and second, other pertinent facts and circumstances which are connected with the Lord's supper.

The manner of presentation points up the fact that the disciples at Troas had an established custom of coming together upon the first day of the week, the day upon which Jesus arose from the dead, and also the day upon which the church was established; that the object of their coming together was to break bread, and that the apostle Paul tarried seven days to be present at that very meeting.

Other pertinent facts and circumstances connected with the Lord's supper must include the fact that previously the Lord had instituted the Lord's supper as emblematic of his body and blood and had commanded his disciples to eat and drink of it. Another pertinent fact that must be included is that after the establishment of the church on Pentecost the apostles proceeded to set the church in order for worship and edification by directing them to continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in the fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. A third pertinent fact that must be included is that the Corinthians had an established custom of meeting on the

first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and that they assembled to eat the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11).

The necessary and inescapable inference that must be drawn from these facts and circumstances involved, therefore, is that the meeting of the disciples on, and only on, the first day of the week is a divine obligation and a condition precedent for communion among all Christians. (Thus all examples which are coupled with facts and circumstances so as to be a part of and to constitute a necessary inference are binding exclusively upon Christians today.

*In Matters of Opinion, Liberty.*

In matters of opinion brethren must allow for liberty of thought. In many matters a brother must be granted the liberty of entertaining an opinion, but other brethren must likewise be granted the liberty of rejecting the opinion for themselves. One brother may entertain the idea that Christian schools are in reality a waste of time, effort, and money. Another brother may entertain the idea that Christian schools are the remedy for many of the ills of the youth of the land. The brother who sees no value in Christian schools must grant the brother who does see value in such schools the liberty to exercise himself in the interest of those schools; and on the other hand, the brother who is committed to the cause of Christian education must grant the brother who is not so committed the liberty to channel his talents in other directions. Neither brother may force his views upon the other.

*In All Matters, Charity.*

In all matters brethren must maintain charity toward each other. They must exercise leniency in judging a brother and his actions, and they must be of a loving, longsuffering and forgiving spirit. They must always maintain freedom to discuss their differences of opinion.

Matters of engaging in religious politics, vying for ascendancy of position, and rending the brotherhood through bitterness and strife are antipodal to the spirit of charity and good humor that should prevail among brethren. Brethren often need to learn the art of good manners.

Only as brethren understand and are willing to comply with the principles of unity—i.e., in matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; and in all matters, charity—will the brotherhood enjoy a healthy doctrine and fellowship. The principles for unity need to be re-emphasized. They are an integral part of the pattern of sound doctrine.

## The Undenominational Character of the Church

Another principle that must always be held in focus is that the Lord's people are to be undenominational in character. The plea of the restoration movement was for undenominational Christianity, and the plea needs to be re-emphasized today. Preachers and teachers are speaking and writing less about undenominational Christianity and more about the church of Christ.

If brethren are to understand and appreciate the undenominational character of the church, they must understand that the term “church” and other like designations have been given to emphasize the many fundamental aspects and relationships of the Lord's people. Every such designation has been given for the specific purpose of bringing the varied aspects, relationships and undenominational characteristics of the Lord's people into greater focus.

### *The Autonomy of the Local Congregation*

A third principle that must be held in focus is the freedom and autonomy of the local congregation. The New Testament teaches by necessary inference that the local congregation must be always and under all circumstances free and autonomous. This principle is basic. It must be respected.

### *Security of the Church.*

A free and autonomous congregation might apostatize at a time when it would not otherwise have done so had it had less freedom because of some form of control or a superstructure organization, but the compensating factor is—and here lies the security of the church—that a congregation cannot sweep numbers of other congregations into apostasy along with it, as a control or a superstructure organization could do. Conceivably, a control or superstructure organization could stay a congregation or congregations from removing themselves from the gospel of Christ, but that same control or that same superstructure organization could sweep all the congregations within its grasp into complete apostasy should it become bent in such a direction.

If brethren are taught—and taught well—the principle of freedom and autonomy for the local congregation; then, independent thinking by the respective members of each congregation will ensue, which in turn will



guarantee that any movements that tends toward unscriptural control or a superstructure organization will be for the most part successfully repelled.

Problems of institutionalism have arisen in every generation since the founding of the church, and they will continue to arise. The problems that arise in this era can be met and solved if brethren know and understand well the principle of freedom and autonomy of the local congregation.

### *Abuse of Principle Versus Violation of Principle.*

Basic to a full understanding of the problems that stem from controls and superstructure organizations is the necessity of differentiating between the abuse of a principle and the violation of a principle. A control may be established as the result of the abuse of a divine principle; while a superstructure organization can only be established as the result of the violation of a divine principle.

Actually, a person, or a religious journal, or a school could become an unscriptural control. Such an unfortunate condition would be the result of the abuse of a righteous principle rather than the violation of one.

A superstructure organization is the violation of a divine principle. Such is the case with the missionary society.

### *The Missionary Society.*

The missionary society is inherently a usurper and a destroyer. It has no place among God's people. The sinfulness of the missionary society may be summarized in two pertinent points:

1. First, the missionary society usurps the very role and mission that Christ committed to the church itself—that of evangelizing the world.
2. Second, the missionary society through its superstructure organization destroys the freedom and autonomy of the congregations held within its superintendence.

The missionary society is not God's way for the evangelization of the world. The superstructure of the missionary society is analogous to the sphere, power and control of the Federal Government of the United States. The several states through representation surrendered certain of their innate powers and liberties in order to give birth to the Federal Government. The Federal Government thus constituted became more powerful in its area of operation than the respective states.

The case is the same with the missionary society. Congregations through representation surrendered certain rights and freedoms in order to give birth

and ascendancy to the missionary society. The missionary society thus constituted became more powerful in certain areas than the local congregations, thus destroying their freedom and autonomy.

Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the fact that brethren must keep in focus the freedom and autonomy of the local congregation. Not only must brethren repel the rise of any superstructure such as the missionary society, but they must resist any control that may arise as a result of the abuse of a righteous principle.

### *En Masse Thinking and Acting.*

Unfortunately, those who become *en masse* most concerned about the existence of unscriptural controls and superstructure organizations are not always able to recognize them when they see them. *En masse* thinking and acting for or against any problem or issue is rarely ever accompanied by independent reason, caution and deliberation.

A very real danger is that the *en masse* thinkers and actors may commit the very same abuses that they so strongly oppose. The American people, for example, in their fight to preserve the principles of democracy and the American way of life, have actually sacrificed many of those principles of democracy in order to preserve them. The condition is a paradoxical one.

Those who crusade for the freedom and autonomy of the local congregation must be on guard lest they maintain unscriptural controls in order to rid the churches of such controls. That this mistake has been made in the past cannot well be denied. Brethren, therefore, must have a full grasp of the basic and fundamental principle of the freedom and autonomy that must characterize the local congregation, else they can never rise above the abuses that are certain to come.

### *The Primary Principles of the Gospel, the Worship, and the Christian Life*

A fourth principle that must be held in focus is the stress that must be put on the primary principles of the gospel, the worship, and the Christian life. Christianity is characterized by preaching. It is characterized by the preaching of sound doctrine.

Every sermon should stress fundamental Bible principles, and one that does not is not worth the time that is consumed in the delivery of it. Truth is precious, and time is fleeting. Souls are being continuously hurled into eternity. There is no time for empty words.

### *The Primary Principles of the Gospel.*

A healthy doctrine may be maintained in the brotherhood only if preachers and teachers stress the fundamental principles of the gospel. The old sermons on the proper division of the word, the establishment and identity of the church, the Holy Spirit, what one must do to be saved, etc., must be preached over and over again. The errors of sectarianism must be pointed up and answered.

There seems to be a strong tendency away from this type of preaching today. Young preachers seem not to be as careful today to quote scripture and give chapter and verse for their teaching. Young preachers—as well as others—should read the great debates on matters of Christian doctrine that have been held from the days of Alexander Campbell until the present. A spiritual inventory would likely reveal a tragic weakness in this matter among the rank and file of preachers today.

### *The Worship.*

The worship must receive the proper emphasis. Brethren must worship in spirit and in truth. There is an alarming danger that the observance of the Lord's supper may fall into a mere form like the observance of Mass. The church can have a healthy doctrine only if its worship is in spirit and in truth.

### *The Christian Life.*

Proper emphasis must be placed on the Christian life, the consecrated life. Only as brethren are characterized by godly living, consecration, compassion and love may they be said to be healthy from a spiritual standpoint. The brotherhood must have the kind of preaching that stresses the Christian life.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, if these principles are held in focus, the church will be healthy. If they are not held in view, the ultimate results will be tragic.

## **LESSONS FROM THE PAST**

**(HOWARD A. WHITE)**

On a June day in the year A.D. 325, a group of influential men from many places assembled at Nicaea, a prominent city on the eastern shore of Lake Ascania in Asia Minor. Numbering more than three hundred, they included representatives from churches throughout Europe and Asia. The delegates convened in response to a summons from the Emperor Constantine, and although he had not yet been baptized, he dominated the meeting. The decisions made in the Council of Nicaea were to affect the course of Christendom for centuries to come.

The three centuries that had passed since the church was established in Jerusalem had witnessed profound and revolutionary changes in its organization, doctrine, life, and worship. If one of the apostles of Jesus Christ could have returned to the earth and visited the Council of Nicaea, he would have been astonished to hear the contrast between the simple faith that he had preached and the intricate controversies of the delegates. He would have realized that an apostasy had taken place; that men wore titles and exercised powers unknown to Christians of the first century; and that many innovations had been introduced in place of the worship and doctrine of the churches among whom the apostles had labored.

Those who are dedicated to a restoration and maintenance of “the faith once for all delivered” will find it profitable to examine the departures from the pattern of New Testament teaching. That such departures occurred is a fact generally known among us. The reasons for their occurrence are less well known. A knowledge of the past may help us prevent mistakes in the present and avoid them in the future. Although history never repeats itself, those who read its record may see causes and effects and develop insights that will enable them to deal more wisely with the problems of their own time than otherwise would be possible.

Changes in the pattern of New Testament teaching did not appear suddenly, nor were they the result of an organized conspiracy in the minds of crafty men. Departures came slowly, often requiring decades or even centuries for full development, and were the results or processes that probably left most professing Christians unaware that basic alterations were taking place.

One of the earliest of these trends away from apostolic teaching was the tendency to centralize authority in one bishop in each community instead of maintaining the equality of bishops or elders that is taught in the New

Testament. Large churches in prominent cities became objects of more respect than smaller groups in towns and villages. In these outstanding churches were learned men or men with strong personalities who rose to positions of eminence and influence. Such men controlled financial affairs, directed the worship, and took the lead in deciding difficult questions that the ignorant masses failed to understand. With the passing of time, in keeping with the principle that “power is ever stealing from the many to the few,” these men came to be known as bishops in a sense that exalted them above other elders.

Clement of Rome encouraged such assumption of power by contending, toward the close of the first century, that the apostles had successors clothed with the same authority that had been given to the original twelve. A few years later, Ignatius of Antioch insisted that in order to maintain unity a single all-powerful bishop should preside over each church. By the middle of the second century, the ideas of Clement and Ignatius had become united, and bishops of monarchical authority were to be found in most places.

Doubtless one of the reasons for this situation was the human tendency on the part of ambitious men to seek places of prestige and power. The Apostle Paul had warned the elders of the church at Ephesus that from among their own number men would “arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20: 30.) And if some were eager to seize authority, most of the members were probably glad to turn over all responsibility to the leaders.

The average member of the church in the fourth century was unprepared to deal with the great variety of perplexing questions that demanded attention, and one of the greatest causes of the drift toward centralization was the division and confusion of the time. As early as the first century, Christianity split into a hundred fighting sects. By the time of the Council of Nicaea, the situation had become intolerable. It appeared that the church was bent on fragmentizing itself into a thousand splinters. In an era of such chaos it was inevitable that people looked for strong leadership to resolve their differences.

The first part of the fourth century could have been a time of rapid growth and expansion of Christianity. Persecution that had plagued the church from its beginning had officially ended with the Galerian Decree of A.D. 311 and the Edict of Milan two years later. Instead of using the new freedom in preaching the simple gospel without fear of restraint, factious members turned on one another. The result of their controversies was that they not only failed to spread pure Christianity, but they created a situation that was one of the most significant causes of centralized authority.

The questions that agitated them seem as foolish and unnecessary to us as some of ours will probably seem to those who may read about us in the distant future. Some were determined to exclude permanently from the fellowship any who had denied the faith under stress of persecution. Others were equally determined that lapsed members should be received again on evidence of genuine repentance. This controversy, known as the Donatist Schism, shook the churches of North Africa to their foundations. Other quarrels involved the right to eat meat or to marry again when one's companion had died.

Many of the most serious disputes arose over the nature of Christ. The sect known as Arians argued that since Jesus is the Son of God, Jesus must be inferior to God. Athanasians denounced the Arians and contended that Jesus is entirely equal to God. It was to deal with this issue that Constantine called the Council of Nicaea. Influenced by his wishes, the Council decided in favor of the Athanasians. A few years later Constantine decided to be baptized by an Arian! So the chief result of the Council of Nicaea was to write a creed that was one more step along the way to the development of a centralized hierarchy.

Changes in the organization of the church did not originate in co-operation among Christians in doing benevolent or any other kind of work. The departures came largely because of doctrinal disputes and the attempts to resolve them by enforced uniformity. To combat heresies Christians were exhorted to follow the lead of the bishops of strong churches or the decisions of councils. Those who advocated such methods of settling disputes claimed that their plan was the surest way to adhere to the teaching of the apostles. In other words, while they were leading the church in to apostasy, they insisted that they were following the pattern of sound doctrine!

Accompanying the changes in organization were corruptions of life and worship, absorbed for the most part from the pagan world that surrounded the church. With persecution officially ended and with the Emperor Constantine smiling on the church, it became fashionable to be a Christian. Constantine and his successors gave huge sums to the churches, and many wealthy citizens did likewise. Members of the church, formerly opposing worldly amusements, developed a taste for Roman circuses, gladiatorial combats in which men killed other men, and for the gory spectacles of Roman games. In the age before persecution ended, the world was against the church but did little to stop its growth. When persecution ended, however, the world got into the church and did it more harm than in the years of bloodiest persecution.

As the church grew in numbers and in wealth, its officials began to live in luxury and often in licentiousness. The pagan historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, noted that the bishop of Rome rode in one of the finest chariots in the city and ate at a table much more pretentious than that of the emperor. By A.D. 366 the office of bishop of Rome was so lucrative financially that a bloody fight took place to determine who would get the place.

With such shameless striving for power and wealth, it is small wonder that the worship more and more took on the aspects of paganism. One of the acts of the Council of Nicaea was to decree the intercession of saints. Numerous cults of saints sprang up very similar to those of pagan hero-worship. Many of those who had been converted from heathenism substituted saints or martyrs for their pagan deities. Mary became chief of all these venerated persons and began to take the place of Jesus as mediator between God and men. Feast days, each with its forms of observance and worship, became so prominently featured that the Lord's day worship seemed almost unimportant by comparison.

The events of the first four centuries of the Christian era provide some needed lessons for Christians of the twentieth century. From the brief recitation of developments that it has been possible to give in this short space, the following principles stand out:

First, those who stir up needless controversy and engage in hairsplitting disputes always place the church in a dangerous position. A Catholic priest once showed me a printed chart that graphically illustrated the folly of division. The chart showed the various religious bodies that have claimed to be Christian throughout the ages. In explaining the diagram, the priest observed that non-Catholic religions would ultimately split into so many tiny fragments that none of them would amount to anything. At that time, he said, conditions would be just right for the Catholic Church to move in and regain the control that she exercised in the Middle Ages.

Second, those who insist most loudly that they are preserving and maintaining the pattern of apostolic soundness may be the very ones who are advocating principles that would lead the church into another apostasy. Throughout the centuries creeds have been written and authoritarian systems established on the ground that such were necessary to preserve the purity of the church.

Third, those who set themselves up as judges and arbiters of doctrinal soundness may be establishing an unscriptural hierarchy. The departures of the first four centuries came about as the result of following a minority of men who claimed the right to decide what was sound and right for all the churches. There is no paper among us, no school, and no influential

individual who has the right to pass on the soundness of preachers or churches. Any person or institution that sets up in the business of safeguarding the faith of the brotherhood is guilty of attempting to establish a kind of hierarchy to which other must submit on pain of excommunication.

Fourth, in these prosperous times when the church is strong and powerful in an increasing number of communities, and when many preachers are enjoying generous incomes, there is the danger that we shall forget our mission and take on the materialistic ways of the world.

By turning to human authorities and becoming absorbed in the things of the world, the early church plunged itself into the spiritual darkness of the Middle Ages. Unless we keep the light of Christ's truth burning bright, the darkness may descend again.



## **WHERE THERE IS NO PATTERN (ATHENS CLAY PULLIAS)**

***“Let all things be done decently and in order.” (1 Cor. 14: 40.)***

Each faithful Christian is determined to obey the will of God in all things and to oppose with equal vigor every false teaching and unscriptural practice. Where there is a divine pattern in any particular area of work or worship, the loyal Christian will follow that pattern without variation. The issue at hand may be sharply drawn with a short question: What are God’s people to do when there is no specific pattern?

Certain principles must always be kept in mind in the glorious task of restoring New Testament Christianity. First, there is a realm of faith, where the specific pattern has been given. When God has spoken on any subject through the pages of the Bible, what he has said is definitely in the realm of faith. When God has given a commandment, that commandment is a matter of faith and must be obeyed. When God has given a commandment and a plan, or method, for the execution of that commandment, then *both* the commandment and the plan of execution are matters of faith.

There are many examples that could be given. God has commanded Christians to worship him, and he has commanded Christians to sing as a part of that worship. Therefore, those seeking to restore New Testament teaching and practice have opposed adding instruments of music to the worship on the solid ground that God, in commanding singing, has excluded the instrument. When God commands immersion for baptism, it necessarily follows that sprinkling, pouring, and so forth, are automatically excluded. Another example is found in the Lord’s supper. Jesus gave this commandment: “This do in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:19.) Observance of the Lord’s supper is a matter of faith, and failure to do so is sin. In this case, Jesus went beyond the commandment and spelled out in clear detail exactly how to observe the Lord’s supper. Any grade school child could take a copy of the New Testament and learn with specific certainty the elements to be used and the steps to be taken. Even the day of observance is firmly established by apostolic example. (Acts 20:7.) Therefore, the commandment to partake of the Lord’s supper, the detailed plan to be followed, and the day of observance are all matters of faith. No man has the scriptural right to substitute his opinion or preference for the God-given directions relating to these things.

The total effort to restore New Testament Christianity depends upon recognition of the realm of faith as including that God commands, requires,

and forbids. Thomas Campbell a long time ago expressed this principle in familiar words: “Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.” Digression from the truth always takes place when men value their opinions above God’s revealed will. Those who have sought to introduce unscriptural practices or organizations into the work of God’s people have been steadfastly and properly opposed. Those who love the Lord will continue to oppose these things. God’s will is supreme. The opinions of men must never be allowed to replace the will of God written on the pages of the Bible.

The second basic principle to be remembered in the restoration of New Testament Christianity is this: There is a realm of human judgment. There are many things connected with the work, worship, and lives of God’s people which are, beyond question, matters of judgment. The tendency is strong to make everything a matter of faith. Apparently, there are some who would rewrite the old statement, “We speak where the Bible speaks, and we are silent where the Bible is silent.” They would make this proverb say, “We speak where the Bible speaks; and where God has given no pattern, we’ll make one for you.” These teachers of men, who would make matters of opinion matters of faith and bind their judgments and preferences on the brethren, must also be steadfastly opposed, and opposed for the same reason as other digressive are opposed.

The issue arises in a situation in which God has given a commandment and has *not* given a plan, or method, for the execution of the commandment. This does not mean that there are blank spaces in the Christian’s life not covered by the scriptures. There is one scripture which covers everything not otherwise specifically covered: “Let all things be done decently and in order.” (1 Cor. 14:40.) Those matters which are distinctly in the realm of opinion are to be governed by the general principles of righteousness taught in the word of God.

There are many examples of instances when God has given a definite commandment, and has *not* given instructions as to how this commandment shall be obeyed. In these cases, all things must be “done decently and in order,” and in a manner consistent with what God *has* revealed in his word. Now may we examine some cases in point.

(1) There is the commandment to meet together (Heb. 10:25) which, coupled with divine instructions about worship—singing, praying, partaking of the Lord’s supper, preaching, and giving of our means—constitutes a direct command to God’s people to assemble themselves together. This assembling is unmistakably a matter of faith. On the other hand, the New Testament is silent on *where* to meet. Therefore, the *where* is a matter of

judgment, and never can rightly be made anything else. God's people have met and worshipped acceptably in all sorts of places—private homes, barns, yards, brush arbors, tents, school-houses, court houses, rented halls, meeting houses belonging to other people, and many more. Congregations have bought places of worship and have built places of worship. The meeting house, with everything in it and the use to which it may be put, is a matter of human judgment for the elders of each local congregation operating under the general command: "Let all things be done decently and in order."

(2) There is the command to teach the word of God repeated time after time throughout the New Testament. In obedience to this commandment, the mother teaches her child in the home; the teacher in a school teaches the Bible in a classroom; a businessman teaches his employees; an Aquila and Priscilla teach a man in their home; the editor teaches the Bible through the printed page; the word of God is taught through radio and television. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." (Acts 8:4.) The duty to teach is a matter of faith; the method or medium to be used is a matter of judgment. When the class system was introduced as a plan of instruction in the Sunday morning Bible study, there were some who cried "unscriptural." The result was an anti-Sunday-school faction, which still exists. These brethren made the error of treating a matter of judgment as a matter of faith to the division of the church.

Someone will ask why, then, was the missionary society wrong? The answer is simple. God spelled out a plan for his people to organize themselves into congregations; provided a plan for the government of each local congregation; and described clearly the work to be done by these congregations in proclaiming the gospel to the whole human race. The fact that these divine provisions have been made forbids any plan or organization beyond the local congregation designed to do the work *in the stead of* the congregation, or to exercise control over the congregations. The New Testament plan for the congregations of the body of Christ to evangelize the world is spelled out in detail: (a) Go; (b) Preach (Matt. 28:18-20); (c) Convert (Acts 2: 38, 3: 19); (d) Confirm (Acts 14: 21-22; 15: 32, 41); (e) Organize (Acts 14: 23; Titus 1:5). For full examples see Acts, chapters 13 and 14. The local congregation working through elders, overseers, is to select, send, support, and supervise evangelists. *It would be unscriptural for any agency other than the local congregations to undertake to do this work.* The missionary society was wrong because it undertook to take over and do this work of the local congregations, and sought to exercise control over these congregations. To illustrate this intent, I quote the exact words of D. S. Burnet, a leading exponent of the society, speaking as

corresponding secretary of the American Christian Missionary Society: “For all such purposes, this society is the hand, the tongue, the voice, the heart, of the great brotherhood. We have no other point of contact.” I repeat, if any individual, paper, preacher, college, or other agency endeavored in this way to become what D. S. Burnet called “the hand, the tongue, the voice, the heart of the great brotherhood,” then such action would be unscriptural. This certainly does hinder the individual Christian or Christians, when moving into a new region, in teaching the word of God as they have opportunity. On the contrary, there is the ever present obligation to teach the word of God. However, their efforts must always be pointed toward the establishment of a scriptural congregation of God’s people. The missionary society was not a mere method, or medium, through which teaching was to be done, but rather a substitution of man’s plan based on human judgment for God’s divine plan revealed and spelled out in the New Testament. This does not forbid congregations cooperating together in a good work, as long as the thing actually taking place is cooperation, not organization of the congregations, coercion, or control. It *does* forbid creation of an organization or plan, such as the missionary society, to take over the work of the church and supplant the church.

(3) There is the command to bring up our children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord.” (Eph. 6:4.) This responsibility for the education of our children is a matter of faith, made such by divine command. The New Testament does not propose to spell out the plans and methods to be followed in the education of children. Christian parents are left free under the general command, “Let all things be done decently and in order,” to devise ways and means to train young people. The Christian college, operating under a board of directors, is one effective way to help parents educate their children and develop the talents of those children for usefulness in the church of the Lord.

When David Lipscomb and James A. Harding established the Nashville Bible School, there were many who cried “unscriptural.” Brother Lipscomb was accused of establishing a missionary society under the guise of a school which taught, and still teaches, the Bible each day to each student. These critics, who developed a doctrine known as Sommerism, shouted that the Christian college that teaches the Bible is exactly parallel to the missionary society. There is no such parallel, and the reason is plain. When the Christian college does all it claims to do, the church has no less to do; none of its work has been taken over by the college, and the college exercises no control, or supervision, over the church. Exactly the same could be said of a gospel paper. If a Christian college, or a paper, or an individual were to

begin to select, send, support, and supervise evangelists; take over the mission work being done by the local congregations, and exercise control over these congregations, then there would be a parallel between these activities and the missionary society, and therefore such action would be unscriptural, just as the missionary society is unscriptural, and for the same reasons.

(4) The care of orphan children and widows is a divine command (James 1: 27); and, therefore, beyond question, a matter of faith. There is no New Testament pattern as to how this care shall be provided. The *how* is in the realm of human judgment. Actually, orphans are being, or have been, cared for, to my personal knowledge, in a wide variety of ways: In private homes without outside help; in private homes with other persons paying for their care; in private homes with congregations paying for their care; in houses owned by local congregations where widows and their children have been placed and supported by the congregation; in orphan homes under the elders of a local congregation, taking in many children, with other congregations and individuals cooperating to provide the necessary support; and in orphan homes organized by brethren for the care of homeless children, operating under a board of directors and supported by congregations and individual contributors. Someone will say, is not an orphan home under a board of directors parallel to a missionary society? The answer is a definite *no*. There is no such parallel and the reason is plain. The missionary society proposed to take over and do a work which the local congregations are given a specific pattern for doing, and to exercise control over the congregations contrary to God's order. When the orphan home has done all that it claims to do, the congregations have no less to do. The home for orphans in no sense supplants the church, and certainly nothing is less able to dominate the church than a home for orphan children, which is dependent on Christians for its very existence. If the contention is made that the orphan home operating under a board is parallel to a missionary society operating under a board, then does it follow that the missionary society could be made scriptural by placing it under the elders of a local congregation, as some of the homes for orphans have been placed? Certainly not. The missionary society would be as unscriptural under the elders of one congregation as under a board of directors. The contention has been made that the orphan home operating under a board of directors would be scriptural if supported by individual contributions, rather than by support received from congregations. Would the missionary society be any less unscriptural if it were supported by individual contributions alone? The answer is *no*, and the missionary society would be unscriptural regardless of

the source of its support and regardless of the form of control used for its government, because it proposes to do a work which the New Testament has clearly instructed the local congregations to do and has given step-by-step examples of how this work is to be done.

The missionary society would be just as wrong under an eldership as under a board of directors, because there is a divine pattern for the congregations to do what the missionary society proposes to do. There is no such divine pattern for the care of orphans. The local congregation is its own “missionary society.” The local congregation is *not* its own orphan’s home. As a matter of fact, a congregation could not care for even one orphan without establishing an institution (orphan’s home) to do so, or using an institution already established—a private home or an orphan’s home. Some have tried to make the point that the congregations could employ the services of an orphan’s home to care for a child, but could not contribute to the same orphan’s home. In a situation where the sole business of the home is to care for homeless children and all funds are sent to accomplish this, would anything really be changed if the bookkeeper set up a charge account for each child, and then credited the money sent in on the account of each child, rather than placing the money in a general fund from which the child’s expenses were paid? The net result would be the same. On the other hand, could the congregation use the services of a missionary society at all? The answer is no, because the missionary society itself is wrong, and the New Testament teaches that the work which it proposes to do is to be done by the congregations.

Therefore, there is no parallel between the missionary society and the orphan’s home any more than there is a parallel between the missionary society and the Christian College. Daniel Sommer thought he saw in the Nashville Bible School, now David Lipscomb College, what some of the brethren think they see in the orphan’s home. Brother Sommer pressed his opinion to the division of the church. I fervently pray that present-day brethren will not make the same mistake.

There are numerous other examples of issues that some have tried to make matters of faith and fellowship which are matters of opinion. The unity of God’s people is a matter of direct commandment. *Any issue which is allowed to divide the body of Christ must be more grave than the division caused.* Matters of faith are of supreme importance, and God’s people must be loyal in matters of faith at any price, even the painful price of separating from brethren and loved ones. No matter of opinion is ever that important and to make it so is to accept a fearful responsibility in the judgment. In every case, those who would impose human opinions on the brethren as

matters of faith and fellowship must be resisted to the end. The brotherhood of Christ must not be split into endless factions and parties over these matters of judgment. To allow this to be done would be to crucify him afresh and put him to public shame. “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” (Gal. 5:15.) Those who press human opinions upon the brethren as matters of faith must accept responsibility for the division that follows. *It is just as sinful to make matters of opinion matters of faith and conditions of fellowship, as it is to treat matters of faith as matters of opinion.* In each case, the body of Christ is divided, hindered, and humiliated. In each case, there is disrespect for the revealed will of God. I appeal to brethren everywhere to stand united, unyielding, and uncompromising in matters of faith—where God has spoken. There must never be any compromise in the realm of faith. At the same time, I appeal to the brethren everywhere to be patient and forbearing in the realm of judgment. May the spirit of Abraham of old prevail among us: “Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.” I might add, the Canaanite and the Perizzite are still in the land—ready to laugh us to scorn when members of the body of Christ “bite and devour” each other over these matters of judgment.

Rock-like firmness in the realm of faith, and the spirit of Abraham in the realm of opinion, are both essential to the successful restoration of New Testament Christianity.

# **PRINCIPLES OF NEW TESTAMENT CONGREGATIONAL COOPERATION**

(CECIL N. WRIGHT)

Ours is at present one of the most controversial of subjects, and the present period is a crucial one in the history of the New Testament church, as all persons informed on brotherhood conditions must know. It is not altogether unlike that time in the first century when circumcision was an issue that was fought over to the last ditch. For the past seven years a fierce and unrelenting controversy has raged over congregational cooperation. At first, seven years ago, an all-out offensive was launched against mission work done by one congregation with sister congregations assisting it financially. The next main target was the nation-wide network radio and television program, "Herald of Truth," produced and directed by one congregation, with the assistance of personnel from a few other congregations, and made possible by financial aid from many churches. Finally, orphanages and old folks' homes, though owned and operated by one congregation, if contributed to by other congregations, have likewise become objects of severest attack. It is in the midst of a setting like this that we have our assignment. And it is in view of this that we shall direct our remarks.

## **Principles**

Principles are propositions or generalizations, accepted as true and fundamental, that provide a basis for reasoning and a guide for conduct and procedure. Some are so readily evident or so widely accepted among us as to enjoy the status of axioms and need not be proved in this address. For example, it is generally agreed that: (1) All things done must be lawful. (2 Tim. 2: 5.) (2)

Divine law may be ascertained only through express command, necessary inference, or approved example. (3) The largest lawful or scriptural unit of the church universal is a local congregation. (4) New Testament congregations are to be autonomous or self-governing units under Christ alone, and not subject to any other outside control, centralized or otherwise. And (5) they may not enter into combines or federations and thus form separate or super organizations that differ from or are larger than a local congregation. Therefore, for any type of cooperation to be scriptural, we agree that it must not violate any of these principles.



It seems in order, however, to elaborate upon the matter of legality or authority, for there are two kinds of authorization—general and specific. General authority does not bind but only makes permissible; it is in the realm of the optional. Specific authority is both binding and exclusive; there is nothing optional about it. Take baptism as an example. Authority relating to it is *both* general and specific. It is specific in two aspects—it specifies the act, immersion, excluding any other; and it makes the act itself obligatory, not optional. But it is general in another aspect—namely, in regard to place. The act must be performed somewhere, but the place is not specified; it is left optional. Hence, baptism may be performed anywhere there is enough water—in the ocean, in a lake or pool or stream, or in a baptistery. The authority for baptizing in any of these is general, not specific.

It is only on the basis of general authority that we do any number of things—for instance, sing “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” There is no express command to sing it; no necessary inference that we must sing it; and no approved example of its having been sung in New Testament times—and we know it was not! But on the basis of *principles* inherent in certain express commands, necessary inferences, or approved examples, we rightfully infer general authority for it. Otherwise it would be sinful to sing it. And the same can be said of such other things as the use of baptisteries (which we have already mentioned), blackboards, charts, printed Bibles, Bible schools, Bible school literature, public address systems, radio, television, church houses, ministers’ homes, Sunday contributions for other than benevolence, etc., *ad infinitum*.

Moreover, it is unlawful for man to legislate specifics in the realm of what God has made general. God authorizes marriage, but does not bind it; he leaves it optional. Man sins if he binds either marriage or celibacy. God authorizes uncircumcision, but does not bind it; he leaves it optional. Man sins if he binds either circumcision or uncircumcision. That was a sin of the Judaizers. To whom, Paul said, “we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.” (Gal. 3: 3-5.)

In matters of option or liberty (but only in these), we are to be guided by the principle of “expediency,” mentioned in 1 Cor. 6: 12; 10: 23; etc. That is, our conduct is to be determined by what seems most appropriate and profitable under the prevailing circumstances. Accordingly, the apostle Paul circumcised Timothy—to give him ready access among Jews for mission work (Acts 16: 1-3); but he refused to circumcise Titus—because to do so would have been a concession to those who were seeking to bind circumcision and outlaw uncircumcision and thus legislate where God has

not (Gal. 5: 3-5), and in the long run would have unnecessarily hampered the success of the church and the progress of the gospel.

The importance of recognizing these principles cannot be too greatly stressed, particularly those relating to authority. For it is a proper understanding and application of them that it will take ever to settle the cooperation controversy correctly.

## Cooperation

1. *As It Ought to Be.* The word *cooperation* itself is not found in our common English translations of the Bible. But a kindred expression, *fellowship*, occurs often. Cooperation is simply the act of working *jointly* for the same end. And the New Testament abounds in exhortations and examples that spell cooperation among both individuals and congregations. But to prevent perversion and misuse or abuse, it must be kept within the bounds of New Testament principles. And that is what those who are fighting the cooperative works under consideration are saying has not been done.

2. *As Some of It Is Said to Be.* So far as we have been able to determine, the fundamental charges against the congregational cooperation under fire, and the philosophies behind them, may be summarized as follows: (1) That this cooperation is for work that God does not either expect or allow; that if a congregation cannot do a given work alone, it need not and ought not do it at all. (2) That it infringes on congregational autonomy—on the autonomy of the contributing congregations, because their resources and work are overseen and controlled by another; and on the autonomy of the receiving congregation also, if the use of donations is stipulated, as usually is the case, for then it is accepting outside dictation. (3) That it creates a combine or federation with centralized oversight and control, a new organization or society—something larger than a local congregation and therefore not a local congregation. And (4) that it does not conform to the specific, exclusive, “set pattern” that is alleged to be set forth in the New Testament.

These charges make it necessary to examine New Testament examples of cooperation, to see what *principles* they do or do not exemplify, and then measure the charges and the condemned cooperation by them.

3. *New Testament Examples.* In Acts 8 we have the apostles sending Peter and John of the Jerusalem church to the church in Samaria to render personal services; and in Acts 11 we learn of the Jerusalem church sending Barnabas to the church in Antioch for the same purpose. Again in Acts 11

we are told of members of the church in Antioch sending funds by Barnabas and Saul to the Judean elders for relief of the brethren. And in Acts 24: 17; Rom. 15: 25-28; 1 Cor. 16; 1-4; 2 Cor. 8: 1-9: 15 we see the churches of Achaia, Macedonia, and Galatia sending funds for “the poor among the saints” in Jerusalem, at the solicitation of the apostle Paul.

4. *Deductions from Examples.* Taking the foregoing facts as generally understood and analyzing them in terms of the present controversy, we have the following evident propositions and deductions:

PROPOSITION I: The Antiochian, Achaian, Macedonian, and Galatian churches (a) contributed funds to the Jerusalem church and it received them, (b) to be disbursed by it, (c) for a stipulated purpose, (d) to enable it to do a work it could not do alone (in the matter of properly taking care of its poor) and (e) that none of them could do alone. Also, (f) members of the Jerusalem church assisted the Samaritan and Antiochian churches with their personal services.

PROPOSITION II: All this was done (a) *with* apostolic approval and/or initiative or solicitation,

(b) *without* any of the giving or receiving churches losing any of their autonomy, and (c) *without* creating a combine or federation with centralized oversight and control, a new organization or society—something larger than a local congregation and therefore not a local congregation.

CONCLUSION: There is, therefore, ample and clear-cut scriptural authority for churches today (a) to contribute funds to another church and for it to receive them, (b) to be disbursed by it, for a stipulated purpose, (d) to enable it to do a work it cannot do alone and (e) that none of them can do alone; also (f) for members of one church to assist another church with their personal services. And all this can be done (g) *without* any of the churches losing any of their autonomy, and (h) *without* creating a combine or federation with centralized oversight and control, a new organization or society—something larger than a local congregation and therefore not a local congregation.

This nullifies completely the basic charges against the congregational cooperation being condemned, and conclusively vindicates it. But we wish to deal more at length with the claim of a specific, exclusive, “set pattern,” which it is charged that the said cooperation violates.

## **Pattern**

1. *A Set Pattern Alleged.* “Congregational cooperation is taught, not by command, but by an approved example. And the approved examples all

follow a set pattern.” “When it comes to the matter of congregational cooperation, there is no *general* authorization; but there is a *specific* authorization.” “General authority is inclusive; specific authority is exclusive.” These are quotations from the Harper-Tant Debate in Abilene, Texas. They present unequivocally the claim of a specific, exclusive, “set pattern” of congregational cooperation.

That claim is false, however, on its very face. The New Testament examples we have already presented adequately disprove it. Some of them involved money without anything being said about personal services, and *vice versa*. Part of them had to do with evangelism, other with benevolence. And there were even variations in a given kind of cooperation (as in benevolence), which we shall show a little later—variations that destroy the very pattern that is claimed!

2. *Essential Elements Claimed.* We turn again to the same book—to the notes in its appendix. Quote: “*Essential elements of the pattern laid down in the scriptures.* 1. The action: Many churches—Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, etc.—sent to one church, Jerusalem. 2. The reason: to benefit the *receiving* church ‘that there may be equality.’ (2 Cor. 8: 14.) 3. The time: Temporary ‘at the present time.’ (2 Cor. 8: 14.)” Then follows an illustrative diagram, to show that *all* contributing churches had “abundance” and the receiving church was in “want” before cooperation, which (cooperation) produced “equality.” In contrast, to make the cooperation in connection with the “Herald of Truth” look as bad as possible, all contributing congregations are shown as having “equality” before “Herald of Truth,” but with equality destroyed and Highland fabulously enriched after “Herald of Truth.” In this are two glaring misrepresentations.

3. *Misrepresentations.* One is a misrepresentation of the Highland church, and we point it out, not for Highland’s sake alone, but because the charge will apply to other receiving congregations as well. Highland in fact gives as do other congregations to finance “Herald of Truth,” and gives *more* than any other. Moreover, the giving of others do *not* enrich Highland, but simply helps it maintain its so-called “equality” while carrying on its expensive program, instead of becoming quickly impoverished and bankrupt.

The other misrepresentation is of the Macedonian churches. In order to make them qualify in so-called “essential elements of the pattern laid down in the scriptures,” they are represented as having “abundance” the same as other contributing congregations, whereas the scriptures definitely, specifically, and emphatically say they were in “deep poverty.” (2 Cor. 8: 1-

5.) This is only another of many proofs that the alleged “set pattern” does not exist in reality, *but is only a figment of the imagination!*

## **Conclusion**

“Any example which imposes restrictions which do not conform to the characteristics of the gospel are to be judged as incidental.” (Robert H. Farish, in *Gospel Guardian*, March 21, 1957, p. 3.) Adapting and expanding this obviously true statement of principle, we may say: Any New Testament example that has limitations which do not conform to the characteristics of other New Testament examples is to be judged as incidental—that is, while lawful, it is not binding but is optional. Therefore, it does not and cannot constitute a specific, exclusive, “set pattern.”

The only conclusion we believe fair, honest, open, and properly informed minds can come to, is that those who have been opposing the congregational cooperation among us the past seven years have been doing in principle exactly what the Judaizers of Paul’s day were doing when attempting to legislate circumcision and outlaw uncircumcision, to whom Paul and other inspired men “gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.” (Gal. 3: 3-5.) We pray that such efforts may soon end, and that churches of Christ everywhere may forge valiantly ahead, either independently or in scriptural cooperation, as expediency may seem to require, in the great work of evangelism and benevolence, unhampered by humanly imposed restrictions.

## **FACTS THAT SUPPORT OUR FAITH (JOE E. SANDERS)**

The events described in the historical narratives of the Old and New Testaments are accurate and authentic, and the weight of modern critical study and investigation is on the side of their credibility and trustworthiness. Anything that is credible and objective pertains in some measure to reality. The focus of this discussion will be upon the factuality of Christianity. Christianity pertains to reality because it is based upon facts. Facts may be thought of as some material, objective thing such as an archeological discovery; or some historical happening, as a reign of a king or a battle; or a personal or social phenomenon, such as the conversion of an individual or the growth of the church. Facts may be classified further as material, supernatural, and experiential.

By material fact is meant anything of a concrete, specific nature; e.g. documents, books, things, historical events, etc.

By supernatural fact we mean those happenings and phenomena which cannot be satisfactorily explained simply on the basis of natural law. Miracles are an example of this, also fulfilled prophecy.

Experiential facts as they relate to Christianity have to do with the change brought about in society as a result of the Christian religion; e.g. the elevation of womanhood, certain experiences of people which are traceable directly to the impact of Christianity.

### **Material Facts Which Support Our Faith**

Our knowledge of Christianity comes from two sources. One is a continuous and sustained testimony, historically preserved, from the first century until the present that people held certain beliefs and practices in reference to God. The other source of knowledge of Christianity is the sacred documents of these people preserved in the Bible. Both of these sources constitute valid material facts which support our faith. Perhaps none, among us, would question the validity of the Scriptures as a support of our faith, for indeed faith comes from hearing the word of God. It is maintained here that the extra-biblical records, such as the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, Josephus, and the Jewish Talmud, contain facts which give support to our faith. In addition to these, there are such material facts of history as monuments, tombs, inscriptions, parchments, and archeological remains of Egypt, Palestine, and Babylon which contribute to the

demonstration of the historical factuality of Christianity. From the sources available to us outside the Bible itself, we are able to ascertain the truthfulness of many facts claimed within the Bible.

The Bible contains many facts which validate our faith, As a record, it mentions many things which are factual in nature and which can even yet be checked for their factual and historical accuracy. It is not maintained that all historical events mentioned in the Bible have extra-biblical confirmation, but research and archeological discoveries are constantly confirming the historicity of the Bible. For example: Robert Wilson in his *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament* shows how the names of certain kings, who lived over a period of approximately 3900 years, have been transliterated into the Hebrew, and each name appears in chronological order not only with reference to kings of the same country, but also with respect to kings of other countries. The writer shows how, mathematically there would be only one chance in 750,000,000,000,000,000,000 that this data would be correct. The Bible contains many geographical facts, such as the names of rivers, mountains, plains, etc. which can be verified. It also treats of the material and social culture of the people by referring to such things as houses, clothes, tools, customs, manners, and practices of the people. All of these accord with the known facts of history, and show, without doubt that the faith of a Christian has some tangency with fact.

## **Supernatural Facts Which Support Our Faith**

In addition to many facts of a material nature which support the faith of a Christian, there are also many events and phenomena which have relevance to Christianity which can only be satisfactorily accounted for by invoking the category of the supernatural. There are many evidences which indicate the presence of the supernatural in human affairs.

There has been much opposition to the supernatural, especially from the scientific world. The scientists thinks the supernatural is contradictory to natural law. His concept of natural law is based upon his understanding of the principle of uniformity. The Christian does not deny the existence of a uniform world. For all practical purposes, he sees a natural world that is uniform; but he does not believe in extending this uniformity to all human history. He believes the principle of uniformity must not rule out conceivable supernatural events if by rational arguments these can be shown to fit into the over-all system of the universe.

The scientific method deals with the observable and with the stable as much as possible, and endeavors to predict on the basis of past

experimentation and observation. This shows why it is impossible for the scientific method to adequately explain all of reality or experience. There are many very real experiences which do not come under the observation of the scientist. The novel or the unpredictable is not capable of scientific treatment.

Miracles are not accepted by the scientist, but to the Christian they constitute a valid area of fact which support his faith. Although they are supernatural they are sensible, in that they appeal to the senses. They are not like the tricks of a magician which appeal primarily to human curiosity, but have a moral and ethical quality.

Miracles are credible facts within the Christian system, since they fit coherently into the system. They must be studied within the Christian context to be dealt with fairly. So long as they are handled as problems in science and history they will be rejected by men. They cannot be isolated from their Biblical setting.

The immediate purpose of miracles was to authenticate Jesus as the Divine Messenger. Only secondarily were they to authenticate the truth of his message. They stand in such relation to his teaching that they form an integral part of the whole. Some of his teachings are unintelligible until they are related to the miracles which called them forth.

Of all the miracles of Jesus and the Apostles, perhaps the resurrection of Jesus himself can best be used to show how the faith of a Christian is supported. This miracle is more directly related to Christianity than some others. It is an integral part of the scheme of redemption. Paul says if Christ is not raised there is nothing to Christianity. (1 Cor. 15: 17.) This miracle is also the seal of a Christian's resurrection.

The Old Testament foretold the resurrection of Jesus (Psalm 16: 8-11.) Jesus believed the Old Testament foretold this event and so taught his disciples. (Luke 24: 25-27.) He was very careful to teach the twelve about His death and resurrection. (Matt. 16: 21, 20: 19; Luke 9: 22.) Although this had little meaning to them until after he was raised. (John 20: 9.)

The person who disbelieves the resurrection has the problem of the empty tomb. It is generally agreed that such a person as Jesus lived at the time ascribed to him in the New Testament; and that he was put to death under Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberias Caesar; his body was taken from the cross and placed in Joseph's tomb; a large stone was placed before the tomb to seal it; and upon the morning of the first Sunday the body was gone. The enemies of Jesus said the body was stolen while they were asleep. A sleeping witness is incompetent to testify to what transpired while he is



asleep. And think of the shame and the punishment a guard would have to suffer for sleeping at the post of duty.

The friends of Jesus said the body was raised. One of three things is true. They were either deceived or dishonest, or they were honest and competent witnesses. It seems impossible that all of them could have been deceived because the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection were frequent. (1 Cor. 15.) They had no motive for being dishonest.

If one does not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, he must also discredit the gospel accounts as being unreliable; and the book of Acts will also have to be discredited. The sermon of Peter (Acts 2) was preached less than two months after the resurrection and no one denied the resurrection. It must be remembered that many of the same people who put Jesus to death were present and heard Peter's sermon in the same city where the crucifixion took place. The person who disbelieves the resurrection is caught in the dilemma between the natural and the supernatural elements of the gospels. Most radical scholars will admit that behind the gospel records stands the person of Jesus.

Another area of supernatural fact, besides the miracles, is that of prophecy. Prophecy pervades the entire Bible. It is found in the historical, poetical and wisdom literature, the Gospels and Epistles. Some prophecies are very minute in detail. The names of persons are given before their birth and the outcome of battles determined before hand. Often prophecies deal with remote time and with people and kingdoms before they exist. Some prophecies are of such a nature as to be in exact opposition to what man would predict.

There are many examples of fulfilled prophecy which strengthen the faith of a Christian. Some of these relate directly to the Messiah. The place of his birth; his trip into Egypt; his home in Nazareth; and his death and resurrection are examples. The typology of the Old Testament is a kind of prophecy which finds its fulfillment in the New Testament antitype. The ark, the tabernacle, and the wilderness wanderings of the Hebrew people are examples of this. The Apostle Paul makes over seventy direct quotations from the Old Testament and over one hundred allusions. In all there are more than six hundred quotations and allusions from the Old Testament found in the New Testament.

## **Experiential Facts Which Support Our Faith**

The third area of facts which support the Christian's faith is called experiential. This has to do with the life experiences of people and the

changes which have occurred in society which can be traced directly to the influence of Christianity. Christianity has tangency with life and experience. It never would have gained a hold upon man if it had lacked relevance. This can be illustrated from the life of an individual which has been changed from that of a depraved reprobate to a Christ-like person; or the change in nations where the influence of Christianity has been felt. John, a son of thunder, is changed into an apostle of love; Saul, a persecutor, is changed into an apostle to the Gentiles and a proclaimer of the truth. Nations which have felt the impact of Christianity have eradicated human bondage, elevated womanhood and improved their system of jurisprudence. Christianity does not seek to correct the wrongs of society and the injustices of government by inciting sudden and violent revolutions, but by inculcating just ideas and infusing a right spirit in individuals.

When observing an individual or a nation where such changes can be traced to the influence of Christianity, one is led to accept the validity of this as a strong argument in favor of Christianity.

These three areas, material, supernatural and experiential, supply the Christian with many facts which undergird his faith.

## **CHRIST-CENTERED LIVING**

**(ERNEST O. STEWART, JR.)**

Simon Peter was one of five thousand men who witnessed the miracle of Christ's increasing five barley loaves and two fishes into more than a sufficient quantity to feed this vast multitude. Shortly afterward, Peter faced one of the great tests of his life and made one of his more noble decisions. When the multitude went away, disappointed that the supply of loaves and fishes would not continue, Peter was tempted to do the same, but could not. He had come to recognize in Christ not only the source of the increase of bread and the cure of man's illnesses: he knew that in this divine Person is deposited the source of all life. Therefore he said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

The other apostles recognized in Christ the same power. John especially makes numerous references to this life-giving power that is Christ's. The beginning of his Gospel refers to the eternal existence of Christ with God. "In the beginning was the Word." Then it is said: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." The first general epistle has a similar beginning. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)" Of equal significance is the statement; "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John's Gospel also contains many of Christ's own statements in which he asserts his right to be recognized as the source of life. To the Samaritan woman he said: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." When the self-seeking Jews spoke of the manna which their fathers ate in the desert, Jesus answered: "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." The people said: "Lord, evermore give us this bread." And Jesus said unto them: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Referring to those who would accept him as their shepherd, he said: "I am come that they might have life, and ... have it more abundantly." In the presence of physical death, he could proclaim: "I am the resurrection, and

the life.” And when the apostles had not yet fully discerned the way unto the Father, Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

The life of the spirit of man has its source in Jesus Christ. This is the basic message of the New Testament. As Jesus is the central character of inspired scripture, so must he become the center and core of the life of the man who would live unto God. That is why spirit-filled men preached the message of a past-crucified, now living Christ. That is why the church daily and in every place ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ. Herein lies the significance of the inspired direction given to men seeking the remission of sins to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus, then the continued admonition that, having received Christ, they should walk in him.

It may seem needless and naive to draw again on the old expression that Christ is Christianity, and Christianity is Christ. But this continues to be the most needful message of our century and all time. As the carpenter continues to drive upon the head of the same nail until it is driven in and clinched, we must continue to preach the necessity of living unto Christ until men learn and practice the teaching.

There can be no Christianity where there is no Christ. Everything in nature has its center of gravity. (Roy L. Laurin, *Commentary on Colossians*, Van Kampen Press, 1948, p. 119.) Gravity tends to draw all things to a common center. Every Christian has a center of gravity. It is Jesus Christ. He has been buried with Christ in baptism, has risen with him, and now his life is hid with Christ. A gracious colored lady gave her concept of what Christianity is by saying: “Christianity is putting Christ on the inside, then letting him show on the outside.” This is basically what Paul is saying in Gal. 2: 20. “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 Christian life is animated by its vital connection with Christ. Jesus pointedly illustrated this truth when he said: “I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.” In the plant, the branch must maintain a vital connection with the vine in order to live. The juices of the vine are in every branch and leaf, living in them. Our connection with Christ is this vital, for he said: “Without me ye can do nothing.”

This illustration bears out a point of application in this lesson. If one is Christ-centered in his living, the fruit of the Spirit of Christ will be seen in his life. Jesus said: “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” The fruit of the Spirit will be readily visible in the life of the individual whose source of life is Christ. The church today would

experience a growth unparalleled since apostolic days if each Christian were living unto Christ so that he could join heart and voice with Paul in saying, "We preach Christ crucified," then just as affirmatively say, "For to me to live is Christ." We have gone forth singing "Christ for the World," but it has been too much a song of the lips with not enough demonstration of the "product." The salesman who would come to his appointment merely to dilly dally in talk, relentlessly assailing the product of his competitor without first demonstrating the workability of his own would not gain our confidence. Perhaps we are not wrong when we say that the person who has Christ within will produce a demonstration, but it seems more correct to say that Christ within *will produce* the demonstration ! It is not really a matter of how we shall use Christ if he is within, but a matter of whether or not he is there! And the thing which we most need as we preach Christ to the world today is the evidence that we have first accepted him. In the face of our knowledge of the character of Christ, it is inconceivable that one who has centered his life in him should live according to the flesh. The works of the flesh are put to death to make room for Christ. It is just as inconceivable that the Christ-centered life be fruitless, void of good works. Jesus "went about doing good." If there be instances where a specific pattern is not given for a commanded work, it seems to me that the pattern is more to be found in the spirit and grace of Christ than in the reasoning of man. If this be not practical or usable, there can be no debating the principle that our attempts to dissolve all differences about such patterns must be approached in Christ's spirit. If the approach is not in his spirit, we stand to lose more than the issue of our argument. "There is a vast difference between attempting to deal with issues of the day using Christ as the center from which we work and exalting a position on some issue to the place of center." (Delmar Owens, *The Surrendered Life*, p. 7.)

The Christ-centered life is the complete life. "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." Two thoughts are suggested here. First, the only life that is complete is the Christ-centered life. All spiritual blessings are in him. "Christ is all, and in all." In this connection Paul said: "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In turn he prayed: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith... that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." The words understanding, wisdom, and knowledge are found frequently in the Colossian Epistle, and their source is attributed to Christ, in whom are hid "all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge." Few think of going to Jesus Christ as the depository of knowledge and wisdom. We are advised to go to Socrates and others, but Paul declares Christ to be the ultimate in wisdom and

understanding. The way of life that does not offer an explanation of and provide a promise for the future is incomplete. Such is the way of life of the atheist. The life of the future is assured for the Christian. “If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Rom. 8: 11.) The inward man of Christ and the outward man of the flesh are not compatible while we live in the body, but when we shall be manifested with him in glory, then our vile body shall be changed “that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” The abiding pledge of this Christian hope is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” The second thought that is suggested here is that the complete life, the whole of it, is to be centered in Christ. Paul said: “Your life is hid with Christ in God.” He did not say: “Your religious life is hid with Christ.” He did not say: “Your Sunday life is hid with Christ.” Christ in us not only influences, but he *determines* what our life will be religiously, socially, in business, in the home, in recreation, and in every phase of life. Christianity is our basic vocation.

When the pattern has been formed with intricate care to every detail and the sand has been closely packed about it in the flasks, then the pattern is removed and the hot metal that is poured into the sand assumes the exact shape of the pattern itself. Here is the ideal of Christianity. Christ is the pattern of our lives. We are “changed into the same image from glory to glory.” When our will is melted into the will of Christ then we become like him. In his teaching he has set forth principles through which we can face every life situation.

As we prayerfully study about the importance of conforming to the pattern in the things that touch upon and make up our lives, let us not forget that there is a pattern for life itself. We may be assured that the life that is conformed to this pattern is the life that is lived in fulfillment of God’s purpose for us; it is the life that is lived joyfully; it is the life that is lived abundantly; it is the life that is lived in hope of glory; it is this, and more, and more, and more—because the pattern is Christ.

# **THE OBJECTIVES OF LIPSCOMB\***

## **(ATHENS CLAY PULLIAS)**

*An address delivered by President Athens Clay Pullias to students and faculty at the formal opening of the 1956-57 session.*

David Lipscomb College, by a provision in the original deed conveying land given by David Lipscomb himself, is an educational institution in which, “in addition to other branches of learning, the Bible as the recorded will of God and the only standard of faith and practice ... shall be taught as a regular study to all who shall attend...”

Carrying out the provisions of the founder for the daily teaching of the Bible and for “other branches of learning,” Lipscomb has as its overall purpose the fullest possible development of young men and women in physical, intellectual, and spiritual living. This philosophy of complete education is perfectly illustrated in the life of Christ, as described in Luke 2: 52, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

For the achievement of this grand purpose, there are ten specific objectives in the education of young men and women who enroll in David Lipscomb College...

1. *To provide the very best in Christian liberal arts education under the direction of Christian teachers in a distinctively Christian environment.*

David Lipscomb College is committed to the highest standards of scholarship and at the same time is dedicated to the building of Christian character as the ultimate goal.

2. *To equip the student to communicate clearly, logically, and effectively through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.*

David Lipscomb College realizes that the mastery of the skills of communication is an important asset in any field of work, as well as in all human relations, and that it is of supreme importance to the work of spreading the kingdom of God.

3. *To give the student a basic economic understanding and ability to choose a vocation that will make the best use of his talents in earning a living and in serving God and his fellow man.*

David Lipscomb College believes a Bible-centered liberal arts education is the best general preparation for any business or profession. Special training in a chosen field becomes more meaningful when based on this

foundation, and the person thus educated is better able to take his place in a democratic society as a responsible, free citizen.

4. *To encourage the development of an appreciation for the good and the beautiful.*

David Lipscomb College strives for this positive approach to the development of high ethical and moral principles: To lead the minds of students in the direction of “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report,” as Paul urges in Phil. 4: 8. The completely educated man or woman should be able to appreciate the finest in music, art, literature, and nature, as well as the true beauty of spiritual goodness.

5. *To train future leaders in the church.*

David Lipscomb College recognizes and endeavors to measure up to its responsibility as a Christian liberal arts college to train future preachers, teachers, song leaders, elders, deacons, and other leaders who will put the work of the Lord's church first in their lives, regardless of whether their chosen profession is law, medicine, a business career, preaching, teaching, singing, or any other work or vocation.

6. *To train future leaders in all honorable professions and vocations.*

David Lipscomb College further recognizes its responsibility as a Christian liberal arts college to provide Christian leadership for all honorable professions and vocations. One of Lipscomb's most cherished goals is to see placed in high positions of leadership in all such occupations, dedicated Christians of outstanding ability and talent.

7. *To develop socially responsible citizens.*

David Lipscomb College seeks to equip its students with a basic knowledge of American institutions which deal with our historical, political, social, scientific, and religious heritage; to produce good citizens concerned with perpetuating the best in our American tradition and democratic way of life; and, with an awareness of changing world conditions, to produce leadership in the promotion of civic, national, and international understanding and good will.

8. *To prepare young men and women for their future roles as builders of the home, as husbands and wives, and as fathers and mothers.*

David Lipscomb College considers no phase of life preparation more important than the training for a successful partnership in a happy home life. Complete education requires such preparation.

9. *To stimulate intellectual curiosity.*



David Lipscomb College earnestly strives to create within its students an inquisitive mind and desire to know. Lipscomb's goal for every graduate is that from the beginning of his freshman year he may be inspired with an eagerness to learn, a devotion to truth, and a determination to achieve that will make the student years an introduction to scholarly habits and pursuits that will go with him throughout his life, keeping him permanently dedicated to the principle: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

10. *To hold up Christ as the example to follow in every field of activity, in elementary school, high school, and in college, as well as in later life.*

David Lipscomb College has established as the sure criterion for students in formulating standards of conduct on the campus and off, an honest answer to this question:

*"Is this what Jesus would have me do?"*

I appeal to each of you here today to join in a united effort to accomplish these purposes and goals in the life of every growing person over whom you have influence. The accomplishment of these objectives will require the finest talents, the unwavering support, and the dedicated labors of us all. May God grant each the wisdom and strength to do his best in the service of God and humanity.