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Restoration
Moments

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THE *Quarterly*

**PREVIEW
EDITION**

Whatever Happened to
Shepherding?



The Quarterly

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*Published four times per year, in
January, April, July, and October.*

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Subscription Rates:

Individual Issue: \$3.99

Annual Subscription: \$15.99

**Bundles of 10 or more re-
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WELCOME!

You hold in your hands the special *Preview Edition* of a brand-new publication called *The Quarterly*. We really hope that you enjoy it.

Our purpose in producing this magazine is to build up, to encourage, to inform, to help you in your walk as a Christian, and even to make you smile. Lofty goals? Of course. But we're pretty confident that the staff of writers we've got are more than up to the task!

In each issue (the good Lord willing), you will find interviews with long-time Christians, preachers, teachers, and/or missionaries, getting to hear some of their struggles and triumphs in the work of the Lord. There will be updates from across the country, giving news on the progress of the Gospel and new additions to God's family.

Since this is a *Preview* issue, it is smaller than what a regular issue will be. But we wanted to give you a taste of what to expect—a sampling of what *The Quarterly* will bring you every three months. Once a quarter, for less than the cost of a value meal at McDonald's, you will get something that will help to feed your soul, that will encourage you, and something that will (we certainly hope) put a smile on your face.

We've got a lot of great stuff planned for upcoming issues (see the "Next Issue Preview" near the back for more!).

For a complete list of the contents of this issue, just turn the page!

Thank you for taking the time to look at this preview issue, and if you like it, please consider subscribing—and even if you *don't* like it, please consider subscribing. ☺

Bradley S. Cobb
Editor and Publisher

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1 Year, Print - \$15.99

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WHAT TO FIND AND WHERE TO FIND IT

(a. k. a. the Contents of the Quarterly)

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THE QUARTERLY: PREVIEW ISSUE

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Editorial: An Important Note

Any honest Christian will tell you that there are far too many divisions in the Lord's church. Let's not beat around the bush here—one division is too many. It saddens me that we have any "groups" or "wings" or "divisions" or whatever else you might want to call them. Unfortunately, that was the state of the church before I was born. I didn't cause it, but I still have to deal with that reality.

Over the past few years, I have been involved with a group on Facebook that is comprised of dedicated preachers and faithful men in the church. That group contains a wide array of brethren, including many fine men who are in different "groups" in the church. We have had some great discussions on the issues that have separated us. We still don't agree or endorse the positions that the others take on the issues, but at least now we have a better understanding of where each side is coming from and the opportunity for more open dialogue. It's not unity, but it's a good start.

In putting together a staff of writers for the Quarterly, I reached out to several brethren—on both sides of these divides. And I am quite thankful that some of them agreed to be involved with this endeavor to strengthen and uplift the brethren. But I need to make this perfectly, 100% clear to all the readers of the Quarterly:

Just because someone writes for the Quarterly does not mean he endorses everything that is written or advertised in its pages, or that he is pronouncing himself in 'full fellowship' with the other writers.

For example, two men are interviewed in this issue who have long been associated with Oklahoma Christian University. Their observations are very relevant, interesting, and timely, but just because they are interviewed in this issue does not mean that all the writers necessarily endorse or support O.C.U.

The writers in this issue are all good, dedicated men who love the Lord, who believe in the inspired word of God, who have obeyed the gospel plan of salvation, who insist of following the biblical pattern for worship, and who seek to follow Jesus Christ to the best of their understanding. I appreciate them all, and after reading this issue, I hope you do too.

-Bradley S. Cobb

Are *YOU* interested in writing for the Quarterly?

- We are looking for dedicated Christians who want to help encourage, edify, and help other Christians in their walk with the Lord.
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- ***No previous writing experience is required***—we will help you each step of the way—if you need any.
- ***Can't think of what to write?*** We can help you with topics, ideas, and more!

If you'd like more information, send us an email:

Bradley.Cobb2@gmail.com

Insights from Seasoned Ministers: Loren Gieger

(Interviews by Jim Mitchell)

Recently I had the opportunity to sit down with two men who have been a part of Oklahoma Christian University for decades and have had a positive impact on thousands of students over the years. Both are still very active in the Lord's work, and their insights on how things have grown and changed carried both encouragement in things which have been positive as well as concern for the challenges the Lord's church faces.

Dr. Loren Gieger served as a Professor of Biblical Studies at OC for 31 years before retiring from the University classroom. He continues to teach the Early Bird class on Wednesday evenings at the Memorial Road church of Christ in Edmond, OK – which he has done for over a quarter of a century, and he preaches for the church of Christ in Stroud, OK. Dr. Gieger is a member of the Evangelical Theological Society and the Near Eastern Archaeological Society. He has done archaeological studies in Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt.

What changes have you seen within the Lord's church through the years?

LG: The first change I see is a decline in numbers. Small congregations in rural areas continue to decline as smaller communities dwindle and people migrate to the cities. It seems like congregations that are doing well are the larger congregations as people become more attracted to congregations with huge numbers. The strength of the leadership within many congregations is declining as membership in general is "graying."

My second concern is with the soundness of the church. I think that younger ministers have not fought the battles a previous generation did with denominationalism. Younger ministers in general seem unaware of the dangers of the vocabulary used where there are non-Biblical terms frequently used in the religious world. Generally, as I listen to younger preachers, they don't seem to know the book or how to exegete passages properly. They endeavor to appeal to a wider diversity of members and as a result, the distinctiveness is losing ground. I do think we need to turn some of these trends around.

What things do you see happening today which are encouraging?

LG: Our preachers are more formally educated than ever before. They tend to be very sharp, eloquent and good communicators. They are much better at illustrating lessons, stories are interesting, the lessons they give include lots of examples. However, as a result of that emphasis, there is a lot less Biblical proclamation in their preaching.

There are more opportunities and ministries for local congregations which is fantastic. Visual presentations (utilizing things such as power point) make lessons interesting and memorable more than ever before. The internet gives us opportunities which are unparalleled as we can communicate with Christians and missionaries around the world. Generally speaking, members of the church are more prosperous (at least in this country). We have finer homes, but may actually use them less in Christian hospitality than previous generations). The younger generation in the Lord's church are very service oriented and take advantage of multiple mission trips, camps, and campaigns around the globe.

Within the younger generation, the commitment to the restoration of New Testament Christianity is not something which I see today as much as in the past.

What can you share from your ministry which was unusual or humorous?

LG: When I was in Fort Worth, one of the elders gave me a call late at night about the death of one of our members and told me he would come by and pick me up to go visit the family. I dressed hurriedly and slipped my shoes on (I had two pairs of shoes sitting by the couch). When we arrived at the home and rang the doorbell, one of the two elders with me said "Hey preacher, look down at your feet." I had put on one white shoe and one black shoe. I tried to hide one foot behind the couch, but finally just brought both feet and told them that I have on one black shoe and one white shoe as you can see, but that I had another pair just like it at home. When I arrived back home, the front porch light was on, and my wife had set the other white and black shoe out on the porch. Later, the congregation took up a special contribution to give me a trip to the Bible lands. They rented a banquet

room and had a dinner to see me off on the trip. Every man who came to that dinner came wearing one white shoe and one black one. The story made the front page of the local paper in Forth Worth.

What concluding thoughts do you have as we bring this interview to a close?

LG: I am afraid that the restoration mindset may be fading away, and I'm not sure how to stop that from happening. I also think there are some things we have taught we need to continue to revise, we never want to get away from scripture, but there are some things that are problems in today's society that we really haven't faced as well as we should. We have

taken a [prohibitive] stance in churches of Christ (you can't do this and you can't do that) but we have not taken a redemptive stance, that is, how do you handle people that are in certain situations. I think we need to take another look at how we conduct funerals. We can do a better job ministering to the family of the deceased in times of grief. I think we need to teach people how to give. I think we have converted people (even on the mission fields), but we don't teach those people to give like previous generations have given. I don't want to sound negative, but I do think that along with the positives taking place, there are problematic areas we need to continue to address.

Insights from Seasoned Ministers: Stafford North

Dr. Stafford North has been a part of Oklahoma Christian University as a teacher and administrator since 1952. Though he has stepped out of the role of full-time instructor, he is still very much involved with the university and continues to teach several classes. He has been preaching since 1948 for congregations in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Florida. Through the years, he has specialized in studies of: Evangelism, Daniel, Revelation, eschatology, church doctrine, and church leadership.

What changes have you seen in the Lord's Church in Oklahoma over the years.

SN: I moved to Oklahoma City in 1958, when Oklahoma Christian College moved to the city from Bartlesville. Back then, there were somewhere between 10 to 15 congregations in the area, and they seemed to work well together. The church has grown a lot since then. I think that's partly due to the influence of the university over the years. There have been a lot of students who have graduated and stayed in the area. Along with the positives, there are challenges we face. In 2003 we had 605 churches in Oklahoma with 63,581 members. That has since gone down to 566 churches, with 56,528 members. Things are changing where rural congregations have had a hard time continuing. There have also been studies indicating that not as many young people are staying with the church they grew up in. I think one of the things we need to work on is finding ways to help them stay faithful. As a whole, I think the relationship among

the congregations here in Oklahoma has been positive. That's not true everywhere else.

In terms of some of the things going on in the church generally, there are things that have developed elsewhere that have not affected us very much in Oklahoma. I counted the other day the number of churches in the states around us - OK, NM, KS, AR, TX (those states around us) - who have started using instruments. In those states, there are 36,000 churches and 36 have gone instrumental. There are two such congregations in Oklahoma, and they have not thrived with such a decision. I think that says something about Oklahoma churches wanting to be faithful to the word and it speaks well of the churches in Oklahoma. Some churches have begun to use women in more ways in worship, but I don't know of any churches in Oklahoma where that is the case (that's not to say that no one has done so, but that I'm not aware of any), so that trend doesn't seem to be infiltrating Oklahoma churches either.

I think there are a lot of things that speak well of Oklahoma churches. The spirit is positive and we continue to be staying with what the Bible teaches about all of these things. I will say, though, that we don't seem to be evangelizing as much as we ought to. There are more and more congregations who are recognizing their need to be more evangelistic and we need to do whatever we can to help them do that. That's something at which we can all be better.

As you think over the time you've spent in the state, what strikes you as some of the most unusual or most humorous experiences you've had.

SN: Early in the history of Oklahoma Christian, back in 1955, when the college was in Bartlesville, I drove to Grove, Oklahoma to preach. It was about a 100 mile drive and I would drive over Sunday morning and drive back late Sunday night. I remember staying up late, working a musical we did titled "Songs America Sings." It was a three act show and a big deal for the school as nearly the entire the student body (of 150 or so) was involved. After staying up late one Saturday night and driving to Grove the next morning I had, in the middle of the sermon, the kind of moment you have when you've been driving down the road and all of a sudden realize you're not quite sure where you are. I had that moment during the sermon. For a moment, I didn't know where I was and didn't know where I was in the sermon outline. I went to sleep in my own sermon! I quickly just picked a point on the outline and started from there to

finish the message. I want to be very clear that that's the only time I've ever gone to sleep in my own sermon!

What makes you the most optimistic about the direction of the Lord's church and the direction of Christian education?

SN: In the years I've been teaching at Oklahoma Christian, I've met a lot of very fine young people, who want to serve. That seems to be a characteristic of this generation and we need to capitalize on that. They go on campaigns and help with local evangelistic outreach (the Capitol Hill church of Christ is a great example of that with the medical outreach they have and the way they talk to people in line about the Gospel). The inner city work in both Oklahoma City and in Tulsa are good examples of being evangelistic in meeting the needs of others. We've also been blessed with a lot of great preachers here in Oklahoma throughout the years, and that has also helped strengthen the cohesion we have among the churches.

EQUIPPING

By Jim Mitchell

In Ephesians 4, after Paul listed areas of service in the first century church (4:11), he wrote that the purpose of these tasks was "*for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*" (4:12). The sentence (as it is most often translated into English) doesn't end until verse 16, and stresses the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God (4:13), the strength to overcome "*the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting*" (4:14), and the growth to maturity which must take place as the body of Christ is "*knit together*" by "*speaking the truth in love*" and by "*the edifying of itself in love*" (4:15, 16).

Before it is possible to ascertain the elements involved in "*the equipping of the saints*", the scope of meanings within the term *equip* need to be addressed. Just what does it mean to *equip the saints*, after all, several other English translations use the word "*perfecting*" instead of "*equipping*"? In Matt. 4:21 and Mk. 1:19 the verb form of the word is translated

"*mending*" as James and John along with Zebedee their father were mending their nets. It is used by Paul in his admonition to the Christians in Corinth that they be "*perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (I Cor. 1:10), and to the churches in Galatia that if someone "*is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness*" (Gal. 6:1). In a majority of the more than a dozen places where variations of the word are found, it is translated as "*perfect*" or "*complete.*"¹ What then is involved in "*the equipping of the saints*"?

James MacKnight notes that the word used in Eph. 4:12 "*properly signifies to place the parts of any machine or body in their proper order, and to unite*

¹ Forms of the Greek word *katartizein* are found in: Matt. 4:21; 21:16; Mk. 1:19; Lk. 6:40; Rom. 9:22; I Cor. 1:10; II Cor. 13:9, 11; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:12; I Thess. 3:10; Heb. 10:5; 11:3; 13:21; and I Pet. 5:10.

them in such a manner as to render the machine or body complete. Hence it is used to denote the reducing of a disjointed member to its due place...In the metaphorical sense... (it) signifies the fitting of a person, by proper instruction, for discharging any office or duty.”²

Taking into consideration the various uses mentioned above from which “*equip*” is derived, perhaps the best way to describe the “*equipping of the saints*” involves not only that we have a knowledge of God’s Word, but also that we have had practical training laid out in “proper order” where more advanced instruction (Heb. 5:13, 14) has followed an understanding of the foundational truths of God’s Word (I Pet. 2:1-3) with Christians growing in their ability to apply Scripture to life situations as spiritual maturity increases. Whether we are involved in topical studies of the Bible (with a variety of passages being studied in connection with a central thought or theme), a textual study (going through a thorough exposition of a book of Scripture), or a study which focuses more on practical application of Biblical principles to everyday life, the goal should ultimately be the same – “*the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ*” (Eph. 4:12-15).

May you have a very blessed, encouraging, edifying, and equipping Quarter!

² James MacKnight, *A New Literal Translation from the Original Greek, of all the Apostolical Epistles. Vol. III* (Baker Book House, 1969 – reprinted from the London edition, 1821) p.318. In commenting on the same Greek word, William Barclay wrote: “In classical Greek it has a wide variety of meanings, all of which can be gathered together under one or other of two heads. (i) It means ‘*to adjust, to put in order, to restore*’. Hence it is used of pacifying a city which is torn by faction; or setting a limb that has been dislocated; of developing certain parts of the body by exercise; of restoring a person to his rightful mind; of reconciling friends who have become estranged. (ii) It is used of ‘*equipping or fully furnishing someone or something for some given purpose*’. So it is used of fitting out a ship and it is used of an army, fully armed and equipped, and drawn up in battle-array.” William Barclay, *New Testament Words* (Westminster Press, 1974) p. 168, 169.

RESTORATION MOVEMENT LECTURES

1. *The Christian Connexion*
2. *The Reformers*
3. *The Union of 1832*
4. *The church of Christ and Slavery*
5. *The Causes of Division in the Restoration*

Lectures by:
Bradley S. Cobb
And
Mark McWhorter

Saturday, October 15, 2016

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I Can Do All Things Through Christ Which Strengtheneth Me

By Roderick L. Ross

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Philippians 4:13 KJV)

In May 2011, my vision was blurry with blind spots as I went to bed. My wife was not feeling well, and I assumed I was suffering from another one of my “optical migraines.” The next two days my wife did not feel any better, and I felt worse. I assumed that I had come down with the virus that my wife was suffering from. We both slept most of the day. The next day my wife felt better, having recovered from her virus. My vision, however, had not improved. I had not felt good enough to even notice for the past two days. My “optical migraines” usually lasted about one to two hours. This visual disturbance had lasted three days. We figured that it was time to go to the emergency room.

After an MRI, the doctor came in and said I had suffered a stroke. The stroke did not affect my motor coordination, my speech, my face (a drooping face is a common sign of a stroke), or my ability to swallow. Nothing was affected other than my sight.

I went to a Neurological Ophthalmologist, and after examination he said my vision had been affected to such an extent that “I would never drive, read or work again.” He explained that my eyes were 20/20, but my brain did not interpret the message correctly; therefore, corrective lenses would not correct the problem. I was legally blind.

The best way I can describe it is to describe it graphically. From 9 to 12 on a clock-face, I am blank. The remainder of my eyesight is out of focus, and I am photophobic – overly sensitive to light. Sunlight and fluorescent lights produce a condition that is best described as snowblindness.

It took me three years to convince Social Security of my disability. The court stenographer said that my case was only the second case of my particular condition that had been presented to the Central Ohio court on Social Security in the past twenty years. Thus, for three years we were deprived of any income other

than my wife’s. Even my doctor and neurologist had difficulty grasping the circumstances that I now found myself in.

In such circumstances, there is an urge to blame God many times. As Satan said in Job:

And Satan answered the LORD, and said, “Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.” (Job 2:4-5)

One of the members of a congregation that I preach at could not understand why God would allow something like this to happen to me.

I had one advantage over Job that helped beyond measure in facing my condition. Job’s wife told him to curse God and die. My wife provided the love, the courage, the caring, and the encouragement that I needed. She allowed (and made me) do what I could for myself, and helped me with everything that I needed help with. She became my eyes. She drove me wherever I needed to go. She read many things to me.

I had one advantage over Job... My wife provided the love, the courage, the caring, and the encouragement that I needed. ... She became my eyes.

Then said his wife unto him, “Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die.” But he said unto her, “Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” In all this did not Job sin with his lips. (Job 2:9-10)

With her help and encouragement, I have settled into a routine where I can accomplish what I can. I

work for short periods, and rest/nap, and go at it again.

I teach the adult Bible class and preach every Sunday morning in Trimble, Ohio; I preach every Sunday evening in Lancaster, Ohio; I prepare a handout for Bible class, and a handout for the sermon; I send out an e-mail Monday through Friday; I do a radio program that is locally broadcast every Saturday morning; I manage three Facebook groups, and three Facebook pages; and I maintain a website, 321BibleStudy.net. I have written a book that is available on CD, and have compiled a series of articles that will soon be published in book form.

Preaching Sundays wears me out. I am good for nothing on Mondays, usually spending most of the day in bed.

Why and how have I been able to rebound and do as much as I have? I think there are two reasons.

The examples that I saw throughout my life.

I had the privilege of attending school with the first blind person ever to attend normal public school. Holly Reed was her name. She was in my Algebra and Latin classes. She amazed me with what she could do. After all, how can you do binomial equations without being able to see them? She was an inspiration.

In college, the program director of the student radio station had low vision problems. The things he did, and was willing to do, to deal with his problem filled me with wonder and admiration.

My grandfather went blind as a result of his arthritis medicine. Yet, he maintained his cheery disposition.

My youngest son, Rick, suffered from severe, chronic asthma. He was hospitalized 48 times in the first twelve years of his life. One time, he was given a 7% chance of living through the night. Yet, he played soccer, baseball, basketball and on the class field day when he was six came in second in the school. He never panicked. He kept his cool. He did what he could do, and never fretted over what he could not. The doctors were amazed at what he was able to do. One doctor said he had the worst case of asthma he had ever seen. I learned a tremendous amount from watching him.

These examples were a tremendous influence on me, and encouragement that adversity does not have to stop you from doing everything. Sometimes, you

can even amaze others and yourself at what you can accomplish.

The attitude which I developed through my study of God's word: one that looks for what can be done, rather than looking for what is prohibited.

The attitude that separated Dirk Phillips from Martin Luther, and which separates the churches of Christ from the religious world is that you look for what can be done, rather than look at what is prohibited.

"It is evident that whatever God has not commanded and has not instituted by express commands of Scripture, he does not want nor does he want to be served therewith, nor will he have his Word set aside nor made to suit the pleasure of men." – Dirk Phillips, *Vindication*, 1500's

"I can do all things which are not specifically prohibited." – Martin Luther

It is basically answering the question, "Is the Bible a book that tells us what to do? Or, is the Bible a book that tells us what not to do?" Is the Bible positive, or negative?

Generally, we apply this to the church and its actions, but it has a personal application as well.

Too often we concentrate on what our limitations are, rather than what our capabilities are. This is true of everyone; but seems to be magnified in the case of chronic illness, injury, and disability. It is the same concept when we concentrate on our problems, and fail to count our blessings.

We all need to know our limitations (something that sometimes we hate to admit), but we also need to know our abilities.

Too often we think that we need to do great things, or a lot at a time. I was always guilty of this, trying to write in blocks of 24 to 48 hours. Now, I had to work in blocks of 20 minutes, rest an hour, and do it again. It frustrated me, but by persistence I was able to get as much and more done this way than by my marathon sessions.

I looked for ways that I could do things, rather than concentrating on why I couldn't. I utilized reading glasses along with magnifying visors, oversized computer screens, and oversized type. Below is an example of the type I use for my copy of the Bible class and sermon handouts.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

I read on a computer where I can make the pages 24 inches wide. There is not a Bible printed which is large enough for me to see. I almost exclusively use an audio Bible app on my phone.

The churches that I preach at have graciously allowed me to continue. Instead of reading the scripture during the sermon, I ask the men of the congregation to read it, and I comment on it. (I had seen this done mainly in black congregations at times over the years).

I firmly believe that each person has a responsibility to do what they can.

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.
(1 Peter 4:11)

I have used this passage as a sort of theme over the years, especially the first part for my preaching.

But, it is the second part which made me buck up under difficulty and look for opportunities. *Let him do it as of the ability which God giveth.* Do what you can. No one can do any more. No one should do any less.

Look at the verses which follow:

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:12-13 KJV)

Although probably speaking of the Roman persecution; disabilities, disappointments, illness, and injuries can change our lives in much the same way. Things happen to people in this life. You are not the first person to face difficulty. Do what you have to do to do what you can and must.

Daniel Sommer suffered a stroke which left him blind while preaching a gospel meeting in Pennsylvania. He finished the meeting, took the train home to Indiana, and it was not till the next morning when he spilled his water that even his family realized what had happened.

We can either whine about our problems, or deal with them, making lemonade out of the lemons.

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.
(Job 1:20-22)

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Written and maintained by Roderick L. Ross.

RESTORATION MOMENTS

THE CONVERSION OF BLUE DICK

From the book, *The Life of Knowles Shaw, Singing Evangelist* (by William Baxter)

*A miserable drunk.
A congregation that wanted
nothing to do with him.
And the power of the gospel.*

Knowles Shaw was holding a meeting at some point on the Ohio River, where it was necessary for him to cross frequently. The first night of his meeting, he went down to the river, but found the only ferryman to be a poor, ragged, besotted wretch, no hat on his head, his hair matted, his whole person filthy in the extreme, and giving evidence that he was even then under the influence of drink. His appearance was so forbidding, and his condition such that Shaw was doubtful as to whether it would be safe to entrust himself in a frail skiff with such a ferryman. And had there been any other and safer means of getting across he would have availed himself of it. But there was no other chance, and with some misgivings as to the result, he entered the boat. He soon found that, though under the influence of liquor, the ferryman knew how to manage his skiff, and feeling at ease on that matter, he began to talk with him. He asked him his name.

"Blue Dick," was the reply.

"But," said Shaw, "surely that is not *really* your name."

"Well," said he, "if I have any other, it has been so long since I heard it, I have almost forgotten what it is."

Changing the subject abruptly, he asked, "Why don't you quit drinking?"

"I can't," said the poor wretch.

"Yes, you can," replied Shaw.

Wondering that a stranger should take any interest in him, he said, "Mister, do you think I could?"

"Of course you can," said Shaw, in a kind and assuring manner.

The poor fellow sat for some time in silence. It was long since any word of sympathy, interest or encouragement had fallen upon his ear, and the kind words of the stranger reached the heart which all his

neighbors thought had ceased to feel. Deeply moved, he looked up and said, earnestly:

"Mister, do you really think I could quit drinking?"

"Have you a wife and children?"

In a voice choked with emotion, and weeping bitterly, he said that he had. The way was now open. Shaw told him he was a preacher, and asked him to come and hear him.

"Why," said he, "you would not let such a one as me come; and if you were willing, others would not like to see me there."

Shaw urged him to come, assured him that he should be welcome; that instead of being out of the reach of mercy, that it was such as he that Jesus came to save. Tenderly and earnestly he besought him to change his course, until the poor ferryman began to think that there might be hope even for him. On reaching the other side, Shaw paid him his fare, and, as he did so, he pointed to a saloon that was near, and said, "I do not like the idea of this money going to such a place as that; can't you promise me that you will not drink any tonight, and I will come back, and you shall take me over the river again." Blue Dick gave the required promise and they parted; the preacher going to the house of God, and the ferryman, with emotions such as had not stirred in his heart for years, standing in deep thought by the rapid river under the watching stars.

After meeting, Brother Shaw went down to the river, found Blue Dick waiting for him, showing by his manner that he had kept his promise not to drink. He gave him a few words of encouragement, and obtained his promise that he would come and hear him preach the following night.

Great was the astonishment of many to see Blue Dick at church, and greater still to see the preacher, who had seen him come in and drop into the first empty seat that he found near the door, come up to him, take him by the hand, speak a few kind words to

him, and ask him to come again. Night after night he came, and the warm hand of the preacher never failed to give that of Blue Dick a friendly grasp, and the fitting words spoken did not fail to strengthen the new purposes that were beginning to take shape in his mind.

The coming of this one, and the marked attention shown him by the preacher, led some of the brethren to fear, yes fear, that this poor outcast might offer himself for membership. They even expressed their fears to Brother Shaw, and predicted that it would ruin the church if one such as he should attempt to enter the fold. Brother Shaw, however, did not fail to show, in their loveliest colors, the tenderness and compassion of Him who came to give hope to the hopeless, to seek and to save the lost. The lost sheep, and the wayward, wretched, ruined prodigal seemed to point to Blue Dick, and Blue Dick himself began to think they meant him; and one night, when the preacher, with even more than his wonted earnestness, urged the despairing and lost to come to Christ as their only hope, Blue Dick rose to come forward and accept the gospel offer. The preacher went half-way down the aisle to meet him; angels doubtless, too, at that moment gave expression to their joy in glad song, and He who died to save the lost was, doubtless, glad to see that the lost was found.

The coming of [Blue Dick] ... led some of the brethren to fear, yes fear, that this poor outcast might offer himself for membership.

But, alas! while there was joy in heaven, the coming of poor Blue Dick to confess his Lord, to strive to lead a better life, did not send a thrill of joy through the church; some there were who, like the elder son in the parable, thought that the returned wanderer would never be other than a disgrace to the family, thought that Blue Dick had gone too far to retrace his steps, and that his newly-formed resolutions would be broken on the very first invitation to take a drink, and that he would soon sink to even a lower depth, if possible, than before. Such was the feeling of opposition with regard to him that Brother Shaw did not take his confession and baptize him for several days, feeling, doubtless, that until he could change their views on

the subject, that their coolness would repel and discourage, rather than help and save.

Before the meeting closed, to the wonder of the whole community, Blue Dick made a public confession of his faith in Christ, was baptized, and by his consistent life soon disarmed whatever of objection remained, and was regarded as a standing proof of the power of the gospel.

Blue Dick was no longer there; he was transformed into Brother George M. , one of the best members of the church.

Years passed by; the faithful evangelist revisited the same place. Blue Dick was no longer there; he was transformed into Brother George M. , one of the best members of the church. He was living in a comfortable home, surrounded by a loving and happy family, with every mark of neatness and thrift about them. As soon as Brother Shaw had entered this happy Christian home, the one who had been Blue Dick said: "Brother Shaw, kneel down and thank God for what he has done for me, that I, who when you met me was a poor, miserable, drunken sinner, have been lifted up, and, by the mercy of God, am what I am today." Down they knelt; preacher, husband, wife, and children, all, all wept; but they were tears of joy; and when they parted it was in the glad hope of meeting in that blessed land where no partings shall be.



The Life of Knowles Shaw, Singing Evangelist, is available to download for free from the Jimmie Bel-ler Memorial eLibrary on TheCobbSix.com.

The Parable of the Lighted Candle

By Devin Self

In my childhood I remember going spelunking in a cave up around Jasper, Arkansas. It wasn't very much of a journey *into* the cave but it was enough to make my family and myself nervous. But one of the things I remember most of all about the cave was how dark it was, and how relieving it was when there was light around. You could get yourself into a real mess if there wasn't light: you could fall into a hole, get trapped somehow, or even worse. And the people that had the light were always the ones you wanted to stick close by to.

What this reminds me of is the parable of the lighted candle that Jesus told in Luke 11:33-36. Read there with me: "No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."

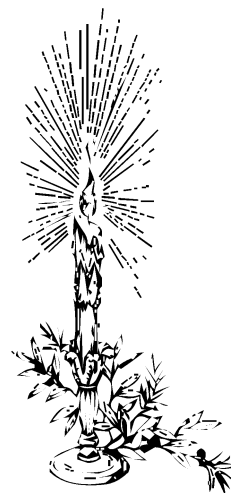
Now after reading this passage of scripture, look with me closely at each part, and remember back to the story I told you just a minute ago. How effective would the light that others were carrying be to us if they hid it to themselves or used it only where *they* wanted to see? It wouldn't be very effective at all, and wouldn't help us whatsoever—and in the same way, if we have the light in us, but don't share it with others who are lost in the dark, they will never get to see how wonderful God's love and word are.

Luke 11:34 says "When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light, but when thine eye is evil thy body also is full of darkness." A major part of the eye is its ability to focus in and out on things. And focusing is a major part of how we can see clearly what it is we want to see. But if our focus, not only in our eye but in our lives, is directed towards evil things then evil things will be what fills inside of us—so we must be careful where our focus is directed. Just as it says in Luke 11:35, "Take heed therefore that the

light which is in thee be not darkness." Another verse is 3 John 11, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." The good news, though, is if we keep our eye solely on God and live our lives with him in our focus, then we can be full of light like Jesus said in Luke 11:36. And not only that, but others can be led to the light of God's word as well, because they will be drawn to us, seeing how we show that God is in our life. And they will also want to know more. Just like a light shining in the cave for me as a kid—it drew me nearer. The last verse I want you to read with me is John 12:35, "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."

Have you given your life completely to God? You can do so through hearing the word of God, as it says in Romans 10:17; believing, as it says in Mark 16:16; repenting, as it says in Acts 17:30; confessing, as it says in Romans 10:9; being baptized, as it says in Acts 2:38. Then you need to be faithful unto death, as it says in Revelation 2:10; and after this we must "study to show thyself approved unto God," as it says in 2 Timothy 2:15.

Are you staying near the light?



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Biblical Biography: Barnabas

By Bradley S. Cobb

Encourager and Apostle of the Church

Joses is a unique individual. This Levite is the first Christian outside of the twelve apostles to be named in the book of Acts (4:36).¹ ² He was so well-known and well-loved by the twelve that they gave him the nickname “Barnabas,” which means “son of exhortation.”³ This nickname stuck, and it is the only name by which he is mentioned throughout the rest of the Bible.

Barnabas sold some land to make sure that the poor Christians in Jerusalem had enough to eat, and he placed it in the care of the apostles. Other people did similar things, but Barnabas is the one who is singled out in the history of the early church, because he plays a much bigger role later on. But from this, we can see that Barnabas truly cared for his brethren in Christ. He wasn’t concerned about building wealth for himself, nor was he worried about owning a lot of land. He was more interested in “how can I help others.” He was a helper and an encourager. This made him stand out in the eyes of the apostles.

Barnabas next appears some years later,⁴ and still showing these same qualities. Saul of Tarsus, the former Christian-killer, had seen the light and obeyed Christ, but he had a very difficult time convincing the

church of that. In fact, the Christians in Jerusalem wanted nothing to do with him—they thought he was lying, attempting to trick them so that he could drag them all into prison (Acts 9:26). But while the whole church at Jerusalem rejected Saul, Barnabas stood up for him. Barnabas met with Saul and heard his side of the story. Then he arranged a meeting with the apostles, where he—Barnabas—told them that Saul had seen Jesus in the road, and that the Lord had spoken to him, and that he had preached boldly in Damascus. Barnabas didn’t just arrange this meeting; he put his entire reputation on the line by standing up for Saul of Tarsus. And it was because of the support of Barnabas that Saul became a welcome member there (Acts 9:27-28).

***Barnabas didn’t just arrange this meeting;
he put his entire reputation on the line by
standing up for Saul of Tarsus.***

Sometime soon thereafter, Saul’s life was threatened, so the brethren sent him back to his home of Tarsus. But then came momentous news, that the Gentiles were now being accepted by God into His church! Cornelius and his family had been converted, and then several Christians in Antioch began converting large numbers of Gentiles. It is here that Barnabas again appears.

The church in Jerusalem heard this wonderful news and sent Barnabas to Antioch. The Greek word used in Acts 11:22 for “sent forth” is the verb form of “apostle.” Barnabas was, at this point, an apostle of the church in Jerusalem, sent to see what was happening in Antioch. When he arrived, he was overjoyed and served as an encourager to them, bringing many people to the Lord. But Barnabas had other plans as well. He remembered a young man named Saul who was a bold preacher, and who had to be sent back home to Tarsus to keep him safe. Barnabas went to Tarsus and found his friend. Saul had not lost his zeal for the Lord and they both returned to Antioch, where

¹ The church did not come into existence until the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. There were disciples of Jesus mentioned by name in Acts 1, but at that point, there was no church to be a part of.

² A very few ancient Greek manuscripts have “Joses Barnabas” instead of “Joseph Barsabbas” in Acts 1:23, and from that, some have suggested that Barnabas was one of the two men considered to take Judas’ place as an apostle. The evidence is against this. First, the significant majority of manuscripts do not say “Joses Barnabas.” Second, the man in Acts 1:23 is called “Justus,” and that name is never used to describe the man we know as Barnabas. Third, when Barnabas appears on the scene in Acts 4:36, Luke introduces him as someone that has not yet appeared in the book (giving name, surname, birthplace, Jewish ancestry, etc...). These considerations eliminate the idea that Barnabas was the one who wasn’t chosen to replace Judas Iscariot.

³ KJV says “son of consolation,” Acts 4:36.

⁴ Estimates range from just a few months to nearly 10 years, depending on which commentary you read.

they worshiped with the church for a whole year (Acts 11:23-26).

Around that time, a prophet came to Antioch, telling them about a great famine that was going to come upon Judea. The Christians in Antioch all pitched in to aid their brethren, and when it came time to choose two men that they trusted enough to send to Jerusalem with all that money, it was Barnabas and Saul. The word “sent” in Acts 11:30 is the verb form of “apostle.” Barnabas went from being an apostle of the church in Jerusalem—sent to Antioch—to being an apostle of the church in Antioch—sent to Jerusalem. And when their mission was completed, they went back to Antioch (Acts 12:25-13:1). Barnabas was a man who made sure he saw his mission through to the end, and didn’t shirk in the face of difficulty.

Apostle of the Holy Spirit

In Antioch, a group of prophets (including Barnabas) were serving God and fasting, the Holy Spirit called Barnabas (and Saul) for a specific work, to act as a missionary throughout Asia Minor. Barnabas, along with Saul, brought his nephew John Mark along on the journey. Barnabas had gone from being an apostle of the church at Jerusalem and of the church at Antioch to being an apostle of the Holy Spirit.⁵ Their first stop of note was when Barnabas (and Saul) were called by Sergius Paulus, desiring to hear the word of God. It is here that Barnabas shows another trait: humility. A sorcerer named Elymas tried to keep Sergius Paulus from obeying the gospel. Barnabas could have taken the lead and put him in his place, but he didn’t, because Saul (now going by the name of Paul) took care of it.⁶ Barnabas had the background—loved and respected by the apostles. Barnabas had the prominence—an apostle of two different congregations, and listed first among the prophets in Antioch. But he knew that Paul was destined for great things in the work of the church. He had told this to the apostles in Jerusalem, and he didn’t stand in Paul’s way. Instead, Barnabas humbly let Paul take the spotlight. By the end of this event, it was no long-

er “Barnabas and Saul,” but “Paul and his company.”⁷ John Mark, for some unknown reason, went home at this point.

Barnabas continued to be an encourager, certainly to Paul, but also to the people they met on their journey. Acts 13:43 shows Barnabas and Paul encouraging Jews and religious proselytes to follow the grace of God. But at the same time, Barnabas also stood up to those who would hinder others from obeying the gospel. When the Jews stirred up people and spoke against the message of Christ, Barnabas, along with Paul, expressed the rejection of the Jews and the acceptance of the Gentiles. The persecution continued, however, and Barnabas and Paul were thrown out of the city.

In Iconium, Barnabas preached the gospel, and the Jews were divided. Some of them tried to stone Barnabas, but he was able to escape the city with Paul.⁸ The pair went to Lystra, where Barnabas and Paul both preached. After Paul healed a man, the people all began to cry out that Barnabas and Paul were gods coming to earth in the form of men.⁹ It’s interesting that they called Barnabas “Zeus,”¹⁰ since Zeus is the most powerful Greek god. In carvings and reliefs, Zeus is always pictured as being very muscular and tall. It is possible that Barnabas was an imposing figure,¹¹ while Paul wasn’t as much. Paul was the main speaker, and so they called him “Hermes.”¹²

The priest of Zeus tried to offer a sacrifice to them, and the people were joining in, but the apostle Barnabas (along with Paul) ran back and forth telling them to stop.¹³ He tore his clothes, pleading with the

⁷ Acts 13:13

⁸ Acts 14:1-6

⁹ “The Roman poet Ovid (43 B. C. - AD 17) (*Metamorphoses* VIII, 626ff) records the ancient myth concerning a visit of Zeus and Hermes to the neighboring region of Phrygia, disguised as mortals. All turned them away except one old couple, Philemon and Baucis, on the Lycanion border. Later a flood came in judgment and drowned all except this couple” (Kent, pp. 116-117, cited by Mark Dunagan in his notes on Acts 14:12).

¹⁰ KJV renders it “Jupiter,” but the Greek word is Zeus.

¹¹ If this is the case, it could show why the church in Antioch was confident that Barnabas could get the money they collected safely to Jerusalem—no one would mess with Barnabas.

¹² Hermes, or “Mercury” (KJV) was the messenger of the gods.

¹³ Acts 14:14 specifically calls Barnabas an “apostle.” But he is not to be viewed as one of the “twelve apostles”—he is an apostle of the Holy Spirit and the church in Antioch.

⁵ The message given directly by the Holy Spirit originated with Jesus Christ (John 16:12-15), and thus it is also accurate to say that during this missionary journey, Barnabas was an apostle of Jesus Christ. That does not mean that he was one of the twelve apostles, or that he was able to pass on miraculous gifts; it simply means that he was one sent on a mission by Jesus Christ Himself.

⁶ Acts 13:6-13

people, “Why are you doing these things? We are men, just like you!” And he pleaded with them to turn away from the worship of false gods and to turn to the one true God of heaven. It took all that Barnabas and Paul had to keep them from offering that sacrifice. And once that catastrophe was averted, other Jews came in and stoned Paul, dragging him outside of the city, and leaving him for dead. But the next day, Barnabas and his beaten and bloodied friend went to Derbe and preached.¹⁴

From that point, Barnabas and Paul made their way back to Antioch, stopping at the churches they planted and encouraging the members. When they made it to Antioch, their mission was “fulfilled” (Acts 14:26) and they reported to the whole church all the things that had happened.

Apostle of the Church—in front of the Apostles

Barnabas did not shy away from debate. There were men who came from Judea to Antioch claiming that unless these Gentile converts were circumcised and kept the Law of Moses, they couldn’t be saved.¹⁵ It was Barnabas, as well as Paul, who stood up to them: Luke doesn’t mention anyone else. This was something that shook the church at Antioch greatly, something which Barnabas and Paul could not sit idly by and allow to happen. Barnabas stood up, as did Paul, and there was a very heated argument and debate over the matter. It is most likely that this debate took place in the assembly of the saints on the Lord’s Day, since “the brethren” were present when it happened.

These troubling teachers from Judea suggested that the matter could be solved by going to Jerusalem and letting the apostles and elders make the determination.¹⁶ To this, Barnabas and Paul agreed, and the church at Antioch sent them to Jerusalem.¹⁷ Barnabas was again an *apostle* of the church at Antioch, as was

Paul. On their way to Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul took their time and stopped at several cities, proclaiming the salvation of the Gentiles—the same thing they were going to Jerusalem to prove—and caused happiness to flow throughout the church in those places.¹⁸

Arriving in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed back with open arms. Barnabas was well-known and well-loved by the apostles, and was remembered fondly by the members in that city for his good deeds and work for the Lord. It was here in Jerusalem that Barnabas brought money from the sale of his land to aid hungry Christians. It was here in Jerusalem that Barnabas proclaimed their biggest persecutor had been converted. It was here in Jerusalem that Barnabas brought a sizable gift from the church in Antioch to aid with the famine relief. When Barnabas came, it always seemed to be an uplifting event—and this time was no different.

*Barnabas was well-known and well-loved...
for his good deeds and work for the Lord...*

***When Barnabas came, it always seemed
to be an uplifting event***

Speaking before the whole church in Jerusalem, along with the apostles and elders, Barnabas and Paul both rehearsed all the things that God had done with them, sending them on a missionary journey, blessing their efforts to bring the Gentiles to Christ, and confirming their message with miracles. Some of the Pharisees among the church opposed them, and there was much debate again. At that point, Peter stood up and reminded them of his experience with Cornelius, how that Gentile man received the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. The not-so-subtle message was, “If you condemn Barnabas and Paul for not circumcising Gentiles who become Christians, then you’re also condemning me, and condemning God for accepting the Gentiles.”

This statement of Peter silenced the crowd, and they all began to listen to Barnabas and Paul. Barnabas is listed first in Acts 15:12 because he had a much greater reputation and influence with the Christians in Jerusalem; he probably did most of the talking as

¹⁴ These events are recorded in Acts 14:11-20

¹⁵ Acts 15:1

¹⁶ One has to wonder if Paul considered himself one of the official “apostles” at this point, because if he did, he could easily have stated, “I am an apostle,” and settled the matter right then and there. It is possible that Paul recognized his reputation as a turncoat from Judaism, and decided it would be more judicious to allow the other apostles to speak on the matter—even though they would say the same thing that he did.

¹⁷ Acts 15:3. The KJV says “brought on their way by the church,” which seems to indicate that the church in Antioch took care of their travel expenses to Jerusalem.

¹⁸ Acts 15:3.

well. He commanded the attention of the multitude, and told them how God Himself verified that He accepted their ministry to the Gentiles—without circumcision—permitting them to perform miracles and wonders.¹⁹

After hearing their testimony, James (the brother of the Lord) stated they were going to write a letter expressing the Holy Spirit's decision (Acts 15:28), and send it with Barnabas and Paul. But they also were going to send two of their own with them, Judas Barsabbas, and Silas²⁰ as representatives of their congregation. The letter, given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, places Barnabas's name first. Even at this point in time, after their first missionary journey, Barnabas was still more influential and well-known throughout the churches than Paul was. It was at this time that James, Peter, and John publicly gave Barnabas and Paul the "right hands of fellowship,"²¹ ending the debate on whether Gentiles could be accepted into the church as Gentiles.

Barnabas and Paul, along with Silas and Judas, went to Antioch, called the whole church together and presented the letter to them. Everyone was very pleased and comforted by it. So for a long time, Barnabas and Paul worked with the church in Antioch.

Stumbling and Separating

While they were in Antioch, Peter came up to visit, and was in full fellowship with the Christians there—both Jew and Gentile. Barnabas and Paul were spending time with them as well, but then trouble arose. Some Jews from Jerusalem came up, and Peter was afraid of what they would think and say if they saw him eating with Gentiles—regardless of the fact that they were Christians—so he got up and ignored them. The other Jews that were there saw Peter leave the company of the Gentiles, and so they followed

suit.²² This mass exodus from showing fellowship with the Gentiles was so pervasive and persuasive that even Barnabas fell prey to it. He joined Peter—a man who had been his friend for years—and avoided eating with the Gentiles. Paul was shocked and appalled at the hypocrisy of these Jewish Christians—but then he adds the words "even Barnabas."²³ The hypocrisy was so overwhelming that it even got Barnabas—the last person Paul ever expected to turn away from the Gentiles.

How horrible must Barnabas have felt when he listened to his protégé put Peter in his place, realizing that those words also condemned him. Barnabas humbly repented of his hypocrisy, and no doubt apologized to the Gentile Christians for getting caught up in peer pressure. Barnabas even apologized to Paul, and all was forgiven.

Sometime after that event, Barnabas was approached by Paul with an idea: "Let's go visit our brethren in every city where we've preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing."²⁴ Barnabas was open to the idea, but wanted to bring John Mark with them. Paul was very insistent that John Mark had abandoned them before, and that he didn't want such a person accompanying them.

Luke says "the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder from one another."²⁵ Barnabas tried to reason with Paul, but Paul was hard-headed in this matter. You can imagine the argument.

Paul: Barnabas, no! John Mark cannot be trusted. I will have nothing to do with him.

Barnabas: Paul, that's exactly what the Christians in Jerusalem said about you. I stood up for you then, and I'm standing up for John Mark now. Give him another chance.

Paul: No, I'm not going to risk being abandoned by him again.

Barnabas was willing to give John Mark another chance, but Paul wasn't. As a result, the two men who had been so closely linked for years divided. Barnabas was disappointed in Paul's decision, but that didn't mean he didn't still love him. Barnabas and

¹⁹ When God permitted someone to perform miracles, it was a confirmation of the message that was being preached. Since Barnabas and Paul were able to perform miracles, it showed that God approved of their message. See Acts 16:20. For more information on this subject, see this author's book, *The Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts*.

²⁰ These two men will be discussed in more detail later in this book.

²¹ Galatians 2:9. There is some debate among commentators about the timeline and where this passage fits in, but there shouldn't be. This harmonizes perfectly with what was taking place in Acts 15.

²² For at least some of them—perhaps even most of them—this was done because they were following the example of an apostle of Jesus Christ, and not out of an animosity towards the Gentiles.

²³ Galatians 2:13, ASV.

²⁴ Acts 15:36.

²⁵ Acts 15:39.

Paul were still in full fellowship with each other, even though they were no longer working together. Barnabas takes John Mark with him, and they sail off to his home country of Cyprus,²⁶ where they work with the churches that Barnabas had helped plant years earlier.²⁷ But because Barnabas insisted on giving John Mark another opportunity to prove himself, he basically disappears from the rest of the biblical record.

Barnabas was willing to give John Mark another chance, but Paul wasn't. ... Barnabas was disappointed in Paul's decision, but that didn't mean he didn't still love him.

Paul does bring his name up one last time in his letter to the Corinthians, years later, showing that (1) Barnabas was still very well-known and well-respected throughout the churches, (2) that he and Paul were still friends and fellow-workers in the kingdom, and (3) that Barnabas was seen as a person in the church whose actions and teachings could be trusted. Paul appeals to the example of the apostles, of the brothers of the Lord (James and Jude among them), and then of Barnabas. This tells us that Paul still thought highly of the man who defended him, who sought him out, and who worked side-by-side with him for years.

Tradition

Tertullian, who lived from AD 155 to 240, stated that Barnabas was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.²⁸ Hippolytus of Rome (AD 170-235), as well as Clement of Alexandria, states that Barnabas was one of the seventy disciples²⁹ sent out by Jesus Christ

in Luke 10:1-24.³⁰ The *Clementine Recognitions* (written approximately AD 200-400) identify Barnabas as Matthias, and even has him preaching about Jesus in Rome before the crucifixion.³¹

There is also a writing called “The Epistle of Barnabas,” which Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215) believed was written by Barnabas. This writing was held in such high regard in some circles that it was regarded as part of the inspired word of God by Clement of Alexandria and Origen, both of whom quoted it as authoritative. It was also included in Codex Sinaiticus (a 4th-Century New Testament collection) and the “Jerusalem Codex” (11th-century), but the early church historian Eusebius objected to its inspiration. The Epistle refers to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem as a past event, meaning it cannot be dated any earlier than AD 70.³² Miracles in the church—including inspiration—ended by the time Jerusalem was destroyed.³³ Therefore, the “Epistle of Barnabas” cannot be inspired by God and deserves no place in the Bible. It is also doubtful that it was written by Barnabas at all.³⁴

According to early church tradition, Barnabas was in Cyprus, teaching boldly in a synagogue when Jews from Syria and Salamis fell on him, dragged him out of the synagogue, tortured him, and then stoned him to death. After this, John Mark buried him and went

³⁰ The seventy were “sent forth,” which is the verb form of “apostle.” If Barnabas were truly among that number, then that would add yet another way in which he was an apostle.

³¹ The *Clementine Recognitions* is a writing which claims to be from Clement of Rome (died approximately AD 101), describing how Clement (who is also identified in the story as the cousin of Caesar) saved Barnabas from an angry mob, and how Barnabas later introduced him to Peter in Caesarea. It is an interesting story, but it contains several statements that contradict the biblical record, such as Zacchaeus being a disciple of Peter and Peter being required by James (brother of the Lord) to send transcripts of all of his sermons and teachings back to Jerusalem for James to review. Most scholars date it no earlier than AD 240, over a hundred years after Clement of Rome died.

³² Ed Stevens, in his unpublished thesis, “Redating the Epistle of Barnabas,” argues that the destruction referenced in this epistle is the one accomplished by the Babylonians in 586 BC, and thus gives a pre-AD 70 date to this uninspired letter.

³³ For a more detailed explanation, along with the biblical proofs for this statement, see the appendix in this author’s book, *The Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts*.

³⁴ The general consensus of modern scholars and historians is that the “Epistle of Barnabas” was written—at the very earliest—near the end of the first century, at least 20 years after the New Testament was completed.

²⁶ See Acts 4:36, 15:39.

²⁷ See Acts 13:4-13, 15:39.

²⁸ Conybeare and Howson argue for this interpretation as well.

²⁹ Hippolytus lists seventy men by name, claiming they are the seventy disciples sent by the Lord. However, his list includes at least one Gentile (Luke), as well as another man who was not converted to Christ until after Paul’s conversion (Philemon). As such, while the list proves to be interesting, it simply is not accurate.

to tell Paul and Peter.³⁵ This was said to take place in AD 61. Another writing, called the “Acts of Barnabas,” claims that his death came when a noose was placed around his neck and he was dragged by it until his tormentors set fire to him.³⁶

The History of the Cyprus Church states that Barnabas was buried with a copy of Matthew’s gospel.³⁷

About 400 years after the death of Barnabas, there was a writing circulating with the name “The Gospel of Barnabas,” which is only known only because it was condemned as heresy³⁸ (no copies of it are known to exist today). Barnabas’ name was later blasphemed by Muslims who produced a writing called “The Gospel of Barnabas” which said Jesus wasn’t the Son of God, but just a prophet who wasn’t really crucified, and it mentions Mohammad by name.³⁹

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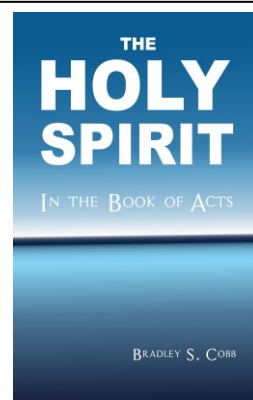
³⁵ Paul mentions Mark being with him in Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24; Peter mentions Mark’s presence in 1 Peter 5:13.

³⁶ As one can see by these two contradictory reports of the death of Barnabas, just because something is “traditionally believed,” does not mean it is necessarily true. Another example is the death of Peter. Tradition holds that he was crucified upside-down, but the writing that records that tradition also says that a talking cross that was as tall as the clouds came out of Jesus’ tomb. It makes for a nice story, and there may be truth to the manner of Peter’s death, but it is impossible to state it with any certainty.

³⁷ Some modern guidebooks say that this copy of Matthew’s gospel was written in Barnabas’ own handwriting. They do not say, however, how that conclusion was reached. See “The Search for the Twelve Apostles” by William Steuart McBirnie, Ph. D., page 261.

³⁸ The *Decretum Gelasianum* lists this “Gospel of Barnabas” as apocryphal and condemns it.

³⁹ This work is often referenced by Muslims as evidence of their beliefs and teachings about Jesus. The only manuscripts known to exist are in Spanish and Italian, and neither one is older than the 1500s. In it, Barnabas is one of the twelve apostles, clearly contradicting the inspired Scriptures.



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What Ever Happened to Shepherding?

By Jamie Beller



Among the saddest words spoken of Christ are those recorded in Matthew 9:36: “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”¹ While the statement, “as sheep having no shepherd,” was made of the multitudes, perhaps the statement could be said of far too many congregations of God’s people today.

Of all the leadership models that Christ could have chosen for His church, He chose shepherding. Sadly however, in many instances the shepherding model has been abandoned for other leadership models. Whatever happened to shepherding as the leadership model utilized in many congregations? Before emphasizing how we restore shepherding, perhaps we must first recognize the reality that in many congregations the shepherding model has either never existed, or it has been abandoned.

*...a man who refuses to do the **work** of a shepherd is just as disqualified...as a man who does not meet the **qualifications** to be a shepherd.*

The Reality

For some congregations the reality is that shepherding has never existed, or that it existed at one time but has since been abandoned. Oh, there are, in some cases, men in the *role* of shepherds, but who

neglect the *responsibility* of shepherding. Quite frankly, a man who refuses to do the *work* of a shepherd is just as disqualified to serve as a shepherd as a man who does not meet the *qualifications* to be a shepherd. That in mind, perhaps one reason shepherding has been abandoned is that emphasis has been placed on the *requirements* to be a shepherd to the neglect of emphasizing the *responsibilities* of a shepherd. Emphasizing one does not preclude the emphasis of the other.

*...perhaps one reason shepherding has been abandoned is that emphasis has been placed on the **requirements** to be a shepherd to the neglect of emphasizing the **responsibilities** of a shepherd.*

Concerning the responsibilities of shepherds, the apostle Paul, in addressing the elders at Ephesus, declared, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. For this I know, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.” (Acts 20:28-29). Two of the greatest responsibilities that shepherds have are (1) *providing* for the flock and, (2) *protecting* the flock. If shepherds fail to provide and protect the flock, they are just as responsible for the ignorance, division, and destruction of the flock as the flock is (Heb. 13:17).

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

Another reality concerning the abandonment of the shepherding model is that the task of shepherding has been delegated to the preacher. In his excellent work, *Shepherds, Wake Up!* brother J.J. Turner suggests that “Perhaps the model has been abandoned because the task of shepherding has been given to the full-time man on the staff—but who has no authority—whom we lovingly call minister”² A preacher is not hired to do the work of the shepherds, or any other member for that matter. Unfortunately, the sad reality in some cases is that *congregational* expectations for the work of the preacher supersede the *scriptural* expectations concerning the work of the preacher. As a result, the preacher is often expected to not only do the work of an evangelist, but also the work of an elder, while also doing his work as a Christian.

Still another reality that exists is that in some congregations is that there are “faithful men” who “lead” the congregation, but none who *shepherd* the congregation. This seems to be true among congregations without elders. As a result, hours and hours are spent by “faithful men” discussing the budget and building with little time being spent discussing the body. A further result—though perhaps unintentional—is that in too many instances congregations encourage a system that is often decried and deemed denominational—the pastoral system.

Regardless of why shepherding has either never existed, or why shepherding has been abandoned, the reality and result is that in many instances the “sheep are without shepherds.”

The Role of Shepherding

While great emphasis is often placed upon the requirement to become a shepherd (1 Timothy 3), how much emphasis do we place of the role and responsibility of shepherding? To appreciate the role of shepherding, consider lessons learned from the Chief Shepherd. Psalm 23 provides wonderful lessons that can be learned by both shepherds and sheep.

The Lord is my shepherd. Both shepherds and sheep ought to appreciate the personal relationship that they have with the Chief Shepherd. Shepherds and sheep alike should always work to strengthen that relationship.

I shall not want. When shepherds are caring for the sheep like the Chief Shepherd, there should not be

a need among the sheep—the shepherd should be providing for them.

He leads me beside the still waters. Just as the Chief Shepherd provides His sheep with peace, so shepherds ought to ensure a peaceful environment for the sheep whom they lead.

He restoreth my soul. Like the Chief Shepherd, shepherds are to be actively interested and involved in restoring the souls of the sheep whom they lead. (Note: It is a sad commentary when a sheep can be astray for several weeks before the shepherds realize it enough to do something about it).

He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. In order for shepherds to lead their sheep in the paths of righteousness, not only must they know the path of righteousness, they must also be an example of those who are walking the paths of righteousness (1 Peter 5:2-3).

Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...Thou art with me. Shepherds are not merely supervisors of the sheep, they are companions with the sheep, especially when the sheep suffer times of trial and tragedy. (Note: It should be no surprise that the relationship between the sheep and the preacher is closer than the relationship between the sheep and the shepherds if, during the times of trials and tragedies, shepherds neglect this responsibility and delegate it to the preacher).

It should be no surprise that the relationship between the sheep and the preacher is closer than the relationship between the sheep and the shepherds if, during the times of trials and tragedies, shepherds neglect [their] responsibility and delegate it to the preacher.

Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. The sheep are comforted by the presence of the rod (an instrument used for protection of the flock), and the staff (an instrument used to catch the sheep from falling).

Thou preparest a table before me. Being that feeding the flock is one of the responsibilities of

² J.J. Turner, *Shepherds, Wake Up!* (Huntsville, AL: Publishing Designs, Inc. 2005, p.32.

shepherds, it should always be that the shepherds ensure that the sheep are properly fed.

Thou anoinest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Just as shepherds of old soothed the wounds their sheep suffered, so shepherds today should be a source of joy and encouragement to their sheep who have been wounded by life. Of such joy and encouragement there should be no limits.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. The greatest responsibility that shepherds have toward the sheep whom they lead is leading their sheep in God's will, which results in the goodness and mercy of God, and ultimately in the sheep dwelling in the house of the Lord forever.

Certainly there is much that shepherds and sheep can learn from the Chief Shepherd which will positively impact the relationship between themselves as well as the relationship that exists with the Chief Shepherd. As a shepherd, the greatest responsibility that exists is to strengthen the relationship with the Chief Shepherd and the sheep.

The Restoration of Shepherding

If shepherding has never existed, or has seemingly been abandoned in the congregation of which we are members, how can we bring about its restoration? Such a question is to be answered by sheep and shepherds.

1. Emphasize not only the requirements to become a shepherd, but also the responsibilities

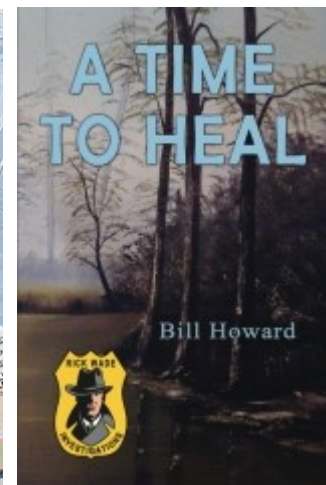
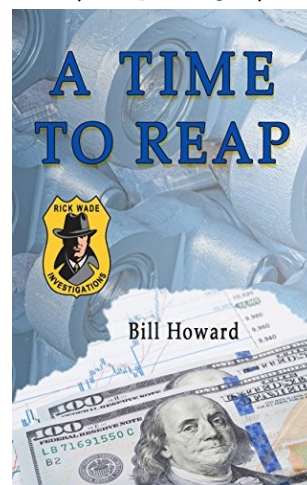
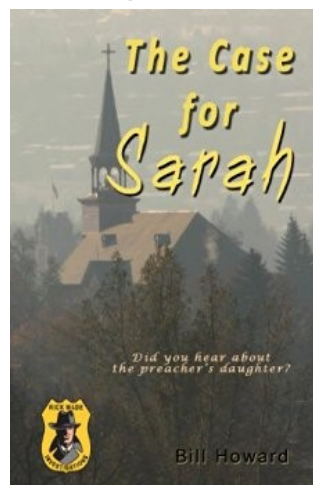
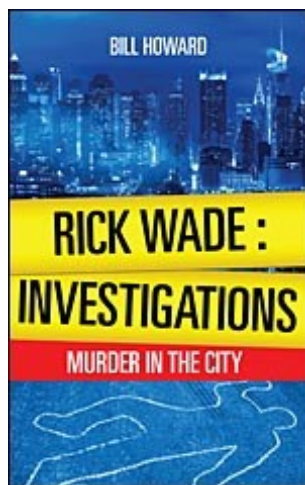
of being a shepherd (Again, one who does not desire the responsibilities of being a shepherd is just as disqualified from serving as the one who does not desire the office of a shepherd).

2. Engage in the study of sheep and shepherding, as well as the work of shepherding as modeled by Jesus. (Too often, leadership exists as a result of what and how it's "always been done," rather than an extensive and intensive study of God's Word on shepherding.)
3. Encourage those who serve as shepherds to be just that—shepherds. Encourage shepherds to develop the heart of a shepherd.

Conclusion

It cannot be overstated just how much shepherding is needed in the Lord's church today. Sadly, in many places shepherding has either never existed, or it has been abandoned for various reasons. The result of such is that many members seemingly become as "sheep having no shepherd." Now shepherds, imagine meeting with the Chief Shepherd to give an account of the sheep over whom you had oversight (Heb. 13:17). What kind of account will you give? As sheep, what kind of an account would we expect the shepherds to give? Answering these questions is made much easier when shepherding exists, because for those who are shepherding, it is always about pleasing the Chief Shepherd and providing for the sheep.

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Paul Darst: A Novel

(By Daniel R. Lucas)

[Note: D. R. Lucas served as a lieutenant and chaplain during the Civil War, and went on to preach the gospel in Iowa and Indiana for several years. He wrote the book *The Conversion of Paul Darst* in 1886 as an effort to reach more people with the gospel of Christ. It is a fascinating book, with many ideas and answers that Christians can use when speaking to others. For this reason, and the value of the book itself, we will be presenting it in installments in *the Quarterly*. Enjoy!]

Chapter One: An Open Question.

Unconsciously to ourselves we measure the character of those around us. And the estimate we put upon the characters of others is sometimes an index to our own. This is especially true if we express the estimate we form in words. If we listen to one person dissect the character of another we are sure to form an estimate of the character of the speaker. This fact will often help us to account for the discrepancies that exist in the minds of different persons concerning the virtues or vices of those by whom they are surrounded. Our education also gives a tinge to the direction of our estimate. Hence it was an open question in the town of Bethel as to whether Albert Darst, the merchant, was a Christian or not, and the subject was one that caused much discussion in religious circles. He did not belong to any church, but his life was one against which very little of harm could be truthfully uttered. At the Mite Societies and Sewing Circles, the subject was always a disturbing element. Miss Penelope, who was a lady of some experience — although I cannot give her age, as she never volunteered to give it and no one ever had the courage to ask her — was very outspoken in her criticisms of his course and boldly denied that he was a Christian. When called upon for a reason, she would answer in a peculiar curt way she had when any one implied a doubt about her infallibility:

“I know he’s not a Christian, for he even went so far as to criticize a sermon delivered by our preacher

on the final perseverance of the saints, and I know that any man who would find fault with the preaching of our minister is not a Christian. He even said that a soul would starve to death on the dogmas — husks, he called them — that came from our pulpit — as though the decrees of God and the things done ‘in the secret counsels of his own will’ were not the things for a man to preach! He says he wants him to preach Jesus in his life-work of doing good, as though a man could do something to save himself, or that any would be saved except those God elected from all eternity. The idea that a man can be a Christian and criticize these blessed doctrines when preached by so good a man as Rev. Mr. Fate, our preacher, is *absurd*.”

When Miss Penelope said “absurd,” in her peculiar style, it seemed an end of all controversy, and her little speech caused quite a flutter in the circle where it was delivered, but no one seemed disposed to take the matter up.

All eyes turned, however, to the widow Ingraham, who was present; for it had been rumored that Mr. Darst, who was a widower, had called on her once or twice, and the gossips were busy with their suggestions of probabilities. As if anticipating the movement, but without any sign of embarrassment, Mrs. Ingraham said very quietly and pleasantly:

“I do not know whether Mr. Darst is a Christian or not, but there is a little matter that I feel injustice to him I ought to state. You remember last winter when Mr. George, the carpenter, fell from my house, where he was doing a kind act for me in repairing the roof, and broke his limb; the family was left in quite a destitute situation. I did not have much but I felt if I could help them I would like to do it, so I went over to inquire about their condition, when they told me they were provided for, that Mr. Darst had paid their rent and furnished them provisions enough to do them until Mr. George would be able to work again; but I must not say anything about it as Mr. Darst would not like it. Many other such cases have come to my knowledge accidentally, and although Mr. Darst may

not be a Christian, I think there is as much Christianity in feeding the hungry and assisting the unfortunate as there is in long prayers and sermons on the decrees of God.”

The company was somewhat astonished at the audacity of the widow in the last remark; but, if the truth must be told, rather pleased that the challenge of Miss Penelope had been so deftly taken up. The latter saw this, and in a milder tone than usual, said:

“I will not quarrel about that, but there is one thing I guess not even Mrs. Ingraham will call in question, and that is the fact that Mr. Darst has not properly reared his family in the way they should go, for Solomon said, ‘Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it,’ and now just look at his son Paul, notwithstanding he’s named after the great Apostle who taught the comforting doctrine of election and reprobation, ‘without any faith or foresight on the part of the creature,’ as our Confession of Faith says, he is a complete infidel. This you all know, so that even Rose Leyden, though she does deny the decrees and belongs to the Methodists, has refused to keep company with him anymore, because he is such a notorious infidel. He has gone so far as to say that Tom Paine wrote more sense in his “Rights of Man” and “Age of Reason,” than our minister preached in his pulpit. Now, if Albert Darst is a Christian, why is it that he has not taught his son to know better; *that* is what I don’t think anybody can answer.”

As she uttered the last words, she arose preparatory to her departure, determined that no one should have a chance to reply, if any desired to do so. Judge her not too hastily, dear reader, you have seen but one side of her character as yet, and appearances are often deceptive. The Sewing Circle broke up that day before any other character beside that of Mr. Darst could be dissected, though the fact that such an intelligent, earnest, and promising a young man as Paul Darst should be so outspoken an infidel was a source of much regret to all present.

Chapter Two: Bethel.

Why the town of which I am writing was called Bethel is a question I cannot answer. The ancient Bethel was where Jacob saw the ladder reaching up to heaven with the angels ascending and descending upon it, and I have heard it said that when the “old settlers” founded the town, a large stone in the shape of

a pillar was found, which recalled the ancient history and they called the new location Bethel. But, you inquire, “what’s in a name?” Very much! The celebrated Bacon once said “the world is ruled by names,” and they play an important part in the history of our race. The study of the origin of names is one of peculiar interest to the antiquarian, and names often betray the character, politics or religion of a people. The names of persons from various trades, such as Smith, Miller, Farmer, Tanner, Potter, and Merchant; of colors, such as Black, Brown, White and Green; of peculiarities, such as Bright, Keen, Sharp, Meek, Rich, Good, Strong, and Smart, are so familiar that we scarcely ever stop to think of their origin. Animals also have transferred their cognomens; hence we find Lyon, Badger, Roe, Hart, Hare, Wolf, Cat, etc., though I do not now remember ever to have known a man by the name of Dog, and though I would not slander my fellowmen, yet I have known some men that the name might not have been an altogether inappropriate suggestion of possibilities. I read once of two lawyers, Uriah Ketchum and Isaac Cheatham, who formed a co-partnership and called upon a painter to prepare them a sign. He cut his board a little too short and could only paint, “U. Ketchum & I. Cheatham.” The lawyers were not exactly pleased, but the people did not consider it an extraordinary departure from the facts in the case. Men may not think much of names, but a patriot would hardly name his child Benedict Arnold or Aaron Burr, or a Christian call his offspring Thomas Paine. If you find a child named John Wesley, you may be certain that his parents are the methodic followers of that worthy personage. A Presbyterian will probably name his child Calvin much sooner than he would Servetus.

At a town meeting once held in the Hoosier State, it was found impossible to select a name to suit all parties. Names had been presented and rejected, until the chairman, who was the lamented Elder George Campbell, a pioneer preacher of Indiana, and one of the purest, plainest, and most amiable preachers of his generation, was beginning to despair of success, when he called on the village physician, a somewhat poetical personage, to suggest something. The Doctor had been reading Longfellow, and suggested “Hiawatha” as a symphonious appellation. The suggestion was hardly made before the chairman, in his disgust, using a phrase well known in western parlance, exclaimed, “O, get away, get away!” “That’s it!” exclaimed sev-

eral bystanders, “let us call it Gitaway,” and “Gita-way” it is even unto this day. Efforts have been made to bury the name under another, but such is the power of a name that it still lives.

If Bethel has any such history I know it not, what I have heretofore given being the sum of my knowledge in the premises. I know that many years ago when the Mississippi valley was being settled, the town was located, and there being no “milk sickness” near and the people only having the “chills” once a year — though some scoffers said that was all the time — and immigration from the east and south setting in, the town soon became a thriving and prosperous one. Where a few years before, the Indian roamed unmolested in the pursuit of game, in his primitive barbarism, now may be seen stores, shops, churches, and school-houses, and the prouder portion of the inhabitants delight to call the place the “City of Bethel.”

Chapter Three: The Class-Mates

The town of Bethel was honored as the location of the Scott University, a celebrated institution of learning, and the college was the boast and pride of the place. The students were many of them of superior ability, and remarkable for their moral deportment. One class especially attracted much attention from the faculty and community. They were very warm friends, though it was the wonder of every person how this could be the case, owing to the dissimilarity in their education, especially in their religious opinions. The tie between “chums” and class-mates is, however, a very strong one, engaged in the same studies and recitations, meeting together with perfect freedom from restraint, the elements of discord generally give way to those of amity and harmony.

Aaron Wingood, the eldest, was the son of a Presbyterian elder who was an enthusiastic Calvinist. He fully believed that to leave his children without a knowledge of “Divine Sovereignty,” was to throw them upon the world without a protection against the temptations and vicissitudes of life. Consequently the catechism was Aaron’s study from his earliest years, to which was added as he grew older the Confession of Faith, and works explanatory of that system of predestination and fatalism. Unconsciously to himself, therefore, Wingood was fully indoctrinated before his mind reached its maturity and he complacently believed his system of faith to be impregnable to any assault that could be made upon it and prided himself

on the strong position he occupied. He was ready at all times to defend the faith of his fathers with a most commendable zeal.

William Lanire was the antipode of Aaron in many respects. His parents were Wesleyans in all their religious thoughts and actions, and used all the diligence of fond parents to impress upon the mind of their son the tenets in which they so profoundly believed. It is scarcely necessary to say that both in early infancy had been “dedicated to the Lord” in an act which to their parents was one of earnest religious feeling. The name of God had been called upon them in connection with their own, long ere their own lips could lisp it, by men who, with conscientious devotion, ministered in what they deemed holy things.

The dispositions of the two young men were as opposite as had been their religious training. Aaron was habitually sedate and calm, while William, easily ruffled in spirits, was sometimes gay and buoyant, at others sad and melancholy.

Job Baines, an uneducated philosopher of Bethel, was in the habit of saying: “William Lanire is a illustration of Paul Darst’s new theory that he and Unruh Henry has been inventin’ out of the materials Darwin has lately been presentin’, that this earthly tabernacle controls the inhabitant of it, instead of the inhabitant controlling the tabernacle, for he is one day onto the top of Mount Pisgah with Moses, viewing the land of promise, and the next one he is into the Slough of Despond along with Bunyan, so deep he can’t see the main road, when its corduroyed through the swamp, accordin’ to his digestive apparatus. If his dinner agrees with him, he’s lookin’ for the milk and honey land, if his stomachic machinations are disordered, he’s down among the roots and herbs of the miry way.”

Walter Belcamp, the third, was the son of Baptist parents who, though rejecting the theory of the other parents so far as the christening was concerned, yet carefully watched the spiritual education of their son, leading him to early imbibe their religious sentiments. On coming to a proper age it had been decided by the church of their “faith and order” that Walter had experienced the necessary change of heart to make him a proper subject for reception into the church. His experience, it is true, had nothing remarkable about it, as he honestly told the assembled congregation, but that he desired to be a Christian, that he believed in Christ and desired to obey him. The elder who put the

question of his reception to vote made a short speech in his favor, in a sort of apologetic way, showing that as Walter had never been into the greater depths of sin, it was not to be expected that his deliverance would be so marked and well-defined as those who had been long engaged in the practice of sin. He was then received without a dissenting vote, and the next day was baptized, being from that time forward a persistent and earnest advocate of the teachings of the church with which he was identified.

Scott Harvey, the fourth, was educated somewhat differently from either of the others. His father had been reared after the straightest sect of the Calvinists, but had in his later years, under what he called the “liberty of the gospel,” become an ardent disciple of

the teachings of a class of liberalists, of which we might mention the able and distinguished Henry Ward Beecher as a representative. While he clung with great tenacity to his own way of thinking and church, he with equal freedom gave everybody else the same right, so far as both divine and human authority extended, to have their own way. Scott therefore became an advocate of what he called “liberty,” and being opposed to clerical government, in fact it might almost be said any government at all, he became an uncompromising Congregationalist.

Paul Darst, the fifth, was an Infidel, whose experience will be found in another chapter.

[To Be Continued]

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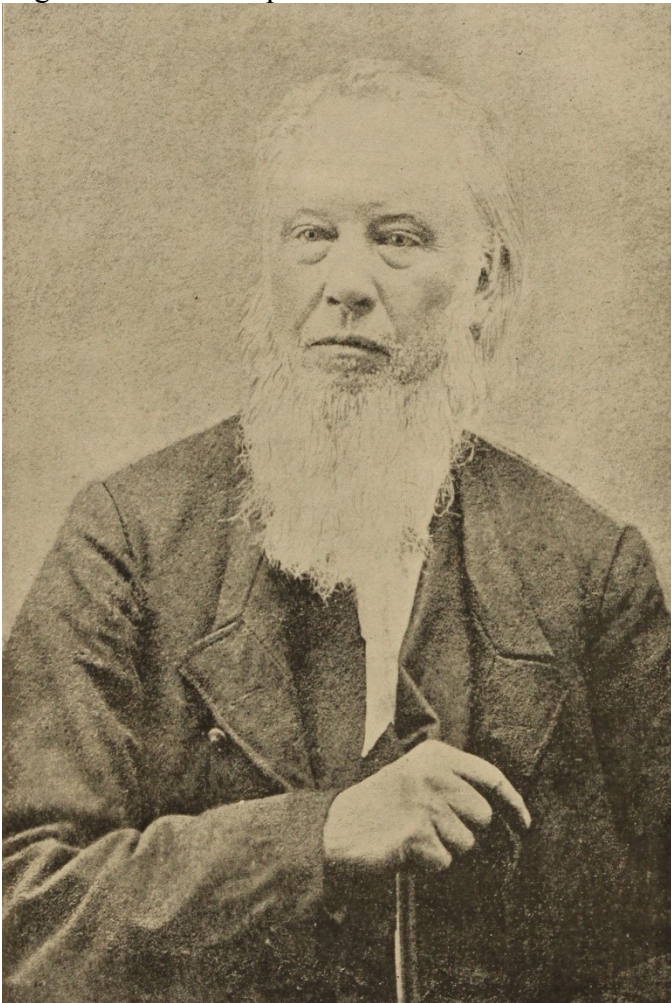
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Funny and Not-So-Funny Events in the Life of Elijah Martindale

(by Bradley S. Cobb)

Elijah Martindale is a name that most people are completely unfamiliar with. This is sad, because his history is actually quite interesting. He was raised by a Baptist mother, and his father joined with that religion when Elijah was ten years old. Later on, Elijah, after studying his Bible, understood that he needed to be baptized, but he staunchly refused to join the Baptist Church because he could not agree with their creeds. As a result, none of the Baptist preachers would baptize him. It wasn't until a Seventh-Day Baptist missionary came into the area that he was able to get someone to baptize him.



After his baptism, he began visiting different churches to see which one taught the Bible, and not

the doctrines of man. As a result of his search, he joined the "Newlight church," or as it was more commonly known, the "Christian church," which was associated with Barton W. Stone. Elijah began to preach, but his upbringing caused him to only preach faith as a prerequisite to salvation. Upon studying the Bible more, he found that no one was saved in the New Testament without being baptized, and he began to preach the gospel in its original purity.

This got him kicked out of the Newlight church.

However, after a period of a few years, almost the entire congregation had become convinced of the truth of what Elijah was preaching, and were immersed into Christ.

He was a frequent companion of Elder Samuel Rogers, and in one location while this pair was working together, two men, Benjamin and Daniel Franklin, came forward, made the good confession, and were baptized by lantern-light. Elder Benjamin Franklin went on to become one of the most powerful and influential writers and preachers of the mid and late 1800s.

Much could be said about the work of brother Martindale, but we want to share with you some stories of his adventures as a minister of God, direct from his pen.

Mistaken Identity

I visited the Middletown or Fall Creek [Indiana] church once a month for some years. I remember one time during the busy season I was compelled to make the journey, nearly fifteen miles, on foot. I set out early in the morning, stopping to rest at a cabin near where the village of Cadiz now stands. I then pursued my journey until I reached Israel Personet's, not far from the place of my destination. I had several times stopped with him, and was always made to feel at home. I supposed the little children, who were the only occupants of the house when I arrived, knew me. As I felt greatly exhausted with my long walk and fasting, I walked to a bed and lay down to rest until the parents would return. One of the children ran to

where her uncle was plowing in the field and told him a drunk man had come to their house and gone to bed. The man hastened to come to their rescue. I had fallen into a sweet slumber, but was waked by a heavy tread on the floor, and, looking up, saw a man staring intently at me to make out who the intruder was. He soon knew me and laughed heartily at the joke.

An Interesting Way to Support the Preacher

[A]s it has been with every faithful watchman who stood upon the walls of Zion, there were troubles brewing for me. It came in this way: There were a number of the brethren who were leading members that I never could persuade to quit the use of ardent spirits as a beverage, both for themselves and families. After a while the devil or some of his servants put it into the head of one of the members to start a distillery. By this time the brethren had purchased a small farm near the meeting-house for the use of a preacher. They wanted a resident pastor, but in this they failed, so they concluded to rent the parsonage farm and apply the proceeds to pay for preaching, for now the idea was beginning to be common that the laborer was absolutely worthy of his hire. They rented the farm, taking grain rent and turning the grain over to the brother who ran the distillery to be made into whisky and enable the brethren to pay the preacher.

The “Erring” Preacher?

I went to a temperance meeting and when the pledge was passed I placed my name on record as an abstinence man. I told the people I believed the Gospel was pledge enough if it was lived up to, but I found so many professors [of religion] that failed to keep the pledge of temperance I thought it my duty to let the world know that I was an abstainer [because of my] religious principles. Moreover, I wanted to give every assistance in my power to stop the awful ravages of the demon of intemperance.

My brethren at home found no fault with me for enrolling myself in the temperance movement. Not so at Hillsboro. The news went from lip to lip “Bro. Martindale has joined a temperance society. What must be done?” It was decided to send some five or six of the brethren to labor with me and try to reclaim the erring brother. They came; and such another day’s controversy I never want again. They took dinner with me and we parted. Sometime afterward I sent an appointment to preach on the subject at their meeting-house on Sunday afternoon. I went and preached Saturday evening and Sunday morning. At the close of

our morning services a brother arose and stated that the afternoon discourse could not be preached in that house as agreed by the church. I felt a strange sensation come over me while I yet stood in the pulpit, a feeling I never had experienced in a stand for divine worship and hope I never will again. I didn’t say much in retort, but announced that I would make the speech in the adjoining grove. So we dispersed.

“[Temperance] was considered too unholy a subject to occupy the Lord’s house on the Lord’s day.

While we were at dinner, several of the brethren insisted that I had better not go on to make the speech, but let a Brother Hendrix who was present talk a while to the people in the house. I yielded to their entreaty but never felt sure that I did right. The brethren told me some time after this that I could have the house on weekday to preach temperance, as it was considered too unholy a subject to occupy the Lord’s house on the Lord’s day.

After my temperance meeting at Little Blue River (for that was the name they gave the church) I didn’t often attend at that place. Although time and patience have healed the wound, it left an ugly scar. Take it all in all, it was one of the hardest trials I was ever called to bear. One brother, and one only, came and confessed his fault like a Christian. He is gone home, and I hope all of them will repent of their sins and get home to the good world.

Things Haven’t Changed...

In those days, preaching against the sin of intemperance or slavery was condemned on the ground that *it was mixing politics with religion*. There are many in the church today who will not be pleased unless these great sins are entirely ignored in the work of the ministry.

* * *

Elijah Martindale’s *Autobiography and Sermons*, from which these quotations came, will soon be available to read online at the free Jimmie Beller Memorial eLibrary, located at TheCobbSix.com.

Poetry Corner

Father, My Heart

(by Deserae Cobb, age 11)

Thanks for my life, and all I share it with,
You're number one in my life, not the fifth.

I will never have to fear, for Lord,
I know that you are near, Lord.

Please help me not to fight,
Because I am a Christian, and now see the light.

Please bless one day I will be a mother,
And teach my children to love one another.

Help me spread your inspired will,
So many good people may spiritually heal.

When I must face my chilling death,
My words will be with my last dying breath,

"I have done my best to run a good race,
And helped others to see His grace."

But while I am stuck here in the world,
At least I will know we still have your word.

I am stuck on earth, doing old chores,
But Father, my heart will always be yours.

I Will Live My life for You

(By Deserae Cobb)

God knows the difference between right and wrong,
We should live for Him, though our lives are long,

We've suffered here for many years,
Though Jesus went through more than tears,

They whipped Him and beat Him until He died,
Then they shoved a spear through His side,

But now He's up on God's right side,
Up in heaven so fair and bright,

Trust and obey, we can go too,
Lord I will live my life for you.

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Sons and Daughters of Encouragement

(by Gerald Cowan)

There was a time when the cure for overly exuberant spirits was to douse the person repeatedly with cold water, especially useful for the mentally ill, but not exclusively for them. Hence the expression: “to throw cold water” on something or someone. We may refer to one who discourages others as a “wet blanket.” We have other expressions which mean essentially the same as discourage: Take the wind out of his sails. Let the steam out of him. Put a damper on his spirits. Take him down a notch or two. All of them mean about the same and have the same result: they are an effective cure for enthusiasm, optimism, or any kind of “high spirits.”

Christians ought to be like Joses, a Levite from Cyprus, a Christian who had such a good attitude about encouraging others that the apostles nicknamed him Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37). *Bar-nabas* means *son of exhortation (consolation, encouragement)*. *Beth-nabas* would mean *daughter of encouragement*. I once read of a soldier who was discharged from service because he discouraged so many of his fellow-soldiers. He could be called “a son of discouragement.” Every Christian should be a “son or daughter of encouragement,” because Christians are instructed to *encourage (exhort, provoke) each other to love and good works* (Heb. 10:24). The fact is, “children of discouragement” are able to “throw cold water” and “dampen the enthusiasm” of “children of encouragement.” I will show you how it can be done, so you will not do it and so you will recognize it when somebody else is doing it.

Part One:

Some Effective Tools Used by

Sons and Daughters of Discouragement.

Things That Limit or Destroy Enthusiasm.

Pessimism. Looking on the dark side of everything, focusing on the difficulties and disadvantages rather than the possibilities and goals. A pessimist is not surprised when things go wrong; he was expecting it. If things turn out well he is surprised; it was just luck. It probably won't happen again. The pessimist insists on a guarantee of success before undertaking any project. He never does anything by faith. He can't believe what he can't see (2 Cor. 5:17).

Worry. Worry is a special form of pessimism, or perhaps the result of pessimism; always expecting trouble to materialize. It is the dread of “what may happen.” Worry is always about future consequences of past or present events and circumstances. Justifiable concern is what keeps us involved in doing right things in the present – to prevent bad things from happening in the future. But unreasonable anxiety about what may or may not happen is contrary to the will and teaching of Christ. The antidote for worry is simple: do right and trust God (Mt. 6:34, Phil. 4:6-9)

Suspicion. Lack of confidence and trust in others, expecting the worst, looking for hidden motives that will disprove apparently good attitudes and actions. Some works are never started because we are sure, “Nobody will do what it takes” or “If they do work they won't stay with it long enough to get the job done.” Why can't we heal the hurts and bridge the gaps that separate us from other racial, ethnic, political, or social groups? Sometimes it is, “Because people in my own group will get the wrong impression (be suspicious of me).”

Fault-Finding – Complaining – Accusation – Gossip, repeating charges made by others. Complaints are often based upon prejudice and personal preference. People enjoy putting others down and so they are willing to repeat complaints and accusations made by others, even when they are idle gossip. An accusation doesn't have to be true to be damaging. The fact that it is made will lead some to assume there must be some truth in it. Think of the false accusations made against Paul. He had to prove his innocence, prove himself not guilty as charged (Acts 22, 24, 26). The best example is Jesus Christ. Nobody could prove any charge of misconduct or sin against him (John 8:46) but he was crucified because of false accusations of wicked persons. Is that discouraging? Here's something more to consider: Jesus said if you stand with him you will receive the same treatment given to him, and it was said in a strictly negative context (John 15:18-21, Mt. 5:10-12).

Evasion – Blame-shifting – Excuse-making. Evasion can mean trying to avoid the issue by refusing to say what you really mean. When a person refuses to tell the truth or to stand firmly on what he

believes to be the truth, it is very discouraging. Imagine how that could play out if a preacher, teacher, elder, or other leader practiced evasion, avoiding the truth and never taking a firm stand. Would it not foster suspicion, worry, and pessimism – discouragement? Legally, the Fifth Amendment to our nation's Constitution allows one to refuse to give self-incriminating evidence. In nearly everybody's mind, "taking the fifth" is a tacit admission of guilt. It is like saying, "I am guilty but you will have to prove it without a confession from me." Evasion often leads to some other discouraging actions. The most highly developed art of many sinners is the art of the alibi, the excuse, the claim that "it is not my fault." Somebody "made me do it," "I acted in good faith but somebody deceived me." Read the example of the first excuse-makers, Adam and Eve, in Genesis 3:12-13. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent – God blamed them all and found none of them innocent or excusable.

Compromise. "Give a little, take a little – be willing to bend. We can work something out that all of us can live with." When an arbitrator compromises with your adversary to your detriment do you feel betrayed and discouraged? If you are the compromiser, be aware that a doubtful, unstable, wavering, or double-minded person will receive nothing, including getting no respect from others and no approval from God (James 1:5-6).

Desertion. When a trusted person betrays and deserts you and a cause or a work you shared, it is hard to continue to feel good about the person. I am sure it pained Paul to say of a once-faithful co-worker, that, "*Demas has forsaken me*" (2 Tim. 4:10). I've often wondered how Paul felt about Barnabas the "son of encouragement" and their sharp contention that led Barnabas to separate from him and go his own way (Acts 15:36-40).

Ingratitude. Never pay any compliments for work well done. Never say thanks. Never give public recognition for achievement. Just treat people as though they should be glad to have the privilege of doing the work. Shakespeare said, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." Remember the nine ungrateful lepers who disappointed the Lord who helped and healed them (Luke 17:16).

Doom and Gloom. Some seem to think rejoicing may "jinx" the future and things will get worse. That

brings us full circle, back to our starting point, pessimism.

Conclusion to this part: Take a dim and pessimistic view of everything, worry about the outcome, don't trust anyone, evade the truth and avoid taking a firm stand, find someone else to take the blame for your mistakes, compromise and tolerate the ungodly and pamper the rebel, desert the weak and ignore those who suffer in silence, never show gratitude – take the path of least resistance in everything – then watch hearts break. Watch initiative and enthusiasm die. Of course we do not want to take that path! So, let's see how to be sons and daughters of encouragement.

Part Two:
Effective Tools Available to
Sons and Daughters of Encouragement.
Things that Promote and Enhance
Enthusiasm

Optimism - Idealism. The optimist looks for good in everyone and everything, and expects to find it. He insists, "Things are seldom as bad as they seem. Things may be bad now, but it won't last forever." "It *came to pass*; it did *not come to stay*." He tells us that even the most difficult task can be accomplished if we work together with God.

Assurance. *In everything God works for good together with those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose* (Rom. 8:28). This does not mean all things are good. Some situations and events can never be called good on their own. It means no matter how bad things get, one can avoid being overcome by the situation; one can learn from it, and be stronger as a result. Something good – if not for yourself then for someone else – will come from it.

Confidence – Trust. Expecting the good and right reaction. Assuming that when one knows the truth he will accept and apply it (2 Cor. 8:22, Gal. 5:10, Phil. 21, Heb. 6:9).

Honesty - Realism. Say what you mean and mean what you say. Rom. 12:17b: *Provide things honest in the sight of all*. If one is always honest, there is no reason to doubt him. If one is honest, but mistaken, the proof of honesty is in his willingness to make appropriate corrections. It is the dishonest person who assumes that nobody else is honest.

Steadfastness - Dependability. Christians are to be *steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the*

work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). One should not be easily pushed away from his own steadfastness, and should not follow a multitude to do something that is not right (2 Peter 3:18, Exodus 23:2). Being steadfast in the faith makes it easier to resist the devil and temptation (1 Peter 5:8-9).

Loyalty – Faithfulness. Of course our first loyalty is to God. Compare Moses, in Heb. 11:24-27. We know also that God is dependable. He says, “*Fear not, for I am with you*” (Deut. 31:6-8, Heb. 13:5-6). Our brethren need to know that they can depend upon us to do what we say, to support and encourage them, etc.

Gratitude – Appreciation. Withholding it discourages the one who has done or is doing something needed or requested. When it is expressed and is genuine it increases enthusiasm in workers, givers, and receivers. We should be *Always giving God thanks in everything* (Phil. 4:6, Eph. 5:20). Gratitude is what makes any sacrifice justifiable, acceptable, and worthwhile. We need to learn to express gratitude at the proper time. Most of us regret not having spoken to someone now gone – what we want to say can no longer be said or heard by the one who needed to hear it. The next point is a follow-on from this one.

Approval – Compliment – Praise. Others will seldom assume that, unless you specifically say otherwise, you approve and are pleased. Compliments and praise must be genuine, coming from honest hearts. Sycophantic praise may sound good but it is not real, it is flattery. It will do more harm than good. *A flattering mouth works ruin* (Prov. 26:28). But *a word spoken in due season* – the right word spoken at the right time by the right person – *how good it is* (Prov. 15:23). It provides encouragement and incentive to continue.

Fellowship – Acceptance – Sharing. We are not alone, not separate or independent. We are interdependent. I am with you – I want you here and I need you. You are with me. You are not alone. We are in this together. The body is of many parts and not all parts are the same, but all the parts are needed and all are integrated into one body (1 Cor. 12:12-27).

Love should not be overlooked. Virtually everyone wants to be loved. We want affection. We want concern, sympathy, good will. But more than that we want the love that recognizes us as valuable, im-

portant, wanted, and worthy of what is given to us. We recognize the importance of this kind of love when we reassure others that God loves them and wants them, and we love them and want them too. The love of God is probably the most frequent topic in outreach sermons and the most effective tool in evangelistic efforts. No one ever gets tired of hearing about how and why he is loved. Read John 3:16 and 1 John 4:7-12.

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Rejoicing. This is highly contagious – be careful or you’ll catch it! *Rejoice in the Lord always; let your graciousness be apparent to all* (Phil. 4:4). We should rejoice with those who rejoice (Rom. 12:15) – the fact that others have cause for rejoicing should be reason enough for us to rejoice too. Share your reasons for rejoicing in what God gives you, does for you, and does with you. Others will want to share with you and rejoice with you too.

Conclusion to this part: A cheerful, worry-free attitude which expects the best from everyone involved, an uncompromising honesty and a firm resolve to do the right thing, faithfulness and loyalty to others when we can serve them and gratitude toward others when they serve us – these things will create and sustain enthusiasm and promote its growth.

Nobody wants to be, or be associated with, a negative personality, a discourager of others.

Christians are expected to be, and want to associate with, a positive personality. In this, as in most things, you are what you choose to be, not something forced upon you. Christianity is also a choice, not something that can be forced upon you. Are you choosing to be a Christian? Are you choosing to be an encourager?

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TABERNACLE SHADOWS

(By Mark McWhorter)

The Creation of the universe was recorded in *less than two chapters*. Creation is, of course, referenced many times in Scripture; and no one denies the importance of God's recorded message regarding the Creation.

Now, consider the importance of the *Tabernacle* and the instructions regarding it:

- Exodus has *thirteen* chapters devoted to it.
- Leviticus has *eighteen*.
- Numbers has *thirteen*.
- Deuteronomy has *two*.
- Hebrews has *four*.

That is a great deal of inspired material! God must have considered the Tabernacle of great importance.

When God gave Pharaoh two dreams, Genesis 41:32 says it was doubled because it was established by God and it would come to pass. This should impress on us that whatever the Tabernacle was about is established and came to pass.

It took six days for God to create the Universe. He spent *forty* days giving Moses the pattern for the Tabernacle and the Law.

Hebrews 10:1 tells us, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually make the comers thereunto perfect." The Law was a shadow. The Tabernacle was intimately connected with that Law and the sacrifices. Thus, it is involved with the shadows. Hebrews 9:24 states, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." This reveals that the Tabernacle itself pictured the true spiritual things associated with Christ.

Jesus pushed this point in Luke 24:44, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." All things must be ful-

filled in Christ. If God devoted nearly fifty chapters of the Old Testament to the details of the Tabernacle, there must be shadows of the true involved. A few verses earlier in Luke 24, Jesus stated, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

The Tabernacle Not Permanent

The Tabernacle was never intended to be the perfection and end of Christ's building. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building," (Hebrews 9:11). "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man," (Hebrews 8:1-2). "It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these," (Hebrews 9:23).

The Tabernacle was not intended to be a permanent dwelling for God any more than the physical presence on earth by Jesus was to be permanent. "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," (John 1:14). The Greek word for 'dwelt' is the word for tabernacle. That dwelling was a temporary thing.

It should be noted that God dwells with man while the material world is in existence. Through Moses he commanded, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them," (Exodus 25:8). In Exodus 29:46, he stated, "And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God." "...for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel," (Numbers 35:34). "Sing and re-

joyce, O daughter of Zion: for, Lo, I come, and I dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord,” (Zechariah 2:10). God comes and dwells with man. This indicates direction. Man is on earth. God comes to man.

When the world is destroyed at the Judgment, then man dwells with God in heaven. “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also,” (John 14:1-3). Ecclesiastes 12:7 says that at death the spirit returns to God who gave it. Thus, when the earthly existence is over, the spirit leaves the earthly residence; the spirit goes to where God is. (These concepts of God dwelling with man, and of man dwelling with God, and the use of the Greek word for *tabernacle*, being a temporary dwelling, should be pondered when used by God in Scripture. For instance, it aids in understanding some of The Revelation.)

Meeting God is the Focus

It is of interest that God begins the description of the Tabernacle with the Ark of the Covenant. He is preeminent. He is the source and focus of all things. He gives the Tabernacle from *His* perspective. He intends that man understand: the end goal is at the Ark of the Covenant. Man normally begins his discussion of the Tabernacle from the outside and works inward. We start with our weaknesses and take our journey toward God.

Giving for the Tabernacle

The items for building the Tabernacle were given by the people. According to Exodus 25:1-7 and Exodus 35:4-9 they were to bring gold, silver, brass, blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goats’ hair, rams’ skins dyed red, badgers’ skins, shittim wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and breastplate. The people willingly gave, according to Exodus 25:2. The things the poor gave were just as important as what the wealthy gave. These principles come forward to us today. 2 Corinthians 8:12, “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” In 2 Corinthians 8:3-4, we are told they gave beyond their power and pleaded that the gift be accepted. 2 Corinthians 9:7, “Every man according as he purposeth in his

heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

The Israelites gave more than enough, Exodus 36:3, 5-7. That mindset involves recognizing God as the provider of all. 1 Chronicles 29:14, “But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come to Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.” It must be remembered that what the Israelites gave came from Egypt, Exodus 3:21-22; 11:2; 12:35-36). God had allowed them to receive all of it from the Egyptians before they left. The Egyptians were glad to give it to them, just as long as they left. (A side-light point is that the Israelites were not stealing from the Egyptians. The Egyptians had been withholding wages for quite some time. This was God’s way of giving them due wages and providing the necessities for the building of the Tabernacle. The word ‘borrow’ in Exodus 3:22 literally means ‘ask’ or ‘request.’) Even with the value of all that they gave for the Tabernacle, it could not come close to the value of the ONE who is figured in the Tabernacle. (At \$1000 per ounce, the gold they gave would be worth \$43,865,000.)

The Beauty of the Tabernacle

The beauty of the Tabernacle was representative of the glory of Christ and his church. “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father...” (John 1:14). Peter writes that the apostles “were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor 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” (2 Peter 1:16-17).

The Pattern of the Tabernacle

The Tabernacle was built according to the pattern God gave. Exodus 25:9, “According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.” Exodus 25:40, “And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount.” Other references to the pattern are Exodus 26:30; 27:8; Numbers 8:4; and Acts 7:44. Exodus 25-27 are chapters of command. Exodus 36-38 are chapters of obedience.

There is order in all that God commands. David acknowledged that order, and the breach of it, 1 Chronicles 15:13. Christians are told to keep order, 1

Corinthians 14:40. Christians have a pattern. “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you,” (Romans 6:17). According to 2 Timothy 1:13, the pattern must be kept. Christians follow the example of Christ, 1 Peter 2:21.

Unless the Tabernacle was built according to God’s instructions, all was vain. Psalm 127:1, “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. ...”

All the workers of the Tabernacle were involved in the pattern. Men were weavers, engravers, embroiderers, workman, etc. , Exodus 35:25, 35. Women were spinners. There was work for everyone, even if the work was of different natures. The same holds true for members of the church. All are to work. No person’s work is more important than another’s, 1 Corinthians 12.

Names of the Tabernacle

It is called *the Tabernacle of the Congregation* in Exodus 27:21; Leviticus 1:1; Numbers 1:1 and Deuteronomy 31:14. There was only one Tabernacle for only one Congregation. God dwelled with that one Congregation. There were no divisions of faith or law. The same holds true for the Church. Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Ephesians 4 tells us that there is one Lord and one body and one faith.

It is called *the Tabernacle of the Lord* in 1 Kings 2:28 and Joshua 22:19 (the Lord’s Tabernacle). It was his. He would go with them, Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:9. In the same way, the church is God’s, 1 Corinthians 1:2.

It is called *the Tabernacle of Testimony* in Exodus 38:21; Numbers 1:50; and Numbers 17:10. The Ten Commandments were in the Ark. These were a testimony to his holiness, power and authority. The Rod of Aaron was a testimony of his care and spiritual reproductive power. The Pot of Manna was a testimony of his filling their needs. These all demonstrated God with them and over them. The church has the Scriptures which give his testimony, 1 Corinthians 2:1; 2 Timothy 1:8. The name is used in Revelation 15:5, “And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.”

It is called *the Tent of the Testimony* in Numbers 9:15.

It is called *the Tabernacle of Witness* in Numbers 17:7-8; 2 Chronicles 24:6; and Acts 7:44 (Stephen used it in his sermon). It was first named this when the rods of all the tribes were placed in the Tabernacle to verify which tribe represented God. The rod was his witness, Numbers 17:10. The church is the witness of Christ. (This is not the way ‘witnessing’ is used by much of the professed Christian community.) John 15:16 has Christ speaking to the apostles regarding their carrying on his work. In 1 Peter 2:9, the church is told, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

It is called *The Tent* in Exodus 39:32-33, and 40. It was intended to be temporary. It was a tent for God to meet with man, Exodus 36:14. In Exodus 25:22 God stated that he would meet and commune with them there. God meets us if we are in the church. The church is a temporary entity that exists on earth. The church as a spiritual building will cease to exist at the Judgment. Those faithful in the church will continue to exist in their heavenly reward along with all the faithful from the beginning of time.

It is called *the Sanctuary* in Exodus 25:8. Psalm 77:13, “Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary.” “To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary,” (Psalm 63:2). The Hebrew word ‘sanctuary’ means ‘a consecrated thing.’ Jesus is the High Priest and Minister “of the sanctuary, and of the true Tabernacle....” (Hebrews 9:1-2).

It is called *the Temple* in 1 Samuel 3:3 and 1 Samuel 1:9. The reason for this is that those who were faithful to the Tabernacle, would be in the everlasting Temple of heaven. Thus, it could be seen from one perspective as a permanent place. Those faithful in the church also will spend eternity in heaven. Thus, from that perspective the church can be seen as a Temple.

It is called *the House of the Lord* in Exodus 34:26 and 1 Samuel 1:7 and 24. It is God’s house. He had it built and he inhabited it. The same is true of the church. Christ built it and God dwells with us.

It is called a *Worldly Sanctuary* in Hebrews 9:1. The Tabernacle was a figure of the spiritual Tabernacle. The church is not a physical building. It is a spiritual building.

It is called a *Pavilion* in Psalm 27:5. It was to be a place of safety and shelter from God’s enemies. The

Hebrew word can mean ‘a lair’ or a ‘den.’ Proverbs 29:25 says trust in the Lord is safety. Proverbs 18:10 says safety is in the Lord who is a strong tower.

It is called *the Tabernacle of Shiloh* in Psalm 78:60. Shiloh means ‘tranquility.’ The Tabernacle was a place of rest and quiet. Shiloh was the first place of established residence for the Tabernacle in the Promised Land. Christ is the place of rest for the

Christian. Matthew 11:29, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

This is the first article on the Tabernacle Shadows. It is hoped that this one and future ones will help us to see the many, many shadows and figures associated with the Tabernacle.

Looking to buy used books?

Contact Mark McWhorter, mtmcvb@centurytel.net, and ask to be added to the used books email list.

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Preparing Yourself to Conduct Bible Studies

(by James Sims, Jr.)

Part One: Building Your Foundation

Sitting on the porch swing one morning in Asheville, North Carolina, my Aunt Ida told me that I would be a gospel preacher. She had such high hopes for me. I told her I wasn't smart enough to be a preacher. She said "You can do it," and told me to pray about it. Every morning when I left the porch, she would say, "Keep looking up." That has always stuck with me. Other than Aunt Ida, no one really pushed or encouraged me to go into the ministry. Sometimes I wish that someone had. Maybe I would have started preaching earlier. If you see this desire in a young man, or have a chance to work with the youth, encourage them to be the leaders of tomorrow's church (as preachers or elders). The decisions they make now in their life will have an impact on their future ability to serve the church. Understand that I am not saying you have to be a preacher to have Bible studies. As Christians we are told to spread the gospel, seeking and saving the lost as Christ did. Also, spend time in prayer. Pray about everything. Pray for God to help you when you lead a Bible study and He will be your guide.

Even though as a little boy I wanted to play with others, I would spend the time daily with Aunt Ida struggling with the morning teachings and quizzes, trying to remember verses, the Ten Commandments and names in God's Word. Being a little boy, the main reason it was hard for me to learn or comprehend was because we were using the King James Bible, with all the *thee's* and *thou's* on the pages. Aunt Ida would read to me and help me to memorize scriptures by saying the verses from the Bible and having me repeat them. She was a patient and loving woman. She never knew that I did go on to preach the gospel—as she passed away before I started. To this day I thank her for it.

Studying daily will give you confidence in being able to teach others. Studying the Bible helped me to have the answers for those that have questions. When someone asks a question, it is important that you give them the right answer (don't give them an 'I think,' or a wrong answer. They will remember this). If you don't know the answer, take down their question and let them know you will research the answer in the Bi-

ble and get back to them. Make sure you get back to them with the truth. We are human, and we don't know or remember everything. That is why we have God's written Word. The Bible is there for us to use for this purpose.

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I grew up in the church of Christ, having a very good support system from my physical family as well as my church family. There was always someone to take me to church, from parents to grandparents to aunts and uncles to friends. Once I was old enough, I made the commitment and made sure I was always in attendance and was an active Christian. Attending church, being with other Christians, and listening to the sermons and class lessons helped me to learn what the Bible teaches—as well as how to tell others.

I like to talk with others. If you aren't as comfortable doing this, being involved in the worship services is also a way to build your confidence. Saying prayers, waiting on the table and even doing a devotional or sermon will help you with this. If you are the one that schedules the duties of the service, encourage the Christian men that don't usually take a speaking part to do so. They will be nervous at first and may be short in their speaking but this is a way for them to learn. Let them know that you need them, and help them step out of their shell. The church always needs teachers for all ages. Help out by teaching a class. Not only will you gain Biblical knowledge but you will also have time to spend speaking to a class.

What Are People Looking For?

What are people looking for? What they want is the TRUTH! I knew a couple that had visited every denomination in town. After obeying the gospel by being immersed into Christ, they told me that the reason they finally obeyed the gospel was that I told the truth, that they could follow along in scripture with

the teaching, and that I explained key words in the Greek text to help them understand. They heard the truth. Remind those that you are studying with that you are the messenger and not the originator of what you are teaching. You see, people today just want the message plain and simple. No need to sugar coat. The key is no matter what, ***teach the truth***. Sometimes we might hold back on people in the world and give them a little time to learn. But you will have to step on some toes eventually. Do it out of love for their souls. Give them what they need, not what they want, and they will thank you for it.

Where Do You Find These People?

Where do you meet these people that need to hear the truth? Some are in your congregation. Just because someone is always in attendance doesn't mean they have obeyed the gospel. There are also visitors. Invite them to come to class or a get-together. Get to know them. At some point you can mention a Bible study with them. If you aren't comfortable leading a study join forces with the minister or someone else in the congregation. If a member is having a Bible study with someone, you can ask to sit in and learn from watching them. You come into contact with people all of the time in your daily activities. You spend time with friends. You have neighbors. People usually can tell that there is a difference about you from people of the world.

Something else to do is to add the word 'church' to your regular vocabulary. Whenever anyone asks about where you are going tell them you are going to church. This lets them know it is important to you and a priority in your life. This gives the opportunity for them to ask, 'What church do you go to?' This gives you the opportunity to tell them about the church. Your neighbors will notice your 'routine' of going to church also. When we eat out, we pray before the meal. Ask your waitress/waiter if there is something they need prayers for and include their request with your prayer. These are all opportunities to open up a Bible study with someone.

There are people at your work that are searching. When I worked in the secular world, any time I would first work with someone I would tell them that I am a Christian and if they have any questions feel free to ask. I would tell them that I will give them the answer from the Bible, not my opinion. There was a man who I worked with that was with me day after day for two years straight, eight to ten hours a day. One day he

walked into services to listen. A few months later he obeyed the gospel. He told me, "I have been watching you for two years, through all the adversity we have been through at work in dealing with people and in things in your personal life. I waited to see what was going to happen, to see if you would fail, quit, or not walk the walk you were talking about (Christian) and you passed the test."

You see, be yourself! Let others see you and they will let their 'walls' down that have been put up by people claiming to tell the truth and the Word, but really giving man's opinions and ideas.

Listen when people speak. They will let you know where they are at, and from the words they use you can find a way to offer a Bible study. Remember that others are watching you to see if you 'walk the walk.' Realize the tremendous weight that something like that carries and what a powerful message you can give. I was in prison for a while—well, I worked at a State prison and before that I would kind of judge people by the outside: how they dressed, toys they had, money they had, etc. By working at the prison, I learned how to read the inmates hearts, meaning to look at the heart of man and not by what they wore, toys they had, or money they spent. I had many Bible studies while I was there and the inmates have plenty of time to be sure that what you are teaching is the truth. There were 13 immersions while I worked there. It helped me refine what God has been telling me all my life through His Word. 'Seek and save the lost,' no matter who they are. All need to hear the gospel. Don't make an assumption that they have already heard. Remember that most people have been exposed to some denomination and may have teachings from there that they think are gospel. Learn about what denominations teach so that you will be read to answer them with the truth.

Build your foundation to be able to approach people about having a Bible study. Know who you can call to help you with Bible studies, knowledge, and encouragement. Pray. Encourage. Study. Attend. Participate. Always tell the truth. Talk to everyone. Say 'church.' Be an example. Be yourself. Listen. Walk the walk. Look at people's hearts. Be what God wants you to be according to His Word.

The next article will cover ways to reach out to others to be able to teach them about salvation.

Hospitality Revisited

(By Perry Hall)

In the first act of hospitality, God invited Adam and Eve to live in His edenic world. Don't be like Adam and Eve. They weren't very good guests. They started eating without permission.

All of us have been guests; some of us might have even been victims! Once I ate Jamaican food (which I love) so hot it felt like there was a hole filled with burning coals in my tongue. I kept eating though because of Jesus: "When you enter any town, and they welcome you, eat the things set before you" (Luke 10:8 HCSB). Being a good guest was important to Jesus. No doubt some have experienced worse situations, like a friend of mine who ate rat in South America. He said it was good. I would say that reflected on his wife's cooking but that would not be hospitable.

Scriptures are plain in declaring hospitality important. The Holy Spirit commands it (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9); elders and certain widows are qualified by it (1 Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:8; 1 Tim. 5:10); and Christians will be judged eternally by it (Matt. 25:31-46). Even a cup of cold water is considered significant by Jesus (Matt. 10:42; Mark 9:41). Obviously if it is important to God, it is imperative to any well-meaning disciple.

The Meaning of Hospitality

Here is a list of three words in the Bible dealing with hospitality:

- Love of strangers - *philoxenia*
- Loving strangers - *philoxenos*
- Entertaining strangers – *xenodocheō*

The similarity between all three is "strangers." The difference is loving (*philos*) and entertaining, receiving, or welcoming (*dechomai*). Making welcome and feeling welcome are foundational thoughts of hospitality.

Let's revisit a familiar scene: visiting a strange congregation. The feelings can range from uncomfortable to fearful. It's uncomfortable for Christians

because we are surrounded by people we don't know. It's fearful for those who *have been* rejected by so-called Christians when needed the most; or fearful that they *will be* rejected. Listening to the unloving language describing spiritual outliers such as homosexuals, transgenders, and such, makes me wonder if they would feel welcomed, even if they wanted to repent...or before we knew and they walked through our door.

When a visitor walks into our assembly we often say a simple "welcome." Some congregations even have official greeters like Wal-Mart. But what does "welcome" mean? The etymology of the English word properly provides what we should be thinking and feeling: "a person whose coming is pleasing." Sadly Chick-fil-a is known more for people feeling welcome than some churches. Strangers can feel the "vibe" of the church often just by walking in and watching others. Visitors are a goldmine for growth because they are doing something too many Christians fail to do which is "go." We should go to them; but when they "go" to us, make sure they know they are a person whose coming is pleasing to us.

*...when [visitors] "go" to us, **make sure they know that they are a person whose coming is pleasing to us.***

Considering how we treat visitors, would they feel welcomed in our homes after church? Afterwards, if we can't personally practice hospitality to these strangers, no matter their dress or lifestyle, then don't bother saying "Welcome;" because we won't really mean it.

What is our attitude towards strangers and theirs towards us? The most amazing aspect of Jesus' ministry is not that He loved the sinner while hating the sin; or loved those who hated Him. After all, we shouldn't really be amazed at anything Divinity can do because

God is God and Jesus was God in the flesh. When I am amazed at God being God I am looking at him through my sinfulness. What amazes me the most about Jesus' ministry is how many immoral sinners loved Him—because He loved them. Understand, Jesus didn't have the cross – not yet – to say to the sinner, “See how much God loves you!” Jesus just had His life which said, “See how much God loves you!” Jesus' love for spiritual strangers was so great He welcomed them and they accepted His hospitality: And the Pharisees and scribes were complaining, *“This man welcomes sinners and eats with them!”* (Luke 15:2 HCSB)

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I want to live that life! As we are seeing, hospitality is more than hanging around people who are like us and people we like. Hospitality is a serious topic, one which might be more challenging than we expect or are willing to hear and practice. Hospitality is a “strange” practice.

The Meaning of Hospitality - Going Deeper

In going deeper, hospitality is the gospel. Hospitality is grace. Hospitality is mercy. It is not a substitute for the gospel, or an aid in preaching the gospel, nor a bait and switch technique. It is simply one person loving another. Our hospitality is giving to others as a physical response to God's spiritual hospitality to us. This deeper meaning of charity in providing for the needs of strangers and society's forgotten is itself forgotten. The gospel is giving in love, as is hospitality. Paul uses the gospel as an illustration of the church collecting and contributing for poor saints: *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Though He was rich, for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich”* (2 Corinthians 8:9 HCSB).

As many words have changed meaning, so has *hospitality*. We have transformed it into something trendy instead of allowing hospitality to transform us into something godly. As is still done among social groups today, in the Greco-Roman world, hospitality was a way for the rich to keep up the appearances of being rich by spending time with the rich.

“Christian hospitality transformed Greco-Roman hospitality in its service to the needy rather than the rich. It was primarily the poor, widows, and traveling missionaries who received hospitality.”¹

Christianity transformed hospitality, but have we modern Christians transformed it into something less significant again? What is the biblical purpose of hospitality?

“We don't welcome the naked so they can be naked in our presence; we don't show hospitality to the hungry so they can watch us eat. We welcome the naked and hungry to change their circumstances. We make room for them so we can clothe and feed them. So too with moral hunger and personal shame. We don't welcome addicts so they can continue in their addiction. We make room for them, and take up residence in their lives, in order to be agents of ethical transformation. We don't receive the prostitute to help her get more tricks. We open our lives to the prostitute so we can deliver her from her slavery—to the pimp, perhaps to drugs, to poverty, to a destructive life. Hospitality is not universal approval. It is universal welcome for the sake of renewal. We make room not to tolerate but to transform.”²

Too often we have reduced hospitality to having friends over for food, fun, and “bored” games. All of this, plus potlucks and eating together at restaurants, are good and necessary for our spiritual family relationships; but barely touches the deeper meaning and purpose of hospitality. Christians eating together in the Bible was the true meaning of hospitality and had little to do with “get-togethers.” I would suggest that most of the times Christians ate together, the texts suggest the poorer were being fed by those richer.

“Hospitality, in the sense of the N.T. (Hebrews 13:2, 1 Peter 4:9), is not akin to ‘keeping company,’ or ‘open house’; it is a form of charity

¹ <http://www.summitluminetnetwork.org/paiges-articles/early-christian-hospitality-in-context-three-christian-distinctives-that-extended-and-transformed-contemporary-mediterranean-hospitality>

² Peter Leithart, *Traces of the Trinity*, Location 1671-2

much needed by travelling, exiled, or persecuted Christians.”³

Maybe “hospitality” has lost its significance and meaning much like discipleship has, because both have become something easier than what they were originally. In fact, hospitality is discipleship. The very meaning of the word hospitality shows that something is amiss in the way it is often practiced today. If it means ‘love of strangers,’ then why are we inviting only our friends? And yet, if we have trouble spending time with friends; how even less effort is spent with “strangers”? If we have trouble sitting with the outliers who are Christians at potlucks; how much harder is it to even look at a homeless person in the eyes at an intersection and share from our prosperity with them? Can you see the problem? We have made hospitality about us! One of the most unselfish acts in Christianity has become self-serving.

We have made hospitality about us! One of the most unselfish acts in Christianity has become self-serving.

The greatest meal of “hospitality” is when we who were strangers are invited into God’s house to eat with His Son in His fellowship meal (1 Cor. 10:16). And wouldn’t you know it, Jesus initiated it with His apostles in a guest house (Mark 14:14; Luke 22:11). Hospitality is the gospel.

The Meaning of Hospitality – Even Deeper

Daniel Webster was out hunting one night, had traveled too far, and it was too late for him to head back to his cabin. He pounded on the door of a local farmhouse. All the lights were already out and the farmer was in bed. An upstairs window was raised and the farmer demanded, “*What do you want?*” Daniel Webster replied, “*I want to spend the night here.*” The farmer answered, “*All right, stay there.*” And down went the window.

While humorous, did your mind drift back to a certain parable of Jesus (Luke 11:5-13)? The point of the parable is not the importance of hospitality, but persistence in prayer. Yet my point is Jesus often uses hospitality as the background for his parables and our

relationship to God: Two Debtors (Luke 7:36-50); Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37); Rude Guest (Luke 14:7-14); Great Banquet (Luke 14:15-24); Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32).

Did you notice something curious as you reflected on those parables? While not all parables involving hospitality are from Luke (i.e., Matt 25:31-46), all of these are. These parables parallel the many actions of hospitality within Luke (2:1-7; 4:38-39; 5:29-31; 6:1-5; 7:31-35; 7:36-50; 9:1-6; 9:10-16; 9:51-55; 10:1-12; 10:38-42; 11:37-53; 13:22-30; 14:12-14; 15:1; 15:19-31; 18:18-23; 19:1-10; 19:28-40; 22:7-13; 23:50-56). His account is known for emphasizing the humanity of Jesus and therefore humanitarian needs; such as the equal treatment of those whom society minimizes. In Jesus’ day that would have been the poor, Gentiles, sick, and women, among others. It is more than a narcissistic need within humans to be recognized; it is essential to our mental core. Being ignored, minimized, excluded, outcast and such is detrimental to our very humanity. Likewise, ignoring, minimizing, excluding, casting out and such is also detrimental to our very humanity. This makes the practice of hospitality that much more meaningful. It is a moral act and therefore the absence of it is immoral.

“In ancient times, hospitality was viewed as a pillar on which the moral structure of the world rested. It was a highly valued moral practice, seen as an important expression of kindness, mutual aid, neighborliness, and a response to the life of faith. Hospitality addressed the physical needs of strangers for food, shelter, and protection, but also included recognition of their worth and common humanity.”⁴

One of Luke’s examples of hospitality is Jesus being entertained by Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42). Martha welcomed (*hupodechomai*) Jesus into her home. Like *xenodocheō* (entertaining strangers), it too is related to *dechomai* or welcome. Commenting on this “welcome” (v. 38), Aaron Kuecker said,

“But the story must be read against the backdrop of Luke’s Gospel as a whole, where the work of hospitality (a vital form of generosity in

³ Expositor’s Greek New Testament, via biblehub.com/commentaries/romans/12-13.htm

⁴ Christine D. Pohl, allsoulsseatle.org/resources_files/Hospitality.pdf

the ancient Near East) is one of the chief signs of the in-breaking of God's kingdom."⁵

Jesus' "in-breaking of God's kingdom" began in a scene of hospitality, or better yet the lack of it. With Luke's emphasis, it is no wonder his gospel is the only one which mentions there was no room in "the inn" for Jesus' parents (Luke 2:7). The word inn is *kataluma* and can mean "inn;" but the only other two times it appears (Mark 14:14; Luke 22:11) it refers to a guest room. Kenneth Bailey gives it this meaning in "Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes" (chapter 1). Considering Luke's emphasis on hospitality, it makes good sense for his story to begin with Jesus' parent's not being shown hospitality, even if it is simply a lack of room in the guest house. Hospitality is as essential to the gospel of Luke as hospitality is essential to the gospel-lived lives of Christians.

Another example of hospitality within Luke is Zacchaeus (19:1-9). Salvation through the gospel of Jesus is a theme of Luke, along with hospitality. In this scene we see these combined: "*Today salvation has come to this house,*" Jesus told him, "*because he too is a son of Abraham*" (Luke 19:9 HCSB).

Luke even concludes with an act of hospitality on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). Although invited by these two disappointed disciples, Jesus assumes the role of host and not guest by blessing and breaking the bread, then sharing it with His disciples. In this act they recognize Jesus. In our acts of hospitality, we will be blessed if strangers see in us Jesus.

In the very first act of hospitality Adam and Eve were bad guests. The rest of the Bible is spent with God inviting strangers to spiritually dine with Him because we too have followed in the footsteps of our forefathers. Salvation is an invitation of hospitable grace:

Isaiah 55:1 (HCSB) "*Come, everyone who is thirsty, come to the waters; and you without money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost!*"

Having revisited hospitality, and having received God's hospitality, let's visit with those who need *our* hospitality.

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BIBLICAL TRUTH

STANDING ON

ITS SPIRITUAL

HEAD TO GET

OUR ETERNAL

ATTENTION.

⁵ Theologyofwork.com/new-testament/Luke/

About the Authors

Gerald Cowan has been preaching the gospel for over 50 years. He has spent the past 2 ½ decades working for the Lord in Southern Illinois.

Kyle Frank is a Christian, Restoration Movement enthusiast, and book lover. His writings have appeared in *Gospel Light* as well as *Faith and Facts Quarterly*. He has two books in print, both dealing with Elder Benjamin Franklin. (Kyle's articles will begin in the Premiere issue of the Quarterly, January, 2017)

Perry Hall has been preaching over 30 years, with a degree in History and Philosophy. He has been married since 1984, and has 4 children. He says, "We have two who are adopted and two we got the old fashioned way. I mention this to encourage adoption (Jms.1:27) - Moses and Jesus were adopted. Two of my children are black and racial harmony is a real-life concern of mine. My parents now have 10 out of 16 grandchildren not biologically related to them. As for a hobby I like motorcycles because you can't fit a wife and 4 children on a motorcycle."

Mark McWhorter is a former medical professional, a research fanatic and history nut, a missionary, a book-seller (with his wife, Teah), and that doesn't even come close to all that he does. He has written for several brotherhood periodicals, spoken on several lectureships, helped present a Restoration Movement seminar, and was integral in starting Roundhouse, an annual gathering of members of the church who homeschool.

Jim Mitchell obtained his Bachelor of Arts from Freed-Hardeman University & Master of Divinity from Oklahoma Christian University, and has been preaching for more than 35 years and has worked with congregations in Florida, Virginia, and Oklahoma. He served as the minister for the church of Christ in Harrah, OK, from 2006 to 2014 and is now the pulpit minister for the Cherokee Hills church of Christ in Oklahoma City.

Roderick Ross, better known as "Rod," has been married for 42 years to (he believes) the most wonderful, caring woman on the earth (as well as the best cook), with three grown children (married), and nine grandchildren from ages 1-14. A lover of baseball, Ohio State football, hunting, fishing, Roy Rogers movies, and American history. As his youngest son once said, "You know everything nobody wants to know, and everything nobody cares about." He suffered a stroke in 2011, which left him legally blind, unable to drive, read and work; but, he still believes that everyone should do what they can. He maintains a website, three Facebook groups, three Facebook pages, sends out an email lesson Monday – Friday, teaches Bible class, preaches every Sunday morning and evening, and does a weekly radio program. He does each of these in small time frames, followed by power naps.

Devin Self is a member of the Gravel Hill Church of Christ in Dover, Arkansas. From a very young age he knew he wanted to serve the Lord. Going to church camps, youth devotionals, and vacation bible schools were part of his favorite childhood memories, as well as the many great influences that kept him growing stronger. He is married to his wonderful wife of 2 years, Kelsey, and they hope someday to have children to be raised up with Christ as their foundation.

James Sims excels at working with small congregations, and building them up in the faith. He has worked with congregations in Nevada and Florida (currently working with the church in Floral City, FL), and has much practical experience in reaching the lost for the Lord.

Bradley Cobb is the author of several books, including *The Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts* and the upcoming *Who Were the Apostles?*, commentaries on Habakkuk, Philemon, James, and Jude, as well as two children's books. He is also a preacher, editor, artist, musician, Restoration Movement enthusiast and nerd. He is married to his best friend, and they have four Christian children.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

Most of the articles that appeared in this *preview* issue will be included in the *Premiere* issue, coming in January, 2017. But in addition to that, we've got lots more to offer!

- ***The Lost Outlines of H. Leo Boles*** – Read the fascinating—and tragic—story about the discovery of a treasure-trove of never-before published outlines written by the former editor of *Gospel Advocate*.
- ***Bible Q&A*** – Bible questions, submitted by our readers, answered by one of our regular writers. (Note: that means you ought to send in some questions for us so those pages aren't blank!)
- ***Studying the Eldership*** – A new series all revolving around the biblical description of elders—with each article written by a different author.
- ***The Teen Pages*** – Written for teenage Christians, and sometimes **by** teenage Christians, this section focuses on helping our younger brethren grow and stay strong in these difficult years.
- ***Children's Puzzle Page*** – A special page just for the kids to do. Sometimes a crossword, sometimes a “Who am I?” but always fun for the kids—and adults too!
- ***Book Reviews*** – We have lots of big readers on staff—and if they read a book they think you will enjoy, they'll let you know it here. On the other hand, if the book is worthless and pitiful...well, we probably won't waste the space to tell you about it. ☺
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