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Sleeping!

Andrew Turkington

A legitimate sleep is a gift from God. "... he giveth his beloved sleep" (Ps. 127:2). How necessary to physical refreshment is this time spent in the unconsciousness of sleep! "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet," (Ecc. 5:12).

Many times we are awake when we should be sleeping. Instead of "casting all your care upon Him," (1 Pet. 5:7), we permit our concerns to rob us of the sleep that we need very much. Peter knew how to practice what he counseled, because the night before Herod was going to take his life, he was sleeping deeply, (Acts 12:6).

However, there are more times when we are sleeping when we should be awake, especially in the spiritual sense. When we sleep physically, we are unaware of everything around us; we could be in great danger and not even know it. Also, when a person sleeps spiritually, he is insensible to:

1. The Danger of His Soul

The jailer in Philippi not only awakened from his physical sleep, but also from spiritual sleep, when "called for a light and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; and brought them out, and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'" (Acts 16:29,30). Some have said that that he was thinking of the danger of losing his life because the prisoners had escaped. But Paul already had assured him that all were still there. Without doubt, he was asking about the salvation of his soul, having come to the very doors of death. Possibly someone who reads these pages is like Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 4:7), sleeping in his bed, and you unaware of the danger of losing your soul eternally in hell. "Awake, thou, that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14).

2. One's Actual Spiritual Condition

It is possible to be far from the Lord, spiritually cold, and not be aware of it. Because of her sleep, the Bride in the Song of Solomon missed the presence of her Beloved (Song 5:2-6). He was calling her from the closed door, and when she was finally ready to open it, he had left. And what it cost her to find him again!

A little carelessness is enough to bring us to spiritual poverty. "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come, as one that travel- leth, and thy want as an armed man" (Prov. 24:33-34). The field of the lazy man, covered with thorns and briars, betrays the fact that he has abandoned himself to sleep. It is said that the believers in Africa used to have a separate place where they went to pray. When a brother was not careful about his spiritual condition, another would see that the bush had overgrown the pathway between his house and his place of prayer. What is our spiritual condition?

3. The Spiritual Needs of those around us

How sad was the call of the ship owner to Jonah! "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not," (Jonah 1:6). All around him were those idolatrous mariners at the point of perishing, and Jonah, tranquil, was sleeping.

The five prudent virgins were prepared with their oil but, they were sleeping! At their side were five foolish virgins without oil, and they who could have counseled them to seek the oil, were insensible to the great need that they had. By the time that they finally awoke, it was too late to seek oil.

Are we sleeping in full view of the need of the perishing

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souls that are around us?

4. The Snares of the World

How far a believer can go when he begins to go down! Samson came to the place of a deep sleep, insensible to the danger that was near him. He had been playing with sin, and he thought to escape the results of what he had done. But he didn't know that Jehovah had departed from him. Sleeping in the arms of a Philistine woman, Samson lost the ultimate sign of his separation as a Nazarite. And when the enemy attacked him, he didn't have any power to resist.

The devil has his own agents (men or women) lying in wait, ready to knock down the most consecrated believer. The Lord awakened his disciples, and said to Peter, *"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak,"* (Matt. 26:41). We should clothe ourselves with all the armor of God, so that we will stand firm against the wiles of the devil, (Eph. 6:11).

5. The Schemes and Wiles of the Devil

The enemy uses the opportunity when men are sleeping to sow tares among the wheat (Matt. 13:25). As an application of this parable, we can learn how important it is that those elders of an assembly are well-awake so that they do not allow the entrance of false doctrine or mere professors. The enemy never sleeps, and he is always seeking opportunity to damage the work of God when we are careless.

David reminded Abner of his failure to guard his lord, the king (1 Sam. 26:15). All the valiance of Abner didn't amount to anything, because he was in a deep sleep. A believer can have great ability and may have done great deeds in the past, but if he is spiritually sleeping, the enemy can cause disasters.

6. The Admonitions of the Word

None less than the apostle Paul was ministering the Word. But Eutyclus wasn't paying the least attention to him and learned nothing from it. He was asleep. How can we explain the fact that the good teaching of the Word has no effect on some believers? They are spiritually asleep! Like Eutyclus, they seek a position where they can be with the believers and at the same time they want to be inclined toward the world outside. Very quickly they are submersed in a profound spiritual sleep, and they are in danger of suffering a spectacular fall.

7. The Imminent Coming of the Lord

We are not waiting to see any sign in order to know that the coming of the Lord is near. But before our eyes we see how

the world is preparing for what will take place after the rapture. It seems to us that now we hear the call, *"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."* If the coming of the Lord were to take place at any moment, and we know that it is so, how do we explain our lives that are so relaxed and egotistical? It is because we are spiritually asleep.

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11). Rise up, oh church, shake off your stupor, because your Bridegroom and Lord comes in the clouds!

(translated from "La Sana Doctrina" Jan-Feb 2010)

When a trial comes upon us let us look upon it as sent for a particular blessing, not considering how heavy it is, but what advantage we can get from it.

Regeneration

Peter Simms

Matt.19:28; Titus 3:5; John 3:3-5; 1 Pet.1:23

The word **Regeneration** comes from the Greek word "palingenesia" meaning birth (*palin*) again (*genesis*) and stresses the inception of a new state of things in contrast with the old.

The phrase born again (Gal.4:9 Gk. *palin*), or born from above (John 19:11 Gk. *anohen*) stresses the act of communicating new life. The necessity for regeneration lies in what we are, and not in what we've done. It is used of a spiritual regeneration in Titus 3:5, involving the imparting of a new life (John 3:3-5) The two operating powers that produce this are "the word of truth," (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23,) and the Holy Spirit, (John 3:5, 6) The washing of regeneration is explained in Eph. 5:26, *"that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"* (cp John 15:3). This washing does not refer to water baptism, which, in the writer's opinion is erroneous and should be rejected. See the note on page 66 in *"The Gospel And Its Ministry"* by Sir Robert Anderson, a book all young students of the gospel should read.

The seed in 1 Pet. 1:23 means parentage. When the corruptible seed of the male meets with the corruptible seed of the female, a new life is formed; however it is destined to die, because it is of a corruptible source. So likewise Peter explains, when the incorruptible seed (parentage) of the word of God, and an unregenerate person's faith meet, a new spiritual birth takes place. John 5:24 says *"He that heareth my word (John 6:63) and believeth on Him that sent me (John 3:17) hath (present tense) everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."* This transfer from death to life is the essence of regeneration.

The new birth in John 3:3-7 stresses the communication of new life: this is accomplished by the Spirit of God through the Word of God. John 6:63 says *“It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”* No amount of human intelligence can bring this about or understand the mechanics involved. It’s like the wind, because we hear the sound and feel the effects, but we can’t tell where it comes from or where it goes, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit. (John 3:8).

We must be clear on the fact that God makes no attempt to reform man in his depraved condition, but rather has sentenced him to death (Gen. 2:16-17; Ezek. 18:4). But thank God, He has not left us there without hope of ever seeing the kingdom of God. He rather demands regeneration if this kingdom is to be enjoyed. Sin has left us not only depraved, but also spiritually dead. One definition of death is that it is separation. As the spirit is separated from the body at our physical death (James 2:26), we were born separated from God spiritually (Ps. 51:5). This separation from God (1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:1-4; 4:18; Isa. 59:1) leaves us spiritually dead, and it’s this condition that regeneration is able to rectify.

This concept is laughed and scoffed at by the unregenerate man (1 Cor. 1:18). He does so because of a lack of understanding, *“How can a man enter the second time into his mother’s womb?”* (John 3:4) To him the new birth is ludicrous. He is not willing to accept the fact that his sin has destroyed him spiritually, and that he will never see the kingdom of God, unless he experiences the new birth. We must never allow the sinner to think that he has, nor can have, any foothold into the kingdom of God by his own doing. The sinner, as far as God is concerned, is dead, and he must be born again! No amount of reformation, baptisms, religious endeavors, or good works can give him life; he must be born again (John 3:3). Read the interesting account of the nation of Israel that needed a new life (Ezek. 37:1-14) and a new heart (Ezek. 11:19; 36:25-28; Jer. 24:7). Our Lord referred to this passage when speaking to Nicodemus, the teacher in Israel, who should have known what it meant when our Lord told him he must be born again. This is still man’s great dilemma, and God takes the initiative (John 1:13) in solving it through regeneration, which is in fact a creation by divine generation, the constituting of sinners as legitimate children of God. (John 1:12 reads *“which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*)

Meaning of Regeneration

In Matt. 19:29; Isa. 35:10 we read of conditions when the curse of Gen. 3:17-19 will be removed. *“Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed (or have been following) me, in the regeneration (the future Messianic age) when the*

Son of man shall sit down upon his throne of glory (Matt. 5:31), ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” ((JND). You can see how it involves the inception of a new state of things. In this dispensation we suffer rejection; in the next dispensation we shall reign:

Col. 1:13: *“who has delivered us from the authority of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love”* (JND) The same idea is here. 1 Pet. 2:9 *“that ye should show forth the praises (excellencies) of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”* We have passed from one sphere into another. John 5:24: *“but is passed from death unto life,”* which is the same concept.

1. A definition of regeneration by W. E. Vine:

“The new birth and regeneration do not represent successive stages in spiritual experience, they refer to the same event but view it in different aspects. The new birth stresses the communication of spiritual life in contrast to antecedent spiritual death; regeneration stresses the inception of a new state of things in contrast with the old; hence the connection of the use of the word with its application to Israel, in Matt. 19:28.”

“In Matt. 19:28 the word is used, in the Lord’s discourse, in the wider sense of the “restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21), when, as a result of the Second Advent of Christ, Jehovah ‘sets His King upon His holy hill of Zion’ (Ps. 2:6). Israel, now in apostasy, is restored to its destined status, in the recognition and under the benign sovereignty of its Messiah. Thereby will be accomplished the deliverance of the world from the power and deception of Satan and from the despotic and anti-christian rulers of the nations.” (W. E. Vine)

2. A definition of Regeneration by R. C. Trench:

“That free act of God’s mercy and power, whereby He causes the sinner to pass out of the kingdom of darkness into that of life, out of death into life. This ultimately results in the introduction of righteousness and holiness into the life, thus purifying and cleansing it. The renewing is the gradual conforming of the man more and more to that new spiritual world, into that which he has been introduced, and in which he now lives and moves; the restoration of the divine image.”

Order in God’s House

1 Tim. 5:17-25

Joel Portman

Paul continues his teaching on local assembly responsibilities, considering the elders once again and the conduct of saints with regard to godly order. Some who have written

or spoken on this passage differ in handling it, so we want to exercise caution and avoid dogmatism in what we might write. Some truths are very clear, however. One is that godly oversight maintained by exercised elders is very important and must be guarded in an assembly. The other is that any act of identification with an individual without careful consideration could introduce possible harm and would reflect on Timothy personally, or on any other who might be so involved.

Estimation of Elders v. 17-18

Some good men of a past day, such as William Kelly and others, declared that assemblies today cannot have elders because there are no apostles or “apostolic delegates” to identify them (*Exposition of the Two Epistles to Timothy*). However, to what purpose were the instructions that pertain to elders (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, etc.) given, if it is not the Spirit's purpose that these principles might be applied to entire dispensation? We believe that God intends for every assembly to have godly, spiritual men who are called of God and raised by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) to carry out this very important work until the coming of our Lord. As such, they are to be held in high esteem and appreciated for the work that they do. Hebrews 13:7 instructs believers to remember them who have had the rule (standing before and leading), (likely those of the past who have died), and in 13:17, they are to obey them and submit to them.

These elders are to receive honor, or esteem, of the saints; 1 Tim. 5:17 indicates that those who do such a work well, laboring in the word and doctrine (teaching) are to receive double honor. Some have used a few occurrences of this word to teach that they are to receive pay for their work, but if that is the case, there would be some who receive honor, or pay for serving, and some who would receive double pay. However, its use in 6:1 regarding servants toward their masters seems to preclude it meaning “pay” or salary. It is true, we believe, that in cases where such a laborious work involves so much burden that normal “secular” work is insufficient to meet an elder's expenses, the honor given to them for their work would even go so far as to include financial help given to assist them. They are laboring so intensely for the welfare of the saints that it would only be righteous for those who receive such help to recompense that labor, even in material ways. As James Allen puts it, “appreciation of the spiritual value of such men, who sacrificially spend themselves for the saints, would scarcely allow them to suffer material need, particularly when this need was brought about by their unremitting attention to the needs of others. Thus the assembly should face an exercise to support materially those who would spend sacrificially on their behalf, if and when such a need arises,” (*What the Bible Teaches, 1 Timothy*).

An elder should receive the honor and esteem of the saints, and those who are able or exercised to do so “excellently, or commendably” are worthy of double honor for their work. “This does not mean, as some suppose, that there are two kinds of elders, ruling elders and teaching elders. . . Laboring or toiling in them to the point of weariness and fatigue, they richly deserved ‘double honor,’” (*First Timothy*, D. E. Hiebert). It emphasizes that, while this a work carried on by every elder, there are some who may labor more intensely or ably than others for various reasons.

Paul quotes an O. T. scripture (also used in 1 Cor. 9:9), to indicate that one laboring is rightly due a recompense for his labors. Then he also quotes from the N. T. as scripture, taking the words of the Lord in Luke 10:7 to emphasize the same point. Thus, we see both parts of our Bible quoted as Divinely given and with authority to support what he is teaching to Timothy with regard to elders and their due.

Protection of Elders v. 19-21

Such elders who work with exercise and fulfill their responsibility ably may be subject to attack by carnal men. They are to be protected from false accusations, and it is only with adequate witness to a charge against them that any action is to be taken. Inevitably there will arise in assemblies those who reject godly oversight, and sadly, it is seen now and again among assemblies today. Frivolous and unproven charges against an elder must be dismissed and disregarded, and the reputation of such an elder must be guarded so that his work might continue unimpeded. Korah and his men rose up against Divinely instituted authority in Israel, rejecting God's call of Aaron and his family to the priesthood and Moses' call of God to leadership (Num. 16). This was the result of their unbelief and refusal to enter the land in Num. 14, and was characteristic of wilderness conditions. God faithfully defended both Moses and Aaron against those charges and upheld them by His judgment on the rebels and display of the glorious life of Aaron's rod in God's presence.

Then we believe that in v 20, Paul deals with those who are bringing those false charges. Some see these as elders who sin. Again James Allen (*What the Bible Teaches: 1 Timothy*), says that this argument seems strangely weak. It seems more proper to see the sinning ones as those who are continuing to bring such charges, innuendos, and accusations against an elder. These repeated accusations are clearly designed to try to undermine their authority and diminish their influence among the saints. These sinning ones must be rebuked and dealt with before the entire assembly so that all (the “others” suggests those of that group who may be inclined to continue this pattern) might fear and desist from such activities, which border on railing.

A proud heart and a lofty mountain are never fruitful.
Gurnall

Mr. Darby's translation says that they must be publicly exposed, so that this is an act before the saints because their actions are affecting the entire assembly.

These disciplinary acts must be done without partiality or preference (v. 21). It is in the sight of God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels and this indicates that absolute righteousness must prevail. We live in a world of preference and partiality with unrighteousness evident on many sides, but this should never be seen in assembly decisions.

Selection of Elders v. 22-25

There are various interpretations of these verses, but we believe that they apply to the subject that has gone before, namely that of elders. Timothy had responsibility to identify the men who displayed the essential qualities that Paul has taught in ch. 3:1-7, but in doing so, he needed to make certain that they were truly possessing the moral and spiritual character that was and is essential. Hasty recognition of anyone for an important work or position can result in faults becoming known afterward. This would impact on Timothy if he were involved in such a selection because it would indicate a fault in his judgment, but more than that, it would have a detrimental effect on the entire assembly. There have been cases of men coming into an oversight capacity who later proved to be completely unqualified for it, either due to moral or spiritual flaws. Timothy would need to keep himself pure, or free from any personal charge by association with one like this.

In relation to keeping himself pure, Paul tells Timothy that his personal exercise to maintain purity in himself need not cause him to refrain from all wine. This is clearly not an open door for believers to indulge in wine or strong drinks. The terms used guard us from any such thought. Timothy had infirmities and was evidently not a well man, particularly in regard to his stomach, and since wine was essentially the only medicinal material that could be used in his case, Paul recommends that he be not a "water drinker" only but also use a little wine. The restrictions are important: the quantity is "a little," and it is for "thy stomach's sake" and not for indulgence. More believers have ruined their lives and testimonies by falling into the trap of drinking alcoholic beverages or indulging in other similar practices than those who need to take materials like this for their physical well-being. We should not use a verse like this as an excuse for self-indulgence.

Having instructed Timothy personally, Paul returns to the selection of elders by simply saying in v. 24-25 that the sins of some individuals are evident ahead of time and can be recognized clearly, while there are others that will come to the light with time and careful examination. This would guard against unwarranted haste in recognizing a brother for

this work. In the same way, there are the good works of some that aren't evident at the beginning, but, being known to the Lord, they will ultimately come to the light and be recognized and for this, such a believer will be appreciated. Matt. 6:4, 6, 18; Mark 4:22 teach that what is done in secret will ultimately be brought into the light. May we all strive to faithfully serve our Lord and be occupied with doing those things that, when they come to the light, will reflect a godly and spiritual life worthy of the Lord's commendation and the saints' recognition.

The Word of God brings in God's mind about Himself instead of my own; it lets God think for me; God speaks for me, God acts for me; it makes me passive, because I can be nothing else.

Assembly History, (continued)

Eugene Badgley

At this point I want to mention the conversion of Donald Ross who had great meaning to this history. He was a member of the established Church of Scotland but he found little there to keep his soul fresh. In 1843 about 500 evangelical preachers, Dr. Chalmers at their head, turned their backs on guaranteed salaries and left the church to form the 'free church of Scotland. This was the turning point in the history of the Gospel in Scotland. Chalmers was concerned about the neglected multitudes in the poorest parts of cities like Edinburgh and opened a mission work called the North East coast Mission. This mission was interdenominational; on its board were members of all the churches and they were supported by contributions from all denominations.

In 1858 Donald Ross associated himself with it and wherever he preached the gospel he saw souls saved. The plain preaching was so upsetting to people of mere religious profession that many efforts were made to get the evangelists to tone down the preaching, and when these efforts failed, there was opposition, often intense and bitter. Mr. Ross wrote, "Gradually it became our settled conviction that the clergy were the greatest hindrance to the people's salvation."

After some years they became thoroughly disenchanted with their interdenominational mission. At that time, Mr. Ross had not heard of gathering to the name of the Lord Jesus, but he had enough light from the Word of God to know that something was radically wrong with the interdenomination with which he was associated. One night in a particular place, he preached on the text, "*Come out from*

among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. 6: 17). A saved church elder said to him, "All true, dear brother Ross, but where are we to go?" Mr. Ross answered, "that is what is troubling me."

Donald Ross and Donald Munro soon severed their connection with the mission and formed the Northern Evangelistic Society in Scotland (an independent society); its main purpose was simply the spread of the gospel. It was at this time that there were gathered around Mr. Ross and Mr. Munro a group of men who were of kindred spirit such as James Campbell, John Smith, John Gill who were destined by divine purpose to learn the truth of believers' baptism, and eventually to find in the Word of God, for themselves, the truth of New Testament church order.

They went forth without any visible means of support, making no appeals; no earthly committee, no 'ism' to support. God richly blessed the preaching of these two men. It is not hard to see that God was leading these men step by step to the divine order!

After 12 months of incessant labor Mr. Munro became ill and in Autumn of 1871 he decided to take a voyage to Canada to recovery. At Parkhill, Ontario. He visited a number of his relatives who were in the Presbyterian Church and a number of them were saved and were encouraged to go show their friends what great things God had done for them. During Munro's absence, Donald Ross, in Scotland, learned the truth of believer's baptism and was promptly baptized. He wrote Mr. Munro about this, but he also had been exercised about believer's baptism (he was sprinkled at infancy). When Mr. Munro returned to Scotland in Nov. he was convinced of the need to be baptized and in December, he obeyed the Lord in baptism.

While Mr. Munro was in Canada during the fall of 1871, James Campbell asked Donald Ross to come to Jarrow on the Tyne to preach the gospel. Many souls were saved and were lead on in the truth that they knew. For some time Mr. Campbell had been going to remember the Lord's death, in the breaking of bread with believers in Bethesda Chapel but he recognized that they were not gathered in the full recognition of the common priesthood of all believers, but were under the presidency of their gifted and able minister.

As James Campbell and others in Jarrow continued to read the Word of God, and to have its teaching opened up to them by the Spirit, they saw it to be their privilege, as believers in the Lord Jesus, to assemble as such in His name alone. They were not aware at the time, of a single company of believers thus gathered, but assured from the Word that it was the Lord's way and that He was all sufficient for

all their need, they went forward in the path of obedience as it was opened to them. On a Lord's day in November, 1871, for the first time in Jarrow, the table was spread in the simplicity of early times, as set forth in the Word, and a company of 'born again' Christians came together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, outside of all denomination, to worship God by the Spirit.

But as for Mr. Ross and his companions while they were outside the denomination they were not yet gathered to the Lord's Name. Mr. Ross had heard of people called 'brethren' but only being a very bad group with whom he should have no links whatsoever.

He was determined not to come under the control of any men or system or organization, but to serve the Lord only and follow His Word as His sole guide. This drove Mr. Ross to the Word of God which he searched upon his knees. The outcome was that he resigned from the Free Church and disbanded from the Northern Evangelistic Society and linked himself with the little assembly at Jarrow on the Tyne. They could now preach the whole counsel of the Word of God.

Mr. Crawford states "it must be stressed that these brethren knew little or nothing about 'Open' or 'Exclusive' assemblies and they surely should not be held responsible for anything that has characterized these divisions. These northern assemblies were a distinct work of God."

Thank God this work was not limited to Scotland. In the great mercy of God, these men were led to Canada and the USA.

In 1872 Munro returned to Parkhill to continue in the gospel; the following year (1873) John Smith and James Campbell joined in the work.

Those who were saved were taught the truths of believers' baptism, separation from the world's religion and gathering unto the Name of the Lord Jesus. The new converts were quickly excommunicated from the Kirk as dangerous persons. Turning to no other recourse but God and His Word, they gather in the rear of a brother's store in Park Hill to read the scriptures, break bread and to preach the gospel to any who would listen. In the paper called 'Our Record' dated 1913 (a copy of this record was passed on to me by Brother Hackett of St. Mary's) we have information of John Smith's and Donald Munro's labours in Hamilton, Ontario in 1874. Hamilton became a center from which the gospel went forth to surrounding towns and country districts, namely, Toronto, Bolton, Galt. In spite of distance in travel, within 15 years the work spread to the Maritimes, the Prairies. In the USA, assemblies were planted in Boston, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Binghamton, Chicago, and etc.

Mr. Paul said, "They did not gather on the ground of the one body, but on the simple basis, 'what saith the Scriptures' and to which they would be obedient. Assemblies literally multiplied and grew for the next 35 years."

There was no division; peace and unity characterized them. All spoke the same thing because theories were of no account to them while **'thus saith the Lord' settled everything.**

They were guided simply and only by the Word of God. Mr. Monro said, "There is not a church or a chapel in Christendom whose door is wide enough to let in a whole Bible or a denomination on earth that will endure the whole of God's Truth."

But the Devil would not leave this work alone. Teachers from the other lines attempted to lure assemblies in Ontario to gather on the ground of the one Body or 'life not light' as others phrase it, but brethren refused this unscriptural proposition.

But, in Britain there were ears ready to listen to their proposals. As a consequence leading men in Britain and Scotland completely reversed their stand, repudiated their former teaching and came out openly in favour of J.N.D.'s theory respecting gathering on the ground of the one body.
(to be concluded)

Paul, the Evangelist

Robert Surgenor

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints ..." (Ephesians 4:11-12).

The word **"evangelist"** is an interesting word in itself. You will notice that the middle of the word spells out another word that we are all acquainted with – evANGEList. The word **"angel"** is also translated, **"messenger,"** so that the word evangelist conveys the thought of a bearer of good tidings. That is primarily the work of an evangelist, to bear the good tidings of the gospel to the lost and perishing.

The question arises, in what way is this divine activity to be carried out? Has God left us up to our own imagination or devising to accomplish this tremendous and most solemn task? Certainly not! For the work of propagating the gospel, there is a divine plan laid down very plainly in the Holy Scriptures.

Most people who take up any important activity seek out a mentor, one who sets a pattern and lives the example that the

novice seeks to follow. We see this in many professions in the world, but we also see it in the Word of God. Joshua had Moses to look up to. Elisha followed Elijah, and even asked for a double portion of his Spirit upon the older prophet's home call. Coming to the New Testament, Peter had Mark following him, and Paul took an interest in a young man of like mind named Timothy. Paul set the pattern for Timothy to follow, and as far as I can see, for the work of an evangelist, there could be no greater man to follow than Paul.

How gracious of the Holy Spirit to consider the evangelists of our day by recording for them the principles and activities of this great man Paul. What a mentor! The "theological seminary" for today is the book of the Acts, where the movements and words of Paul have been divinely recorded for our instruction and profit. So, in this little pamphlet let us consider Paul and the scriptural way of spreading the gospel of God.

The Preparing of an Evangelist

The first thing to consider is **TIME**. Paul was apprehended on the road to Damascus and saved, but the beginning of his evangelistic activities for God certainly did not commence the very same day. There was a necessary preparation period in the life of Paul, prior to launching out with the gospel. It is a vital thing to notice this. After his conversion we read, *"Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus"* (Acts 9:19). He then went to

Arabia (Gal. 1:17) and spent some time there, and then returned to Damascus. He did not go to Jerusalem until three years after his conversion (Gal. 1:18). At Jerusalem he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 9:29). Then, being brought by the brethren to

Caesarea, they sent him forth to Tarsus.

Approximately twelve years later, Barnabas, seeing a need for deeper teaching, went over the mountains to Tarsus to seek Saul. Finally, after much difficulty, he found him and brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they assembled themselves with the church and taught much people (Acts 11:25-26). Thus we have Paul, perhaps saved twelve years before being called upon to teach in Antioch and fourteen years in Christ before launching out into missionary work for God. God does not call novices to the work of evangelizing.

The Calling of an Evangelist

What I want to stress is this. It is godly men that have matured in the things of God over a period of time, and in that time have proved themselves competent men, that God calls to preach the gospel. **Not every Christian is suited for this work.** According to Ephesians 4:11, preaching the gospel is a gift from God. The Spirit divides the various

gifts severally as He will (1 Cor. 12:11).

Paul recognized in Timothy the gift of an evangelist. So what took place? Paul inquired of the brethren about the spiritual status of this young man, and he was well reported of by the brethren. Not until Paul was satisfied that Timothy had the full endorsement of his brethren would he venture to take Timothy with him (Acts 16:2). Consequently, the assembly released Timothy from his home-assembly responsibilities, to go with Paul into the great harvest field.

No assembly ever sends a man into the Lord's work of evangelism. To prove that statement turn to Acts 13:1-4 and notice the facts. The assembly held a prayer and fasting meeting. Do you ever hear of such meetings today? What assemblies spend a whole day fasting in order to pray fervently to obtain the mind of God? Antioch did, and as they were praying, the Spirit (probably through a prophet) spake saying, "*Separate me [now] Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*" After fasting and praying the brethren laid their hands upon them (a sign of identification and approval) and **sent** ("*let loose, set free*") them away. Now notice this. "*They, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed ...*" The assembly relieved them of their responsibilities, but the Spirit was the one that called them and sent them forth.

The Method of Spreading the Gospel

The Antioch Assembly was quite unusual. It was not only the first Gentile assembly on earth, but it also had the uniqueness of being formed apart from the effort of any apostle or full-time evangelist. The wording is interesting. Saints who had been persecuted fled north to Antioch, and upon arriving there "*spake unto the Grecians, [also] preaching the Lord Jesus ...*" (Acts 11:20). The word "*spake*," means "*to talk*," while the word "*preaching*," means "*to publicly declare*." In other words, these saints spoke personally to all they came in contact with about Christ, and others who were gifted, preached in the open air about Christ. This resulted in conversions and consequently the planting of an assembly of Christians.

It is personal contacts that are vital for the spread of the gospel. When gospel meetings come to an assembly why are so few, if any, strangers present? The reason is, that the saints do not have their "*feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*" (Eph. 6:15). Notice, it is not "*feet shod with the gospel*," but rather "*feet shod with the preparation of the gospel*." That simply means that long before gospel meetings come, saints should be preparing for those meetings by being conversant with sinners, becoming friends to them, and doing them favors, so that when the gospel does come, they will be successful in persuading sinners to attend because of the good that they have done to them in days gone by.

Then we have open-air preaching in Antioch. Not every brother was suited for that work, but those who were, would preach scripturally and fervently. Why is it today that we see so little open-air preaching? It is allowed. True, some local governments require a permit, but when did you last hear of Christians seeking a permit to preach on the street of a community? Is the reproach too great, or have we lost a fervent love for souls? (to be continued)

Good desires always lead to prayer and effort. If therefore our desires end in desiring, they are not good; they are only the desires of the slothful man which end in want and confusion.

"In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen"

(Genesis 22:14)

A. R. Crocker, Galt, Canada (WIS Apr 1935)

The question arises in one's mind, "What shall be seen?" Chapter 22 reveals to us, in type, the sacrifice of Christ for sin. Chapter 23 reveals the removal of Sarah, a picture of Israel being laid aside. Then in Chapter 24 we see a bride being found for Isaac, typical of God sending the Holy Spirit to find a bride for Christ; and what Rebekah did when she saw Isaac, we will do when we see our Divine Master and Lord; namely, she was overcome, as the word "lighted" is *naphal*, meaning "to fall or faint"; in the first book of Samuel, the twenty-fifth chapter and the twenty-third verse, we read of Abigail lighting off the ass to meet David, or in other words, she stepped down off the ass; the word for "lighted" here is *yarad*, meaning to step down. It is one thing to come or step down; it is another thing to be overcome.

In Gen. 22, we see Abraham severely tested. In the words of verse 2, "*Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of.*" There was no hesitating; he rose up early in the morning and started from Beersheba to Moriah, a two-day journey. What must have been his thoughts with that on his mind, and that secret locked up in his breast. The place was reached, the altar was built, the wood laid in order; Isaac was bound and laid on the altar, the knife was bared, and raised, but the angel of the Lord stayed its descent. Abraham received this wonderful commendation: "*Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me.*" And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up in the stead of his son.

And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said unto this day, *“In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.”*

God delights to test faith, but He not only tests His people to see how well they can stand it, but also to prove how well He can sustain them in it. **The storms of life are not to break us but to make us.** God gives His people hills to climb and sometimes mountains, but we cannot have altitude without them. We may bend every energy running on a dead level, but we will never rise. Then what does it take to make us rise? Hills and mountains, or difficulties and trials; these are the things that usually have the tendency to discourage us and force us backward, but we can rise because of them and in spite of them. If we desire altitude and vision then we must have hills. God’s ways are not our ways, and He has said: *“I will make all my mountains a way.”* Oftentimes we are enveloped by the fogs and mists of earth — unbelief — and it takes a hill or mountain of difficulty to make us rise above them. Not that the mist or fog rises, but we rise by using the difficulty aright. It is the problem of the book of Habakkuk. In chapter one, the prophet is confronted with a very serious problem. The law is slacked; there are those that raise up strife and contention; the wicked doth encompass the righteous, etc. In chapter three the prophet raises a lofty note of praise: *“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places.”* He has gotten above mere circumstances now, though they were very trying. But the question might be raised, How did the change of outlook come? In chapter two we find the secret: *“I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.”* In other words, he rose above the circumstance and got his eye on God again. The blue of the heavens is always greater than the clouds.

So Abraham got the vision, *“A ram caught in a thicket by his horns.”* Note the three things: the **Ram**, the **Thicket**, the **Horns**. God had already said He would provide Himself a Lamb. But it was a Ram that Abraham offered up on the mount. Let us look at these three things. First, the ram. Why a ram? The Hebrew word for ram is *ayil*, and is translated *lintel* once; *post* 21 times; *ram* 153 times. The word ram then suggests **strength** or the **Strong One**. Turn to Psalm 114 and note how the Spirit of God takes up the word ram; verse 4: *“The mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like lambs.”* Also verse 6, the same description: the great mountains are likened to the ram and the little hills to the

lambs. How very suggestive! What a beautiful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Strong One. Yet we read of Him: *“He was crucified through weakness.”* He was taunted, maligned, mocked, jeered, spit upon; yet so submissive. The scribes and the elders said unto Him; *“He saved others, Himself He cannot save.”* How true. But there is a vast difference between incapacity and inability. To use a simple illustration: there is a wreck at sea, the lifeboats have been lowered. On the wreck there are two men, one is a palsied man; the other is a strong, athletic giant of a man. Neither of them get into the boat; the former because he cannot; he is unable to help himself: the latter will not get into the lifeboat because of inability. He is too noble and strong, and so he will not. He tenderly lifts the palsied man and lowers him into the boat.

So our Lord Jesus Christ had all power, yet He hung on the Cross as if He had none. Twelve legions girded with angelic sword were at His back—the scorned and buffeted. He healed another’s scratch, yet His own side bled. His feet and hands were pierced. The wonders left undone are scarce less wonderful than those He wrought. Oh, self-denying love which felt alone for needs of others—never for its own. The Lord Jesus was comparatively a young Man when He died. He was in the full bloom and vigor of manhood, the Strong One, having power to lay His life down and power to take it again. The Roman soldier marveled that He was dead already, for usually it was a lingering form of death, He was the Ram—the Strong One. How beautifully Romans 12:1 exhorts us to yield ourselves to God, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

The ram occupies a large place in the Word of God. It had a very prominent place in the trespass-offering. Then, too, it was the blood of the ram that was placed upon the right ear of the priest and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot (Lev. 8:23-24). It is called the Ram of Consecration. Then, too, it had a place on the Tabernacle in the wilderness, for one of the coverings was rams’ skins dyed red. It has been said: Our justification is effected by the death of Christ for us. Our sanctification is effected by the death of Christ in us. Michelangelo, one of the world’s greatest sculptors, when chiseling away at a block of marble one day, turned to a bystander and said: *“Sir, while the marble is waiting the image is growing.”*

The Thicket: In the fifth chapter of Isaiah you read of the parable of Jehovah’s vineyard. God drove out the nations and planted Israel in that good land. A vineyard. The choicest Vine was planted, a tower was built in the midst of it, also a wine-press. He looked for sweet grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. Compare Hosea 9:10. In short, Israel had become a Thicket. Now read Matthew 21:33. *“There was a certain householder, which planted a vine-*

yard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, He sent His servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took His servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." Israel had become a thicket of briars and brambles. We read of the Lord Jesus, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." They cast Him out, and would not have this Man to reign over them. They crucified Him at Calvary. He was the Ram, caught in the Thicket—Israel.

But how was He caught? By His **horns**. In the book of Psalms you read much of the horns. For instance, Psalm 92:10: "But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of the unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil." The horn would speak of Kingly power and authority. The charge laid against the Lord Jesus Christ was: He maketh Himself a king. Note John 18:37; John 19:12; Luke 23:2. The Ram—Strong One--the Christ. Caught in the Thicket--Israel. By His horns—kingly power and authority.

"In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen," not only speaks to us of the Lamb of God's providing, but of the Ram. The Lord enables us to resort much to that wondrous Mount and learn of Him, His worth and work, for after all, what gives, or rather, what makes the work of Calvary so tremendously valuable, is the value of the Person that wrought that work in agonies and blood. God's Anointed the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us use the things that seem to be against us as stepping stones to Calvary. God will surely test the sincerity of our love and devotedness to Him. Ours is the privilege of learning His way in the trial, not so much out of it, and thus become enlarged. I read, somewhere, of a farmer in West Virginia, who found it very difficult to make ends meet. One day, two men from the north came to him and made him an offer of \$2,000 for his farm. Immediately he accepted their offer and extended his hand for the cash. He received a check for the full amount and gave a receipt. But he didn't know the value of his farm, for a year after he had sold it, you couldn't have bought that property for \$2,000,000. It turned out to be part of the great Virginia coal fields. So,

too, may we know the value of our rich portion in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Taking Time to Read

Franklin Ferguson

A Christian manufacturer was asked, "When do you manage to find time to read and study the Word of God?" The questioner well knew the gentleman's life was a very busy one; that to minister on the Lord's day and at other times, as he did, must need a fair share of time allotted to private devotion. "I never find time to read," he replied, "I am at the mill from early till late, and business needs so much of my attention, how do you think I could find time?" His friend said, "How then do you manage?" Looking at the other's puzzled face, he said, "I will tell you: I take the time. For one hour in the day I turn the key of my private office, and during that hour no one can see me while I read and study the Word. If I did not take time, I should never find time."

About the year B.C. 1451, God drew His people's attention to the importance of an habitual meditation in His Word, saying, "This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:8).

Four hundred years later, the Lord needed to remind His people of this exceedingly important habit of life. In describing a truly blessed man, He says of him, "His delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psa. 1:2-3).

After a lapse of a thousand years, A.D. 60, God speaks for the third time to impress upon forgetful minds the highly essential practice of steadily going on, day after day, with the thoughtful reading of His Word: "Whoso looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

May we ever be joyful in God. "The joy of the Lord is strength." If we are not happy we have no power for testimony. The cure for fretfulness and bad temper is to be filled by the Holy Spirit with God's own joy.