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Spiritual Growth

James Walmsley

I'm Saved. What next?

Now I am baptized and I meet with this or that assembly where the brethren come together in the Name of the Lord. How can I be useful in the things of the Lord?

Having listened to the word of the truth of the gospel and refusing all of the human opinions about this matter, one who has believed in the Son of God has been born again (from above) by the work and the grace of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. There spontaneously springs up in him or her the new life with the desire, "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" (Acts 9:6). ". . . old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17).

At the beginning of His service, the devil placed before the Lord the possibility of pleasing Himself, by changing stones into bread. His response was "*Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*" (Matt. 4:4).

In this new life in Christ, every brother and sister will very soon come to recognize that two possibilities lie before them. On one hand is the possibility of living a life to satisfy self or, on the other hand, to put the will of God in the first place. Romans 12 indicates clearly that to do the will of God requires personal sacrifices, but it is the desire of every believer not to be conformed to the world's standards.

In his life, the believer will come to know different people who are capable and important in their sphere, it might be politics, education, medicine, etc. But only another believer in Christ who has the knowledge of the Word of God can help him in the ways of the Lord. He will discover that in the world are many important people in their sphere, but without the knowledge of the Scriptures. The Lord said, "*I thank thee, O*

Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25). The teaching of the apostle says, "*the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, which things also we speak . . . but the natural man (the man who doesn't have the Spirit of God) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them.*" (1 Cor. 2:11-14). He also said, "*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery . . . which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*" (1 Cor. 2:7-8).

Alone with God in the intimate recesses of the heart, the believer can make the decision that his life will be lived in such a way as to glorify God. Those who make that decision are at the beginning of an experience that will have permanent results of blessing to many people. The sacrificial life that results as a consequence of putting all on the altar for God is one that will bring honor and glory to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and will give profound satisfaction to the person who makes such a sacrifice. A brother who was ill, knowing that the end of his life was very near, said, "I am on the home stretch, content that I did what I could in my life." He didn't have, as many do, regrets for a wasted life.

To gather "in the name of the Lord" with other believers that give evidences of the new life in Christ represents a commitment that is very important, but along with the blessings, do not forget the responsibilities. Every person who is saved by the grace of God, baptized and assembling

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in the Name of the Lord has taken three of the most important steps in his spiritual life. The assembly, gathering in conformity to the Biblical teaching, is the only place where the full authority of the Word of God in every question of faith and practice is recognized, since this is just what is implied by saying that we gather “in the Name of the Lord.” It is more than not to gather in any other name; better, it is to reject every other name confessed by Christendom, the false “church” of Christ. By saying this, we do not deny that among the different groups of Christendom there are genuine believers, but the usual situation is that the membership is nominal and it is composed of a mixture of believers and unbelievers. Neither do we intend to say that false doctrines are not found in many places.

The nations of the western world, the world called “christian,” is full of religions, of “churches,” sects, philosophies, opinions, etc. Every one of these has their meeting place, whether it is a basilica, cathedral, church, temple, hall, mission, etc., with innumerable names: Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Alliance, Free, Adventist, Brethren, etc. Some of these are corrupt; others are dead; almost all have false doctrines or have practices that effectively annul the teaching of the Bible.

For many years, there has been a movement that has tried to unite, not only the sects of Christianity but also all the religions of the world. The basic criterion used to unite people of such different beliefs is simply the concept of “god.” Every one can retain their own concept of deity, but it is necessary that they recognize the authority of one religious person who will speak for them in the name of that “babel” of named religions, with different variations, the “world church.”

The judgment of God is going to fall upon this confusion of religions, as is said, *“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen and is become the habitation of devils (demons) and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. . . and I heard another voice from heaven, saying, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues”* (Rev. 18:2, 4).

(to be continued)

Translated from “La Sana Doctrina” March-April, 2010

“Few, That is, Eight Souls Were Saved”

Steve Walvatne

As another summer draws to a close in America, I’m reminded of past summers and the opportunities they presented for the gospel. I grew up in northeast Iowa, where for

most raised in Christian homes, the summer season meant one thing – gospel meetings. While neighbors filled their summers with camping or boating or ball games, ours were generally spent in a tent someplace, listening nightly as preachers proclaimed the unsearchable riches of Christ. Sometimes the crowds would swell, forcing men to stand and young boys to sit on the platform where they surrounded the preacher’s feet. And who can forget the storms, when winds blew in like a gale, causing brethren to man the poles as the women and children sought refuge in their cars? Many were saved under those canvas roofs and that by itself was a voice to my soul. “How many summers have to go by before you’re saved?” I’d think. “Or will they all pass by, leaving you to perish?” The sentiment of Fanny Crosby’s hymn often ran through my mind like a prayer – and I meant every word:

*Pass me not, O gentle Saviour,
Hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.*

When God mercifully saved me, I wasn’t in a tent, but at home. The transaction occurred on October 2, 1973, just after tent season ended. Yet all of those meetings in all of those summers left indelible marks on my heart.

But times have changed since then. In Iowa, as well as other places, gospel interest isn’t what it used to be. It’s been observed, that our age commenced with three thousand souls being saved through one sermon (Acts 2:41), and that now at its conclusion, nearly three thousand sermons are preached to reach one soul. This makes preaching especially difficult and those who faithfully persevere at it deserve our prayerful support and encouragement. While tradesmen, factory workers, businessmen, etc. can look back on their workday and see definite accomplishments, those who preach (and teach) often go weeks and months with little to show for it – and that’s hard, not to mention humbling. But *“salvation is of the Lord”* (Jonah 2:9).

I believe the preacher Noah (2 Pet. 2:5) would have understood what present-day preachers face. His world, like ours, was riddled with violence and gross wickedness. The times were so bad in fact, that it repented the Lord He had made man (Gen. 6:6). Yet, utter destruction did not fall immediately. God in mercy extended that day for 120 years so men might heed Noah’s preaching and find shelter in the ark. But what was the result? *“Few, that is, eight souls, were saved”* (1 Pet. 3:20). After years of preaching and building only seven others besides himself were saved from the flood, and none came from outside his family circle. Not one.

Sometimes we preach that people in Noah’s day scoffed

and belittled him as they passed by the ark, and perhaps they did. But it's interesting to note we don't read that. No mention is made of open hostility or sneering reproach. Nothing is said of attempts to sabotage the ark or to silence Noah's preaching. Nothing. The long span passes in silence until the promised judgment falls and "***few, that is, eight souls were saved.***"

It would appear Noah's audience was indifferent and this may throw light on the solemn statement in Matthew 24:39 concerning those to whom he preached. It says they "***knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.***" How could they not have known? Wasn't ample warning given? Why such ignorance? Evidently, people were so engrossed with other things that they paid little heed to what Noah said and did.

Yet Noah soldiered on; right to the day God's Spirit ceased striving with man, to the moment when "***few, that is, eight souls were saved.***" Had Noah been "results oriented," he'd have thrown up his hands in frustration, but his eye was single (Matt. 6:22), and "*being warned of God of things not seen as yet, [he] moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith*" (Heb. 11:7). The good steward still does this. He looks beyond the present to the future, when **faithfulness**, not **successfulness** will be rewarded (1 Cor. 4:2), realizing with contentment, that any results, however great or few they be, are solely God's handiwork and not his (1 Cor. 3:6).

Still, times like the present can pose a danger, for when people act indifferent to plain gospel preaching, the temptation exists for preachers to take matters into their own hands. Those so minded try to embellish their message to increase numbers and enhance results. Some, for instance, will soften the solemnity of sin and judgment, hoping to accommodate modern hearers. Others promote questionable enticements trying to lure people into meetings. But the gospel needs no embellishment. It stands supreme in all its glorious dignity, the loftiest tidings to ever grace the ears of mankind. The tormented "rich" man of Luke 16, appealed on behalf of his five living brothers, that they might be given something new, even one rising from the dead, so they wouldn't perish. The response he received remains valid: "*If they hear not Moses and the Prophets [the Holy Scriptures], neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead*" (v. 31).

No, it's not gimmickry we need in the 21st century, but God. We're to "*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mk. 16:15), and that charge to PREACH, to PROCLAIM PUBLICLY, cannot be improved upon. It's God's method. "*The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting*

the soul" (Ps. 19:7). Our task is to labor like Noah did, realizing the indifference that's indicative of last days, yet praying that God through His Spirit might convict and deliver lost sinners for His glory.

May the Lord encourage each faithful herald of the cross! Don't be distracted by sparse numbers or limited results. Keep praying and preaching, brethren, for the day of reward awaits! "*And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be*" (Rev. 22:12).

In Noah's time, "***few, that is, eight souls were saved,***" but think how precious those souls were to God! Today, "***few there be that find it***" (Matt. 7:14), yet the Saviour's words stand true: "*There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over ONE SINNER that repented*" (Lk. 15:10).

The natural man has no apprehension of the Gospel. "What must I do?" is ever his cry. Man has done his work perfectly—that of self-destruction. He is wholly bent upon evil, altogether ruined. Hence he is a fitting object for the Gospel of God.

Redemption

Peter Simms

Rom. 3:9; Gal. 3:10-13; Heb. 2:15; Eph. 1:14

Redemption is the work of Christ relative to man as a slave to some master. He is a slave to sin Rom. 3:9, the curse of the law Gal. 3:10-13, and the fear of death Heb. 2:15, and his freedom and liberty can be secured only by the paying of a ransom. Slavery is one of the most degrading conditions a man can be subjected to. He is reduced to the level of nothing more than some commodity put on the market for sale to the highest bidder. There is as it were a chain for his foot to keep him from going his own way, and a whip for his back, to force him to go where he doesn't wish to go. In this way his freedom is effectively curtailed, and describes a state of hopelessness and despair. It's for this reason the apostle uses it to describe the condition of the sinner as seen in Adam (John 8:34; Rom. 3:9; 6:17,20; 7:14; Titus 3:3; Gal. 4:1-7). The subject of redemption is vast and runs through our Bible from cover to cover, so we will seek to keep it simple and concentrate on the passages cited above.

The apostle Paul teaches us that "*there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus who gave Himself a ransom* (Gk antilutron; meaning an in-the stead-of ransom) *for* (Gk huper; meaning on behalf of) *all.*" This passage is describing for us the character of the ransom which the Lord Jesus gave on behalf of all men everywhere. It's on this great redemptive basis, that the awesome

truth of justification is founded. (Rom. 3:24).

NT Words and their meaning

1. “Agora” Means a marketplace. Here slaves were sold along with many other commodities.

“Agorazo” Means to buy or purchase. In Matt. 14:15 the word is used in a literal sense, the buying of food. In Matt. 13:46. It is also used in a figurative sense, in the buying of a pearl.

2. “Exagorazo” Means to acquire out of the *agora*, Gal. 3:13, to purchase a slave with a view to his freedom. It does **not** signify the actual redemption, but rather the price paid with a view to his full freedom. The main thought in *exagorazo* is intended freedom.

3. “Lutron” Means to loose by paying a price; or to release on receipt of a ransom. It signifies the actual “deliverance,” such as the setting at liberty from (i) Roman bondage, Luke 24:21; (ii) the bondage of lawlessness and self will, Titus 2:14; (iii) Traditions, 1 Pet. 1:18. The prominent thought in *lutron* is actual freedom.

1. Its universal aspect

We must remember that there is a difference between being bought and redeemed. For Christ bought the field (or world Matt. 13:38,44), also the false teachers in it (2 Pet. 2:1), along with every child of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20). There came a point in man's history when God could hold back his judgment on man's sin no longer. This in the NT is referred to as “*in due time*” (1 Tim. 2:6) In due time God poured out His judgment on Christ, so that as it were, He might buy men time, giving them the opportunity to be reconciled to Him.

For instance, a ship may cease to be seaworthy, and no insurance agency will insure it. So the ship is condemned and will be destroyed. However, another shipping line knows that there is a good diesel engine in the doomed ship, so they buy the ship for the engine in it. When this is removed and utilized the engine-less ship will be destroyed. So also when God gets His treasure and pearl out of the world He bought, He will then destroy it, and create a new heavens and a new earth wherein righteousness will have a home to dwell (2 Pet. 3:6-13; Rev. 21:1).

2. Its judicial aspect

Gal. 3:13 is in relation to sin and the curse pronounced by the law. This verse has a special relation to the nation of Israel to whom the law was given, and upon whom its curse rested. But in Rom. 3:24; Col. 1:14, it has a wider application and is the basis of our forgiveness and justification. The Lord Jesus gave Himself for (*huper* on behalf of) all

(1 Tim. 2:6), and for (*anti*, in the stead of) many, (Mark 10:45). His death as a ransom is the basis on which God can redeem man from (Gk *ek*, out of or from) under the curse of the law, declaring him to be just, and forgiving him of all he is guilty of having done, as an offender, of the law of God.

3. Its practical aspect

1 Cor. 6:19-20; Titus 2:14

“*Do ye not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own? for ye have been bought (agorazo) with a price: glorify now then God in your body.*” (JND). We are to cease thinking and behaving as if our bodies are our own, and recognize that they are the Lord's, and are to be used for his glory. Paul writing to Titus said Christ “*gave himself for us, that he might redeem (lutron: to set free) us from all lawlessness, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous for good works.*” (Titus 2:14 JND.)

4. Its ceremonial aspect

1 Pet.1:18-19.

This is in relation to ritualism and traditionalism, and all religious baggage of whatever sort. The ransom price of Christ has set us free from it all. Every form of dead works that we inherited from our ancestors, which had kept us enslaved, the Lord Jesus has redeemed (*lutron*; to set free) us from them all.

5. Its corporeal aspect

Rom.8:23

The believer's body is bought (*agorazo*) and is the purchased possession of the Lord (1 Cor. 6:19, Eph. 1:15). However, his body is not yet redeemed (*lutron*) and is still “*the body of sin*” (Rom. 6:6) for it still has its evil desires and appetites. It is also a body of death (Rom. 7:24-25), and is as it were a death- doomed body. But at the rapture, the believer's body will be redeemed (Eph. 4:30, Phil. 3:21.) Presently though, only our spirits are redeemed (*lutron*: set free), having been perfectly set free, and beyond the reach of any kind of bondage. The body however, is still capable of being a channel through which sin can manifest itself, and become subject to all forms of disease. So we see then that while our spirits are redeemed, our bodies have only been bought. This condition will remain in place until the rapture when all things relative to our bodies will be changed, Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:50-57. This the apostle referred to in Eph. 1:14 and Rom. 8:23 where he spoke of the redemption (*lutron*) of the purchased possession, at the rapture.

Redeemed how I love to proclaim it!

Redeemed by the blood of the lamb;

Redeemed through His infinite mercy,

His child, and forever I am. (*Hallelujah*)

Under the Law they labored first, and rested after (Ex. 20:8-11); but under the Gospel we rest first, by faith in Jesus, and then work.

Paul, the Evangelist, pt. 2

Robert Surgenor

The Leading of an Evangelist

Paul was very sensitive as to the leading of the Spirit where to preach, how to preach, and how long to stay in a given locality. When he entered Corinth he did not know how long he would be there. However, as the work progressed, God had him stay there a year and six months (Acts 18:11). His labors in the gospel and teaching his converts at Ephesus lasted over three years.

It is very plain to see by this that he had no bookings. Conferences were unheard of, so he wasn't running here and there to some conference to get up for thirty minutes to speak. To be quite honest, such activity is not found in the Holy Scriptures, any more than a Sunday school is seen in the Bible. I am not saying that Sunday schools, if conducted in a godly manner, are not profitable, or that conferences as we know them are wrong. I am not saying that. All I am saying is that these two functions cannot be found in your New Testament Bible.

Where does the evangelist go next? A good question. And how long does he stay when he does arrive at the designated place? Another pertinent question. Does the Bible have the answer? Most certainly!

Before the gospel entered Europe for the first time, Paul and his companions were seeking the mind of God as to where to preach. After laboring in Galatia, they purposed to go into Asia. However, the Spirit had other plans for Paul. Notice, he did not simply pack up and go where he felt like going. The Spirit knowing his intentions was quick to let him know that he was *NOT* to preach the word in Asia. So, coming to Mysia, "*they assayed to go into Bithynia.*" The word "*assayed*" has the thought of "*scrutinizing, examining, or proving.*" This reveals that Paul did not look lightly on his movements. He did not go someplace simply because he felt like it. Ah no, his character was far higher than that. He seriously considered his moves that they would be according to the will of the Holy Spirit. After examining the situation the Spirit suffered them not to go to Bithynia. I am sure that there would be much prayer over that situation. Then the answer arrived. He received word from God to go over into Macedonia to preach the gospel. The Scripture states that he assuredly gathered that the Lord had called them to preach the gospel unto the Macedonians, and they went immediately (Acts 16:6-11). Do we see this sensitivity

as to the evangelist's movements today?

When was the last time you knew of a couple of evangelists agonizing before God as to where to take the gospel, then having received an answer from God, went far away from any scriptural assembly and labored for a couple of years in a given locality in hopes of seeing an assembly planted. Be honest, how often have you seen this? If your answer is negative, I pose another question and it is this – Why? Many states in the USA have no testimony for God. Thousands upon thousands of towns and villages have never heard a pure gospel. Why? Is the Spirit of God not interested? Or, are many evangelists not interested? You answer the question. Some conferences boast of twenty preachers attending. Why so many? If you have a scriptural answer to such perplexing situations, please educate me with suitable verses to prove the correctness of such behavior.

The Behavior of an Evangelist

Paul as the evangelist's mentor, reveals the proper behavior of men who carry the gospel. Notice his words in 1 Cor. 9:19. "*Yet have I made myself a servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*" He was made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some. He denied himself in order to endear them, to obligate them to him. He complied with their habits, whether Jew or Gentile. He bowed to their customs and feelings so far as he could while still maintaining a good conscience. He also brought his body into subjection and did not cater to its lusts. He was not the least bit interested in the theaters and sporting events of his day. His sole object was to glorify God and win souls for Christ.

We also get a little insight of this mighty man's character in 1 Thes. 2:4-12, where he relates his behavior before them. "*We speak [the gospel] not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness. . We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.*" He said to them that they were "*affectionately desirous*" of them. Those particular words "*affectionately desirous*" was inscribed on graves describing the parent's sad yearning for their dead child. He mentioned how holily and justly and unblameably he behaved himself among them, and how he had exhorted and comforted and charged everyone of them. This was the character of Paul. What greater example could an evangelist have than this?

Let me ask you, do you think that he had a group of young believers with him, going from door to door, then having a "fun time" in the evening playing games? Do you think that Paul would support a group of novices to "spread the word," and the young women in the group wearing clothing that pertained to a man, (Deut. 22:5) playing games at night and in the morning publicly speaking at a "devotional"? Is it correct for a young sister to be encouraged to speak publicly before other males and females at a gathering, when in the

church she is forbidden to speak? What kind of training is that? Can you picture such behavior? Can you find it in the Scriptures? If so, I will endorse it with all my mind, heart, and soul!

Also, where in the Scriptures do we find young people from various assemblies "herded" together, far away from the oversight of their elder brethren, and yoking themselves with unsaved youth, to spread the gospel?

One may react to these statements and say, "What are our young people to do for the Lord?" Well, I will give you a scriptural answer. First of all, they should be under the authority of the overseeing brethren in their assembly on a daily basis. They should be strongly encouraged to witness for Christ on a one-to-one basis. That is, to make personal contact with acquaintances, relatives, and friends, and witness to them in a private way where they live. To accomplish this they must be qualified by possessing a general knowledge of the Scriptures. If an assembly had a group of praying, Bible-studying young folk witnessing daily at work, at school, and to their neighbors, you would then see them bringing these contacts to the assembly gospel meetings. Can you see the potential in this? Can you see the scriptural pattern? When Christ saved the demon possessed man in Mark 5, what did he tell him? Notice! "*Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee*" (Mark 5:19). There it is, there's the divine pattern. I recommend it and endorse it for all new converts – start at home and witness on an individual basis.

Paul had no printing press, or printed literature, that is true, but it is an asset to us today, for many Christians are not suited to preach, but they can hand out a gospel paper to an individual. At one time we had over 8,000,000 tracts in storage for free distribution. Some brethren contact us for tracts and hand them out by the thousands. Some stand at the public square in their home town and give them to those who pass by. Others go from door to door. Such is a personal work.

I know some sisters that seemingly have the gift of influencing people to attend a gospel meeting. They work by themselves in a quiet and prayerful way. Mary, the quiet one of the family was the one that led folks to Jesus in John 11. When the Jews in the house saw that she rose up hastily and went out, they followed her, and she led them to the Lord in verses 31 and 32. The Samaritan woman of John 4, upon receiving Christ, left her waterpot and ran into the city to tell the men to come and see. Her first day of salvation she became a soul-winner. How long have you been saved? How many souls have you won?

Regarding games, Paul used the Grecian games as an

analogy in 1 Cor. 9, but he certainly never indulged in such sport, or any other type of sport for that matter. To gather young people together to play games runs contrary to the expected behavior of a saint in the Bible.

(to be concluded)

We read that in the days of king Hezekiah it took sixteen days to clear out the temple, because it had not been daily cleansed. Take heed that there is not an accumulation on the conscience of those who are "the temple of the living God", that must be first cleared out before God can be worshipped.

Assembly History, pt. 3

Eugene Badgley

But, as Mervyn Paul said, "here on this side of the ocean all things continued as they had begun in harmony until the fateful day of May 24, 1908, for it was on that date in the conference in Warminster near Orillia, Ontario that a speaker opened the door for division that continues to this day.

"On that dark day at the little country conference came an able speaker lately arrived from Scotland and sponsored by Mr. Richard Irving and some others. In a morning session he gave an address on the local assemblies throughout the world likening them to the stars in relation to the moon which in turn, as mere reflector of the light from the sun, he compared them to the church universal designed to reflect the glory of the Lord. Next he gave a passionate plea that there be no divisions among us, no schisms in the body, deplored the fact that if such great and godly Christians as Hudson Taylor were present, they would not be allowed to break bread...he continued pleading for more liberal views respecting the local assembly (it is clear he never grasped the truth of the scriptural ground of gathering).

After ending his message, Mr. Robert Telfor immediately went to the platform and reviewed and examined each argument in the light of scripture; he skilfully and effectively dealt with them in every detail, but the damage had been done. Three years later in 1911, Mr. McClure made a proposal which is now commonly called the 'middle-path policy'." This policy ask us to accept any and all gatherings which profess to be gathered to the name of Christ as true assemblies, agreeing to disagree on all matters accept the fundamentals of the faith. So this proposal opened the way for change; this change was a gradual move to adopting the methods of the evangelical churches. This proposal echoed what Israel said in effect to Samuel in 1 Sam. 8:5: "*We want to be like the nations about us.*"

No wonder so many Christians find themselves confused and at a loss to understand which path is right?

I recall back in the 50's when certain fundamental evangelicals wanted change. They advocated a new movement known as the New Evangelical Movement which took a neutral position on separation, since they no longer wanted to be LIKE the fundamentalist.

I will quote from a Conservative Baptist Seminary writer who along with others took a stand against this movement: "We are living in a day when people are choosing their own means and manner and mode of operation irrespective of the instruction given by Bible Authority. God's word has always demanded separation from evil and has always denounced amalgamation with evil. Basically, new evangelicalism is an attempt to find a meeting place between liberalism and fundamentalism. It is unwilling to espouse all the tenets of liberalism, but is anxious to escape some of the **reproach** attached to fundamentalism. So the driving motive has compelled them to change their approach in order to better conform to the pattern of the day and to seek to make themselves acceptable. Coupled with this has been an unwillingness to continue in a constant vigorous defense of the faith."

Those who advocated change saw no harm in reaching out to other professed evangelical churches and work with them despite doctrinal differences and they even encouraged liberal churches to join in with them. After about 60 years there has been greater affiliation with ecumenicalism and a marked departure from the Word of God. Since there are still Evangelicals that stand for truth in view of the light they have received, how much more should we, who have the privilege of being in Scripturally gathered assemblies and who appreciate the truth of Matt. 18:20 and Heb. 13:13.

This is one reason why we need to look back at our history and see how God led men and woman out from all that was sectarian to gather on Scriptural grounds as a New Testament assembly.

I believe this history will help us to see the importance of standing firm, resolved to walk in the old paths (Jer. 6:16), to buy the truth and sell it not (Prov. 23:23).

(concluded)

Order in God's House

1 Tim. 6:1-12

Joel Portman

God's house, expressed in a local assembly today, is always a place of order that displays God's will being carried out on earth. This order applies to those times when an assembly meets and also to the saints' conduct at other times. Believers are in that house and represent it wherever they

are, so they have a responsibility to show by conduct and attitude their subjection to God's authority.

This section of 1 Timothy is occupied with that order, and we will look at it as he speaks of

1. vss. 1-2 Conduct of Slaves
2. vss. 3-5 Contradiction of Sinners
3. vss. 6-8 Contentment of Saints
4. vss. 9-10 Catastrophe of Seeking Silver
5. vss. 11-12 Counsel to a Servant

Conduct of Slaves vss. 1-2

Many believers were slaves in the days of the Roman Empire. Estimates indicate that possibly between 25-33% of the population were slaves, and while their treatment could vary, depending on their master, it was yet slavery and they were treated as property, having no rights of their own and no liberty, only responsible to obey and serve their masters according to their desires.

We note that there were believers who had unbelieving as well as believing masters (such as Philemon). New Testament teaching never opposed the practice, though we know that the influence of Christianity softened its effect to some extent. Slaves were taught to manifest their character as believers by a spirit of submission and in so doing, to uphold the teaching that pertained to their "greater" Master and Lord. Many passages give instruction to slaves, such as 1 Cor. 7:21-22, Tit. 2:9-10, Col. 3:22-25, etc. While a master-slave relationship was not the same as an employer-employee relationship today, yet many of the principles apply and would guide one in their service to the one who has hired them and to whom they owe honest work and fidelity as long as in their employ. The testimony of Christ is displayed in such circumstances, and one's employer may be won by the conduct and service rendered.

These were "under the yoke"; Expositors says that the phrase, "under the yoke," proves that that slave belongs to a heathen master. The same authority says: "The heathen estimate of a slave differed in degree, not in kind, from their estimate of cattle. A Christian master could not regard his slaves as under a yoke." Whether totally true or not, (others say that this expression applied in every case) the yoke signified the condition of slavery that demanded absolute obedience to the master. Whether the master merited his service or not, the slave was to count him worthy of all honor. "Count" means that this was a reckoning that was based on a true estimation of facts, not his personal feelings about the master. Because of who he was, he was worthy and they should give him "honor," which is the same word as in 5:17 regarding elders. It means the value and respect that they must have. The result was not only personal, i.e., to avoid punishment for insolence or insubordination, but more

than that, it affected the Name of their Master, God, and the teaching that was connected with His Name. Behavior of a believer is the practical expression of the validity of every claim made regarding our relationship with God and the effectiveness of the truth taught in His Name.

If the master was a believer, the slave must avoid “despising” him because of their spiritual relationship. One can imagine assemblies where both masters and slaves were in fellowship on equal footing, possibly with the slave holding greater responsibility than his master. Yet in the sphere of work and service, he must not forget that he is the slave of the master and thus show every respect for who he was. Gal. 3:28 teaches that in the body of Christ there are no distinctions; the master-slave relationship did not apply in a local assembly fellowship, nor did that Christian relationship apply in his work. He was to render even better service to the master than other slaves who were not saved, so that both master and slave would be helped (“the good benefit”) by his faithful service. Timothy was to teach (instruct) and exhort (encourage) these things.

Contradiction of Sinners vss. 3-5

There were then, (as is now) those who refused wholesome (healthy, sound) teaching that the apostle was giving by Divine authority (“*words of our Lord Jesus Christ*”). They didn't assent to that teaching and rejected it, teaching otherwise in such a way that would contradict conditions of godliness (piety). He identified them as being proud (conceited), so occupied with themselves and their ideas but knowing nothing in reality. Their material only consisted in questions, strifes about words, and other matters that caused wrong responses such as envy, strife, etc.

There is teaching that is conducive to spiritual health and which will develop greater expression of Christian character in the hearers. This was teaching that would produce only spiritual disease and infirmity among the listeners and would lead them farther from the truth and more into ungodly living. Such teaching is not a thing of the past only; the constant efforts of the devil are to undermine the clear, plain teaching of God's Word and to rob saints of their confidence in those things that would enable them to manifest a life that is pleasing to God. Such teaching must be avoided, no matter from whom it arises.

These false teachers felt that the sphere of godliness was a means of making great gain (lit., “godliness is a way of gain”). They were using their teaching as a means to enrich themselves materially, whereas, in reality, it is true that godliness, with contentment, is great gain. There are plenty of those who consider the religious sphere as a means to financial gain. Another way to see this expression is that he might mean that those who taught thus were saying that

material gain was an evidence of godliness; this may have been true in the Old Testament (not always), however, we know that this is not according to the teaching of the New Testament. Material poverty may be seen in a life spiritually rich and also the opposite. Many of God's saints, rich in faith and spiritual life, were some of the poorest on earth; our blessed Lord is a perfect example of this truth.

Contentment of Saints vss. 6-8

A contented believer is one who is satisfied with the things that are spiritual. In the gospel we preach, rightly, that the material things of life can never satisfy the soul, but then we may exhibit the opposite by our desires to have more “things” that are bigger, better, more costly or ostentatious. We learn from Heb. 13:5, Phil. 4:11 the importance of being content. Contentment indicates a condition of being satisfied with what material goods one has and being occupied more with that which is spiritual. That person recognizes the priority of the eternal and, having received such spiritual riches in Christ, doesn't see the elements of a passing, corrupt earth as being so important.

Paul uses two arguments to prove this point. One is that we came into the world without anything and will go out the same way. All of the temporal, material, is only for this life and has no value for eternity. If that is the case, it only reveals wrong priorities in the life when the physical elements of this world have great importance. He also argues that all that one really needs is food and raiment, the basic necessities of life. Admittedly, there are other necessities in life that one can think of, but essentially, this is all that is needed. Most of us have far too much materially and often as a result, we are impoverished spiritually. May we have grace to emphasize what is important and minimize what is not and to display that as a reality in our lives!

Catastrophe of Seeking Silver vss. 9-10

One doesn't have to be rich to want to be rich; Paul is dealing with the attitude of grasping for more than even a poor person might have. It is the **desire**, or purpose of heart, to be rich that brings one into temptation and a trap (snare). It is the temptation to use wrong means to gain riches, or also the alteration of one's emphasis in life that can result from this desire, and it brings one into a snare, being trapped in an endless round of seeking for more and failing to appreciate the spiritual and eternal.

It is not money that is a root of all evil; it is the LOVE of money which can envelope any person whether they have it or not. Some in the world, who promote the elimination of money and the substitution of electronic transactions alone, have quoted this as “money is the root of all evil,” but that is not what it says. Many very godly men have been rich, but their hearts were not set on their riches but rather

the things of God. The Lord said, “*Ye cannot serve God and mammon,*” and yet many try and they become the slave of their material desires rather than “*seeking first (above all else) the kingdom of God*” (Mt. 6:33).

The only result of this passion is that they have been seduced from the faith, and have caused endless troubles to their lives, many sorrows. What a contrast to what our Lord manifested in His sojourn here; we are to be like Him and walk “as He walked.”

Counsel to a Servant vss. 11-12

Timothy, like all who are men of God, was to be constantly fleeing these things and following the things that are spiritual in character. It must be the constant pursuit of the life, not something that is occasional. “Follow” signifies a pursuit, even like one hunting an animal, staying on its track until it is located and taken. “Fight” carries the thought of an agony, straining every muscle to gain the advantage in a contest, and he was to “lay hold on,” or “get a good grip on it.. now.” These characteristics were to mark every step of his life so that his consistency would be an example to others and failures would not hinder his service for the Lord. Eternal life was a present possession, but we learn as well that it is to be grasped and fully participated in its fullness. There are certain spiritual things that we have as a present possession, but they are to be the consuming desire of the life that we might participate in the fullness of what is involved in each one. An example would be Phil. 3:8-11, where Paul speaks of “win (gain) Christ,” “know Him,” and “attain to the resurrection.” Certainly those things were true already in his life, but his ambition was to know them in experiential reality and to live in the present enjoyment of them, making them his ambition as if he could fail to have them, though he had them already. Eternal realities are so important and valuable, we must devote life and heart to knowing the present reality of all they imply, not allowing anything of a passing, materialistic world to interfere.

(to be continued)

If we deserve nothing from God's hands, we should be thankful for everything; if we have more than we deserve, the very least we can do is to be contented; and yet God alone can make us so.

Christ on the Throne

J. R. Caldwell

READ with me a few passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews which direct our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ on the Throne of Glory. Chapter 1:3: “*When He had by Himself purged our*

sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

The Sin-Purger on the Throne

We have here before us, at the outset of this epistle, the Lord Jesus as the risen and glorified One. He is seen here seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. But He is there in a certain character, viz., as the One who has purged our sins.

That is the very first aspect in which, as believers, we were made to know Him. He took our place, took our guilt upon Him, became answerable for our transgressions, and by His own blood made a cleansing (or purging) of them all. It is the very same expression that we have in Rev. 1:5: “*Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins* (made a purging of our sins) *in His own blood.*” It is well for us to seek to make it the habit of our souls to look up to the throne of God and to discern there the One who purged all our sins.

To be on the throne is to be in the place of highest authority; as He said before He left the world, “*All authority is given unto Me in Heaven and on earth*” (Matt. 28:18). The One who was crucified is now in the place of power, and what an immense fund of grace, strength, and blessing is there for us in Him! Authority over angels, over the powers of darkness, over the affairs of the world, over the winds and the waves—all authority in Heaven and on earth is committed to the One who loved us and bore our sins.

Then notice how perfect must be that work, how perfectly accomplished, how thoroughly finished and completed! He became answerable for our sins on the Cross. He was forsaken by God as the Sin-bearer. He was delivered for our offenses; and that word delivered means, one that was taken and delivered up into the hands of justice to bear the sentence, whatever it be. “*He was delivered for our offenses,,*” and therefore God in His inflexible righteousness forsook Him. But “*when He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens,*” and there He has been ever since, ordering all things, controlling all things. “*Head over all things to the Church which is His body*” (Eph. 1:22); so that He can make “*all things work together for good to those that love Him*” (Rom. 8:28); so that we might glory in the tribulations He permits and sends, so that in those very things that seem against us we can learn the most blessed lessons.

What a beautiful opening for a book—sin-purged, and the Sin-purger on the throne!

The Victor on the Throne

Chapter 2:5: “*For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.*” That is the world which shall be ordered and blessed after this dispensation is past. “*But one in a certain place testified,*

saying, *What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?*" (v. 6). This is a quotation from the 8th Psalm. "Thou madest him (that is, Adam) a little lower than the angels: Thou crownedst him with glory and honour (that is, Adam), and didst set him over the works of Thy hands" (v. 7). "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things under him" (v. 8).

We do not see Adam, or the sons of Adam, triumphing and reigning and governing in this world. We do not see the fulfillment of that for which God created man at first. Sin came in, and the dominion was dashed from the hands of Adam. Sin and death have marred the whole creation. But what do we see? "**We see Jesus.**" Here is the Man; here is the second Man; here is the last Adam, the Head of the new creation. "*We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels,*" who came down to take the very position that Adam had at first. He became partaker of flesh and blood because the children were partakers of it. "*We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour*" (v. 9). There is the pledge of the ultimate dominion of man; there is the pledge of the fulfillment of God's purpose concerning man; and though at the Cross it would seem as if God had allowed Satan to go on without restraint, yet at the end we see Jesus exalted and "*crowned with glory and honour.*" There is the pledge that those who trust Him will be crowned with glory and honor too. There is the pledge that sin and misery will come to an end.

In the first chapter He is exalted as the Sin-purger; and in the second He is crowned as the mighty Victor.

The High Priest on the Throne

Chapter 4:12, 13: "*For the Word of God is quick (the old-fashioned word for living), and powerful . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*" May we allow the Word of God to search us and to expose us to ourselves. It is not pleasant, but it is good for us to be detected and exposed to ourselves, to show how unlike Christ we are; and that is the process of sanctification.

"*Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth*" (John 17:17). But how does the Word sanctify? It enters into the heart like a sword. Sometimes Nature would take one course and the Spirit of God would take another. The Word of God comes in to show what is natural and what is spiritual; but Satan is constantly watching to take the edge off it. Never does he better succeed than when he gets us to apply it to others and not to ourselves. "Now is that not a right hint to brother So-and-so? I wish he were here to hear it"; and "That suits sister So-and-so." Let us cease judging one another, and

allow the Word of God to search us. Let it get home, and let it have its whole effect upon conscience and heart. Satan does not object to us reading the Word of God with a cold heart and a hard head.

But you say: "I am afraid of the light." What does verse 14 say? Look at it: "*Let us hold fast our profession (don't give it up, don't sink down in despair), for we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.*" We have not a lofty, indifferent High Priest.

Chapter 2:17, 18: "*Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.*" In order that He might be perfected, not perfected in the sense of being better than He was, but perfected as "*the Captain of our Salvation*"; perfected as the High Priest to enter into our sorrows and temptations, now that He has passed through the heavens up to the very throne of God.

There is an advocate for God within our hearts, that is the Holy Ghost; and there is an advocate for us in the bosom of God, and that is Jesus Christ the Righteous. Oh, how near God has brought us to Himself, and how near He is brought to us.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (chap. 4:16). When we draw nigh to God in prayer it is well always to get one steady look at this merciful and faithful High Priest, this One that has suffered being tempted, this One who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, now at the right hand of God. He bears our names upon His breast, He makes intercession for us, He lives for us, and is prepared to supply to us all needed grace.

Don't be afraid of obscurity. God likes obscure people. He often drags them out of obscurity into the light of day. Don't be alarmed. No good man can be buried alive. He will shine in his own chosen center, however small that may be. When man is most alone, God is with him. Out by Horeb, Moses was honored with this vision. It was while out on the plains, keeping their flocks, that the shepherds received tidings of the birth of Jesus. Moses saw more of God in the desert than ever he had seen in Pharaoh's court.

It is a continuous fight to maintain our place into which God has brought us. Every inch of the ground we give up to the devil he will occupy.