BIBLE PREACHING AND THE MODERN TRENDS

WALLACE W. THOMPSON

The Bible presents a correlation of facts through the ages. Its promises are wonderful, to be enjoyed by the obedient. Most of its prophesies are precious, reaching ‘their fulfillment in Christ. The truths revealed and inspired in the Bible are profound, far-reaching and deeply felt. The obedient, faithful servant is praised throughout the history of God and man. The disobedient are blisteringly, scathingly rwbuked, God’s vials of wrath are emptied out upon individuals that presume authority, and the ones who ‘assume Pharisaical importance, pretense, and show of self righteousness. The plagues of the Bible, which indeed are many, God promises to heap upon those who add to or take from the sacred volume. The call has ever been “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” The soul-reaching question has ever been, “Who is on the Lord’s side”? There has never been a preacher of righteousness that pleased the people, nor will there ever be! Noah, a preacher of righteousness condemned the world, not because the world was not already condemned, but because they refused to accept the Word of God. “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” The world was condemned already, and stands condemned when Christ is refused. Which of the prophets pleased the people? Which one did not the Jews persecute,? Which of the apostles pleaswd the people? Which one escaped persecution? If today a fellow is popular, pleases the people, he is not a servant of Christ, but he serves his own “belly.”

TEE TREND OF DOUBT

The lack of faith has ever been disastrous. It caused Peter to sink into the water. It caused Thomas to doubt the Lord Jesus Christ. It caused the church at Laodicea to wax indifferent and become lukewarm. It caused Demas to forsake Paul and the Lord to follow the love and lures of the world: It caused Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Spirit and lose their lives. The lack, of faith caused the Greeks to seek after worldly wisdom. It caused the Corinthians to be torn with party strife, to follow after men rather than God. Truly, it is the “sin which doth so easily beset US.” None deny, the spirit of doubt is in the world, such as caused Pilate and Herod to become friends and execute the Savior of men to please the people. But the mind of doubt is finding its way into the hearts of professed believers. There are preachers on the West Coast and possibly on other coasts, that “doubt if all God’s saved are in the church of Christ.”
Some seem to “doubt if immersion for baptism is essential” and seem to want to take folks into the fellowship of the truth who have been sprinkled but not immersed. Some preachers, one especially from Tennessee in the Yosemite Camp Meeting, indicated in a sermon that God answered a sectarian’s prayer and he would not say that Individual was not a Christian. Yet the sectarian does not wear the name “Christian.” If the church of Christ is not different, then it is simply another denomination. These weak, indifferent, doubting preachers are re-afflicting and afflicting the church members with doubt, are preying upon the young people in the kingdom instilling in them the spirit of doubt and compromise.

THE TREND TOWARDS WORLDLY WISDOM

To the world the name for this is Philosophy. The word calls for a “love” of the thing. Some preachers seem to know more about Plato, Epicurus, Aristotle, and Zeno, Greek philosophers who sought after “worldly wisdom.” To God and the church such is foolishness. The Bible is not a treatise on human wisdom, but contains the “wisdom from above” which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” Philosophy is a science that attempts to explain the causes, reasons, powers and laws, including in it as a branch of learning mental and moral sciences such as logic, psychology and ethics. To place the Bible on this level lowers it’s standard and degrades its author to a rank with pagan philosophers. There are causes that cannot be explained. There are conditions existing for which reasons cannot be given. There are things that logic cannot understand and comprehend. What things are they? They are the things of God, the things of Divine revelation and inspiration. When it reaches the point a man or a group of men love their philosophy more than the Word of God, they have launched out upon the uncharted seas of human wisdom to dash their vessels, the soul, upon the rocky shoals of infidelity. When this we do we leave the lighthouse of God, drifting upon the waves of foamy shame to be lost in the depths of eternal darkness. Turn back my friends before it is too late! Love God’s Word and church above all things else, for “the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” (I Jno. 2:17).

THE TREND OF PSYCHOLOGY

This is another science, a science of the mind, that is indeed growing. Even at this date it just has its “rompers” on. This science is divided into two great divisions, viz., (1) the analytic or introspective, and (2) the experimental. That these divisions are human arrangements cannot be denied. At least half of the science is not proved, the experimental! Some have gone so far as to say that if Stephen had used the right kind of psychology the Jews would not have stoned him. Others, if Saul or Paul had used the right kind of psychology he could have been spared. One might as well affirm that if Christ had used the right kind of approach he would not have been crucified. Thus one can easily see that God did not plan the truth and the church to be advanced through human science or psychology. The Bible plan of salvation originated in heaven, included in it is faith, service and sacrifice. In these three functions Jesus is our example. Our admonitions in the Bible are to “Preach the Word” and “Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” and “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” and “Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.” These Divine commands are given to every servant. The Bible is not a book telling us the functions of the mind, how it ought to operate, but it is a Book that directs our mind to follow after the mind or spirit of Christ. Let us accept it as such.

THE TREND TOWARDS COMPROMISING TRUTH

Truth is pure, unmixed, flowing from God’s
PRESENT DAY CHURCH PROBLEMS

CLED E. WALLACE

(This is the first of a series of five sermons on this theme delivered during the Lufkin Bible School in January, 1948. Brother Cled E. Wallace, co-editor of the Bible Banner, has been seriously ill but is back at home and we are hoping and praying will soon be entirely recovered. R. E. C.)

In every institution, every organization, whether it be political or social or religious, problems are bound to arise, and there is not any way to keep these problems from arising as long as there is growth and development. I am reading a text in the third chapter of I Timothy. Timothy was to note some things that were wanting. Among other things there were some false teachers that needed to be put in their place. But here is the charge that Paul gave Timothy, and the atmosphere of all of it shows that it was a matter of extreme importance. He said, “Timothy, I write these things unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Now there are no problems or theories of an alarming nature in the church as long as everybody is behaving himself, conducting himself as he should. Notice what the apostle says the church is, the house of God, it is the family of God. In another figure the apostle calls it the body of Christ, and said God set the members in the body even as it pleased Him, and that each member is to function and contribute its part to the growth and to the health of the body. I believe he uses the expression “the building up of itself in love,” joined to him who is the head, even Christ, and the members fitly framed together. And he says there are many members but one body. If the members can find their place of functioning in the body in a scriptural way, then everything goes smoothly and divine purposes are carried out. It is only when somebody, it may be through ignorance, it may be through misinformation, but for whatever cause, if he tries to function out of his place then problems come up; problems arise. Sometimes we find one member is not satisfied to function where he rightfully belongs. When one member of the church decides that he can’t function in the place where he belongs that in itself would create a problem. When I look into this book that Paul wrote to Timothy, this letter, I find he has a good deal to say about how elders are to conduct themselves, how old men and old women are to conduct themselves, and young men and young women. In fact, whoever you are, whether man or woman, whatever your relationship, husband or wife, son or daughter, elder, preacher, deacon, and what-not you can find some specific as well as some general instruction in the Bible about how you ought to function and about how you ought to act.

It isn’t surprising that we have problems in the church. It is like a family. We have problems in the family, a father and a mother, and children, and problems are constantly arising. Because the problems come we don’t propose to destroy the family or disrupt it, but these problems must be met. When a man is in business he has his problems to come up. Difficulties, and sometimes obstacles which at the time seem insufferable and some seem to be unnecessary, but there they are. In government we have our problems arise, and everywhere and in everything these problems come, and so there is nothing strange or to be decried about the fact that problems arise in the church. We can’t ignore them. If a mother refused to call a doctor when her child wasn’t feeling well, or apparently sick, because she is afraid that the doctor would find something wrong with it, why that would be tragic. The quicker you recognize a problem and the more positively and righteously you deal with it, the quicker the proposition is settled.

Sometimes these problems are just growing pains, these pains that the church has, but some churches couldn’t have growing pains, for obvious reasons, and therefore we would have to name it or call it something else. Coming to these problems, history repeats itself, in the rise and decline of nations, and you will find a parallel that is rather striking in the rise, the growth and the decline of the church. When a nation is young and has obstacles to overcome and meet, when this nation, for instance, has enemies that are without that threaten, and new situations constantly arising, it makes for unity and self-sacrifice. Later, when the nation grows strong and wealthy and increases in power and influence, patriotism declines, and original concepts change, and you find new problems arise, and after awhile maybe the nation will grow strong and self-sufficient and independent, and gradually moral looseness begins to creep in; idealism falls, and the first thing you know the nation begins its decline. You can read any historian on the rise and fall of a nation, the Roman Empire for instance, and get the idea. When it comes to the church, we find the church is established and it grows strong and there are periods of difficulty. In these periods, especially in religious history, we find the first century produces certain problems and later centuries others, and although these problems vary, the principles underlying them are just about the same.
In the first century the outstanding characteristic was persecution and martyrdom. I marvel at the establishment of the church and what it accomplished in the first century. Why you think about the fact that Jesus Christ with just a few unknown disciples around him said, "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it," and he built it. When we look at that church on Pentecost, and its personnel, and see from a worldly point of view its prospects and power, and then find it increasing and developing and growing, and persecution and martyrdom instead of holding it down, seems just to have set it afire and promoted its growth and liberality and zeal and influence. Evidently God was with them for we note the growth of the church. The church won out and government applauded and adopted it so to speak, and the church became popular, then compromises set in. Changes began to be made, and such changes in organization and doctrine, and worship, led to the full development of the Roman hierarchy.

Then there was an age that we know as superstition and tyranny and utter confusion. It looked like Christianity could not survive, that it's authoritative book would even be destroyed, the Bible would be burned up and destroyed and yet there came a time when the Bible emerged. Then instead of a full restoration of New Testament Christianity, instead of purity of the doctrine and worship of old, there was a period of denominational prejudice and bigotry. Men were strong for their creeds. They would fight for them, they were bold in their defense of their doctrine. Then that was halted and we have indifference.

INDDIFFERENCE A PROBLEM TODAY

The spirit of the age in which we live is affecting the church and that is one of our problems. We have at the present time a condition of indifference and false tolerance and every man's opinion against divine authority. Indifference is the problem today. The average man in religion is not going to defend his creed. He may belong to a denomination, and he may be zealous as a member of it, but he cares nothing about doctrine. It doesn't make any difference to him about the distinctive features of his creed, he is indifferent toward those matters. It never occurs to anybody today that somebody else might be right and we might be wrong, or that we might be right and somebody else wrong. The spirit of indifference and the spirit of false tolerance of this age is that we are all right, regardless of how wrong we are.

LACK OF CONVICTION TODAY

We are living in a period of utter lack of doctrinal or religious convictions. You can go back for example to the history of Israel, for our admonition and for our learning, and we must keep in mind that the church is a divine institution. It was established by divine authority and it is to be maintained on divine principles. Well, God established the nation of Israel, and he gave that nation a law; he gave that nation a religion, and when he told Moses to build the tabernacle, he said, "See that you build it according to the pattern." They were to worship God strictly according to the pattern. Moses in his farewell address to Israel, said, over and over again, when you go into the land of Canaan, when you get out of this land of sacrifice, trials and troubles, they still remembered the terrible things in Egypt, when you get into the land that God has promised you will live in houses that you didn't build, you will drink water out of cisterns that you didn't dig, you will eat the fruit of vineyards that you didn't plant, you will inhabit cities that cost you no effort, your silver and your gold will multiply and your heart will be lifted up, and you will say, "My might and my power have gotten me this wealth," and you will forget. You will forget that it is God who gives you power to do these things. And Israel did forget. And we could recount with some interest the steps, the gradual steps, that finally led to their complete apostasy and captivity. The history of a church can be like that. As a matter of fact, when you look at this matter of indifference and of false tolerance today in religion you can see how far indeed the church has drifted from its principles.

THE PROBLEM OF PREACHING

This leads up to some specific observations as to problems. First, what problems do we have that cause the most concern? The first one that I note and pay particular attention is the preaching problem. There is no more important problem facing the church. The character of the church is determined and has always been determined by the character of its preaching. When the Holy Spirit came down for the sole purpose, apparently, of revealing the truth, to make it known; God devised a plan. Jesus Christ executed it, and the Holy Spirit revealed it; and when He came, He came down to reveal, and when the church was established it is said they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayers. They continued in the apostles' doctrine and the apostles' teaching, and you know the teaching of the apostles determined the character of the church. The character of the church can't be changed unless the character of the teaching is changed, and a lot of our problems root back to the problem of the wrong kind of preaching. I want to emphasize this matter of the importance of preaching. The world depended on its wisdom, Rom 1:21 depended upon its armed might, nations...
and institutions of various kinds depended on various means, but God depended for his work on what is known in the Bible as the "foolishness of preaching." "Foolishness of preaching," for in the eyes of the world it is a foolish thing to expect such a thing as preaching to accomplish such tremendous and unheard of results. It was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to do something that the wisdom of the world had not done, and could not do, and that all the armed might of all the nations had not done and could not do. He proposed by the preaching of the simple Gospel, which Paul declared to be the power of God unto salvation, to accomplish something in the way of redemption that all the combined means of the world known and unknown could not accomplish.

"THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD PREACHING"

Paul took himself seriously as a preacher. He called himself a preacher. Preachers are sometimes called doctors and they are sometimes called pastors, and they are sometimes called ministers, and first one thing and then another. I don't know of anything in the world I would rather be called than simply a preacher. That is what Paul called himself, and you know he said this regarding himself, "I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself so that I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I receive from the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

On another occasion he said, "Brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, it is not after men, neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, it came to me by revelation of Jesus Christ." That is where I got it, and it is a precious thing to me, even more valuable than my own life, and "though we or an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than that which has been preached unto you, let him be anathema." If I am any judge of the teaching of the scripture, Paul had less regard for a man who would preach something else besides the gospel, than he did for any kind of misconduct that is on record, because it was so Vital. When he wrote to Timothy, he said, 'Timothy give heed to thyself.' Give heed to yourself. If a man gives heed to himself as a preacher, why a preacher's attitude ought to be critically looked into. What is my attitude toward the truth? You know attitudes are in the heart. They may not immediately be perceived externally, but an attitude in the heart is going to creep out where it can be observed. A man must not compromise the truth in his heart. If he does you are going to have problems spring up that even he didn't dream of as a result of his work. It will be a regular Pandora's box of evil things.

THE SPIRIT OF RETICENCE

Today we note in the attitude of a good man, preachers, rather it is an outgrowth of their attitude, a marked reticence compared with a generation ago. In other words, a spirit of reservation regarding the announcement and the emphasis upon some clearly revealed truths. That is not a healthy sign, and the results that we can see on that even in a generation does not present a good prospect, if it reaches the fruit that it promises to. Preaching a good many years ago was, and some preaching is now, and it all ought to be, cold and uncompromising. We can remember what happened when doors were shut against us and when opposition and persecution was just as strong as it could be, and we might have to move out and hold a meeting in the open air or build a brush arbor on somebody's land, though he might not be a member of the church. The opposition that preachers met made them strong because they were forced to defend the truth and they loved the truth. We emphasized those things that were distinctive; not denominationally distinctive, because the church is not a denomination. You can look at the church as a New Testament affair and the body of Christ, composed of all the people of God. The distinctive features of the church just as clearly distinguish it from denominationalism of every shape, as one thing can be distinguished from anything else that is different. We emphasized and underlined and underscored those distinctive characteristics, things that separated the church from the world land everything that pertained to it, even religiously. It takes a pretty high grade of courage to do that.

PREACHERS NEED COURAGE

The right kind of a preacher ought to be an exceptional sort of a fellow. They need a lot of courage and ought to be able to do, if need be, like Elijah did. It looked like he was the only one left, and they were seeking his life to please Ring Ahab, the popular head of an apostate nation who killed a good man, through covetousness, and took his vineyard. When he rode in with his associates and his courtiers on one side, who should march in on the other side but Elijah the prophet? "Ahab, have you both killed and taken possession? Is it thou, thou trouble of Israel? I have troubled Israel, but you and your father's house, in that you have forsaken, the commandments of Jehovah, you won't get by with it Ahab." He went on to tell him that dark calamities would come to him and his house, over his sins. In other words, the dogs would lick his blood where they licked the blood of Naboth, and you know against such opposition, even King Ahab turned white as a sheet, and faltered and feared. It was simply through the force of the truth. It took courage to do a thing.
like that. It took courage for Paul in Athens, alone, to meet people on the street — some of them philosophers and some of them Jews, and dispute with them. He reasoned and persuaded in the synagogues, and when he was driven out of one place he went into another and did the same thing. It took courage when Stephen stood up before those traducers of the truth and said, “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, as your fathers did, so also do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute, and killed them that showed before the coming of the Righteous One, of whom ye are now become betrayers and murderers.” “Stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears,” and he knew it would cost him his life. That wasn’t a mistake on Stephen’s part. It was a choice between treachery to the cause of Christ and death as a martyr, and he accepted the choice without fear or without trembling. In his triumph he said, “I see Jesus standing at the right hand of God,” and he could say with full faith, “Lord Jesus receive my spirit.” There was no reticence or cowardice or anything of that sort.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

The preacher needs to take an attitude test. You know a sweet spirit is a fine thing if it is the right kind of a spirit. We ought to be like the Lord, the spirit of Christ, but you know Christ could be gentle on occasions, and he could be stern and unyielding on occasions. Every once in awhile I pick up a paper and find somebody telling us how we ought to imitate the spirit of Christ, and I read usually about a paragraph and a half and I find that the writer is condemning Christ and the apostles. Condemning the very things that they did. I read an article awhile back, and I guess you did, a pretty good friend of ours, and he intimated that he thought of error, and you can’t tolerate some error and compromise, or otherwise, you must either accept or compromise, or anything of that sort. Preachers used to do the kind of preaching that would put people to talking, and put them to arguing. I recall when I was in Temple a good many years ago, that the telephone rang, Foy called me from Lometa. Foy and I always were pretty close, and he said, “Cled, you had better get on out here. Why,” he said, “we’ve got this thing bottom side up and upside down, hind part backwards,” and he said, “this whole town is afire.” I said I had better go out, end I went out, and of all the crowds you ever saw, and of all the preaching you ever heard, we just baptized about 110 or 115 during that meeting, and restored about all the backsliders in the country, and practically ruined every denominational church in that country. And you know the preachers were going up end down the streets, and some of them were even heckling him in his services. They were having the hottest time you nearly ever saw. An argument took place on the corner of the street, and there was one noted old infidel there. He didn’t believe in anything, and he was sitting there listening to them, and really was enjoying the argument. One fellow, all excited, said, “That fellow got up there last night and told that crowd that there wasn’t but one church.” This old infidel said, “Well, if that young fellow stays around here long, there won’t be but one.” You know soft preaching never would have done that. The church grew in opposing error. Courage on the part of preachers does not mean that there are not proprieties that we must observe. There is courtesy and all that, but there is not any courtesy in all the world that I know of that would keep me or hold me back legitimately from preaching the truth of the gospel on any proper occasion, end a man that will withold the truth, any truth, for fear of the sensibilities of somebody in his audience, because of some pressure, social, financial or otherwise, is not worthy of the gospel of Christ. Now these are just some principles that I think ought to be brought out and talked about.

NEUTRALITY IN PREACHING

There is a spirit of neutrality in preaching. You know sometimes an issue will come up that is loaded. Any capable preacher knows the Bible ought to be able to see an issue. All right, here is an issue that comes up, but the issue is loaded. I know it is right, I know that is what the Bible teaches. I know that is where I ought to take my stand, but I know that if I do it will just cost me some popularity, it will cost me some friendships, it may cost me position, it may cost me in painful ways, and so I’ll just wait. My sympathies are with the ones that make the fight, but I don’t want to get hurt. Some don’t believe the false doctrine but throw their influence on the other side and do injustice even to their own convictions, what little they have by complimenting the fellow that holds to those things. We have men today, prominent men with big names and indeed fine characters in many ways, that never take a stand on any issue until they see which way the wind blows. They’ll come
out right if the pressure goes the right way, and they might not come out wrong if it went the other way, but they just wouldn’t come out at all. You know courage is one of the requirements of preaching, and understand this preaching question is one of the most important issues.

Our preaching is a little bit like another thing I have observed, I am expecting in this capacity at least a few times during this series to say the wrong thing at the psychological moment, and now is when I am going to say one. I picked up the Gospel Advocate and the Firm Foundation after I had this speech pretty well mapped out, and I knew when I made it that I wouldn’t deliver it like I fixed it. But anyway, I picked up a paper, and they had a lectureship at George Pepperdine College. I looked over the subjects of that lectureship and they had another lectureship at David Lipscomb College and I looked over the subjects of that lectureship. Well, what was wrong? On first glance, why, if a man wasn’t a little critical, he possibly wouldn’t notice anything. A good friend of mine was doing all the lecturing over at George Pepperdine. Do you know what he lectured on? He spent the whole time, and he was the big shot in the lectureship, about all he talked about and all he preached about in it was courtship — like anybody didn’t know how to court without some preacher telling him — courtship, marriage, and then the home, how husbands and wives ought to get along together. I know husbands and wives ought to get along together, and I know that they have to learn how to get along together. If you take a dozen people and bring them together, or a hundred people, or two hundred people, we know that you have to give diligence to keep the unity of the spirit, and if a good man marries a good woman, why, if he’s got a head of his own, which he sometimes has, and if she’s got a head of her own, which she always has, they have to learn how to get along. Well, what is wrong with that kind of a program? I’ll tell you in just a minute. Over at David Lipscomb College they had a lectureship and the whole program, every feature of it, was on the personal godliness of a Christian. One lecture was on jealousy, and another lecture was on envy, and another lecture was on honesty, and all that. Well, what’s wrong with that? Well, I’ll tell you exactly what’s wrong with it. In the first place, as good a preacher as that fellow is at George Pepperdine, and as good friend of mine as he is, there’s at least five bishops in the Methodist church that can outlecture him a 11 to smash on every one of his subjects, and do it more eloquently and in a more scholarly way. You know it used to be, a way back when Sam Jones and Billy Sunday and those big union revivalists were coming in, and they were staying off of everybody’s doctrine, but they were preaching on dancing and preaching on whiskey drinking, and preaching on card playing, and preaching on popular sins and all, of course, most of what they said about those things was true, but they were not preaching the gospel. You know what they were doing? We were not encouraging horse racing, nor divorce, nor gambling, nor drinking or anything like that, but I’ll tell you what we were doing, we were preaching the gospel and making Christians out of folks, and somehow or other they just acted pretty well in those regards without featuring those as major things. It is the church’s business to preach the gospel, and when the church confines its program to a kind of social gospel it will grow weak. I don’t care how much morality you preach, I don’t care how much you preach against marriage and divorce, and against sobriety and honesty and all of that, of course there is some of that in the Bible, a lot of it, and it ought to be preached, but when you feature those things, and lectureship after lectureship gives the whole time and absolutely puts no emphasis whatever on those distinctive principles of the gospel that the church was established and grew on, as long as it grew, disaster is bound to result. That is the way the dégèratives did years ago. They quit preaching the gospel and began preaching morality, and a sweet spirited proposition, and about eleven times out of nine when a man begins to emphasize the sweet spirited part of it, why it is cowardice on his part, and he just mistakes the spirit he has. You know the gospel is all that will save people. It is the power of God unto salvation. The last time I delivered a lecture at a college lectureship by invitation, I’m just a little bit ashamed to tell you what I spoke about. I acted pretty nice when I was up there. I have always sort of felt that they put me on that theme to keep me off of something else, and I promised my wife before I went up there that I wouldn’t be a bull in a china closet or anything of that sort if I could help it. Think about assigning a preacher the subject of discussing the Business Life of a Christian. What does a preacher know about business? Some brethren could do a little lecturing on that no doubt but they should assign me a subject that I knew something about. The head of a college one time, and I told the folks at home once that I was 8 little bit more important than some of them thought I was, but the president of a school, a good friend of mine, came all the way to Austin one time just to see me and discuss some of the problems that were bothering him. He was possibly disappointed because I didn’t know as much about them as he had hoped I would, if that was really his purpose, to get some information. One time they sent me a program for a lectureship, and it had one subject, I think it
was stewardship or something like that, and it was divided into sixteen or eighteen different heads, and each lecturer was supposed to take one of those sub-heads and make a speech out of it. Why, they just spread the thing out so thin, and what was there to all of it? Not much of anything. I 'heard some of them, and when I was asked about my reaction to it, I said, “The subject that you have given, that you have divided into sixteen sub-heads, might form the basis of one pretty good lecture if you’ll get somebody that could handle it.” The idea of taking one little part of a character that is not doctrinal or distinctive and divide that into a whole series of lectures and just have a lot of little pep talks around.

The church is facing a problem today that can only be met by men who love the truth, who have an attitude toward it like Paul had toward it, and who will preach it and urge its principles in the right sort of a spirit regardless of consequences. You know it is not the preacher’s business to get his color from the church. You know preaching is so important that you’ll possibly leave you out, and divide the basis of one doctrinal and practical. You know there is not spiritual preaching. Something of that sort, brother says, “Well, you know the kind of preaching?” I had heard some of them, and when I was asked about my reaction to it, I said, “The subject that you have given, that you have divided into sixteen sub-heads, might form the basis of one pretty good lecture if you’ll get somebody that could handle it.” The idea of taking one little part of a character that is not doctrinal or distinctive and divide that into a whole series of lectures and just have a lot of little pep talks around.

This preaching problem is one of the big problems. I don’t want to try to say all of it tonight, my time is up, but I have one thing that I clipped gives a little trend. I expect many of you saw it, and I’m not sure that I haven’t seen it somewhere before, but it just stuck me as particularly forceable at this time and under these circumstances. “Old Parson Stubbs, he used to preach at Tobin’s school house and at beach. A preacher of the olden brand, with scriptures verses right at hand. With half the Bible learned: by rote, right in his head where he could quote. I’m sure the bells of heaven rang when he prayed and when he sang: he raised a loud reproof against all fashion breed of sin; he spoke aloud, some say he raved about the need of getting saved. He held revivals now and then where women, kids and grown up men, ‘with tears-streams coursing down their face, sought pardon and redeeming grace. He thundered forth the truth, the word, in tones that were distinctly heard; and he had one message meant for all, ‘t was seek redemption from the fall. The parson died in ’93, his life’s song was Abide With Me. His last words were, It is Ms way, Goodbye, I’m going home today. A man now preached in his place, who scoffs the very sound of grace. He has AM’s and PHD’s and other marks of high degree; He lectures on ‘the planet Mars, the glory of the moon and stars’; The beauty of the mountain range, and other topics vague and strange. His lectures might be very good if they were ever understood, but they, don’t put a man on pins and make him sorry for his sins. They never stir a wicked gent upto the point where he’ll repent. I wonder, what this man will sing when slipping off to meet the king, and if like Parson Stubbs he’ll say, Goodbye, I’m going home today.”

(Continued on page 15)
CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

HARRY PICKUP, SR.

'It is doubtful if any nation on earth has ever been as 'freedom conscious as the United States of America. During 'two world conflicts we listened to our orators, and to others; declare the advantages of, freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom of religion and freedom of speech: In a vague sort of way we believed what we heard, though few of us took the time to dig deep enough into the matter to learn what we really meant when we spoke of the basic "ideals of freedom." We were fairly 'well-fed, we had enough clothes and fuel to keep us warm, we attended church services when and where we felt like it and we expected the cop on the beat to protect us and our property from burglars and thieves. Nearly everybody in America seemed satisfied that they had a pretty good idea of what the nation stood for; but even so, most of us sort of 'took things for granted.

It has long been the opinion of this writer that the Ivory Soap percentage (99 and 44/100) of the people of this nation have a poorer conception of CHRISTIAN freedom (which was the basic reason for the founding of this nation) than they do of the meaning of American, free: dom! It is my ambition, therefore, to point out the real meaning of freedom as the focal point of the Christian religion, not as it is worded in denominational theology, but as it is revealed in the 'New Testament.

FREEDOM FROM IGNORANCE

The first of these we shall call Freedom From Ignorance, and it is based upon two statements which were made by Jesus. He said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jno.8:32) And, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (verse 36)

The goal of secular education is to train man to become an asset to self and humanity. With-out education man gropes in darkness for the lines which tie him to the fields of real usefulness: He cannot know how to properly use the multitude of things which God has enclosed in natural laws unless he is trained in the various sciences. He is helpless in the vast fields of electronics, medicine, archaeology and dozens of others, if he is ignorant of the principles by which they move. His mind must be properly developed to use the rules and apply the formulas which bring into being plastics; sound and pharmaceutical supplies: An ignorant mind is helpless in all but a few of the many fields of work which have contributed so much to the peace, comfort and development of man.

But there is something more: tragic than an ignorant mind: an intellectual mind and norant soul! It was this that Jesus had in mind: educating 'men in the field of spiritual develop-ment. This is accomplished by "the truth" by which the Son of God proposes to "make you free." Free from the shackles of spiritual ignorance; free from bias of prejudice and error which are tools of the devil to keep men in bondage (2 Tim. 2:23, 26) The average man knows little or nothing of the issues which involve his eternal welfare, though he may know by heart, the issues which concern his business and politics. Many children (some, whose parents are members of the church) can tell you the names of every movie star in Hollywood—and how many adulterous marriages contracted—who can't name 'the books of the New Testament. Ignorance of the simple story of the cross is responsible for millions being lost, when all could know the truth, the truth which makes man free from sin.

FREEDOM OF FAITH

Freedom of faith is an important plank in Christian freedom. This gives us the right to believe and practice exactly "the faith" of the New Testament, for which Jude says we are to contend earnestly, (Jude 3). Insipiritual things we are not-under this freedom-ham strung by the human creeds, human traditions and the doctrines, -of men... We are free under God to practice the things for which we have commands and examples in the Word of God. Here we are free from human opinion, being supplied by the Holy scriptures, which perfects us in all good works: (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Some have contended that 'freedom of faith means freedom 'to believe what one pleases. This isn't true—either with regard to things material or spiritual. The laws 'of our land prohibit us from believing anything we please in matter&l matters, and the laws of God prohibit us from believing anything we please in spiritual matters. The bank robber makes his calls after hours, because he believes in that kind of program... But there are policemen land guards whose business it is to prevent him from practicing his faith in such matters. There are a million men in our penal institutions who were once, rudely awakened to the realization that they could not believe what they pleased, or practice what they believed.

Freedom of faith simply means that man is free to believe and practice what God teaches. Realizing that he will some day be judged by the things written in the books, (Rev. 20:12-15) he is not scared by the pompous claims of ecclesiasticism. He is free from the bonds of denominationalism and from the dead bones of...
church traditions. He doesn’t have to wear a sectarian name, be guided by a denominational creed and led around by the nose at the hands of some man. In brief, he is free under Christ, the Captain of his salvation, to be just a Christian, a member of the church he can read about in the Word of God.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Another important item is freedom of speech. God tells us to “speak the things which become sound doctrine,” and speaks of “sound speech which cannot be condemned.” The free speech of Christ will not turn one person against another; it is the authority of human opinion that does this. Human documents, human creeds, human councils—speaking by no higher authority than their own little minds—are the flies in the ointment which generate the seeds of religious prejudice. When we speak the words of the Lord, we are speaking the truth, but when we speak the concoctions of our own minds (even though we may try to dignify the same by references to scripture) we speak the language of Ashdod. No speech is free spiritually and scripturally free when it must feel the pulse of human councils and creeds before speaking.

Most readers of gospel literature remember the case of the Baptist preacher who went fishing with his non-Baptist friends. Evidently the conversation was on religion, during the course of which the non-Baptist asked the preacher, “See, here is the water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Evidently the preacher remembered the case of the eunuch in Acts 8, and without any formality or voting, he immersed his friend in the creek. Later, when the matter was brought to the attention of the governing body of the Baptists who had jurisdiction over this particular preacher, he was warned never to let such a thing happen again! The reason given was that the thing wasn’t carried out according to Baptist custom. Well, this is certainly true; but it definitely was New Testament custom to do it as described in Acts 8. But this preacher and thousands of other denominational constituents are not free under God to speak the truth in Christ. Really, it is a delightful experience to have freedom of speech in spiritual matters, ruled only by the inspired mandates of a divine lawmaking body, unhampered by the unscriptural paraphernalia of denominationalism’s lower court.

FREEDOM FROM SPIRITUAL WANT

The true Christian also has freedom from spiritual want. Jesus says something about this in the sermon on the mount. “Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Being “filled” involves more than escape from sin (though this is certainly sufficient reason for hungering for righteousness); it is the sum of all the Christian graces which come as a result of true spiritual hunger. The man who desires to obey the gospel of Christ, can. He doesn’t need to agonize for years, trying to get religion or come through some sort of an experience which is “better” felt than told.” There are numerous examples of what to do to be saved in the book of Acts of Apostles. When one’s soul is really hungering and thirsting for salvation, it can be easily satisfied by following the examples of primary obedience suggested. In order to live the Christian life and worship God acceptably, one has but to “walk the new life” as this life is described in the rest of the New Testament. There is no excuse for starving to death (spiritual want) on a diet of sectarian lectures. New Testament Christianity makes one free from spiritual want.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

There is a final, but most important freedom, which Christianity alone can give: freedom from fear. Human religions, human traditions and principles of pure morality, can take one no farther than the grave. From a purely human point of view much good is performed upon the bodies of men by organizations which are purely human in name, origin, doctrine, and practice. In the name of everything, from the Grand Order of So-and-So to the Council of the P. D. Q., human bodies are helped by other humans more fortunate than the sufferers. Such work has merit, whether organized or unorganized, but the advocates of such doctrines of human mercy can proceed no farther than the point where the beneficiary dies. Not so with Christianity. Christ proposes to make men FREE, free from fear of the unseen. David expressed it in these words: “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me...” Dozens of passages express the same sentiment. Jesus tells us that He will come for His faithful, and adds, “Where I am, there ye may be also...” May Cod help us to appreciate the real meaning of this, so that we may prepare for the inevitable appointment which we all have with death, and be free from fear-realizing the helping hand of Christ.

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SOME OLD DOCTRINES RESTATED AND EXAMINED
FALSE ARGUMENTS AND PERVERSIONS OF SCRIPTURES
R. L. WHITESIDE

It is not my purpose to notice all the false arguments and perversions of which religious people are guilty—not even all I know about. First, let us notice some peculiar notions people have formed about the results of the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Read Genesis 3.

When I was in the Nashville Bible School, a visiting preacher of great ability said in a sermon, “When Adam sinned the seeds of mortality were sown in the human body.” I did not believe that theory then, nor do I now. Recently some brother said that if Adam had not sinned, we would have remained immortal. That is a wild guess. There is not the least indication that man’s physical nature was affected by his eating the forbidden fruit. Had he been permitted to have continued access to the tree of life he would have lived on in sin. You do not believe it? Then read this: “And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever—therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” So it was the fruit of the tree of life that kept them alive; separated from it they died. Not having access to it we have seen brethren refer to “our mortal (bodies) is to say that by sinning they changed their bodies from immortal bodies to mortal (bodies) is to say that by sinning they worked a great miracle on themselves! Then I have seen in print where brethren refer to “our fallen nature”. I do not think they know what they mean by the expression. What do they think happened to our nature? Do they think our nature fell into a state of sin and depravity? What else can they mean, if they mean anything? It all sounds very much like the Augustinian-Calvinistic doctrine of inherited depravity.

When, as a youngster, I began to pay any real attention to preaching, I heard more than one gospel preacher on what, I think they called the “Fall and Reinstatement of Man”. It was argued that the steps that were taken to get away from the tree of life must be retraced to get back. As they enumerated the steps they stepped them off on the rostrum. “They heard a lie—step no. 1; they believed a lie-step no. 2; they obeyed a lie-step no. 3. To get back you must retrace the steps. You must hear the truth—step no. 2; you must obey the truth—step no. 3.” That all looked plain and simple to me: so when I began to try to preach, I followed that pattern for some time. With a little more maturity of thinking I saw that the line of thought contained too much error, For one thing, Adam did not believe the lie, for Paul says he was not deceived. It is not certain that Eve told him what had been said to her. He was not influenced by the devil’s lie, but by his wife. She gave the fruit to her husband, “and he did eat”. And so, what I had thought was a good sermon exploded. I did not save any of its pieces.

Another theory about the effects of the sin of Adam and Eve is the Calvinistic theory of inherited depravity and sin. Let some standard works tell what the doctrine is. The Presbyterian Confession of Faith says; “From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.”

They usually try to soften the doctrine till they begin to make their arguments for the supposed necessity for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion; then they make the sinner utterly depraved, dead, with no ability to do anything. We shall examine some of the fallacious arguments built on perversions of certain passages in efforts to sustain this hurtful doctrine.

Jeremiah 13:23-25. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. Therefore will I scatter them, as the stubble that passeth away, by the wind of the wilderness. This is thy lot, the portion measured unto thee from me, saith Jehovah: because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.” It is argued that a sinner cannot do anything toward changing his condition any more than an Ethiopian can change his skin or a leopard his spots—that this illustrates the condition of an unregenerate sinner. But some things are overlooked. It is not said that these Jews were born evil, but were “accustomed to do evil”. Also, Jehovah said evils would come upon them “because thou hast forgotten me”. So they had known Jehovah, for people cannot forget what they had never known. Because they had become hopelessly corrupt, the Lord would “scatter them, as stubble that passeth away, by the wind of the wilderness”. Their condition was hopeless. Verse 27: “Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! thou wilt not be made clean”. It is argued that nothing but the direct power of Jehovah...
can change an Ethiopian’s skin, or a leopard’s spots. But did the Lord ever by direct power change people who have become wholly corrupt? Because Jerusalem had reached that condition the Lord abandoned them, and had them carried into captivity. And when the Jews again became so hopelessly corrupt that they crucified the Lord, and then, by bitter persecution and slaughter, tried to destroy his church, the Romans utterly destroyed their nation, killing multiplied thousands of them and carrying the remainder into captivity. That is the way the Lord deals with people when they become hopelessly corrupt. Other examples illustrate the same truth.

What happened to the people at the flood shows what God did to people who became depraved beyond remedy, though what is said about them is perverted into an argument in support of the doctrine of hereditary total depravity. Genesis 6:5 “And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”. But it is not said that they were born such corrupt sinners. That point is assumed, and the assumption not only lacks proof, but it flatly contradicts what is said in verse 12: “And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.” Their corruption was of their own doing—they corrupted their way. And because they had reached such corruption, and would not heed Noah’s preaching God destroyed them with a flood. And also when Sodom and Gomorrah reached the wholly corrupt condition, which the creeds wrongfully charge upon all men, the Lord destroyed them. And so he did with Pharaoh and his hosts. And such endings came to people who were “utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil”. People may reach that state of depravity by their own doings, but they are not born in that condition.

Another argument is built on an unwarranted use of the word dead in Eph. 2:1. It is believed that a dead man can do nothing—cannot even hear, and cannot believe, till God makes him alive by some direct influence of the Holy Spirit. But the prodigal son was dead, but he returned to his father without any direct operation of the spirit of his father. When I debated the Holy Spirit question with Ben M. Bogard, in his first speech he put in his time trying to prove that the sinner is so depraved, so dead, that he can do nothing till he is made alive by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit in addition to the word. I knew he would accuse me of limiting the power of God: and so I decided to beat him to it and put him in a dilemma so that he would get hurt no matter (Continued on page 16)

ANNOUNCING

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This book is now off the press and at the bindery. It will be ready for delivery within a few days now. A book bearing the above title was published in 1997 by Lambert and Son in Port Arthur, Texas. This book contained a series of sermons preached by Foy E. Wallace, Jr. The new book which has just come off the press contains all of the original sermons and about twelve additional chapters making the book twice the size of the original. The enlarged edition has 257 pages in it, printed on 60 lb. egg shell paper, a fine job of printing and bound in excellent cloth binding with jacket. Subjects discussed are:

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JAMES W. ADAMS

*Originality* is not claimed for the challenging (?) title of this article. Due credit is here-with given to our friend and brother, E. W. McMillan, and attention is directed to his article by the same title in the Firm Foundation of July 13,1948. Now, Brother McMillan is a nice man and quite able in discussing prayer, evangelism, Christian living, and some aspects of the worship, but he is definitely out of character in the field of polemics. One has but to read his ‘article to appreciate the truth of the statement. The amazing thing is that he should venture, if timidly, into so controversial a realm as that invaded by his article. I dare say that he would not have done it but for the fact that he is a budding college president (Japanese work) and wants to pave the road into the budgets of the churches for his prospective school. There is one thing for which we are profoundly grateful, namely; that Brother McMillan is finally getting into a school. Some of his friends (?) have been reporting that a brother sometime ago offered to endow a Bible chair in one of ‘our’ colleges for him if Brother McMillan could get a school to accept him, but that none of ‘our’ schools would acquiesce in this agreement. We are, therefore, happy that Brother McMillan now has the opportunity to head a school, so that such derogatory rumors might be killed, but we are unwilling for him to assume that he can dash off a few lines in the Firm Foundation and settle all matters connected with the issue relating to church support of the colleges.

AMUSING ASPECTS OF THE ARTICLE

One’s first reaction to brother McMillan’s ‘article is amusement. In the first place, why did our brother wait until so late in the fray to present arms? The heat of the battle has abated. The missiles no longer fly. The smoke of combat has almost cleared away and the issue of the conflict determined when our brother comes tip-toeing across the field of battle with his pea shooter. Where were you, brother, while the conflict raged? Could it be that you were afraid you might be accidentally hit?

Another amusing thing about this article is the fact that our brother so skillfully constructed his little straw soldiers to slay with his demon pea shooter. The very title of his article suggests a question that is wholly beside the point with reference to the issue involved. No informed person would argue with our brother concerning what is or is not the Lord’s money. I do not recall that this expression ever was a point at issue on the part of those who oppose church support of the college. Where did brother McMillan get the idea that a fixed part of an individual’s money is the Lord’s and the rest his own, and that our opposition to the support of the college by the church is based upon such a theory? I am quite sure that no writer in the Bible Banner ever expressed such as the ground of the paper’s fight against the practice. What an individual does or does not do is not the issue. The issue has to do with what a church may or may not do.

WHY DOES BROTHER McMILLAN NOT AFFIRM THE PRACTICE HE ENDORSES?

‘From his misleading title, our brother proceeds to a discussion of several negative arguments’ (?) on the church-college question that he has heard somewhere. Where he heard them I do not profess to know, but that they in any sense represent the Bible Banner’s opposition to the church support of the college, I do deny most fervently. If Brother McMillan wanted to write on this issue, why did he write a rebuttal to negative arguments never offered by the leaders of the opposition to the practice in question? Why did he not write an article affirming that it is scriptural for churches to contribute to the support of the colleges from their treasuries? It is not too late for him to do so if he is ambitious to set all right on the question. Will he try it? We shall see.

‘THE PROPAGANDA SPIRIT’

Brother McMillan accuses some who have written of being motivated by the ‘propaganda spirit.’ In other words, some are accused of being insincere and dishonest. Careful! Careful! and shame! shame! Someone will be sure to charge you with judging a brother’s motives, and then to whom may we look for our lessons in the ethical attitude in Christian journalism. Some of us will be forced to turn to the Gospel Broadcast yet. However, on second thought, Brother McMillan ought to have a good nose for propaganda inasmuch as he and his consort, one of the Davidson boys, became so familiar with its use in the promotion of the New Christian Leader several years ago. Remember?

ORPHAN HOMES AGAIN

Like others who have written on the subject, our brother wants to bring the orphan homes into the discussion. Like the little boy about to taste the hickory who says, “Tommy did it too.” In injecting the orphan home into his article, Brother McMillan assumes two things: (1) He assumes that orphan homes and colleges are identical (like some of our other ‘illogicians’ he thinks similarity proves identity); (2) He assumes that if one endorses the support of an or-
phan home from the church treasury, it is scriptural to support a college from the church treasury. If one could prove that colleges and orphan homes are identical, such would not prove that to contribute to an orphan home from the church treasury makes it scriptural to contribute in this manner to a college. It would only prove the inconsistency of the man who endorsed the one and condemned the other. An inconsistent practice on the part of men is poor evidence that any practice is scriptural. Surely, our brethren are hard pressed if they have no better than this to offer in defense of their practice of supporting the college from the treasury of the church.

OUR BROTHER ASKS SOME QUESTIONS

With an air of “this is the crux of the whole matter,” Brother McMillan poses some questions. He asks:

"Another thing-those Bible teachers who teach the Bible daily in our schools, are they, in their Bible teaching, doing the Lord’s work? And whose money should support the Lord’s work in Bible teaching-the individual’s money or the Lord’s money?"

May we ask brother McMillan a few questions? When Paul taught in the school of Tyrannus, was he doing the Lord’s work? Did that oblige the church at Ephesus to make a contribution from its treasury to the school of Tyrannus? When Paul taught in the synagogue of the Jews, was he doing the Lord’s work? Did that oblige the churches to contribute to their synagogues from their treasuries to the synagogues of the Jews? Your scribe preaches two months of the year on Sunday afternoons at the State Hospital in Terrell. In preaching the gospel there, is he doing the Lord’s work? Does that obligate or even justify the church in contributing from its treasury to the support of that institution? In the answer to these questions, will be found the answer to our brother’s question.

Brother McMillan raises another question. He asks:

Inasmuch as Bible teaching is a work which the Lord requires; and inasmuch as the buildings for that teaching are admittedly a legitimate expense of the church as such; inasmuch furthermore, as daily chapel services in schools are worship periods designed for the spiritual welfare of those who attend, why should it be a sin to share the expenses out of a church treasury?

Let us suggest a parallel for our brother’s consideration. Inasmuch as preaching the gospel is a work which the Lord requires; and inasmuch as the support of preachers and the incidentals to that work are the legitimate expense of the church as such; inasmuch furthermore as the purpose of the missionary society is the spiritual welfare and eternal salvation of those whom it reaches, why should it be a sin to share the expenses of this work out of the treasury of the church?

Our brother makes another faux pas when he argues from “reciprocity.” Does he really believe that the church is duty bound to make contributions from its treasury to the support of all institutions which directly or indirectly contribute to its welfare? When he answers this question, your scribe will be happy to deal with it.

THE TOUCHING CLIMAX

In bringing his readers to a climax, Brother McMillan very touchingly takes them to the judgment, and rejoices that there all are convinced that they should have condemned the schools in the budget of the churches and that they should have helped all of the schools raise the money that they are perennially in need of. Well — I am not a prophet like my brother, but judging from the past it might be that some will not be sorry that they did not get more money for the colleges. When we think of Bethany College, College of the Bible at Lexington, Johnson Bible College and others, we wonder.

Altogether, Brother McMillan made a noble effort in his article to placate the offended, excuse the offender, defend the schools in the budget, and plead for more money for the colleges. It is too bad that he did not succeed to any noticeable degree in any of his objectives. Honestly, brethren, Brother McMillan has his hands full in cleaning up and keeping clean the Japanese work without injecting himself into the church-college issue, but if he thinks he can settle the matter in favor of the college in the budget, we will be happy to see an article from him at an early date affirming unequivocally that it is scriptural for a church to support “our” colleges from its treasury. We await his pleasure.

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JUST TEACH THEM TO LOVE JESUS

CLEON LYLES

What a person should preach, and when he should preach it, may never be a settled question. There has always been controversy about this matter. Many have been known to change almost over night. Sometimes preachers preach for years, and do a lot of good, then suddenly learn how to “preach in love.” Then they condemn all who may be doing it as they formerly did. Still others want to “preach in love” on some subjects, but do it otherwise on others. One of the most nauseating arguments I have read in some time is advanced in a little mimeograph sheet that came to my desk from a Texas town, concerning preaching on giving. Here it is: “Really we do not need to preach every Sunday and all the time on money, if the people know what it is going for and that the work of the Lord needs help in this section or that, they usually give freely. Some preachers are noted for “preaching on money all the time,” others for presenting Christ and the need of the world for Christ and stir up the hearts of the people to give prompted by a love for Christ and his cause and the lost. This done, it does not take preaching every Sunday on money. There is something wrong with a preacher who is continually preaching and whipping a church into line on giving.” Now the purpose of this statement, I do not know. Sometimes statements are made to create a following, or reconstruct one fast falling apart, but that does not give excuse for teaching that which is wrong.

Suppose we take the above reasoning and see if we can harmonize it with other subjects. “Really we do not need to preach every Sunday and all the time on premillennialism. Some preachers are noted for preaching on premillennialism all the time, others for presenting Christ and the need of the world for Christ end stir up the hearts of the people not to be premillennialists. There is something wrong with a preacher who is always preaching and whipping a sinner into line on premillennialism.” Or suppose we try another. “Really we do not need to preach every Sunday and all the time on baptism. Some preachers are noted for preaching on baptism all the time, others for presenting Christ and the need of the world for Christ and stir up the hearts of the people to be baptized. There is something wrong with a preacher who is always preaching and whipping a sinner into line on premillennialism.”

CHURCH PROBLEMS —
(Continued from page 8)

You know Paul told Timothy, you take heed to yourself and you take heed to your doctrine for in so doing you’ll save both yourself and them that hear thee. Any motive that a man has in preaching that is not connected with saving himself and those that hear him, with due regard to the fact that God is the author of it is unworthy. If he feels that way about it, human opinionism against divine authority will have no influence on him whatsoever in any form or -fashion or from any source.
BIBLE PREACHING

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fountain. There can be no compromise with error and truth still be held. To compromise is to loose one's self from the anchor of truth. Too many are making the truth a matter of politics and diplomacy. It is possible for folks to "believe a lie" and be damned if we receive not a "love for the truth." The whole world is afflicted with delusions due to the 'fact people do not receive a love for the truth. Thus God permits man's mind to be deluded, deceived when that man does not hold a strong love for the truth. It is the truth that frees men from sin (Jno. 8:32). Jesus is the "truth" (Jno. 14:6). We are "purified by the truth" (1 Pet. 1:22, 23). We are set apart by the "truth" (Jno. 17:17).

There is no question but that the church today is feeding upon "softism." Not all this attitude is coming from the colleges, but a great portion of it is. To give you proof of this statement a group of college graduates were called upon to go to a foreign field on a special campaign. After they arrived on the field and were on the job it was discovered by a faithful preacher that they were not trained to teach the truth, and a special session every day was held to instruct these graduates in the doctrine of Christ. Now if you doubt this statement I have definite proof, can give you the name of the preacher, tell you where the work was, and the name of the institution from which the students graduated. It would be much better for institutions not to teach any Bible in their halls, rather than implant in young minds the idea that it matters but little what one believes religiously.

TREND TOWARD ENTERTAINMENT

This cry was first the cry of denominationalism. Due to laxity in teaching the Bible truths at home and in the church, the young folks in denominationalism became worldly minded. They were taught constantly that one church was as good as another, and even that people could be saved outside the church. They evidently believed it and began to stay away from the church in droves. In the excitement the bewildered parents began to cry out for a return to Bible principles that would save their children and themselves, but they started the appeal, "What will become of our young folks"? Someone suggested that entertainment be found for them, and thus began a phase of activity in sectarian churches that has entered into the church of Christ. The church has never been by the authority of Christ engaged in the recreational business, but has been engaged in the saving of souls. The entertainment idea has gone so far in denominational churches that church dances are being sponsored for their pleasure, and recreational halls are a matter of necessity in church blueprints today. Recreation and entertainment are matters of social and domestic responsibility. Worldly pleasure and the church have never been associated in the 'mind of God. We would not be surprised if someone soon advocates a "Theatre for members of the church to show only good pictures" or a "Swimming pool for members of the church" or a "Bowling alley for church members" or some other worldly project to fasten on to the spiritual.

IN CONCLUSION

Let us ignore the modern trends in the world that will lead us away from the simplicity of the New Testament. Let us refuse to fasten to the church any institution of a worldly nature. Let us cling to the truth and the love for it that we should manifest, rejoicing in the Lord's handiwork, the true tabernacle, ever looking for the coming and claiming of our blessed Lord from the courts of eternal glory!

SOME OLD DOCTRINES

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which way he went. I began my reply by saying, "One objection I have to Mr. Bogard's theory is, he limits the power of God. He has the sinner so depraved and so dead that God could not make a gospel that would reach him. I then waited for results-they came in his next speech. He came up waving his arms and talking louder than usual, saying, "It is not a question of what God can do. God can do anything he wants to do. He could have made a gospel that would reach that dead sinner, if he had wanted to." I replied, "Oh, well, the sinner is not as dead as we have heard he is, for God could have made a gospel that would reach him, if he had wanted to." So the trouble is not with the inability of the sinner at all: it is with the ineffectiveness of the gospel God made! But I maintain that God made the very gospel Bogard said he could have made, and I will proceed to prove it, for it is useless in the face of Bogard's admission to talk any more about depravity and the dead sinner." Then I proceeded to show by numerous passages that the gospel is God's power for salvation, and that sinners were able to hear, believe, and obey that gospel. "Search the book of Acts, and not one time will you find that any sinner was told that he could not obey the gospel without a direct work of the Spirit. Will any one say that Luke', an inspired historian failed to mention an absolutely essential thing, really the only essential thing? He did, if the advocates of the direct operation theory are correct. Who can believe it?" (More to follow.)