Preaching, Preachers, People, and Quality Control

Alan Adams

Preachers do not pay nearly enough attention to: (1) the preacher’s subordination to the preaching; (2) being productive, and (3) the quality of that which they produce; and I believe there is a correlation between this and the masses of brethren who have “gone out” from our midst. Like children in Never Never Land, who have yet to grow up, they are following modern day Pied Pipers whithersoever they go. How can so many leave that which they ostensibly have known and loved for so long? Perhaps going back to the beginning and pondering the people and process by which they were “brought in” might give us some clues. A sizeable section of First Corinthians (1:10-4:21) holds the key to understanding the source of much trouble and ultimate apostasy. Let us examine this section of Scripture.

THOUGHT CONTEXT

Two passages help sharpen focus on Inspiration’s point at hand: “I beseech you, brethren…that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you…” (1:10-11). The same now is derived from all that has been discussed up to that point.

We see from several of Paul’s epistles that he had his detractors. At one time or another, some insinuate he is preaching for the money; others, that by his earning his own bread, he is somewhat aloof. In this section, we infer that someone has remarked upon Paul’s non-excellent, non-persuasive “speech” (cf. 2:1-4), perhaps even drawing comparisons between his and that of the “eloquent” (Ac 18:24) Apollos.

So, Paul proceeds to (1) dismiss the notion that Christians are “of” himself, Apollos, or any preacher [1:12-15]; (2) emphasize the fact that resident power of salvation is in “the preaching” and not the preacher [1:21]; (3) show that authority lies in the inspired word not men [2:13]; (4) chastise their preacher exalting carnality [3:1-4]; (5) point out the parity of all of God’s ministers [vv 5-7]; while (6) setting forth the relative difference between the same [v 8]; (7) warn, word to be preachers about the quality of their work [vv 10-20]; (8) admonish us not to...
Preachers come and go, but “the preaching” is God’s permanent “power” to “save them that believe” (1:18,21). The ASV, in verse 21, includes the article “the,” which draws attention to the objective content of the gospel with its singular ity. “The preaching” is from tou’ khruo’gmatoj. The tou’ is the genitive form of the definite article. The khruo’gmatoj is a form of the word for proclamation or herald. The last two letters of the word indicate that it is a substantive carrying the idea of “thing preached,” thus “the preached thing” (see ASV margin).

The thing Paul preached came from God via the Holy Spirit, who enabled Paul to speak said thing “not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth” (2:13). Consequently, because Paul and others had “received the Spirit which is from God” (v 12), he could say, “we have the mind of Christ” (v 15). Here “mind of Christ” is a figure of speech standing for the revealed inspired Word of God: the preaching. We surely need more of the “mind of Christ” and less of the mind of preachers.

### PREACHER ROLES

Paul rebuked Corinthian Christians for being “careful” and “walking after the manner of men” (3:3). He asked, “when one saith I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men?” (4:8). He explained that preachers such as he and Apollos are “ministers” (v 5), “planters; and waterers [v 6],” “workers” (v 8,9) and “builders” (v 10, 12, 14). He affirms that both the preaching and the preacher’s “work” (13,14,15) must be “tried by fire” (v 13). Some of it will not pass muster; it will be “burned” (15). He noted that God ultimately produces “believers,” and that preachers are conduits through which this is accomplished; thus the preacher’s “work” (v 13-15), or product, is a believer, a Christian (v 5).

### THE NEED FOR SOME SERIOUS QUALITY CONTROL

Preachers are, among other things, to produce “believers.” Jesus says they are to “make disciples” (Matt 28:19). That reasonably includes not only their initial conversion of a sinner, but his continued growth and development as a child of God. The “day when the fire comes” (v 13), the “little trials” (1 Pet 1:7; 4:12) of this life—as we must (Matt 18:7)— to “believers” or “disciples,” is a sad fact of life that many

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**Who Said It First?**

“Writers of every age have endeavored to show that pleasure is in us, and not in the objects offered for our amusement. If the soul be happily disposed, everything becomes capable of affording entertainment, and distress will almost always have a name. Every occurrence passes in review, like the figures of a procession; some may be awkward, others ill-dressed, but none but a fool is on that account enraged with the master of ceremonies.” — Oliver Goldsmith, 1728-1774.

“But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be . . .” (1 Tim 6:7) —

**The Holy Spirit** through Paul the apostle, and James the half-brother of Christ, First Century A.D.

Time and again, reading the thoughts of truly erudite and thoughtful people, we are impressed that they are merely echoing what God has already said.—AA

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**Sound Preacher Sought**

Though I do not personally know this church, I know of their concern for sound doctrine. They received Banner of Truth from Ken Butterworth, and are now receiving a bundle of BOT. They recently sent $100 to BOT. I know I appreciate them. I’m sorry I don’t have a phone number. Please read: —WFP

The Weaver church is located in Weaver, Alabama, about 12 miles north of Interstate 20. We are a small group of about 50-60 in attendance. We are in need of a part-time preacher, preferably a preacher who is retired and would like to preach part time. One who is somewhat flexible. We should be able to pay him between $400 - $500 per week, with an understanding that he would have the freedom to take time off when desired, if necessary. Contact: Ralph Mammett, P.O. Box 191, Jacksonville, AL 36265.
I don’t know its origin, but the idea of “chimney corner Scriptures” has been around for a long time. It refers to long and popularly held notions that the Bible says a particular thing that in reality it has never said. Some of them are cute and benign; some of them are at least closely akin to biblical sentiments; but, some of them are out-and-out misrepresentations of what the Bible actually says.

From the meaningful to the absurd, the “chimney corner” seems to be literally full. There are things like: spare the rod and spoil the child; there were three wise men; Eve ate the apple; Jesus was born on December 25; exceeding the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees means we must give more than 10%.

It’s good to periodically to examine the “corner,” and if need be take the broom to it. Even if the sentiment of a CCS is otherwise good, in an overall sense, it’s not really good to get in the practice of spouting conclusions that aren’t actual Bible statements, or aren’t warranted by a passage to which we are appealing.

I have gathered a filed quite a number of chimney corner Scriptures over the years; some of them, I used to use myself. Let’s consider a few chimney corner concepts that are held regarding christians, non-christians, Divine Law and sin. None of these are cute or benign. They have serious implications.

“It’s OK, he’s not a christian.” — Way back when, we lived in Indiana and one summer I worked in a camp sponsored by christians. There were two swimming times for the young people: one for the boys, and one for the girls. Although the pool was clad males and females, I thought it somewhat incongruous that someone would have chosen a man to watch over the girls.

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I voiced my judgment on the matter and it was “explained” to me that there was no problem because 1, the young man was not a christian; and 2, (the above quotation). I naturally had to probe this sort of thinking, which probe discovered the odd thought that the young man’s being a non-christian mitigated any biblical concerns about modesty, lust, and all that. This is closely akin to yet another CCS.

“LET THE NON-CHRISTIAN DO IT, HE’S LOST ANYWAY.” — This one emerged during a discussion about capital punishment in particular. The purveyor was trying to harmonize his view that a christian may not under any circumstance take the life of another, with his belief that the Bible does in fact authorize civil authorities to “bear the sword” (Romans 6:1-5) against “evil-doers” (I Peter 2:13). I made the point that neither the civil authorities nor the sword were inanimate objects, some human being would, with God’s approval, have to be taking the life of another; at which point he said the above. These two are closely linked to another CCS.

“THE NON-CHRISTIAN IS NOT LOST BECAUSE HE HAS SINNED, BUT BECAUSE HE HAS NOT OBEYED THE GOSPEL.” — Each of these three CCS’ has an underlying sentiment: The non-christian is somehow not bound by the law of Christ in the same way a christian is.

The non-christian is lost because he has sinned, and is precisely the transgression of Divine Law. The one and only Divine Law in effect is the law of Christ, which is why Jesus said that to the “Son,” God has given “authority over all flesh” (John 17:1-2). It is precisely because one has violated Divine law that he needs to obey the gospel whereby he is forgiven (cf. Ac 2:38). This CSS is about like saying that the drowned man died, not because his lungs filled with water, but because he didn’t take hold of a life preserver.

Sin is sin regardless of who does it. The ideas that 1, The non-christian may be solicited by others to commit sin because “he’s lost anyway”; or 2, There are things which the non-christian may benignly do, but which would be sinful for the christian to do; or, 3, The non-christian is not under Christ’s Law; or, 4, Moral concepts have different meanings for christians and non-christians (for example: christian killing as opposed to non-christian killing; christian adultery as opposed to non-christian adultery, etc.) — anyway, such ideas are these are absurd, repugnant, and wrong. They aren’t in the Bible, even if people repeat them over and over as though they were —AA

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will be “burned.” What is that to a preacher whose product has been destroyed? He “suffer[s] loss” (1Co 3:15). Conversely, when a disciple comes through the fire stronger than ever, what is that to the preacher or minister “through whom [he] believed” (5)? The preacher shall receive a reward (4). Will the preacher be lost because one of his converts falls away? No. The preacher “himself shall be saved;” but, remember, his ultimate salvation will be down the same road everyone has to travel: “through fire” (15).

With what ought preachers to be concerned in this matter of making believers? Paul said, “I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” (1Co 3:10). It ultimately is the heater, whether the prospective convert or the christian, who is responsible for his sincerity of heart and purpose. But, the preacher still has an awesome responsibility to be sure he has “take[n] heed” in this matter of “building.” The only control the preacher has over this process is to be sure he has completely and accurately taught a person before baptizing him.

Accurate teaching involves both content and motive. We clearly cannot teach somebody “the whole Bible” before baptizing them; yet, there is an objective body of information that must be passed from teacher to learner: “Ye are God’s building...ye are a temple of God.” Trace this “ye” back to chapter one (vv 1,2). God’s “building” or “temple” is the “church.” As preachers “build” the church, that is, to add believers to the church, and edify them, they must be careful as to the quality of those people.

The only way to judge a builder is by his work. If he uses low-quality materials and shoddy workmanship, over which the preacher has some control, well, time will tell. “Each man’s works shall be made manifest” (13). When the “fire” comes, if the building is not made of fireproof materials such as “gold, silver, and costly stones,” there will be “wood, hay and stubble” (12) just won’t stand the heat.

Let us never forget that we are all “living stones” built up into a “spiritual house” (1 Pet 2:5). Whereas the church ideally ought to be built out of tough stuff, it is unfortunate that some pretty flimsy, flammable stuff has found its way into God’s Temple. We need more serious concern over this matter of quality. No, it is not the Preacher’s task to look out into the world and decide who is or isn’t of sufficient quality. We must rather “preach the gospel to every creature.” We have no choice as to whom we preach, only what we preach to them.

Let us be about preaching the gospel, the truth, and the whole counsel of God. If we stick to the job of being “urgent in season, out of season,” in the matter of “reprov[ing], rebuk[ing] and exhort[ing] with all longsuffering and teaching,” the rest will take care of itself. Too many preachers won’t do their job. Pursuing aggrandizement, they:

There were people then, as now, who compared and graded preachers on such matters as who is the smooth-est speaker, or which one has the most flair; or, even which one baptized them (1:12-16; 2:1-2). Such folly. It is the “bod[y] of the good preaching” (2:15-16), not the too oft, foolishness of preachers, that are saved. Preachers such as Paul and Apollos, regardless of their individual skills or differences, are both “ministers through whom ye believed” (3:5). Paul says that preachers are “God’s fellow-workers” (9). Preachers are builders. Note how many times the words “builder,” “building,” “building” are used in this chapter.

As preaching builds, are we building “a temple” (9) or “temple” (16). Paul says “ye [emp.] are God’s building...ye are a temple of God.” Trace this “ye” to chapter one (vv 1,2).

Let us be about preaching the gospel, the truth, and the whole counsel of God.
Having over the years much to say about preaching and preachers (e.g. foregoing article), particularly as relates to preacher shortcomings, I now have the daunting task of bringing forth a man who has the capacity for being, in all respects, a successful gospel preacher.

“The preaching” end of things, is in one sense the least complicated aspect as it relates to preacher training. By the “preaching” (again, as per the foregoing), we mean God’s Word. I don’t mean that the Bible is “easy,” rather that the Bible is really the only "The preaching" end of things, is in one sense the only constant in the entire process. Students’ backgrounds and capabilities vary. Their personalities, egos, social skills, work experience, work ethic, and preparation all vary as well. Some are married, some single; some have supportive wives. Chronic age seems to seldom be determinative of maturity.

Our academic program at NWFSBS is on a par with that of other similar programs. We are equally concerned with our students being well-rounded, normal, responsible people. We do our best to borrow from our experiences and press on matters of personal living and comportment which will have bearing on whether a graduate can “go forth” and “do the work of an evangelist.”

We are determined to produce preachers, not preachers (e.g. foregoing article), particularly as relates to preacher shortcomings, I now have the daunting task of bringing forth a man who has the capacity for being, in all respects, a successful gospel preacher.

We need gospel preachers like Christ, Paul, Peter and others mentioned in God’s word. The reason the church is not growing numerically and spiritually is because there are not enough preachers who will preach the message of Paul, Christ and Peter, and there are too many who are willing to preach a perverted gospel.

At Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies we are striving to train men who will preach the gospel in its purity and simplicity. We try to instill in them the importance of imitating such gospel preachers as Christ, Peter and Paul. The Bible message preached by our graduates is a manifestation of the instruction they receive.

BUT, WE NEED YOUR HELP. We need your voice to promote the school; we need your prayers for blessings upon the school; and, we need your financial help. We have four full time students headed our way in August; two of them are still in need of financial assistance. If you or the congregation of which you are a member can supply monthly support or a one-time contribution, it will be greatly appreciated. The program here requires full time attendance. There is no time for students to work on a job to support themselves.

Jamie Hoskinson and Joshua Lifford are their names. For more information, call us (850) 474-9257, 968-2207.

Continued from page 9 to walk in sins, but good works. Becoming adept at “good works” is as much a matter of time and practice, as is getting good at sin. The main difference being, once “in Christ” we have the incentive of God’s love, Christ’s perfect example and sacrifice, and the promise that the “blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (John 1:7,1), which comes “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light.” This new walk or trek upon which one embarks after being “buried…through baptism” (Romans 6:4) is made sure if we keep in mind not only who we are but where “[He has] raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him [that is] in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). Many marriages have gradually lost their luster. What started out with romance and sparks comes to be dull, lifeless and uninteresting. Everlasting lovers or sweethearts is truly many splendored. Physical attraction cannot sustain love. Kindness and a desire for another’s well-being (I Pet. 5:5-6).

We crave, we need, we desire help. Help us help another. Help us help another by helping an applicant to the NWFSBS Preachers’ School. We need your prayers, your help, your support.

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Continued from Page 5—

Matt. 2:3-15. He called them serpents, and vipers. “Ye serpents, ye gener-
ation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” Matt. 23:33. He called them sons of hell, “...ye make him twofold more wicked than your-
selves.” Matt. 23:15. He also called them fools and blind. “Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?” Matt. 23:17.

We Need Preachers
With The Characteristics Of Paul.

Paul was very patient. “But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses.” II Cor. 6:4.

Paul was unselfish. “I have covet no man’s sil-
er, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.” Acts 20:33,34.

Paul was a fearless worker for the Lord. This was demonstrated in Acts 27:23-25. Because of Paul’s fear-
less attitude the people became even bolder. “And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” Phil. 1:14.

Paul was zealous. “Concerning zeal persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” Phil. 3:6. This was prior to his becoming a Christian. After he became a Christian he was even more zealous for the cause of Christ. Paul said, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” II Tim. 4:7.

Paul was conscientious. Before the high priest, Ananias, he said, “...Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” Acts 23:1. Before Felix, the governor, he said, “And herein did I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” Acts 24:16.

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This was made before those who were making threats. “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:20. Who wonder if preachers of today would have answered the same under those circumstances?

He spoke that which he had seen and heard. This statement was made before those who were making threats. “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:20. Who wonder if preachers of today would have answered the same under those circumstances?

He spoke as the oracles of God. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” This was to be done to glorify God not man. Some preachers of to-
day seek to promote themselves. Self-promoters will not glorify God.

Peter covered the field in his preaching. He had the attitude that God’s word is final. “Then Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” John 6:68. Some preachers of today get their sermon material from de-
nominalistic papers. Years ago, while in a gospel meeting in Kentucky, the local preacher asked me at-
tend the preacher’s luncheon (not the one in Murray) with him. The speaker that day held up “Pulpit Helps” and said, “There is good preaching material in this publication.” That publication is produced by the Southern Baptists.

We Need Preachers Who Will Follow God’s Word.

What a great joy there is in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. The pleasure of teaching people and seeing their faces as they begin to see the truth for the first time in their life is joy un-
peachable. Then to baptize them into Christ and watch them grow as Christians; there is nothing with which to compare it.

There is such a joy in the work of training men to preach the gospel in which I am involved. To observe these men grow from the day they enroll to the day of their graduation is such a satisfaction.

As they go out to begin their new work and begin to write their bulletins and mail them back and as I read them it gives me great joy. When they call to tell about the new converts and restorations with the excitement in their voices brings tears of joy. What is this joy I feel? Because souls are being saved, congregation are growing and I feel that I have that had a small part in the works of these men. Yes, it brings joy unspau-
nable.

It is such a privilege to preach the gospel of Christ. With this privilege brings a great responsibility. We need to prepare ourselves as best we can. At North-
west Florida School of Biblical Studies we are striv-
ing to get the students to do much as we as possible

Some so-called preachers of today are indifferent toward these characteristics. They seemingly have no consciousness of responsibility to preach the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. This type of preacher is both bold and fearless in his preaching for he will preach that which is popular regardless of how foreign it may be to the truth. Such preachers are selfish for they are only concerned of gaining material things. They have no zeal but are in need of someone to tell them what to do.

We Need Preachers With The Attitude Peter Had Towards God’s Word.

Peter covered the field in his preaching. He taught first principles. His sermon on Pente-
cost covered the things necessary for becoming a Christian. Acts 2:37-41. When he taught Cornelius and his house, he taught them what they must do to be saved. Acts 10-11. Peter taught that there is no salva-
tion outside of Christ. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven

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We need preachers who will hold up all the good as Jesus did. Jesus condemned the false doctrines taught in His day. Mk. 7:6-9. Jesus called the religious pret-
tenders what they were: hypocrites. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees hypocrites.” —Page 12

Preachers Must Rightly Divide the Word. “...rightly dividing the word of truth,” II Tim. 2:15. There are those who merely recite the words in Cor. 4:2. Some wrest the scripture. “...in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest...” II Pet. 3:16. There are those who set it aside. “For laying aside the commandment of God ye hold the tradition of men.” Mk. 7:8. Instead of using the word and rightly dividing it, some use denomination material. Many today follow what men say, rather than the Bible.

Preachers must not entangle themselves with the affairs of this life. “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please God in all things.” II Tim. 2:4. They must not entangle themselves with denominationalism and secret orders. II Cor. 6:16-18; 6:14.

We Need Preachers Like Christ.

They must have the conviction of Jesus. Jesus was narrow-minded. He taught that there is only one way..., “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” In 14:6. He taught that one must enter the “strait gate” or “wide gate.” Matt. 7:13, 14. Those that choose the wide gate travel both at the same time. We cannot serve but one master at a time.” No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye can-
not serve God and mammon.” Matt. 6:24.

We need preachers who will hold up all the good as Jesus did. Jesus condemned the false doctrines taught in His day. Mk. 7:6-9. Jesus called the religious pre-
tenders what they were: hypocrites. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees hypocrites.”

Kenneth Burleson
Director, Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies
Whether we consider the scriptures as a revelation — edited by Alexander Campbell Harbinger, The Millennial were printed in the April, 1837 edition of The following excerpts from Thomas Scott’ s “On Reading The Bible” the way of eternal salvation, and shall we refuse to hear his gracious words? Does he give us a book to guide us to it? Does he make known to us mortals those glories which angels adore with unceasing rapture, and shall we turn away? Does he then speak from heaven to us sinners about or that we can discover the way of peace and happiness without instruction. Nothing, therefore, can be more expressive of... God, than the general neglect of the Bible, which prevails among those who profess to believe it to be his word? or that we neither value his favor nor fear his frown; timid, vacillating opinions or options about an endeavor having offered them only some... “...life is a moral and spiritual journey...we understand... By the way, isn’t it well. Later, as young people and then as adults, through various stages of life, they must make countless choices that call the virtues into play. Bennett even understands what many christians have assessments about matters of indifference or moral discipline, compassion, responsibility, friendship, work, standards of right and wrong, noble and base, just and unjust” (pp. 11-12). Remember these things the next time you fail to get your children to Bible school and worship. Remember them the next time you mouth, “They (the church) are running off our young people.” Unhappy and dysfunctional homes are so unnecessary. We have a Divine pattern deviation from which is a guarantee for misery. God must look upon the plight of modern... willye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint” (Isaiah 1:5-6). The Moral Compass of Virtues The Book of Virtues, and The Moral Compass to promote the teaching of morals and virtues within the home. Certainly his works do not compare to the Bible, but he makes some very good points, precisely because he chooses what the Bible already says. In his first book, he identifies ten character traits: “self-discipline, compassion, responsibility, friendship, work, courage, perseverance, honesty, loyalty, and faith.” On page 11 of his second book, he says, Children learn most of their first character lessons in the home...Those early lessons stay with children as they make their way into the world, shaping the way they see life, and to a large degree determining whether they live it well. Later, as young people and then as adults, through various stages of life, they must make countless choices that call the virtues into play. “...life is a moral and spiritual journey...we understand... By the way, isn’t it well. Later, as young people and then as adults, through various stages of life, they must make countless choices that call the virtues into play. Bennett even understands what many christians have assessments about matters of indifference or moral discipline, compassion, responsibility, friendship, work, standards of right and wrong, noble and base, just and unjust” (pp. 11-12). Remember these things the next time you fail to get your children to Bible school and worship. Remember them the next time you mouth, “They (the church) are running off our young people.” Unhappy and dysfunctional homes are so unnecessary. We have a Divine pattern deviation from which is a guarantee for misery. God must look upon the plight of modern homes and ask, Why?”—“Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint” (Isaiah 1:5-6). “On Reading The Bible” The following excerpts from Thomas Scott’s Essays were printed in the April, 1837 edition of The Millennial Harbinger, edited by Alexander Campbell— Whether we consider the scriptures as a revelation which the Lord hath made to us of himself, that we may know, worship, and glorify him; or of his law and government we are to obey him, in order to establish our true condition as sinners; or of his mercy and salvation, that we may find acceptance with him; or of the privileges of his children, in this life and that which is to come: in every view of the subject, the duty of search- ing them must be manifest. Nor can we neglect it, without avowing that we despise the knowledge of God and heavenly things; that we do not desire to serve our Cre- conduct in the hope that in the course of their wanderings, they will stumble onto some more definite personal preferences which will become their "values." We must give our children better equipment than that. We must raise them as moral and spiritual beings by offering them unequivocal, reliable standards of right and wrong, noble and base, just and unjust” (pp. 11-12). Parents, please listen to Mr. Bennett, Moral education must involve following rules of good behavior. It must involve developing good habits, which come only through repeated practice. And character training must provide example by placing children in the compulsory adults who show an allegiance to good character, who demonstrate the clear difference between right and wrong in their own every day habits. (ibid.) Remember these things the next time you fail to get your children to Bible school and worship. Remember them the next time you mouth, “They (the church) are running off our young people.” Unhappy and dysfunctional homes are so unnecessary. We have a Divine pattern deviation from which is a guarantee for misery. God must look upon the plight of modern homes and ask, Why?”—“Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint” (Isaiah 1:5-6). “On Reading The Bible” The following excerpts from Thomas Scott’s Essays were printed in the April, 1837 edition of The Millennial Harbinger, edited by Alexander Campbell— Whether we consider the scriptures as a revelation which the Lord hath made to us of himself, that we may know, worship, and glorify him; or of his law and government we are to obey him, in order to establish our true condition as sinners; or of his mercy and salvation, that we may find acceptance with him; or of the privileges of his children, in this life and that which is to come: in every view of the subject, the duty of search- ing them must be manifest. Nor can we neglect it, without avowing that we despise the knowledge of God and heavenly things; that we do not desire to serve our Cre-
The Home and Christian Living
Alan Adams

Simply put, Jesus came to restore that which man “messed up” and lost from “the beginning.” Two of the things originally ordained and established by God were: The Home and a Divinely mandated kind of Life.

The pristine and perfect Home involved: a union created by God (Matthew 19:6); a pledge of loyalty (Genesis 2:24); an intimate joining (24), and a pro­geny (Genesis 1:28). The kind of Life intended by the Creator for His creature, Man, involved: privilege (2:9-16); obligation (15), and restriction (17). Divine intent was that the Home would sustain and support the Life, and the Life the Home. So it is with the Home and the Christian life today.

Despite the tampering with and the attacks on it, the Home, as God would have it, is still a unique, identifiable entity. It is one man, one woman, and children; and even others who of necessity are subsumed within that household. The Life is no less identifiable. It is a “way,” a “conversation,” a “vocation,” et al.

It is sad that so many, even Christians, have gotten on a merry-go-round from which they can’t seem to dismount. Homes are unhappy and broken because of the way the members thereof are living; and the members of the household are not, by the Home, being instructed, disciplined, and encouraged in the way they should live.

Many homes are unhappy because they do not follow God’s plan which stipulates the husband/father as the “provider” (1 Timothy 5:8), the wife/mother as the “worker [keepers, KJV]... at home” (Titus 2:5), and children as just that: potential adults who need “instruction” and “law” (Proverbs 1:8), the “rod” and “love” (Proverbs 13:24), and who owe their parents “obedience” (Ephesians 6:1).

Mrs. Clinton once spoke of the “silent crisis” of our country: better day care. She and others want the federal government to provide what God says parents are to do “at home” (Titus 2). It is simply and palpably false. This kind of nonsense allows false teachers a free reign and license to go by their own imperious dictation and then saying it is wrong would be another matter. Yet, here is an interesting phenomenon: Some brethren believe that the principle of congregational autonomy prohibits a member of one congregation judging as wrong, for any reason, the activities of another. This is simply and palpably false. This kind of nonsense allows false teachers a free reign and license to go by their own imperious dictation and then saying it is wrong would be another matter. Yet, here is an interesting phenomenon: Some brethren believe that the principle of congregational autonomy prohibits a member of one congregation judging as wrong, for any reason, the activities of another. 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The One Way

We’ve heard people express the idea that “I will go to Heaven my way and you may go your way. After all, we’re headed for the same place.” This might seem reasonable from the standpoint of human reasoning, but God’s truth is not always reasonable. Truth is determined by what God’s word says, not by what we want it to say. Whether there are many ways to Heaven can be determined only by God’s word. If the Bible teaches that you may go to Heaven one way, and I may go to Heaven another, or different way, then it is the truth that there are different ways to Heaven. But on the other hand, if the Bible teaches that there is only one way to Heaven, then it is not true that there are many, or different ways to Heaven. Let us then consider a subject of great importance: THE ONE WAY.

Consider first what the Bible says with reference to the way to Heaven. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me” (John 14:6). Notice that Jesus said, “the way,” “the truth,” and “the life.” That means one way, not many ways. Jesus also said, “I am the truth and the life.” That means there is one way of truth and one source of life: Jesus Christ. If “the truth” and “the life” mean only one, then “the way” would have to mean one also. If we accept the words of Christ, we must agree that there is “one” way, not many ways.

The Hebrews’ writer shows that there is “one way” and not “many ways” (9:15). The passage says that Christ is the mediator of “the New Testament (covenant).” It does not say that there are different ways to different people; if there were, then one “way” would have to mean one also. If we accept the words of Christ, we must agree that there is “one” way, not many ways.

The one New Testament, of which Christ is the mediator, emphasizes the oneness which characterizes the whole Christian system. Paul says, “There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, which is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:4-6). We will agree that the word “one” as it is used seven times in this passage does not mean many. Surely there is agreement that there is one Lord, and not many; there is one God, not many. If one Lord means one Lord, and one God means one God, then “one body” must mean one body.

If we accept Paul’s statement that there is “one body,” we must conclude that there is one way, not many ways. In this same Book of Ephesians, Paul explains to us what the “body” is. In chapter one, speaking of Christ, he says, “[that God] hath put all things under his [Christ’s] feet and gave him to head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (v.22, 23). Since there is “one body” and the body is the church, we cannot escape the conclusion that there is “one church.” But one may raise the question as to how this proves there is only one way to Heaven?

We can see people often fail to see the relationship between the church and the way to Heaven. For so long people have been told that the church is not essential to one’s salvation. They have not, however, been taught this from the Bible. From the New Testament we see that the church is the body. They are one and the same. Note then, what Paul further says about the “one body,” the church: “the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body, the church. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (v.22, 23). Since Christ is the savior of the body, the church, we see why it is necessary to be in the body, the church, in order to be saved. Remember: Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). He is the way because He will save his body, the church. The Bible does not tell us there are different ways to Heaven.

Having seen that the one way is through Christ and his body, the church, we are directed to ask: “Is there only one way to enter the one body?” Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, had a conversation with Christ concerning the kingdom of God. The record reveals some great facts. Nicodemus told Jesus that he knew He was from God, because no man could do the miracles that He did except God; He was with him. In reply to Nicodemus the Lord said, “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus misunderstood thinking Jesus was speaking of a physical birth, to which Jesus replied, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:3-5).

It is clear that Christ is discussing “how people enter the kingdom.” It is just as clear that it is necessary to be “born again.” This means the same as being “born of water and of the Spirit.” Christ was not talking about two different births. But someone asks, “What is meant by the kingdom of God?” Christ teaches that “the kingdom of God,” as pertains to people who obey the gospel, is the same thing as the church. Christ said, “I will build my church...and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom” (Matt. 16:18-19). In response to those who say the kingdom has not yet come, we call attention to Mark 9:1. Jesus said, “there be some that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.” The kingdom, or church, would come during the life of some of those present. The church did come as Jesus said it would. From Acts 2:47, we learn that the Lord added those who were being saved to the church.

Since Christ said it was necessary to be born of “water and of the Spirit” to enter the kingdom of God, it is important that we understand what is meant by that expression. We have seen that the kingdom, as here used, is the same as the church. That being the case, understanding what is involved in entering the church, we can know what is involved in entering the kingdom. In Acts 2:38, we are given the answer to those who asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said, “repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Verse 41 says, “they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Verse 47 says the Lord added to the church those that were being saved.

The One Way to Heaven is through Christ. That is the only way. To go through Christ one must be in Christ. Paul tells us how we can get “into Christ.” “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). Paul says, “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him in baptism into death...” (Rom. 6:3-4).

In the New Testament conversions we see that people heard God’s word and believed it. This led them to repentance, and confession of faith in Christ, and to baptism at which point they came into Christ. People are converted the very same way today, and in no other way.

Although God’s word clearly teaches about The One Way, many religious people have either never come to recognize this, or they are not willing to submit to God’s plan. It is not only the religious people around us that need to understand this and submit to it; more and more of our own brethren are coming to accept the error that there is more than one way to Heaven. If people have a new salvation in Christ other than the one the church that Christ purchased with his blood (Acts 20:28), they believe there is more than one way to Heaven. Many brethren are showing an increased affinity for and fellowship with man-made religions; this is evidence of a belief in more than one way to Heaven.

Pang Dz Bu Shr Yi Kou Chr De

The title is one of my favorite Chinese idioms as nearly as you can transliterate it in English. It means “A fat guy doesn’t get that way in one bite.” The little idiom is a vivid way of saying that some states of affairs do not happen overnight, rather gradually.

HOW DO PEOPLE GET THE WAY THEY ARE? The apostle Paul said the saints at Ephesus had once been “by nature children of wrath, even as the rest” (Ephesians 2:3). Many people see “by nature,” and assume that reference is to one’s congenital makeup, that people are just born that way. Actually, the word “nature” comes from the Greek physis, which can among other things mean “Mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature” (Thayer, p. 660). A good look at Ephesians 2:1-3 will bear out the fact that the “nature” of these folks had been developed gradually and by practice. Note the personally active concepts here: “your trespasses and sins,” “walked,” “disobedience,” “lived,” “doing.” They weren’t born that way; they got that way. A journey of a thousand miles starts with one step. Those people had been on a long journey.

The beautiful flipside is in verses 4-5, 8-10. God’s grace, our faith makes a way for us no longer—Page 13