

# Seek The Old Paths

*"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16)*

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## The Work Of A Preacher

*James Boyd*

*"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God... For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:18,21).*

*"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15,16).*

*"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be*

*sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our reports? So then faith cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:13-17).*

### PROCLAIMER

All of us have a duty to spread the gospel to everyone, but it is the preacher who is the public proclaimer of the Word. The work of a preacher is one that many of us who preach are hesitant to publicly discuss because we are so closely and personally connected with it. Some may assume you are promoting yourself and impugn your motives when you preach such a lesson. Some might ac-

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**The work of a preacher is a Bible subject which many do not know and understand, even some who preach.**

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cuse you of drawing attention to yourself, elevating yourself, defending yourself, and other such things. Yet, the work of a preacher is a Bible subject which many do not know and understand, even some who preach.

There are many good brethren who sincerely appreciate gospel preachers, but not everyone does in the world, or even in the church. None can realize the nature and seriousness of such a work more than those who have given their lives to the work. Being a preacher is not like other occupations where you punch a time clock, go to work, come home from work, time on, time off, office hours, daily schedules, etc. This is said only to emphasize the difference in preaching from other occupations. Preaching is a way of life that dominates life, not only for the preacher but also his family if such he has. The work is constantly with you in everything you do or say, where you go, what you have. You are always a preacher, not just when in the pulpit. It is a work that, by its nature, cannot be regulated, compared or described like other honorable work. Many have not appreciated this fact as they ought.

### HIS AUTHORITY

Let us consider what the preacher is NOT. He does not have authority by virtue of preaching to "rule the church." He is to preach with authority (Titus 2:15), but he does not make the decisions for the congregation nor should he be expected to do so. Elderships must assume this task. He, like

other members, labors under the oversight of the eldership. While his advice and counsel may often be sought because of his study, knowledge and experience, he is not the authority over the church. He is not a substitute or displacement of the eldership, nor should anyone expect him to discharge the duties of the eldership.

### NO SUBSTITUTE

Neither is he a substitute for a working membership. Some evidently think so because they talk about the preacher "taking up the work." Often this is what actually happens. While others sit by and let him "take up the work." He has been "hired to work for us" and we can sit back. This is a mistaken concept of a preacher. He is not "hired help." He is a brother in Christ serving in a specific and unique capacity. When he visits it is not the church visiting. He is not an errand boy for the congregation. It is not even his task as a preacher to organize, supervise and promote all the programs and plans of work for the church. He is not the congregation's public relations man. Some churches look to the preacher to be everything from the janitor to the chairman of the building committee; from selecting who is to serve at the Lord's table to ordering literature. This is not his work nor should it be imposed on him. Some must think because they have a preacher they do not have anything to do. Little wonder many preachers suffer "burn out."

(See page 11, *WORK OF PREACHER*)

# Holding Up The Preacher's Hands

Walter W. Pigg, Jr.

When Amalek fought with Israel in Rephidim, Moses told Joshua to choose men to fight with Amalek. Moses said he would stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand. While Joshua carried out his orders and fought with Amalek, Moses, Aaron, and Hur went to the top of the hill. During the battle, when Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed, but when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed. *"But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun"* (Exodus 17:12). Moses' hands being held up resulted in victory. *"And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword"* (Exodus 17:13).

The expression to "hold up one's hands" has come to mean support, encouragement, and cooperation with one in a particular endeavor. It is in this sense that we set forth the following relative to **Holding Up The Preacher's Hands**.

There is no question but that there is no more important work than that of a gospel preacher, as he proclaims the *"unsearchable riches of Christ"* (Eph. 3:8), the gospel, which is *"God's power unto salvation"* (Rom. 1:16). Paul shows the essentiality of preaching when he

asks: *"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard; and how shall they hear without a preacher"* (Rom. 10:14). Paul quotes Isaiah to emphasize the preacher's noble work, *"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things"* (Rom. 10:15).

If the faithful and true gospel preacher is to accomplish the greatest good through his divine calling, *his hands must be held up*, yea, even "steadied" until the "going down of the sun" when his work is ended. When the preacher's hands are not held up, his work is hindered; individual Christians are affected, and congregations fail to serve their God-given purpose of edifying the members and seeking the lost. The harm that is done cannot be measured in terms of material things, since even one soul is worth more than all the world (Matt. 16:26).

Before we consider some ways whereby the preacher's hands can be held up, we wish to emphasize the fact that not every preacher's hands should be held up, and some hands cannot be held up because it involves the preacher's willingness. We certainly do not wish to minimize the preacher's responsibility in this respect.

Only preachers who are so dedicated that they are *"set for the defense*

of the gospel" (Phil. 1:17), and willing to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) are worthy of having their hands held up by way of support and encouragement. Those who "transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ" (II John 9) do not lead people to God and the salvation which is "in Christ." "Many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1) and none of these should have his hands held up.

Some preachers hands cannot be held up because their heart is not in preaching the word. Recently, I heard of a preacher of several years, and of considerable ability, leaving the pulpit to cut wood for a living. Some time ago, another preacher of several years came by my office — not to discuss spiritual things, but to sell insurance. He had left the pulpit for secular work. Of course, some preachers have given up their work due to things beyond their control, while others are not characterized by Paul's devotion to the gospel as expressed in I Corinthians 9:16: "For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."

## HOW THE PREACHER'S HANDS MAY BE HELD UP

### 1. RESPECT HIM FOR HIS WORK.

No preacher should be exalted as is done by wearing religious titles such as "Reverend," "Most Reverend," "Father," etc. Neither should a preacher manifest an ostentatious dispo-

sition of proudness and haughtiness. But the faithful preacher of the gospel should be esteemed for his work. There is no one, regardless of his wealth, education, notoriety, or political influence that is doing a more important work than that of the preacher. Yet gospel preachers are sometimes looked down upon by the haughty and proud with evident disrespect. Most preachers of many years can testify to this.

### 2. STAND BY HIM IN THE PROCLAMATION OF THE TRUTH.

When the whole truth is preached without fear or favor, there will be some opposition. It is most encouraging to a preacher to know that others love the truth and are willing to uphold and defend it, and stand by the proclaimer of it. What an opportunity Godly elders have to hold up the hands of the preacher by letting the congregation know, quite often, that they stand by the preacher when he preaches the truth. Disgruntled, cantankerous, and compromising members should never be allowed to interfere with the preacher's work by allowing them to have their way simply because brethren do not have the fortitude to stand up to such people.

### 3. GIVE HIM EVERY POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO PREACH THE WORD.

The primary work of a preacher is to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). When there is such a great need for the truth (sound doctrine) to be preached, it is discour-

aging to the faithful preacher to be kept “at home” when he has opportunities to preach in other places as well. A soul won or strengthened in the faith at some other place is also doing the Lord’s work. We shouldn’t be selfish with the truth!

#### **4. EXTEND TO HIM HOSPITALITY.**

It is not unusual for a preacher not to be invited into the homes of the members. Preachers may be expected to be hospitable by those who are inhospitable. A few years ago I attended a personal work study conducted by a visiting preacher at a congregation several miles from where I lived. The visiting preacher had his eight year old son with him. As I talked with the preacher (nearly all the members had gone home) his son asked: “Daddy, where are we going to stay tonight?” His dad answered, “We may sleep in the station wagon.” They were invited to our house where my wife and I enjoyed their company greatly. When a congregation’s hospitality stops on the church grounds, the preacher’s hands are not being held up!

#### **5. SUPPORT HIM IN A REASONABLE WAY FINANCIALLY.**

There is too much truth too often in the statement that “A preacher only has to worry about being humble, the brethren will keep him poor.” Though the faithful preacher cannot put his trust in “*treasures upon earth*” (as members often do), he is entitled to “*live of the gospel*” (I Cor. 9:14). Not only do preachers have living expenses like

everyone else, it is often the case that their expenses are greater than the average member. Preachers often live with a feeling of insecurity since they do not have a house of their own, and may have to move without much advance notice. Few preachers have the “side benefits” such as health insurance, retirement, overtime pay, or long paid vacations that many workers have today.

#### **6. CONSIDER HIM A WORKER “WITH YOU” AND NOT “FOR YOU.”**

The preacher and the congregation should be “laborers together” as they go about doing the Lord’s will. No preacher is encouraged when he is looked upon simply as a “hired hand” to do the congregation’s work. In some cases he may have several “bosses” to whom they feel he should be accountable. No one preacher can do the work a congregation has to do, and even if he could, the members would lose their reward for having failed to serve.

#### **7. DON’T BURDEN HIM WITH TRIVIAL MATTERS.**

Many a preacher has been hindered in his work because he has been saddled with all sorts of jobs which should be done by the members who often do little more than attend church services. The preacher should not be asked to “*leave the word of God, and serve tables*” (Acts 6:2) but he is often made a “handy man” to take care of the upkeep of the church building and grounds, along with no telling what else. Visiting the sick is not a “trivial matter,” and the preacher should certainly engage in this as oppor-

tunity permits, but he is not the "hired visitor" to do the visiting that others should do.

## CONCLUSION

The preacher's work is not easy and few are they who are willing to give themselves to that work. But his work could be made more enjoyable, and effective, by his hands being held up by

the members. Preachers often become discouraged in their work, some to such an extent they cannot bear it, when it ought not to be so. Hard times have fallen upon the church in recent years, and the outcome of the next few years will be determined largely by the extent to which the hands of faithful, loyal and true preachers of the gospel are held up. Will you help?

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# The Militancy Of Error And Our Lethargy

*Charles A. Pledge*

Error of every description bombards us daily from all directions. Religious and non-religious alike, error from all sources is of such magnitude that it astounds one who reflects upon it. But even more astounding than the great bulk of error is the apathetic attitude Christians generally seem to have toward it.

It was no accident that terms like "army," "soldiers," "sword," and other warfarin figures are used in the New Testament to describe certain aspects of the Christian's responsibilities. Life is a warfare, and the Christian life is the greatest of all warfare.

Religious error uses every possible medium to propagate itself every day. The printed page is distributed by the

millions of tons; radio and television mediums are utilized to the fullest; personal contacts are made and new ways to advance itself is being researched by devotees of error. There is a militancy connected with error; an aggressiveness that says we will advance.

What are Christians doing? Are we confronting the problem? Or, are we just waiting for it to go away? Do we really care? Christians can do really great things for those projects we particularly like. Or, if sensual pleasure is derived, there is no end to what we will do. Ball games and other recreational pastimes can empty our pocketbooks and bankrupt our energies and we pursue them further. Christians can "tear our shirts" for a favorite political figure

and go all out for something that appeals to our vested interests. But when it comes to confronting error we quickly lose our fervor.

Our Lord didn't go around "looking" for something to criticize, but when error confronted him, there was no relenting on his part. The apostles were from the same mold and the early Christians were cut from the same pattern. The book of Acts presents the first century Christians as a militant group of soldiers, earnestly contending for the faith. They did not back away from the battle, but pressed forward with the banner of truth.

We twentieth century Christians have become possessed with the idea that our religion must be "acceptable" to our neighbors. We have wanted so desperately that all men should speak well of us that many have compromised the truth in order to be accepted. But having all men speak well of him was not the concern of our Saviour! In fact, he warned the disciples, saying, "*Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets*" (Luke 6:26). Yet, in spite of this and other warnings, we modern Christians become intoxicated with praise and seem willing to go to any length to receive it.

Men-pleasers (those who desire to please men more than they desire to please God) need to remember one cardinal rule: It is impossible to please God when one's mind is set on pleasing men. Paul stated it clearly in Galatians 1:10: "*For do I now persuade men, or God? of do I seek to please men? for if*

*I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*" If one seeks honor from men rather than God, it becomes impossible to believe God (John 5:44.)

Jesus, and his apostles, were concerned that men everywhere accept the truth. Truth, for truth's sake! They never apologized for the strictness of truth! If Jesus and his apostles taught truth plainly, and without apology, should not we do the same thing? Our concern should be the same as our Lord's: that men accept the truth, for the sake of the truth.

When people begin tampering with the truth there is no stopping place. The disposition to soften truth because some might not like it in its plainness is the disposition that would do away with truth altogether. The first compromise is always the fatal compromise.

Ours is an age of unparalleled opportunities to spread the truth. Every opposition against it is but an opportunity to be used if we will. We have opportunities to speak out in ways never before afforded Christians. It is only our phobia of controversy and an inordinate desire to be accepted by our society that prevents us from speaking the truth plainly and aggressively. We do not even pretend to be soldiers anymore! We have traded our armor for a pin stripe suit and have sold our sword for a pat on the back. Instead of evangelizing the world, we are trying to win it through public relations. We spend more time trying to avoid offending someone with the truth than we actually spend in spreading the gospel.

Perhaps it is no wonder, then, that

atheism and materialism is making greater advances in our generation in America than it has anywhere at any time this side of the cross. Many of our preachers are nothing more than religious agnostics with no conviction and less spiritual power.

Love and kindness are necessary in teaching the truth: but so is integrity! And integrity demands that we present the truth as it was presented by our Lord with no additions and no subtractions. But error has a way of challenging truth so as to leave the teacher of truth in a bad light. One of the oldest tricks of Satan is to attack the messenger because when the message is from God Satan knows he can't defeat it. According to error, there is no love if truth is presented in a clear, straightforward manner. According to error, there is no kindness in rebuke. If we listen to error, we will never make anyone understand they are lost without the Lord and his truth. The bottom line of error is that if people don't like it, it can't be right; if it is unpleasant, don't do it.

The devil knows when he has the advantage. Denominationalism is again on the march and brethren seek to compromise with it in order to avoid conflict. Secular interests are pressed in conflict with the Christian's faith and we shrug our shoulders and feel sorry for ourselves.

If you think we have overstated the case, pick up your morning paper and begin enumerating the errors that are hostile to Christianity which appear daily in such mediums. Each Christian

needs to get involved on a local level. After all, each of us are priests unto God. When we rise as one man and declare to error of all kind: "You shall not pass without a battle," we will be drawing close to a victory of faith.

Wherever you are tomorrow, take notice of what is happening around you that is in conflict with the teaching of Jesus. Reflect upon that which is destructive to the ethics and morals of Christianity and ask yourself the question: "Am I going to remain silent?" Remember, there is no middle ground (Matthew 12:30).

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## PREACH THE WORD...

### 2 Tim. 4:2

*Thomas F. Eaves, Sr.*

In the past ten to fifteen years there has been a definite change in some Gospel preachers and preaching. Instead of proclaiming the Gospel which is God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), preachers are preaching "another gospel" which allows man to live as he pleases. According to these modern-day hirelings it is all right to drink socially (the Bible condemns it, Prov. 23:29-35; Habakkuk 2:15; Gal. 5:21; I Peter 4:3), wear clothing in public which appeals to the lust of the flesh (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:19; Matt. 5:27-28), divorce for any cause and remarry (Matt. 19:9), use



mechanical instruments of music in worship (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), and teach that there are Christians in all denominations, when they teach contradictory ways of being saved from sin, (saved are in the one body the church, Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18; Acts 2:4,7 which was built by Christ, Matt. 16:18). In spite of God's word which teaches to the contrary, these modern preachers continue to spread their message which is welcomed with open minds by those seeking to justify their worldly life-styles.

These irenic and anemic proclaimers of "*another gospel*" are dividing the church of the Lord by siphoning off the spiritually immature and those looking for a message which agrees with their modern life-styles. From within they are destroying the Lord's body for which he died (Acts 20:28). Weak, worldly congregations result from weak pulpits. When God's word is proclaimed the spiritually weak grow spiritually (II Peter 3:18), and the worldly are convicted of sin and repent. To accomplish God's purpose preaching must be Biblical – proclaiming God's word!

Who is responsible for this present tragedy? (1) The preacher who does not heed the admonition of the Bible to, "*preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching*" (II Tim. 4:2), and "*woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel*" (I Cor. 9:10). God's men will preach the word of God, the whole counsel of God! (2) Elders are responsible for the current situation in many congregations because they have not demanded that the preacher

feed the flock from the word of God even as they feed the flock in their work of shepherding (I Peter 5:1-4). (3) Also, those who provide training for men who desire to preach. The order of the day seems to be that which is popular instead of instilling within the preacher an ever abiding respect for God's word.

Brethren the situation can be reversed simply by returning to God's word. The hope of the world and the church is in the preaching of God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

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### DON'T BE NEGATIVE

Don't be negative said some to me  
But they were as negative as could be.  
Don't be negative was their constant  
cry,

But from the cross I heard Jesus sigh:  
"Twas not sweet positive truth I taught  
That caused my painful death to be  
wrought.

It was exposure of error, lust and greed,  
That prompted my enemies to plot the  
deed."

So, regardless of the cry of many  
I must be free from the blood of any,  
And when the judgment opens wide  
We can stand with the prophets side by  
side.

Preach it, brother, preach it, never com-  
promise:

God must be glorified, it cannot be  
otherwise.

# NOBLE NEGATIVES: THE POWER OF POSITIVE PREACHING

*Harold Blevins*

To be positively positive about anything is to be **negative**. Therefore this writer is positively positive that he is a negative preacher.

## I AM POSITIVELY AGAINST SIN

Sin is of Satan (John 8:44). War against the Devil has raged from the very beginning (Gen. 3:15). It would bruise the *heel* of the Holy One, but crust the *head* of the Unholy One (I John 3:8). Emmanuel abhors evil, but loves good (Heb. 1:9; Rom. 12:9).

## I AM POSITIVELY AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS

Deity despises all false teachers (prophets). Christ taught that false spirits (teachers) must be tried (I John 4:1) — among the people many false prophets will bring in damnable heresies which must not be followed (II Peter 2:1,2) — false Christ's who deceive must not be believed (Matt. 24:24-26) — false prophets in sheep's clothing must be known by their fruits and thereby hewed down on the polemic platform (Matt. 7:13-19; I Thess. 5:21).

We can **know** the truth (John 8:32; I John 2:3); therefore, we can teach the truth. The savior is supportive of scriptural teachers only (I Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim.

2:2; Heb. 5:14; II Tim. 4:2; et al.).

## I AM POSITIVELY AGAINST ALL THAT GOD HATES

The Almighty has much malice toward evil. David declared for Deity: "*I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside... I will not know a wicked person...*" (Psalm 101:3-5). Jehovah will judge the pernicious pride of those who divide the church (Prov. 6:16-19; I Cor. 1:10; James 4:6). Saints may **not** substitute the wrong kind of love for obedience. Neither should they supplant Gospel proclamations with powerless preaching (II Tim. 4:1-9). Irresponsible and irregular attendance, and disagreeable attitudes of brethren are evils that God despises (Heb. 10:25; Matt. 5:3-12).

God hates every false way (teacher) (Psalm 119:104); He loves the righteous ways of good (teachers) (Psalm 119:172). The Rugged Redeemer relishes rightly dividing his word. Love good and eschew evil (Amos 5:15); and never put the one for the other (Isa. 5:20).

## I AM POSITIVELY AGAINST SUBSTITUTING FOR THE FIVE PARTS OF WORSHIP

One is not to displace anything that

God has commanded as the five parts of worship. To subordinate four parts of worship and elevate one: such as, the Lord's Supper is that which the Creator censures. Spectators rather than participants are loathed by the Lord. We must listen with the right attitudes to the preaching (Luke 8:18; Rev. 2 & 3); sing and pray with the Bible heart (I Cor. 14:15); as well as give cheerfully as prospered (II Cor. 8 & 9).

### CONCLUSION

Since the writer is positively positive that doing anything that Christ condemns is sin, then he does not need to make up his mind, he already has. This makes the writer a negative preacher; therefore, much indignation will follow. Yet God has told one to hold fast to the truth (Prov. 23:23; I Thess. 5:21). May God grant us steadfastness to strive to remain secure in the scriptures (I Cor. 15:58).

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*(Continued from page 1)*

### WORK OF PREACHER

#### COUNSELLOR

Preachers are often called to solve problems in people's lives. This is sometimes called counselling. He is not a professional counsellor. He is asked to help because of his knowledge of the Word and he is usually glad to be of

whatever help he can be. It is a very frustrating role he is called upon to play, however. Too often his advice is sought but ignored, then he becomes the target of criticism when things do not work out happily. It is not uncommon that his assistance is solicited but it only brings him grief, false accusations, disappointments and criticism because many people do not want counselling or advice. They want somebody to side with them in every dispute and somebody to take their side and agree with them. When the preacher does not do this he is considered incompetent. As helpful as he might be along these lines, such is not his primary function.

#### PREACH

A preacher is to preach the Word. He is to bring glad tidings of salvation. This is his number one work. All else revolves around this. Every opportunity he has or can make he will preach and teach. Congregations should encourage him to do this and cooperate with him as he arranges to preach.

He is obligated before God to speak sound doctrine (Titus 2:1,8,15). He must preach the whole counsel of God, positively and negatively (Acts 20:27). He is to keep that which is committed to his trust (I Tim. 6:20). He is to teach that others may also teach (II Tim. 1:13). II Tim. 4:1-5, *"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke,*

*exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."*

### **HIS LIFE**

The preacher must guard his personal life and habits, financial affairs and morals. He cannot be an effective preacher and live against what he preaches.

He must maintain a steady study of the Word he is to preach. When he does the study and research that is required, there must be prayer and meditation. It takes time; far more time than many realize. It takes some more time than others. Brethren should be patient and cooperative with him in this. Study and preach; preach and study. This is the heart of the task. The preacher's mind is never released from it nor should it be. Anything else he does, regardless of how demanding, must not be allowed to interfere with this. He cannot rely upon his oratorical ability, personality, humor, secular wisdom and such like. He must know the Word, preach the Word, and live the Word. This is a consuming work mentally, emotionally, spiritually and very physically demanding.

### **TRUTH OFFENDS**

Unhappily, he often finds the truth he preaches is offensive to some who

hear him. This was true of Christ and His apostles. While this is to be expected, it is an unpleasant and disappointing experience. Yet, he cannot swerve from his commitment to the truth in order to accommodate any hearer. Often the same sermon that offends one will convict another. At no time does he dare apologize for the truth even though it may cost him his pulpit at a given place. He has to live before God and give answers to Him whether anybody approves of what he teaches or not. The aim of every faithful gospel preacher is to please God, not men (Gal. 1:10). At no time does he allow a desire to please and be accepted cause him to offend God. He is fortunate when he can please God and possibly a few men at the same time.

### **REGARDING ERROR**

His preaching must be balanced. He must bring to light all truth and its applications. Failure to preach the positive and negative side is negligence. Exposing error is as much a part of preaching as declaring truth. No responsible preacher seeks to alienate anyone. He wants to win their hearts for Christ. He wants friends as much as the next person. But he is often criticized as if the truth he preaches, which some reject, originated with him. Some will praise him if they like what he says, but tear him to pieces if they disapprove of other truth he declares. When we hear a preacher preach, the first question we ought to ask is, "Is it the truth?"

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## Don't Decapitate The Preacher

The preacher's "neck is always out" because if he preaches the truth on any theme he is certain to "hit" somebody. If he preaches on giving he is trying to raise his salary, and if he doesn't he isn't doing his duty. If he calls names in his preaching he is too hard, and if he doesn't he is too soft. If he preaches against worldliness in the church he is meddling, and if he doesn't he is a spiritual and moral coward.

A Texas paper says, "The preacher has a great time. If his hair is gray, he is old. If he is a young man, he is lacking in experience. If he stays at home in his study, he doesn't mix enough with the people; if he is seen around the streets, he ought to be at home getting up a good sermon. If he calls on some poor family, he is playing to the grandstand; if he calls at the home of the wealthy, he is an aristocrat. **WHATEVER HE DOES, someone could have told him how to do it BETTER.**"

Perhaps the preacher deserves to be beheaded with the sword of criticism at times, but before you start swinging the sword, ask yourself a few questions. "Am I a competent judge of gospel preaching?" "Do I understand the need of the congregation better than the preacher and the elders?" "What would I have done under similar circumstances?" Some has said:

*"When a church seeks a preacher, they often want...*

*The strength of an eagle,  
The grace of a swan,  
The gentleness of a dove,  
The friendliness of a sparrow,  
The eye of a hawk,  
And the night hours of an owl,*

*And when they catch that bird,  
They expect him to live on the food of  
a canary."*

### MEETING OPPOSITION

Preachers soon learn that most of his opposition will come from those who reject his message. Some will attack him personally because they do not want to admit they reject the truth he preaches. It is also possible that he

preaches in such a manner that he offends needlessly. This he can and should avoid and correct when it is mentioned to him. But truth causes disturbance at times and uneasiness among those who do not want to conform to it. Preachers are the last in the church who want to cause problems

because they are always the first to go when problems arise regardless of the cause or source of the problem. But he will not forsake his sacred task regardless of personal consequences for doing what a preacher must do. More often than not he must discharge his duty receiving bare minimum sustenance from brethren, but he does it.

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**Probably never has there been a time when gospel preachers need cooperation, encouragement and support as now.**

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Whoever preaches to you and for you, you better hope and pray he will teach you the truth regardless of the consequences to himself. Beware of that person who is looking out first of all for his own welfare! You better hope and pray that he has the courage to say what should be said and not just what tickles your ears. You better hope and pray that he will stand fast on the Word, by the Word, with the Word, proving his message from the Word. You better hope and pray he will never bow to the many pressures from within and without the church to alter, compromise, soften or otherwise tamper with God's truth to accommodate those who do not approve of it. While he must always try to improve his manner and method, take heed of his attitude, increase his knowledge and skills in doing his work more effectively, you better hope and pray that he will never bend or break beneath the discouragements and sacri-

fices that are imposed upon him, not only by those of the world, but as much by worldly, digressive and vindictive brethren, weak elderships, and a vocal but antagonistic liberal or human legalistic minority. Whenever you reach the point that you only want to hear what soothes and praises you, compare yourself with the word quoted from II Tim. 4:3,4.

Everybody knows, and the preacher is more aware of it than most anybody, that everyone will not approve of the preacher. He is just another human being and has his personal peculiar characteristics like everyone else. Regardless of how fluent, scholarly, effective, kind or forceful he might be, there will be other qualities he may lack than some would prefer. He will not be perfect. Sensible preachers do not even try to please everybody because he knows he cannot. He wisely serves to please God, hoping others will serve to please God also. That is all the faithful gospel preacher seeks from anyone. He is gratified when his efforts are appreciated by faithful brethren.

### GOD'S SON

We all do well to remember that God had but one Son, and He was a preacher. Preachers do not seek your praises, but your salvation. They ask not for your possessions, but fair support in leading you to live for the Lord. They seek not anything more than your life for Christ. There is no more noble and needed work on earth than preaching the gospel. I do not say that

because I preach. I preach because I believe it is true.

Preachers have faults and shortcomings. If he does not realize it it will not be long before somebody reminds him of each one of them. But we need to concentrate not so much on the man as on the message of God the man preaches. Consider it; measure it by the Word; investigate it; believe it when proven true; obey it; and live by it everyday. Also help the faithful preacher defend it.

Probably never has there been a time when gospel preachers need cooperation, encouragement and support as now. The onslaught of error runs rampant in and out of the church. Digression, liberalism, modernism, worldliness, indifference, rebellion, immorality, all kinds of "isms" leading people astray hold sway. Only the gospel can turn the tide and save the soul. It is the task of the preacher to preach it. Pray for him as he labors because he knows before the world is right side up it must be turned upside down. Usually he is trying very hard to fill his role. Know his work and help him do it.

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*(Continued from back page)*

Men (and women) who work evil want nothing said about their wicked deeds. *"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the*

*light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd"* (John 3:20). They desire everyone keep quiet. They want a free hand to deceive and beguile the souls of the gullible. They hate the light of truth. Jesus said regarding such people, *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"* (John 8:44). Regarding those who seek to turn people from the truth, the Bible says, *"...O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord"* (Acts 13:10)?

*"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil"* (I John 3:8). The choice is yours. Will you love the truth and obey it or will you reject it and be lost? Eternal consequences will be paid when the choice is made to reject it (Matt. 25:41,46)! Friend, come to the light of truth before it's too late. Let us condemn all sin alike, wherever it is found.

**Ken Burleson** has moved to Pensacola, Florida, and is the new director of the North West Florida School of Biblical Studies. His address is: 1644 Pine Lane Dr., Cantonment, FL 32533. Anyone interested in the school is encouraged to contact them. Many more workers are needed in the kingdom.

**Sidney White** is now working with Fraley's Chapel in Corinth. His new address is: Rt. 2 Box 365, Corinth, MS 38834.



## Questions & Answers

Garland M. Robinson

### SHOULD ONE PARTICULAR SIN BE CORRECTED BEFORE OTHERS ARE CONDEMNED?

No. Sin is a transgression (violation) of God's law (I John 3:4). *"All unrighteousness is sin"* (I John 5:17). Any sin, all sin, will cause one to lose his soul (Rom. 6:23; James 1:15). Therefore, every sin must be exposed and condemned without partiality! The Bible says, *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine"* (II Tim. 4:2). The "whole counsel of God" must be preached (Acts 20:26-27)!

Jesus rebuked and reproved sin. It was his condemnation of sin, all sin, that caused people to hate him. *"The world ...me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil"* (John 7:7; cf. John 16:8). To his disciples Jesus said, *"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world...therefore the world hateth you"* (John 15:19). *"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you"* (I John 3:13). Do you hate Christ the savior?

(Continued on page 15)

The 5th Annual Miss. Lectures are now history and were a great success. Attendance was equal to or better than last year. Every lesson was "on target" and well presented. A *"thus saith the Lord"* was sounded forth and souls were edified. Books and tapes are still available. Next year's program will be announced as soon as plans are finalized. Let me encourage you to *"Seek the Old Paths"* and walk therein. *"Buy the truth and sell it not."* *"Earnestly contend for the faith."* *"Prove all things."* —gmr

**Seek The Old Paths** is a publication of the East Corinth church of Christ and is under the oversight of its elders. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:13; 2:1; II Peter 1:12. Manuscripts are welcome.

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