

Seek The Old Paths

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

Vol. 10, No. 9

September 1999

DUTIES OF GOSPEL PREACHERS

Roy J. Hearn

Duty is that which is required by one's station or occupation, or what one is bound by moral obligation to do. A preacher is a *herald* or *proclaimer* of the divine word. Hence, one who chooses to be a preacher is bound to certain obligations that should challenge his most serious attention. These requirements are principally set forth in the books of Timothy and Titus, and should be read frequently by all preachers. H. Leo Boles was accustomed to reading these books almost every week.

PERSONAL OBLIGATIONS

1. Hold the faith and a good conscience (1 Tim. 1:19). The preacher must trust God implicitly, looking to him for help under all circumstances. He is to seek to know what is right, then do what he believes to be right. Otherwise, he may be condemned by Jehovah (1 John 3:20).

2. Be diligent in preparation (1 Tim. 4:13-15). The preacher is obligated to study the whole Bible. He is to give all diligence that he may stand approved of God (2 Tim. 2:15). Paul instructs that he give himself wholly to his study and work. He should be as well informed as possible in all things that will enable him to do his work well, and not be satisfied with a mere smattering, or merely "getting up a sermon."

3. Take heed to himself concerning his life and teaching (1 Tim. 4:16). Preachers are prone to seek to correct the faults of others,

the church and the community. He should never forget to turn the searchlight inwardly, lest after he has preached to others he himself may be lost (2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Cor. 9:27). One should take care to preach the truth and practice it. A proper example gets a better hearing.

4. Keep himself pure (1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:22). Be free from hasty and unjust actions. Exercise sound judgment. Do not allow self to be used in unethical schemes. Avoid youthful lusts. Avoid questionable places and conduct. Not only should we avoid evil, but also hate evil (1 Thess. 5:21-22; Rom. 12:9). Let him also be pure from the blood of all men by declaring the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20,26,27).

5. Follow after righteousness (1 Tim. 6:11-12). This command is in connection with the warning against love for money. Covetousness is idolatry (Cor. 3:5; Eph. 5:5). The mercenary preacher cannot please God. In order to be righteous — a condition acceptable to God — one must flee covetousness. When one preaches primarily for money he does not obey this command.

6. Hold the pattern of sound words (2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 2:7-8). Greatest care should be exercised in stating truth in the language of inspired writers. The teaching of Christ as given by the Holy Spirit must be upheld (John 16:13-15). The truth should be positively unmixed with the philosophies of men. Preachers must seek to please God (Rom. 15:3), not seek the applause of men

(Matt. 6:1-6).

7. Be sober in all things. Only those influenced by truth have well-balanced minds and clear vision. Turn not aside unto fables, neither strive about words to no profit (2 Tim. 2:14). Hold steadfastly to divine truth (2 Thess. 2:15).

8. Suffer hardships (2 Tim. 4:4). Preachers should not be exalted in mind over their accomplishments. Compare them with the sufferings and privations of Paul. He must bear persecutions that come because of preaching the truth (2 Cor. 11:21-28).

DUTIES TO PERFORM

1. Protect the church from false teaching (1 Tim. 1:3). Preachers should know the truth; they should know what error is and how to expose it. H. Leo Boles often said, *"One cannot preach the truth without exposing error."* A different doctrine is a perverted gospel and the anathema of God is upon those who preach it and those overcome thereby (Gal. 1:6-9).

2. Preach the word (2 Tim. 4:1-2). This is prefaced by a most solemn charge. The preacher must adhere strictly to apostolic teaching (2 Tim. 2:2). Take care to teach all the apostles taught and only that delivered through them by the Spirit. The word of God is inexhaustible. Preachers should study and expound the scriptures, give their lives to this — one of the greatest needs in the church

(Continued on page 71)

Duties Of Gospel Preachers...



Editorial...

PREACHERS ARE TO BE SUPPORTED IN THEIR WORK

Garland M. Robinson

Yes, preachers are to be supported in their work. Preaching the Gospel is their primary and principal function. Heaven's directive is to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). First century brethren did that. "Paul... and Barnabas continued... teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also" (Acts 15:35). So many other things (besides preaching) have been added on their shoulders that is not really the work of an evangelist.

Gospel preachers are to be supported in many ways. Here are four.

Gospel preachers should be supported by **ENCOURAGEMENT**. Many suppose preaching is an easy task and many jokes have been made about it. Any who do so ought to walk a mile in a preacher's shoes. Follow him for a day. See the hundreds of large and small tasks he takes care of that often no one knows about and take for granted.

Many preachers receive very little encouragement in their work and are often not appreciated for their love of the Truth and devotion in proclaiming it. It's a lonely life in so many ways because preachers are viewed as being from "another planet." Though it's rarely said, but who wants to hang around with a preacher or be his friend? That means you'd have to be on your best behavior all the time. You'd have to watch your tongue and dress. But, isn't that what Christians do anyway? Some have said "excuse me" when they learned I was a preacher. My reply usually is, "I'm just a man. God's the judge. You'll have to answer to Him. He knows how you live every day."

I was told once, "you chose to be a preacher, you could have done

something else." By that they meant, you knew the sacrifices and hardships that go with preaching. If you wanted a higher income, health insurance, fringe/retirement benefits, job promotions, a house of your own, then you could have chosen to do that. Brethren, that's slapping a preacher in the face. He is not to be penalized for loving the Truth and devoting his life in proclaiming it. Preachers should and must be encouraged (Rom. 14:19; Acts 18:27; Phil. 2:1-4), not discouraged. We have far too few good preachers already.

How many young men are preparing themselves to preach the blessed Gospel? How many parents are encouraging their sons to do so. Talk to most any teenage boy and ask him if he has a desire to preach. They will tell you in a heartbeat, no way! Why is that? Is it because they see the way preachers are treated and talked about in the home and community? Is it because they realize the difficult and thankless work they do? Is it because they see the life of devotion and dedication required? Is it because they see how preachers are "used" and when the first sign of trouble in the congregation comes along they are blamed for it and sent packing? Far too often, preachers are treated like papertowels, use them and throw them away. Some say, why, he's just a preacher. That goes with the job. He can easily uproot his children from school and move on. Who cares anyway? He can leave tomorrow, but the rest of us have to live in this community! Very, very often, he and his family is never really accepted by either the church or the community. Why, who in the world would want to get into that!?

In spite of all these things, and a million more, I am thankful there are many sound, faithful Gospel

preachers who are willing to spend and be spent in the work of the Lord. They endure the suffering and insults and "press (on) toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). They feel as Paul when he said, "woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16). While most Gospel preachers have no retirement in this world (since none is provided by the church), they do have one in the world to come. Paul said, "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim 4:8).

I also realize that when I speak of these things it will be viewed by some as whining and complaining. I guess that's the risk I'll have to take. It will just further illustrate my point. I don't know of a single preacher "worth his salt" that will complain about it. However, folks need to be educated, because when they know better, hopefully they will do better.

Gospel preachers are to be supported by being **DEFENDED** when they preach the Truth. Many stop their ears, refuse to listen and even sometimes persecute the very ones who tell them words whereby they may be saved (cf. Acts 11:14). Peter rebuked Simon in Acts 8:20-23 even as Paul rebuked Peter in Galatians 2:11. In both instances, Peter and Paul were doing their job as evangelists, though unpleasant as it may be. Faithful brethren will defend the godly actions of faithful preachers and hold up their hands when they preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20,26,27). It is a tremendous help to not only the preacher, but the whole congregation, when the elders back the preacher by getting into the pulpit and announcing to all that "the Truth has been preached today. We support it. This is where we stand. If any have questions about it, come see the elders and we'll study with you." This occurs very little. So little in fact that some preachers have never seen it done. It would be such a shock that some preachers may faint! What many are used to is being "called on the carpet" and told to tone it down, back off, don't preach that again, you've upset a lot of peo-

ple today, etc. Brethren, such ought not to be!

If what has been preached is the Truth, then obey it, support it, hold up the man's hands that is willing to proclaim it. Only the Truth can make men free from sin (John 8:32). Love it, even when it hurts because you are guilty. Instead of lambasting the preacher, repent and turn to God (Luke 13:3). Defend him, thank him for being your friend. Paul told those of Galatia, "am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth" (Gal. 4:16)? Words of Truth and soberness should cause one to tremble as it did Felix (Acts 24:25). Don't be guilty of causing the preacher to tremble for preaching the Truth. Defend him! Thank him! Encourage him to preach even more and harder.

Gospel preachers are to be supported through **PRAYER**. Paul wrote the brethren of Thessalonica, saying, "Brethren, pray for us" (1 Thess. 5:25; cf. Heb. 13:18).

Paul's request for the prayers of the saints was not selfish, but for the furtherance of the Gospel through his preaching. "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints..." (Rom. 15:30-33). He wanted and needed the prayers of brethren concerning the persecution he faced. "For we... despaired even of life...we had the sentence of death in ourselves,...but...God...delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; **Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf**" (2 Cor. 1:8-11). "**Praying always with all prayer and supplication ...and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, ...that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak**" (Eph. 6:18-20). "For I know that this shall turn to my sal-

vation **through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ**" (Phil. 1:19). "**Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ,...That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak**" (Col. 4:2-4). "**Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith**" (2 Thess. 3:1-2). "...For I trust that **through your prayers I shall be given unto you**" (Philemon 1:22). "**Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much**" (James 5:16). Pray for him in both private and public. He wants and needs your prayers.

Gospel preachers are to be supported **FINANCIALLY** (Gal. 6:6). "...The Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should **live of the gospel**" (1 Cor. 9:14). This has been the principle throughout the Old and New Testaments alike. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (Deut. 25:4). "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward" (1 Tim. 5:18). The Levites who served at the tabernacle received the tithes of the children of Israel (Num. 18:23-24). Paul said, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service" (2 Cor. 11:8). "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. 6:6).

Some have said that a preacher must be poor and humble to be effective. These same brethren have said, "Lord, you keep him humble and we'll keep him poor!" The preacher is not to beg his bread and live as a benevolent case waiting on a hand out from brethren. He must be financially supported so that he can devote his time to preaching and teaching the blessed Gospel. However, when need be, he can and will work to support himself that he may continue to preach (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8; Acts 18:3).

He has spent years in training

himself in the Word and is thus equipped to preach it and teach it — more so than the average church member. Why not give him the opportunity to do what he is able to do (cf. 1 Cor. 12:14-31)? Far too often he is saddled with running errands and doing tasks that most anyone in the congregation can do if they would. It's easy to "let the preacher do it, he doesn't work." He has become the church secretary, custodian, repair man and general all around errand boy. Brethren, be more considerate of him than that. His task is more important than the president of the United States! Assign brethren or acquire the services of one to handle the day to day things that need to be done and free him to spend his time in teaching and preaching the Word.

**7TH ANNUAL
"Labourers Together With God"
Lectureship**

September 12-16, 1999
Christian Evidences (Apologetics)
28 Speakers and Lessons

**NORTHWEST FLORIDA SCHOOL OF
BIBLICAL STUDIES**

Ensley Church of Christ
57 E. Hannah Circle, Pensacola, FL 32534
Phone: 850-476-1417 or 479-4405

CONTRIBUTORS

Bethlehem Church of Christ,

Baxter, TN	\$100
Lois Smith.....	\$10
Anonymous	\$50
Joe Gwaltney.....	\$100
Chuck and Nancy Verkist	\$50
Seibles Road Church of Christ,	
Montgomery, AL.....	\$300
William I. Paul, Jr.....	\$25
M/M Virgil Cretsinger	\$50
M/M Doyle Gough	\$50
M/M Richard Guill	\$50
M. S. Rooker, Jr.....	\$100
M/M Howard Stark	\$30
Cecil and Emogene Copley	\$20
Samuel Washington.....	\$12
M/M John H. Brown.....	\$25
Roger D. Campbell.....	\$100
Carl T. Bullock, Sr.	\$25
James A. Horton.....	\$95
Mark Miller	\$20
Anonymous	\$105

HOLDING UP THE PREACHER'S HANDS

Walter W. Pigg, Jr.

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.

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”* (2 John 9) do not lead people to God and the salvation which is *“in Christ.”* *“Many false prophets are gone out into the world”* (1 John 4:1) and none of these should have his

hands held up.

Some preacher’s hands cannot be held up because their heart is not in preaching the Word. 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 1 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 disposition 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" (2 Tim. 4:2). When there is such a great need for the Truth (sound doctrine) to be preached, it is discouraging 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" (1 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 opportunity 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?

164 Coles Campground Rd.
Murray, KY 42071

THE MINISTER'S WIFE

Who is she? Someone's wife, of course. Usually someone's mother, counselor, confidante and friend. She's an information source for everyone. Someone's organizer and helping hand. Someone's answering service, teacher, maid, chauffeur, appointment maker, seamstress. Someone's strong shoulder to lean on when times are rough.

But is this really who she is? Or, is there another person, another identity which is often "buried alive" by all the roles she is forced to play, another person who, like everyone else, enjoys coming to church for the sole purpose of joining in the worship service and listening to the sermon? Another person who likes to read or sing or cross-stitch for no one else but herself? Another person who longs for friends who will occasionally let her talk out the burdens and problems of her heart? Could there be a separate individual deep inside who rejoices to hear herself introduced simply by her name, instead of usually qualifying the statement that she's our minister's wife?

"A minister's wife," after all, is not who she is but what she is, a role God has ordained for her. She fulfills that responsibility cheerfully and capably, especially when she knows that she is loved and appreciated simply because she is who she is and not just the preacher's wife.

DIVINITY DEGREES AND PROFESSIONAL PREACHERS

G. C. Brewer, deceased

***Our people have not only gone “degree crazy,”
but many of us are actually seeking “divinity degrees.”***

In the years gone by, there has been much discussion among religious people about an “educated ministry.” Some denominations have had certain educational requirements for their preachers. They would not ordain any man to the ministry who did not have a college education and a seminary course in addition to a divine call. Other denominations have insisted that if the man had a divine call he had the approval of Jehovah, and that was certainly satisfactory credentials. Men should not, therefore, forbid his preaching the word of God. Some of these religious people believed that God would inspire the preacher and put the words in his mouth that he should utter. But all the denominations believed that preachers were specially, divinely, miraculously called to preach. Preachers were then looked upon as a special class known as the clergy in contrast to the laity, and there were special functions the clergy performed that no one else was allowed to do. Only the men who had the divine imprimatur and who had been specially ordained were allowed to baptize people, and they only were allowed to “officiate” at the Lord’s table or give the emblems to Christians. Where there was no ordained minister, there could be no Lord’s supper and no baptism.

In the beginning of the Restoration Movement there was an especial attack made upon the idea of a distinction among Christians. The division of the church into clergy and laity was denounced as unscriptural and contrary both to the spirit and teaching of the New Testament. Preaching as a profession was condemned. Every Christian should be a preacher of the Gospel and a campaigner for Christ. This was seen not only to be the duty of each Christian, but to be the natural con-

sequence of his conversion to Christ. It is an instinct with the child of God. He needs no special call, no ordination ceremony, and no theological training to do the things that the word of the Lord authorizes all Christians to do. This was the cry of the men who started the movement back to the New Testament simplicity, and this was the ground of many a hard fought battle. The denominations recognized in this principle a power that would work for their undoing. It would make their rules and regulations, their denominational sanction and ordination, unnecessary. For this reason they fought the brethren of Restoration, not by open debate upon the principle involved, but by indirect methods; by their organized power and by their political influence. They declared that these brethren could not administer baptism, could not officiate at the Lord’s table and they would not permit them to join any “Pastor’s Association,” and they schemed to keep the State from allowing these men to say marriage ceremonies, etc.

The brethren of the Restoration Movement were neither timid nor mild in meeting this opposition. They were bold and fearless and aggressive in the belief that they were contending for the “ancient order” and against the corruptions of ecclesiasticism. Alexander Campbell was especially severe in his attack on the professional clergy. He said: “God made men, but the priests made laymen.” He characterized them as “hireling priests,” “textuary divines,” our “scrap doctors,” etc. He charged them with ignorance, pride, self-seeking, and an anxiety to keep the people in darkness so that they might lord it over them. He scorned them for their clerical dress, their sanctimonious speech, their long-faced piety, their

devotion to party, and their claim to a special divine call. He denounced with special severity their love of titles — Reverend, Bishop, Doctor and Father.

These brethren, however, were all strong advocates of education. Many of them were the leading educators of their day. None of these men, however, ever boasted of his scholarship, or wrote or printed degrees to his name, or ever scorned or even discouraged the uneducated man who attempted to preach the Gospel. None of these men themselves ever took a seminary course or had a “divinity degree.” They would have denounced the idea of taking such a course and would have been utterly shocked and chagrined had any one conferred upon them a “divinity degree.”

But now what have we? That we have given away to denominational influence on many points cannot be disputed by those who are informed. When we look at these things, we are tempted to say, in the language of Gregory the Great: “O times! O customs!” Our people have not only gone “degree crazy,” but many of us are actually seeking “divinity degrees.” Some of our young preachers are going to schools of divinity and theological seminaries, which schools have one mission and one purpose — viz., to make “professional clergymen.” While our fathers would not attend such schools even in their day, it is thousand-fold worse to attend them now than it was then, for in that day they did train their students to meet the assaults of infidels and atheists. They gave them a good course in Christian evidence and taught them respect and reverence for the word of God. But now these schools themselves are spawning beds of infidelity. They repudiate the inspiration of the Bible and the divinity of Christ,

the vicarious atonement and the resurrection of the Lord from the tomb. And yet, we who want our preachers to speak as the oracles of God, to contend for the simplicity of New Testament Christianity, to regard the Bible as final in all things, to “speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent,” send our young men to these infidel divinity schools for preparation for that sort of work! Of all the inconsistencies and absurdities that we have ever been guilty of, this is the worst.

And a further lamentable fact is that our congregations do not use as much sound judgment in employing these preachers as do the denominations. It makes no difference how many degrees a preacher has, the denominational people will not place him in a responsible position until he has been proved in a place less responsible, or until he has demonstrated some ability. But with us, the sound of the degrees and the stamp of the college is all a man needs to receive calls from the largest churches. “Brethren, these things ought not so to be.”

If we continue to go at the rate we are going, how long will it be before a preacher of the gospel will have to have a seminary course and an ordination ceremony before he will be supported in the work of the Lord? How long will it be before an elder or a deacon or any other man except an ordained “clergyman” will be allowed to “wait on” the Lord’s table? And then only the churches that have “pastors” will “celebrate the communion.” How often do we see elders or any member except a preacher baptize people or conduct a funeral service? Are these not already regarded more or less as professional functions? How often do we hear the gospel invitation urged upon sinners by any man who is not a “regular preacher?” Is the invitation “extended” in services where a preacher is not present to preach a sermon first? Have we not, then, in a sense, reduced this to a level with an “official opening of the doors of the church?”

Let us begin to “think on these things.” Let us stop this tendency to drift into the customs of the world, and, therefore, into the whirlpool of infidelity.

Duties Of Gospel Preachers...

(Continued from page 65)

today. Be not content with polishing up sermons of sectarian preachers as too many are now doing. If the preacher devotes himself to unfolding the Scriptures he will never lack for sermon material.

3. **Reprove, rebuke, exhort** (2 Tim. 4:1-2). Too long the trend has been to speak softly and tread lightly. Note the force in the meaning of these words: 1) **Reprove**: “convince, refute, confute, convict, bring to light, expose, find fault with, correct, reprehend severely, chide, admonish, to call to account, show one his fault, chasten, punish” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon on *elegcho*). 2) **Rebuke**: “To tax with fault, rate, chide, reprove, censure severely, admonish or charge sharply” (Thayer on *epitimao*). 3) **Exhort**: “To incite by words or advice; to advise or warn earnestly” (Webster). “Admonish” (Thayer on *parakaleo*). Two-thirds of this command is negative. In Jeremiah 1:10 the prophet was similarly ordered: “*to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.*” This is not to be abused, yet when strong measures are demanded the preacher should not hesitate. Let there be strong denunciation of error and sin, and strong entreaty for souls to turn from them.

4. **Teach how to behave as Christians** (1 Tim. 3:15). Not only should the conduct in the assembly and the organization and work of the church be regulated, but proper instructions from the Scriptures regarding godliness in every place should be stressed. The Christian is a member of the church, a part of the spiritual temple wherever he is, and should ever be mindful of it and act accordingly.

5. **Expose sin without partiality** (Titus 1:13-16; 1 Tim. 5:20-21). God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11). The preacher must be as impartial in his dealings. The church should be purged of evil. The truth can never be hurt by obeying it. We cannot honor God and wink at evil. The rich should be warned as well as the poor (1 Tim. 6:16-19).

6. **Organize churches** (Titus 1:5). Where needed, evangelists

should be able to supply teaching and direction to help local churches to be properly organized.

7. **Teach and baptize** (Acts 8:5-38). These are prime duties of preachers. All New Testament preachers did so, whether apostles or evangelists. Philip serves as a good example. He preached Christ to the Samaritans. Men and women were baptized. He preached Jesus to the Ethiopian and baptized him. Let not preachers be content to merely hold a job, or build upon another’s foundation, but also go forth into needy fields, teach, baptize, establish churches.

8. **Warn against apostasy** (1 Tim. 4:1-6). To be a good minister of Christ, the preacher will warn against digression and apostasy. It is presently urgent that all faithful preachers wield the sword of the Spirit against the encroachments of liberalism that now seek to permeate the church of the Lord. Satan is alert to every opportunity to turn souls from truth. We serve Satan’s cause when we fail to warn against error.

9. **Pray for those in authority** (1 Tim. 2:1-3). The reason is that it pleases God, and the purpose that we may lead tranquil lives. God still rules in the kingdom of men (Daniel 4:32), and prayer is effective (James 5:16-18).

10. **Preach under all conditions** (2 Tim. 4:2). Do not seek the largest audiences, most comfortable places, nor more favorable circumstances, but be ready to preach under all conditions, whether bodily weakness, physical want, or opposition.

11. **Bring to remembrance the ways of Paul** (1 Cor. 4:17). He followed Christ (1 Cor. 11:1); sought no personal glory (1 Cor. 2:1-5); was honest (Acts 23:1); declared the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20,27); gave himself wholly (2 Cor. 11:23-31).

CONCLUSION

A fearful responsibility rests upon those who choose to preach. They should determine to know the truth and preach it at all costs. Heavier judgment comes to those who would be teachers from impure motives (James 3:1). The work of the preacher may be summed up in Paul’s charge: **“Preach the word!”**

*1840 Tottys Bend Rd.
Duck River, TN 38454*

MAIL BAG



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

you please send *S.T.O.P.* to a dear friend of mine. Thank you" ...**Billy Aaron, West Monroe, LA.** "I obtained a copy of *S.T.O.P.* and found it to be very informed. I would appreciate being put on your mailing list. Thanks" ...**Ray Mann, Franklin, KY.** "I would appreciate it if you would add me to your mailing list of *S.T.O.P.* I have read several issues and happy to see your stand for the Truth. Much needed in the Lord's church today" ...**Alex Dickson, Boulder City, NV.** "We wish you all the success the Lord allows in your many endeavors" ...**M/M Howard Stark, Kissimmee, FL.** "Thank God for men like you who still stand for the Old Paths, the Gospel of Christ. This would be a sad, sad day were it not for those like you who continue to stand. Keep up the good work and may God keep and bless you. Because of the cross" ...**Daryl Busby, Sullivan, MO.** "So much has crept into the Lord's church, makes one wonder when the young children will know what the True church is. My hope and prayers are people will wake up before it is too late. Thank you for standing for truth of the Bible" ...**Winnie Hightower, Lindsay, OK.** "Thank you so much for *Seek The Old Paths!* It's a wonderful paper. When you point out the error in so many churches which once were strong in the faith, you are doing what is commanded. It's sad that some don't want to hear that — in effect, don't want to know their souls are in danger" ...**L. Schmidt, Nampa, ID.** "Please accept my contribution for the printing of your great publication. Keep up the good work" ...**Sam Washington, Waynesville, MO.** "We continue to enjoy reading *S.T.O.P.* It is so sad that so many are turning away from the truth. Thanks and God bless you for your efforts to spread the gospel" ...**Cecil & Emogene Copley, Elyria, OH.** "I enjoy reading *S.T.O.P.* and have been saving them for my son to read and I decided to have them sent to him. Thanking you" ...**Ruth Sapp, Crossville, TN.** "Thank you so much for the good work you are doing. Please continue to try to save a few from these sad times. Enclosed, please find check to help in the effort. God bless you" ...**Bill & Joy Gower, Magnolia, AR.** "We really enjoy *S.T.O.P.* and have several friends that would like to start receiving it. Please add them to your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Maurice & Martha Johnson, Albany, GA.** "Just pulled up the web site you are sponsoring and think it is great. It is so difficult to find churches that are willing to stand and be happy with the old paths. Appreciate your effort to be part of that group that is contending for the faith. If there are any other web sites that we can go to that embrace your stance would you please send them to me. Also, if there are any sites that the churches of Christ have where they discuss issues and hot topics, could you email them to me as well. We are so isolated up here in the upper peninsula of Michigan. I see also that you are going to have a lectureship coming up. If tapes are available, I would like access to them. Thank you for your time and effort" ...**Dale Numikoski.** [Note: tapes are free for the asking] "First let me say that I enjoy your paper so very much. If only others would stand up for the truth like you do. I have a friend that enjoys *S.T.O.P.* Will you please mail her one? Thank you so very much" ...**Lois Adams, Greenwood, MS.** "It has been by intention for sometime now to write and send a small token of which I hope can help on postage. Please continue to stand for the truth, your reward will be a home in Heaven. Keep me on your mailing list, I enjoy so very much the publication. Keep up the good work" ...**Rosie Shepherd, Whistler, AL.** "Please remove my name from your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Billye Daughtry, Tyler, TX.** "Please place my name on the mailing list to receive *S.T.O.P.* The articles are excellent. Thank you very much" ...**John B. Tracy, Marietta, GA.** "I read one of your recent issues of *S.T.O.P.* I enjoyed the articles and thought I would like to receive a copy on a regular basis. Please put me on the mailing list. Thank you for the work you are doing" ...**Denny Wilson, Odessa, TX.** "You continue to do a good work with much glory to God. May you always persevere and faint not" ...**Dorcus McLeod, Lucedale, MS.** "Please send me the *Old Paths.* I appreciate the work you are doing—standing up for the true pat-

tern and the truth of God's Word for the church" ...**Ross Miller, Payson, AZ.** "While recently visiting at the Collinsville, IL church of Christ, I picked up a copy of your publication. I really was glad that I did. The articles were very interesting and informative. Please send this to me if you can. I have enclosed \$\$ to help in any way possible. Thank you" ...**M/M Larry Fleming, Franklin, KY.** "I enjoy receiving *S.T.O.P.* I hope you will continue to send it to me. It is refreshing to be able to read a good sound publication" ...**Horace Jacobs, Lynchburg, TN.** "I want to thank you for *S.T.O.P.* We enjoy it very much. Keep up the good work" ...**John Barton, Pollock, LA.** "Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. I would appreciate any consideration if I could receive free news letters. Thank you for your time and God bless you" ...**Daniel Ramirez, Snyder, TX.** "Thanks for sending us your paper. We enjoy reading it very much and find it to be true to God's Holy Word. Thanks again for sending it to us and may God bless you in your efforts to seek the old paths and walk therein" ...**Jerry McKinnon, Shreveport, LA.** "May I please be placed on your mailing list? I've read several and am encouraged by your strong stand for truth. No matter what anyone says, we need papers like yours that stay on the cutting edge. Thanks" ...**Scott Klaft, Dresden, TN.** "Enclosed is a contribution for your wonderful work. We always look forward to receiving *S.T.O.P.* We really appreciate you standing for the truth. In Christian Love" ...**Jack and Anita Cato, Hendersonville, TN.** "I continue to receive and appreciate *S.T.O.P.* Your mail indicates the amount of good you are doing. There is a marvelous, but serious, battle raging and you are doing much to call our brethren to the side of truth. Thank you" ...**Richard Massey, Rising Star, TX.** "Really look forward to receiving your good paper. I have always appreciated your stand for the truth and the revealing facts of those who war against the truth and keeping us informed of those who would, with their fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple. Thanks for being a watchman for Truth" ...**Daniel Carver, Ypsilanti, MI.**

tern and the truth of God's Word for the church" ...**Ross Miller, Payson, AZ.** "While recently visiting at the Collinsville, IL church of Christ, I picked up a copy of your publication. I really was glad that I did. The articles were very interesting and informative. Please send this to me if you can. I have enclosed \$\$ to help in any way possible. Thank you" ...**M/M Larry Fleming, Franklin, KY.** "I enjoy receiving *S.T.O.P.* I hope you will continue to send it to me. It is refreshing to be able to read a good sound publication" ...**Horace Jacobs, Lynchburg, TN.** "I want to thank you for *S.T.O.P.* We enjoy it very much. Keep up the good work" ...**John Barton, Pollock, LA.** "Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. I would appreciate any consideration if I could receive free news letters. Thank you for your time and God bless you" ...**Daniel Ramirez, Snyder, TX.** "Thanks for sending us your paper. We enjoy reading it very much and find it to be true to God's Holy Word. Thanks again for sending it to us and may God bless you in your efforts to seek the old paths and walk therein" ...**Jerry McKinnon, Shreveport, LA.** "May I please be placed on your mailing list? I've read several and am encouraged by your strong stand for truth. No matter what anyone says, we need papers like yours that stay on the cutting edge. Thanks" ...**Scott Klaft, Dresden, TN.** "Enclosed is a contribution for your wonderful work. We always look forward to receiving *S.T.O.P.* We really appreciate you standing for the truth. In Christian Love" ...**Jack and Anita Cato, Hendersonville, TN.** "I continue to receive and appreciate *S.T.O.P.* Your mail indicates the amount of good you are doing. There is a marvelous, but serious, battle raging and you are doing much to call our brethren to the side of truth. Thank you" ...**Richard Massey, Rising Star, TX.** "Really look forward to receiving your good paper. I have always appreciated your stand for the truth and the revealing facts of those who war against the truth and keeping us informed of those who would, with their fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple. Thanks for being a watchman for Truth" ...**Daniel Carver, Ypsilanti, MI.**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **East Corinth Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed FREE upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson** / Associate Editor: **Jimmy Bates**

<http://www.tsixroads.com/~ecorinth>

EAST CORINTH CHURCH OF CHRIST
1801 CRUISE ST.
CORINTH, MS 38834-5108
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
P A I D
Permit No. 253
Corinth, MS