

THE HARVESTERS



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Reflections from Church History

By

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In teaching Church History I try to keep before me the lessons that should be learned. This includes the good and the bad. The guiding principle to which I am committed is the proper application of the Bible to life (James 1:21ff.; I Thess. 5:21-22; III John 11; II John 9-11 et al.). In view of these things the study of what has taken place in the realm of religion (i.e., Church History) is very interesting.

Consider the following quotations from our Church History Text. May we learn lessons from the past to help us today.

The Philosophy

"The church can practice separation from culture, or it can practice synthesis. The Scholastics did the latter."

This quotation is not Biblically sound. Jesus was in the world but he did not become a part of the world. Jesus teaches his followers that they too will be in the world but must not be as

the world (John 17:14-19).

The Standard

It is essential that we realize what constitutes the standard of our religious convictions as well as those of others. It is not possible to justify some religious positions for they are con-

"The Scholars said what?"



tradictory. Some have as their doctrine that which is foreign to the Bible. Consider carefully the substance of some who seek to rationalize that which is unreasonable.

"The content of their study was the Bible, the canons and creeds of the ecumenical councils, and the writings of the fathers of the church. The question that they wished to settle involved whether or not the faith was reasonable."

It should be obvious that anything may be "reasonable" given the broad field of creeds, councils, the writings of the fathers, etc. However, we must not forget that reasoning in this fashion will result in irrationality. We cite again the Church History Text. To many that which becomes the content of faith is accepted on other than rational grounds. *"It must be believed merely on authority apart from reason, for much that was stated by the church to be authoritative could not be demonstrated by reason."* *"Theological dogmas*

were not rationally demonstrable . . . this view separated faith and reason . . .”

In subsequent years men treated religious issues in a different manner than they did scientific issues. They “reasoned” one way when considering scientific issues and another way when considering religious issues. Today it does not bother some religious people that their views are foreign to the Bible or contradict the teaching of the Bible. They have bought the philosophy of the day that makes religious issues subjective and not objective; irrational and not rational; determined by tradition and culture and not by the proper handling of Biblical truth.

The Church History Text makes another significant observation. *“After 1050 the Scholastics replaced the fathers of the church as the main guardians of the truth, and doctor became as great a term of honor as father had been earlier in the history of the church.”* The quotations are from Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through The Centuries* (Revised and Enlarged Edition), pages 231-239.

Is History Being Repeated?

As I taught this chapter (Chapter 23) I could not but relate what happened in the past with what is happening today. What the religious world in general has done the Lord's people in some places are duplicating. Consider some influential folk and the methodology they are pursuing. (1) There is much concern today with “Scholars” and “Doctors.” We hear of “The Christian Scholarship Confer-

“The Doctors could be wrong.”



ence” at some of the Universities among us. In the mind set of some it is unthinkable to scold the scholars; unimaginable to doctor the Doctors. (2) The informed know that there are some of influence who have rejected sound reasoning as a basis for determining religious matters. The emphasis is upon “fellowship,” and the basis of the proposed

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fellowship is the acceptance of that which is not Biblical. (3) In promoting doctrines which are not justified by the Bible appeal is made to the “Fathers” and “traditions” in the Restoration Movement. Is it not the case that we can cite some writing of this movement that would justify most any doctrinal position held by men? (4) In view of so much confusion, the rejection of proper respect for the Bible, and the denial of sound reasoning some are calling for a “New Hermeneutic.”

Are we not seeing history being repeated? How are the actions of some among us different from those of the past? We affirm that the Doctors of the

Christian Scholars can not justify that which is irrational. If fellowship is to be had with the diverse factions of the Restoration Movement, it will not be on the basis of Biblical faith. It will not be on the basis of sound reasoning.

We should heed the words of the Apostle John, *“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God”* (III John 11). To do otherwise is to forfeit our fellowship with God and the Christ. *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds”* (II John 9-11). The words of Paul must not be forgotten. *“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise”* (II Cor. 10:12). *“For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth”* (II Cor. 10:18).

The Harvesters

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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

MONTHLY FOCUS

Eagle Lake

January 6, 1991 I visited with the brethren at Eagle Lake, Florida. Brother Victor Barton taught the adult Bible class and we studied I John 2:1-11. There was good participation from the class. Brother Daniel Denham preached for the worship services. "What is your life?" (James 4:14) was the subject and text of his lesson. He made three points: (1) Life is a gift of God; (2) Life is where we must make preparation to meet God; (3) Life is a time for loving service on behalf of God. One came forward confessing public sin and asking for the prayers of the brethren.

Bartow

Sunday evening January 6, 1991 I visited with the brethren meeting at Jackson Avenue in Bartow, Florida. John Griffis preached. His lesson was "The importance of repentance" and the text was Luke 13:1-5. His lessons stressed three points: (1) The need of repentance; (2) Godly men have always preached repentance; (3) Repentance must be defined properly. One came forward confessing public sin and asking for the prayers of the brethren.

These brethren have increased their support to the *Florida School of Preaching* for this year and it is greatly appreciated.

Tampa

I preached at their morning services at the 29th Street Church of Christ, Tampa, Florida, on January 13, 1991. Brother Sam Roney, graduate from the *Florida School of Preaching* worships

here. Brother J.C. Mobley preaches for this congregation and brother Willie Parker taught the Bible class and we studied II Peter 3. There was good class discussion and the brethren gave the *Florida School of Preaching* \$100. We appreciate their assistance.

Venice

Brother Carr and students were with the brethren at Venice Church of Christ, Venice, Florida, Sunday, January 13, 1991. Ted Wheeler is the preacher here. Both Ted and his wife Renee are 1984 graduates of the *Florida School of Preaching*.

The Bible class was taught by Neil Lopez. Brian Kenyon preached for the morning services and Graham McDonald at the evening. Kevin Joy lead singing for the morning services and Brian Kenyon at the evening.

By special contribution these brethren contributed \$700 to the *Florida School of Preaching*. We are grateful for this sacrificial generosity by these brethren.

Sarasota

We were privileged to be with the Osprey Avenue Church of Christ in Sarasota, Florida, January 20, 1991. Brother Harold Rodriguez, graduate from the *Florida School of Preaching* is the faithful evangelist.

I spoke for the worship services and the brethren contributed \$66. toward the support of the school. Following services we were treated to a scrumptious meal in the home of brother and sister Nathaniel Harvey.

Ocala

Sunday, January 27, 1991 I visited with the Woodland Place

Church of Christ, 1921 N.E. 35th Street. Brother Tuck Andrews is the faithful evangelist here. I taught the adult Bible class and preached for the morning worship services.

There were individuals there who expressed an interest in attending the *Florida School of Preaching*. We hope to see this materialize.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Brother Eugene Clevenger returned for a special series with the *Florida School of Preaching*. The series was January 28-31, 1991. The sessions were daily from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. with an hour break for lunch.

January 22, 1991



Dear Friends,

Enclosed find a check to further your good work in educating those who want to preach "The Word." Enjoy reading *The Harvesters* and to keep informed of your good work.

Keep the good work on the move!

Sincerely,
C.V. Bradshaw

Thank You!

Many make contributions toward the success of our annual lectureship. Essential activities from volunteer help include: picking up our speakers from the airport and return them; providing transportation to and from the motels; furnishing housing and food; and as always helping fi-

nancially. Others have rendered assistance in the past, as well as this year, and they deserve special recognition. **Finley** and **Mary Holton** each year work diligently to serve our guests and to keep the kitchen in operation. Helping them this year has been **Bea Pratt** and **Barbara Brackin**. We thank brother **Kenneth Hawkins** for his generously supplying our fresh fruit.

J.H. Blackman was in charge of making tapes of all the lectures. Assisting him were **John Brackin** and **Graham McDonald**.

There were others that made individual contributions of food but I do not have all of their names. Let me say again to all who contributed in any way to serving our guests this week, **THANK YOU**.

SPECIAL OFFER

This year we had a special series in the annual lectureship program. Each day at 3:30 p.m. a different speaker considered a number of difficult texts and provided suggested solutions for the proposed difficulties.

These texts were grouped around the major headings of God, Christ, and man with some of a miscellaneous nature. Some of this material was put in book-

let form by the school. Contributing to the book with me were **Curtis Cates** and **Eugene Clevenger**.

This material is for the **serious Bible student**. While supplies last you may obtain copies for **\$4.30** and this covers postage and handling.

SEND ORDERS TO:
Difficult Texts Explained
Florida School of Preaching
1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, Florida 33803

Wonderful News

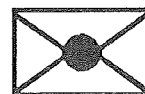
Sunday, January 20, 1991, full time student **Joseph Sejour**, preached for the River Road Church of Christ in New Port Richey, Florida. During the previous week he taught a fellow Haitian who was a friend of his. This friend was also a preacher for the Assembly of God. Brother **Sejour**, using the baptistery of the River Road Church of Christ, baptized into Christ his friend **Dieuma Alnatas**. Brother **Alnatas** can speak no English but has contact with 32 independent churches in Haiti.

Brother **Sejour** wants to return to Haiti this summer to work with the church there. Brother **Sejour** could be of untold

value to these brethren in their progress in the truth. Help make this possible.

SEND CHECKS TO:
Joseph Sejour
Haiti Work Fund
Florida School of Preaching
1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803

January 2, 1991



REPORT FROM
INDIA

The church is growing in India. Many are being baptized, including Hindus, Muslims, and denominational preachers. Congregations are being established, and the church lacks only a few states now in having congregations of the Lord's church in all of the 26 states of India. In all of the meetings there were 519 baptisms. . . .

The needs are great in India. If congregations would save their communion cups and not destroy them, then give them to some one going over, or send to me, the brethren would be very grateful for them. Too, they need Bibles and Testaments at all times. There were some dangerous incidents at times, but I made the trip okay, and glad to be back home. . . . Best wishes for the New Year.

Sincerely,

Perry B. Cotham

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