

The Old Paths

Volume 9, Issue 38

November 17, 2002

“Does ‘Hard’ Preaching Pay?”

Fanning Yater Tant

For several years there has been a discussion within the brotherhood as to the relative merits of “hard” preaching in comparison with “persuasive” preaching. By this latter is meant the type of preaching that never refers to a denominational church by name, uses the Dale Carnegie “method of approach” psychology, seeks never to shock or offend anybody, and in general tries to “love” sectarians into Christ rather than to teach them by a stern contrast of truth and error.

Lately there has grown up a rather definite school of thought in certain sections that a “new era” is dawning among the churches of Christ. In this new and enlightened age the emphasis is to be put on worship, work, love, and fellowship. The old “doctrinal” emphasis, it is felt, was all wrong. We must seek a new way of winning people to the Lord. Men who emphasize the old “doctrinal” teachings must give way to men who preach “love” and “fellowship.”

Well, we’ve had occasion recently to see some “hard” preaching results close at hand. Down at Lufkin, Texas, the church of Christ has had a daily radio program for many months. The radio stations there (two of them) have put no restrictions on the brethren. In the matter of calling the names of denominational

churches and preachers, Roy Cogdill, William Thompson, Jr., and Luther Blackmon have not been at all hesitant. They have read from Baptist manuals, Methodist disciplines, Catholic Catechisms, over these stations, telling the people exactly who it was in Lufkin that taught such doctrines. They have referred to these denominational churches by name, and have read the Bible in direct contradiction of the teachings of these churches. Now that is about as “hard” preaching as even the “hardest” among us have ever desired or attempted. So we were grateful to have a chance to weigh the results.

We found the town of Lufkin in a seething ferment because of such preaching. Men on the street-corners were discussing the matter; denominational preachers were preaching about it in their pulpits: the Assembly of God “pastor,” after consultation with the other sectarian preachers in town, went on the air over both stations to try to prove that “the so-called church of Christ was started by Alexander Campbell after he had been withdrawn from by the Baptists.” He warned all the denominational people to stay away from the services of the church of Christ, and to ask their own “pastors” rather than those “hard” preachers any questions they might have in mind as a result of the sermons of “these Campbellites.”

And the result?

In about one year’s time something like a hundred people from denominational churches have

become obedient to the gospel of Christ. The Lufkin church has held eight gospel meetings within the town and its immediate environs within that year, most of them being conducted by local preachers. These people who have been baptized into Christ are taught; they have not “cast their lot with the church of Christ” because they were friendly with the local preacher nor because they enjoyed the “fellowship” of members of the church. They are Christians because of a deep and overwhelming conviction of the truth as it is taught in the New Testament.

We merely cite this as a case in point. We believe there is ample evidence from all over the world to show that the preaching that is truly effective is “doctrinal” always, all ways, and forever!

Editor’s Note:

This article was written in the *Gospel Guardian* by brother Tant on May 26, 1949. I think he makes some excellent points, don’t you? In fact, as I read this article, I wondered if some of these compromisers brother Tant talked about were still alive! Certainly, the attitude of softness has not died! It was evident during Bible days, as it is evident today. Why is this? What is it that makes people so “nervous” or upset when the truth is preached and error is rebuked and renounced (Eph. 5:17; II Tim. 4:2)? I have a few ideas:

1) Perhaps such preaching upsets those who really don’t believe the truth anyway; and thus they are not willing to defend the truth!

2) Perhaps some are nervous because they have very little Bible knowledge. Therefore, if a friend or neighbor asked them about something that had been taught, they would not know how to answer (See: II Pet. 3:15; Col. 4:6).

3) Perhaps it is because some do not love the truth as they claim; and as a result, they do not want to hear all of the truth taught (II Thess. 2:10-12).

4) Perhaps some have not truly "forsaken all" as Christians, and instead love father, mother, son, daughter, or self more than Christ (Matt. 10:35-38). Thus, when the truth is taught, it bothers them because a loved one, or even they themselves, are caught up in sin.

Whatever the case may be, it is a sad day for God's people when we see Christians who do not want to hear all the truth preached! Brethren, do not mistake compromise for love! The love that Christ has for men is that which looks out for their best interests! Yes, Christ suffered, endured ridicule, pain, and then died on the cross for our sins (Matt. 27; Mk. 15; Lk. 23; Jn. 19)! He did so willingly. He was also the One who cleansed the Temple and drove out the moneychangers on two occasions (Jn. 2; Matt. 21). He called the scribes and Pharisees exactly what they were — hypocrites (Matt. 23)! He warned His apostles specifically about the Pharisees and Sadducees, telling them to beware of their doctrine (Matt. 16:6-12). The motivation for all that Christ did was love — love for lost souls (Lk. 19:10)!! Friends, we cannot say we truly love anyone if we get nervous or embarrassed at the thought of them hearing all the truth of God's word preached from the pulpit, the radio, the bulletin, etc.!!

Let us examine ourselves and see if we truly want the truth preached, proclaimed, and promoted here! Let us not be satisfied at hearing "part" of the truth, or just the portions which make us comfortable. Let us demand to hear "all things" commanded of God (Acts 10:33)!! Paul said, "I am not ashamed ..." (Rom. 1:16). — **ARE YOU??**

Spared From The Tornado....

Jarrold Jacobs

Last Sunday afternoon, we endured strong straight-line winds, as well as heavy rain between the AM and PM services. While it seems people in this area escaped major damage and injury, reports from other parts of the country (esp. Tennessee and Alabama) reveal much worse damage and loss of life. Every Christian ought to pray for those who lost loved ones, homes, and property during those storms. Yet, this is not the purpose for writing this article.

What fascinated me was the report about the Tennessee family who escaped injury and possibly death when the tornado tore up their house. How did they escape injury? Put simply, they were not at home! They said they were "at church" when the tornado went through!

This got me to thinking: If the storms last Sunday had hit around 5:00 or 5:30, would I have made the effort to assemble with the saints (even if it meant I was late)? Think about it: First century Christians endured, "a great fight of afflictions ... made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions ... companions of them that were so used.... [including the] spoiling of [their]

goods ...". Yet, they were told: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:32-34, 25). In spite of the various persecutions the Christians endured, they were still exhorted to continue to assemble with the saints. I wonder if "bad weather" would have entered into these people's minds as an acceptable reason for forsaking the worship services when the saints gathered?

I readily admit that if I was driving and saw a tornado coming my way, I'd want to find a safe place (or ditch) very soon! Yet, let's be honest about this — how often might that happen? Actually, 9 times out of 10 we would already be at our destination and out of imminent danger, anyway.

I don't know anything else about those people in Tennessee; but one thing I do know is that they didn't allow dark clouds, wind, and rain to stop them from assembling when they knew they should.

Dear ones, there are several each week who refuse to assemble with the saints here on Sunday evening. Friend, what is keeping YOU from assembling with the saints? Foul weather can't be your excuse every week! Whatever it is, let me remind you that one day we all will answer to God for what we have done (Ecc. 12:13-14; II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 2:2-16). Do you think your excuse will be accepted by Jesus on the day of Judgment? Be honest!

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Don't forget the call-in radio program on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. **Call: 683-5200** with your Bible question.

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"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jer. 6:16)