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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD**

JUSTIFICATION

Justification is often loosely considered to be the remission of sins, those sins having been atoned for and completely put away by the Lord Jesus Christ, but this is not an adequate definition. Remission, Redemption, Reconciliation, Righteousness and many other terms are closely allied, indeed they form an integral part of Christ's great work; they must not be confused, and certainly not made to mean one and the same, for they are distinct aspects of the mighty transaction undertaken and completed by the Mediator. To comprehend the magnitude and complexity of the work of Christ, one must have an understanding of these words and the particular aspect of doctrine which they describe.

Remission takes away sin and pronounces that person forgiven, but of itself this does not constitute that person justified. Justification is effected by imputed righteousness, which has been the subject of two previous articles. In remission we see the taking away of the filthy garments, whereas justification describes the change of raiment, as the sinner is clothed in the robe of Christ's righteousness (cf Zechariah 3:4). This robe is the Mediator's perfect obedience in fulfilling the Law when upon earth, acting vicariously as the Surety for all His elect people. Remission lies in the removal of the person's sin, Justification in the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ is a fundamental article of the gospel. It is not sufficient for a sinner to be simply pardoned, he must be justified, that is, accounted righteous at the bar of Divine justice.

It immediately becomes apparent that there is a fundamental link between Righteousness and Justification as it is through the obedience of Christ to the Law of God that sinners are **justified**. "*By the obedience of One (Christ) shall many be made righteous*" (Romans 5:19). This is more than our Lord's obedience unto death, it also involves His active obedience in life. "The reward of life is not promised to suffering, but to doing; the Law says, **Do this and live**; it promises life, not to him that suffers the penalty, but to him that obeys the precept" (John Gill, D.D.). "There never was a law even among men, either promising or declaring a reward due to the criminal, because he had undergone the punishment of his crimes" (Dr Goodwin).

The death of Christ covers the penal demands of the Law concerning the believer's sin and saves him from wrath to come, whereas the sinless life of Christ covers the preceptive requirements of the Law. This sinless perfection wrought for His people is imputed to them; this fits them for heaven. "By Christ's death and the merits of His life God's justice is more abundantly satisfied than if we had suffered the pains of hell for ever" (Thomas Watson). In Christ the believing sinner is seen as one who has kept the commandments, that person is **justified** and has a title to life, therefore is granted access through the gates of the city and is eternally blessed (cf Revelation 22:14).

Through the matchless grace of a sovereign God, **justification** is the wondrous blessing of all the elect. This imputation of Christ's righteousness resulting in justification is made real and actual to the sinner at regeneration. Under the Holy Spirit's gracious influence and mighty invincible power the sinner is brought forth to life, enlightened, given faith to believe and appropriate the glorious truth as revealed in the gospel; then it can be said, that person is justified by faith and has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (cf Romans 5:1). The justification of sinners is due solely to the sovereign grace of God,

through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, effectually wrought in the life of everyone of the election of grace, by the Holy Spirit. It is because of this that the free gift comes upon "*all men to justification of life*" (Romans 5:18); "*all men*" in this verse quite obviously does not mean that justification is universal. Justification pertains only to the elect, "*Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified*" (Romans 8:30).

Justification is immediate upon regeneration, "*By Him all that believe are justified*" (Acts 13:39); it is not a gradual process. When a sinner is brought to faith by the Holy Spirit, that very moment that person is clad in the robe of Christ's righteousness and **justified**. Neither are there degrees in justification, all are justified. The repentant thief upon the cross was as much justified as the apostle Paul. What is more, justification is eternal; once a sinner has had his filthy garments removed and has been clad in the righteousness of Christ, that flawless attire is forever upon him, never will it be removed.

"They righteous are in what He's done,
And **evermore** will be;
They stand complete in Christ the Son,
From condemnation free".

The God of our salvation is just and equitable. The demands of His holy Law having been fully met, both preceptively and penally in a substitutionary manner by the Mediator, God can "*be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*" (Romans 3:26). "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*" (Romans 8:1). A person who has been justified through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ will **never** be condemned at the bar of Divine justice. Could ever a more glorious word fall upon mortal ears!

W.H.Molland

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is a work vitally linked with justification, indeed the two cannot be divorced, nevertheless they are not to be treated as terms which identify the same aspect of doctrine.

The primary thought conveyed by the word 'sanctified' is to be separated from the secular and set apart for a sacred purpose. In the Old Testament, vessels, places, days, as well as persons were sanctified, signifying that they had been consecrated for holy purposes (cf Genesis 2:3, Exodus 13:2, Exodus 40:10-13).

In the sovereign purposes of the eternal God, an innumerable company of Adam's race were **set apart**, "*chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world*" (Ephesians 1:4), "*ordained unto eternal life*" (Acts 13:48); they comprise the "*remnant according to the election of grace*" (Romans 11:5). These are said to be "*sanctified by God the Father*" (Jude v1). Viewed from this angle, sanctification is seen to be an integral part of election and is known theologically as **positional sanctification**. This positional sanctification is the possession of everyone "*in Christ*"; it is as complete for the youngest and weakest believer as it is for the oldest and strongest. It is solely dependent upon our union with and position "*in Christ*", which is according to God's sovereign election as laid down in the everlasting covenant which cannot be annulled; it is ordered in all things and sure (cf 2 Samuel 23:5). This is an aspect of the faith once delivered unto the saints for which we must earnestly contend (cf Jude v. 3).

There is however another aspect to this subject which is **experimental** sanctification. The sanctification of the believer "*in Christ*" as laid down

in the covenant of grace is perfect and is infallible as to its end, but sanctification in the actual life of the believer is imperfect; it is progressive because the Christian has the old nature to contend with, which constantly warreth against the new (cf Romans 7:15-25). Certain sections of the professing church teach entire sanctification, meaning that if a person is wholly consecrated to the Lord they can attain unto a state of sinless perfection in this life. Such teaching is at variance with the Word of God. True it is that the believer is exhorted to "*press toward the mark*" (Philippians 3:14) and to "*go on to perfection*" (Hebrews 6:1), but a state of sinless perfection cannot be attained until the believer is glorified in heaven; nevertheless the Christian must ever be striving after holiness in his daily life.

The Scriptures give many similes which illustrate growth in grace and progression in sanctification. Firstly the seed is sown, which germinates; first appears the blade, next the ear, then the full corn in the ear (cf Mark 4:26-28). Christians commence as babes in Christ, growing into young men and then into the state of fathers (cf 1 John 2:12-14). So it is said that "*the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*" (Proverbs 4:18).

It immediately becomes apparent that sanctification is not the same as justification. The child of God cannot be more justified than he is at regeneration, but he certainly can be more sanctified, that is in the experimental sense (daily living). If there is no sign of spiritual growth and development then a person's claim to justification might well be in doubt; "Sanctification is progressive, if it does not grow, it is because it does not live" (Thomas Watson).

The ongoing work of sanctification in a person's life is the hallmark of true Christianity. Regeneration is the commencement of a life of holiness, it is an ongoing death to sin and a living unto righteousness, a

progressive conformity to the Divine nature. This can only be brought about by compliance with the Word of God and being in harmony with His will. "To say from the heart 'Thy will be done' constitutes the very essence of sanctification" (Robert Leighton).

There can be no doubt that the shallow preaching of modern evangelists has done much to undermine the Biblical teaching of sanctification. The 'Come to Jesus' theory, 'and all will be well in this world and the next; for the moment you decide for Jesus Christ as your Saviour, all your sins are forgiven and you are justified before God and can now go on your way rejoicing!' This is not the doctrine of the gospel although there may be smatterings of truth in it, but it is a perversion, it is not all the counsel of God (cf Acts 20:27).

The moment a person is born of the Holy Spirit, that person is a child of God and a member of the kingdom of heaven; immediately he becomes at variance with the world, the flesh and the devil. The world with all its subtle allurements and many of its demands is to be forsaken. The child of God is to mortify the flesh and all its unholy desires and inclinations; he is to resist the devil, with his attractive suggestions. Far from having embarked upon an easy pathway, the new believer finds himself on a battlefield. His new life is no easy-come, easy-go existence, he is to deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow the Lord (cf Luke 9:23); always clad in the whole armour of God (cf Ephesians 6:11-18). It is at the point of conversion that the experimental aspect of sanctification commences.

Octavius Winslow, in his book 'The Work of the Holy Spirit' says, "The work of sanctification is the work of a man's life". This is true and if a person has really known the grace of God in salvation and has the assurance that they are now justified before a holy God, they will realize that they are new creatures, that old things have passed away and all

things have become new (cf 2 Corinthians 5:17). In the mighty work of regeneration, the Holy Spirit brings *"a clean thing out of an unclean"* (Job 14:4). The consequence of this is that the new creature should show forth the praises of Him who hath called them from darkness into His marvellous light (cf 1 Peter 2:9). *"For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:10).

These Scriptures clearly prove that a believer's **positional** sanctification will be evidenced by their **experimental** sanctification, this truth being expressed so succinctly by our Lord Himself, *"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them"* (Matthew 7:20). To over-emphasize the truth of positional sanctification and justification to the detriment of experimental sanctification, is to create a serious imbalance in Christian doctrine and produce fertile soil for the growth of Antinomianism. Those who propagate such unbalanced teaching are vain men, for faith without works is dead (cf James 2:20).

Martin Luther came to a deep appreciation of the truth of justification as it is so gloriously set out in the Epistle to the Romans; it is sad to say however, that he spoke of the Epistle of James, which sets forth the **result** of true justification (good works), to be an epistle of straw. This is a sad distortion of doctrine which alas is not uncommon today. These two epistles complement each other and like all Scripture, must never be taught in isolation.

If a person is sanctified **positionally** by God the Father in sovereign election and in consequence has been justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (cf Romans 3:24), then evidence of this will be seen in a sanctified life. A believer is to give diligence to make his calling and election sure (cf 2 Peter 1:10), meaning that the Christian is to give sure and positive evidence to the fact that he has been elected of God unto

salvation, "*created in Christ Jesus unto good works*". He therefore, by life, conversation and conduct, manifests his high calling to the world in which he lives. This will be clearly detected in a number of ways by all who observe.

1. A sanctified person will not only leave sin, he will loathe it. Never will he excuse sin in himself or condone it in others, rather will his antipathy against it be seen.

2. A sanctified person will be diligent in the study of the Word of God. He will love God's Law (cf Psalm 119:163); to him the Scriptures will be more to be desired than gold (cf Psalm 19:10); he will meditate upon God's Law day and night (cf Psalm 1:2) and it will be his sole authority.

3. A sanctified person will be diligent in attendance to spiritual duty. He will not only be a hearer of God's Word, he will be a doer (cf James 1:22). The Sabbath will be his delight (cf Isaiah 58:13); he will not forsake the assembling together of the saints (cf Hebrews 10:25); he will strive for the faith of the gospel (cf Philippians 1:27) and contend earnestly for the faith (cf Jude v3).

4. A sanctified person will be marked by a well-ordered life; he will be separated from the world, he will not love it, neither the things that are in it (cf 1 John 2:15). He will fully appreciate that his citizenship is in heaven and live consistently, confessing with the worthies of the faith of the ages past that he is a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth and that he is journeying to a better country (cf Hebrews 11:13-16). His life could be summed up in no better way than by the inspired words of the apostle Paul, "*For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*" (Philippians 1:21).

5. A sanctified person will be resolute; he will not be motivated by expediency, public opinion will not sway him, popularity will not influence him. Human reasoning or the theories of men will have no place in his conclusions. His guide will be, "*What saith the Scripture?*" (Romans 4:3), "*What is written in the Law?*" (Luke 10:26). Having discovered from the Word of God his course of action, he will say, "*Thus*

saith the Lord" and with holy determination set his sights to wholly follow the Lord as did Caleb of ancient time (cf Deuteronomy 1:36).

In our Lord's wondrous High Priestly prayer for His own, one of His petitions was "*Sanctify them through Thy truth*" (John 17:17). This petition deals with experimental sanctification; its degree in a Christian's life will be determined firstly by their knowledge of God's Word and secondly (and this is even more important) by their obedience to that knowledge.

W.H.Molland.

The Antinomians who claim that, since Christ not only bore the penalty of sin, but also met the positive demands of the Law, the believer is free from the obligation to observe it, an error with us today. This is a thoroughly false position, for it is only the Law as a system of penalty and as a method of salvation that is abolished by the death of Christ. The Law as the standard of our moral life is a transcript of the holiness of God and is therefore of permanent validity also for the believer, though his attitude to the Law has undergone a radical change. He has received the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of obedience, so that without any constraint, he willingly obeys the Law.

L. Berkhof

The sincere believer acknowledges "*that the Law is holy, and the commandments holy, and just and good*"; he knows "*that the Law is spiritual*". He therefore delights in the Law after the inward man. The closer the resemblance of the believer to the spirituality of the Law of God the more thoroughly is the work of sanctification advancing in his soul.

O.Winslow

A Warning Against Antinomianism

The word 'antinomian' comes from the Greek words, 'anti' (against) and 'nomos' (law), signifying opposition to the law. It refers to the doctrine that the moral law is not binding upon Christians as a rule of life, and was first used by Martin Luther (1483-1546) in refuting the belief of John Agricola (1492-1566), who denied that the believer was in any way obliged to fulfil the moral law. Agricola is alleged to have said that a man was saved by faith alone, without regard to his moral character. Luther denounced this view as a caricature of the gospel, although Luther himself has been appealed to by antinomians in favour of their view.

Great minds have long been involved in this theological controversy, and both sides will always have their able exponents. Let us remember, however, that Scripture gives us this strong warning: *"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain"* (Titus 3:9).

While seeking to avoid "contentions" on the law, let us not avoid the plain emphasis of the Word of God concerning personal holiness, practical godliness and sanctified living unto Christ as Lord of our lives. These things are so important! They are not side issues! They are **not** *"unprofitable and vain"*. Because some may pervert holy living by their self-righteousness (a 'holier-than-thou' attitude), this does not excuse anyone from obeying the precepts of Scripture.

By 'personal holiness' we do not mean 'inherent righteousness', for the sinner by nature has no righteousness to commend him to a thrice-holy God. *"All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"* (Isaiah 64:6). We are

all unclean, defiled and depraved in our natural condition. The Lord Jesus Christ **alone** is 'our righteousness' before God, as far as merit is concerned: "*The Lord our Righteousness*" (Jeremiah 23:6). This is ever the emphasis of the gospel of grace. True righteousness is imputed to us by the grace of God and received by faith. Only Jehovah can "*justify the ungodly*" and impute righteousness to the unbelieving sinner "*without works*" (Romans 4:4-6). This is a reality because the Son of God had our sins imputed to Him, "*that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). What a glorious exchange; Christ took our sins, we receive His righteousness!

What happens in those who believe on Christ? This is the crucial question. Can the believer live as he pleases? Does the grace of God change our lifestyle? Is there such tension between justification and sanctification that no one really understands either? Let C.H.Spurgeon clarify the Biblical position:

"I trust that in my ministry I shall never keep back the doctrines of the grace of God, but I am anxious at the same time with equal clearness to declare the doctrine that good works are necessary evidences of grace. I am persuaded that if self-righteousness be deadly, self-indulgence is ruinous. Rowland Hill said he had spent a large part of his life in battling with the white devil of Arminianism, but he would now fight the black devil of Antinomianism. I desire to maintain always a balance in my ministry, and while combating self-righteousness to war perpetually with loose living. Antinomianism is a black devil indeed, a devil whose smutty fingers have defiled full many of the pure truths of our holy faith, and made even good men shy of receiving them. We must remember that though we are saved by grace, yet grace does not stupify us, but rather quickens us into action: and though salvation depends upon the merits of Christ, yet those who receive those merits receive with them a faith which produces holiness".

Scripture makes it clear that there is a difference between 'works' and 'good works'. 'Works' are attributed to the natural, fleshly man, the person outside of Christ and unrenewed by the Holy Spirit. These are the works

Paul has in mind when he says, "*Not of works, lest any man should boast*" (Ephesians 2:9). Salvation is by pure grace, and is not merited in any sense by the works of sinners. Grace and works do not mix. But then Paul tells us what has happened to the truly regenerate person: "*For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them***" (Ephesians 2:10).

So 'good works' are wrought in us by the same God who has justified us (cf Isaiah 26:12). The works of our own hands are called "*dead works*" (Hebrews 9:14), but these 'dead works' have been repented of, and the blood of Christ has "*purged us*" from them "*to serve the living God*". The true Christian then naturally (or supernaturally) produces 'good works' just as fruit trees produce fruit. Listen to J.C.Philpot:

"Spiritual readers, judge for yourselves. Is fruit generally insisted upon as the mark of union with Christ? Such fruits as self-denial, crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts; labouring to know and do the will of God; repentance and godly sorrow for sin; mourning and sighing over a backsliding heart; a prayerful, meditative spirit and that sweet spirituality of mind which is life and peace - are not these vital realities positively ignored, and not even named, much less insisted upon? It would almost seem, from the general neglect of enforcing upon believers practical godliness, as if the elect might do anything they liked, and that we are saved, not **from** sin but **in** sin; delivered, not from the curse of the law to walk in obedience of the gospel, but almost to do any abomination in which the carnal mind delights (Jeremiah 7:10)".

Antinomianism is simply resting upon mere doctrinal truth, resting upon a mere knowledge of sin, without any vital experience of deliverance from sin in the daily life. We must not only be sound however, in the letter of the truth, but we must have a real, vital union with the living Lord in our hearts, evidenced by a godly walk. "*Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us **how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more***" (1 Thessalonians 4:1).

"Zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). "It will not do for a man to **say** he is not afraid of the judgment seat of Christ because Christ died for him, while at the same time, he is walking in a loose, careless, self-indulgent way. This is a most dreadful delusion" (C.H.Mackintosh).

Away with the modern idea of quietism and passivity (the teaching that all initiatives on our part are the energy of the flesh). This passivity has led us into lethargic inaction and spiritual laziness. The call of Scripture is to **activity** and **duty**: "*Mortify (put to death) therefore your members which are upon the earth*" (Colossians 3:5). "*Put off*" and "*put on*" are Paul's admonitions to us (Ephesians 4:22-24).

W.F.Bell

Released from the Law as a covenant of life, it yet remains obligatory as a rule of obedience to Christ. The Law of God remains in all its dignity, purity, and force. The believer in Christ is released from it as a ground of acceptance, but not as a standard of holiness. Is it true that Christ is the standard and pattern of a believer's holiness? Undoubtedly. Then we argue that the Moral Law was the standard of Christ's holiness; therefore it must necessarily be the standard of the believer's. The whole life of Christ was a conformity to the purity of the Divine Law which was His standard of holiness and His pattern of obedience; therefore in following the example of Him we are being conformed to the purity of the Law "*in newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*". Sanctification then, is a growing conformity to the spirituality of the Divine Law.

O.Winslow

COWBOYS

This is an unusual title for an article in a Christian magazine, nevertheless it will be seen to be relevant.

One of the dictionary definitions of this term is 'an unscrupulous builder', unscrupulous meaning 'not according to principles or exact standards'. It is unfortunate, nevertheless it is a fact, that such builders do exist; they are unprincipled men whose workmanship does not come up to the required standard. Such men soon become known as **cowboys** and the discerning person will be wary of them.

There is an analogy here to matters spiritual and the lessons are most solemn. A blue print was laid down in heaven for the building of the Church. The eternal God is the architect; plans, specifications and building regulations are all carefully set out. Christ Himself is the great Master Builder; *"I will build my Church"* (Matthew 16:18). In the building of His Church, He has enlisted His people who *"are labourers together with God"* (1 Corinthians 3:9). A most sobering word is given concerning the employment of His redeemed ones; *"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed **how** he buildeth thereupon"* (1 Corinthians 3:10). The Church of Jesus Christ is a *"holy temple"* (Ephesians 2:21). Because of its holy design and character the utmost care and vigilance is required on the part of the labourers. A pattern has been set out in the Word of God for the ordering of Christ's Church and guidelines are set; all practices and activities of a local church are to be squared with the Divine Mandate.

Alas there are many unscrupulous builders who have entered the churches and become involved in its worship and witness; they are spiritual cowboys who are now engaged in the work of the Lord. Many have not even studied the plans; they have little if any knowledge of the order or design of God's spiritual house. Nevertheless by their bizarre activities and unbiblical order, they rapidly produce an edifice which to an unspiritual professor may well appear to be a highly successful effort, but in actual fact it is a travesty, a total misrepresentation of the true.

At the time the remnant of Judah returned from the captivity in Babylon to rebuild the earthly Jerusalem and God's house, twice are we told that the Lord appeared with a measuring line to measure the house and the city (cf Zechariah 1:16 & 2:1,2). Whilst this had its earthly significance, it is also symbolic of the spiritual. There is a heavenly Jerusalem and the general assembly and Church of the firstborn to which all God's spiritual people come (cf Hebrews 12:22,23). A line will one day be stretched forth over this spiritual house. *"Every man's work shall be made manifest"* (1 Corinthians 3:13).

The manner of our building and the type of material which we have put into it, be it *"gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble"* (1 Corinthians 3:12), is all to be inspected and measured by the Divine Surveyor. Those bulky commodities, wood, hay and stubble, that appear so great in size, are of no value. The Divine architect and Master Builder never specified such materials, therefore in His final inspection it will be rejected. In that day the question will be asked, *"Who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?"* (Isaiah 1:12). God has given a plan and a specification even to the foundations, but pseudo-builders destroy or at best distort those foundation principles; they then continue to build after the vain imagination of their own hearts, erecting that which is expedient and that which is attractive to the natural man and which does not upset the carnal mind. In consequence when people come into God's

courts, it is in a free and easy spirit of lightness and gaiety. There is little if anything in the activities and ministry of many a modern church which will search the heart and wound the conscience.

Where will the spiritual showmen be in that day, with their spectacular performances in modern methods and signs and wonders, who claim such successes? OUTSIDE! (cf Matthew 7:21-23). Sobering words indeed, but true; this day is surely coming, it is the day of adjudication and it is only that which is according to the plan and in keeping with the spiritual building regulations as laid down in Holy Scripture, which will pass and be accepted.

There is a Divine standard in Church practice and worship. It is ever to be in a spirit of deep reverence and godly fear. How can the noisy, irreverent, frivolous gatherings so common today ever be looked upon as the worship of God? Even sinless angels veil their faces in His presence and cry Holy, holy, holy (cf Isaiah 6:2,3). We are to "*worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness*" (Psalm 29:2), and "*fear before Him*" (Psalm 96:9). Such sobriety will not appear attractive to the natural man and of himself he certainly will not be drawn to it, but it is not for us who profess to be "*Labourers together with God*" to flout His planning regulations in order to appeal to the unregenerate. The Good Shepherd who gave His life for the **sheep** will by the Holy Spirit, infallibly call those sheep and lambs by the faithful preaching of the gospel. The omnipotent Spirit of God does not require the cowboy efforts of drama, carnival and puppet shows in the courts of the Almighty to accomplish that which only He can effect. Gimmickry, amusement and entertainment is that which invariably the Devil uses to filter goats into the flocks of God's redeemed sheep. Churches which embark upon such methods are erecting a '**spiritual folly**' ('folly' meaning 'imitation', 'that which gratifies the builder's whim').

All these matters pertain to our contribution and building of the spiritual edifice. Let us be marked as builders of integrity, ever remembering it is not our structure, therefore we dare not deviate from all that which has been laid down, neither must we lower our standard of worship and witness to a level which does not measure up to the standard Biblical building regulations; to do so is to rightly be classed as an unscrupulous builder - **a spiritual cowboy.**

W.H.Molland

Taken From The Writings of R.B.Kuiper.

"The first and foremost work of the true Church is its faithfulness to the Word of God".

"He who today forbids what God allows will almost certainly tomorrow allow what God forbids".

"How sad is the church's plight today! The cancer of doctrinal indifference is gnawing at its vitals".

"The church that knowingly tolerates in its midst, denial of the basic truths of the Word of God by that very token has ceased being a true Church".

"The Church is as a matter of indisputable fact, the opposite of the unholy world"

"It is a silly notion, widely held, that Christianity is only a life, not a doctrine".

EXTRACTS FROM:

INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Methods of Bible study are only of relative importance, but the **spirit** in which it is studied is all important. It calls for no argument to prove that a spiritual book calls for a spiritually minded reader, for "*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Something more than intellectual training is required: the heart must be right as well as the head. Only where there is honesty of soul and spirituality of heart will there be a clearness of vision to perceive the Truth; only then will the mind be capable of discerning the full import of what is read, and understand not only the bare meaning of its words, but the sentiments they are designed to convey, and a suitable response be made by us.

There is grave reason to believe that much Bible reading and Bible study of recent years has been of no spiritual profit to those engaged in it. Yea, we go further: we greatly fear that in many instances it has proved a curse rather than a blessing. This is strong language, we are well aware, but no stronger than the case calls for. Divine gifts may be misused and Divine mercies abused. That this has been so in the present instance is evidenced by the fruits produced. Even the natural man can (and often does) take up the study of the Scriptures with the same enthusiasm and pleasure as he might one of the sciences. Where this is the case, his store of knowledge is increased, and also is his pride.

We are unable of ourselves to interpret God's Word aright; but it is part of the gracious office of the Holy Spirit to guide believers into the truth,

thereby enabling them to apprehend the Scriptures. This is a distinct and special operation of the Spirit on the minds of God's people, whereby He communicates spiritual wisdom and light unto them, and which is necessary unto their discerning aright the mind of God in His Word, and also their laying hold of the heavenly things found therein. This is evident from the case of the apostles, for though they had companied and communed with Christ for the space of three years, yet we are informed that, at a later date, "*Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures*" (Luke 24:45).

How what has been alluded to should impress the Christian with the need for holy caution when reading the Word, lest he wrest its contents unto his own injury! How it should humble him before its Author and make him realize his utter dependence upon Him!

Tens of thousands of graceless professors possess an intellectual knowledge of spiritual things yet they are not Divinely taught, as is evident from the absence of the fruits which accompany the same. In like manner, there are a great number of preachers who abhor the errors of Modernism and contend earnestly for the Faith. They were taught in Bible institutes or trained in theological seminaries, yet it is greatly to be feared that their knowledge of the Truth is largely a notional one, unaccompanied by any heavenly unction, saving power, or transforming effects. By diligent application, and personal effort one may secure a vast amount of Scriptural information, and become an able expositor, but he cannot obtain thereby a heart-affecting and heart-purifying knowledge thereof. None but the Spirit of Truth can write God's Law on the heart, stamp His image in the soul, and sanctify by the Truth.

An impartial spirit is required if we are to discern and apprehend the real teaching of Holy Writ. Nothing more beclouds the judgment than prejudice - none so blind as those who will not see. Particularly is this

the case with all who come to the Bible with the object of finding passages which prove **our doctrines**. An **honest heart** is the first quality the Lord predicated of the good-ground hearer (cf Luke 8:15). When this exists we are not only willing, but desirous, to have our own views corrected. There can be no advance made in our spiritual apprehension of the Truth until we are ready to submit our ideas and sentiments to the teaching of God's Word. While we cling to our preconceived opinions and sectarian partialities, instead of being ready to abandon all beliefs not clearly taught in Scripture, neither praying nor studying can profit the soul. There is nothing which God hates more than insincerity, and we are guilty thereof if, while asking Him to instruct us, we at the same time refuse to relinquish what is erroneous.

It is an eternal and unalterable law of God's appointment, that whoever will learn His mind and will as revealed in Scripture, must be humble and lowly, renouncing all trust and confidence in themselves. The Lord Jesus declared that heavenly mysteries are hid from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto babes (cf Matthew 11:25). Those who assume an attitude of competency, and are wise in their own esteem will remain spiritually ignorant and unenlightened. Whatever knowledge men may acquire by their natural abilities and industry is nothing unto the glory of God.

Since the Bible is different from all other books, it makes demands upon its readers which none other does. We must first get down on our knees and cry unto God for light: "*Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies give me understanding*" (Psalm 119:36&73); "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally*" (James 1:5); "*That which I see not teach Thou me*" (Job 34:32).

A.W.Pink

EDITORIAL

There can be no doubt that the confusion and declension in the churches today, both with regard to doctrine and practice, is to be attributed to one thing - the Word of God is no longer authoritative to vast numbers who profess the name of Christ, and alas this must include the major percentage of the ministers.

The fundamental aspects of doctrine such as the intrinsic holiness of God, the reality of Satan, the fall of man in Adam, sin, judgment, the substitutionary work of Christ, repentance, faith, conversion, have in so many instances been watered down; indeed in large sections of Christendom, almost totally eliminated.

As for church practice, the slide has been astronomical. The standards of the world and carnal methods have replaced the sober, dignified and reverent worship of the true and living God. Singing, pithy talks and epilogues take the place of the solid preaching of the Word.

Only when the professed people of God uncompromisingly come back to the Holy Scriptures and accept every word and precept as being final authority, will God be glorified in His saints.

Visiting Preachers D.V.

Lord's Day	2 October 1994	Mr J.R.Hooper	Saltash
	16 October 1994	Mr G.Thrussell	Truro