

April, 2007

# Pause Ponder Profit

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*Note:* The following article was written as an editorial in the April, 1956 issue of Bible Bulwarks. Tommy McClure, the preacher at Second and Walnut, at that time, reprinted it in Pause-Ponder-Profit. Fifty one years has passed since this article first appeared. Its admonition and advise is as much needed today, if not more so, than the day it was first written. I commend it to you with the hope and prayer that, with careful consideration, it will benefit every single reader. — J. A. B.

## A Change Of Attitude

by James P. Needham

A man's attitude is the well out of which his actions are drawn. Attitude is basic, and exceedingly important. Every thought, word and deed is colored by your attitude whether in religion or some other phase of life. Get a man's attitude right and his activities will be in harmony with the laws of God and man. If his attitude be wrong and his actions right it is usually due to convenience or cowardice; acting in accordance with his attitude would bring **discomfort** which he doesn't want or he is **afraid** to act the way it dictates. If one's attitude is right he can "stand" poverty or

plenty; persecution or praise; gladness or sadness without any change in his attitude or ill affect upon his general actions, or thinking.

That there has been a drastic **change of attitude** in the church of our Lord within the past several years no informed person will deny. This change has taken its toll both among preachers and brethren in general. Its cause is due largely to the **material prosperity** of the brethren in general. We have moved our meeting houses from "goat alley" to Main Street, and out of dilapidated shacks into modern superstructures of ultra modern architecture. We have at least doubled our memberships in most communities, and have large contributions and attendances. This is all very wonderful **IF OUR ATTITUDE IS RIGHT!** An institution as costly and essential to the salvation of the most valuable thing in the world deserves a place of dignity in any locality. If the church improves and advances in the next fifty years like it has in the past fifty all will be well **IF OUR ATTITUDES REMAIN RIGHT!** But with the material prosperity of the past several years has come a **change of attitude**. This change has led to spiritual deterioration among us, thus to a concerted effort to make of the church a sort of social club, or another denomination.

The time has come when many preachers have turned from exposing error, fighting the devil, and hellfire and brimstone preaching to a social gospel, soft soaping the truth, sugar coating the plain word, and "dehorning" the plain teachings of Christ. The time has come when preachers who call names and identify sin by scriptural designations, and in general preach like Christ and the apostles, are not welcome in many pulpits. There was a time when preachers used

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the backs of their pants legs for shoe shines, rode mules or walked to preaching appointments, got paid for meetings with a side of salt meat or a new pair of socks, and wore the same suit when they preached and when they baptized. They were not flattered with the favors of men nor praised by the public because of their prominence. This is no longer true. Our preachers pay quarters for shoe shines, drive the latest model automobiles to preaching appointments, get paid well, and wear different suits every day; they baptize in a modern baptistry with dimming lights and many are loved, praised and adored by the general public, including the sectarians. We do not hesitate to say that **most of this is wonderful IF THE ATTITUDE DOESN'T CHANGE!** But it is astounding and disgusting to see the number of preachers among us who have determined to give both the church and the world what they want—and multitudes of brethren “love to have it so.” (Jer. 5:31) When our attitudes become as modern as our buildings, our preaching as soft as our dress, and our praise from the sectarian world as abundant as our pay checks, the church is not drifting—it **has drifted!** When the plain truth of the blessed gospel meets with its **first and foremost opposition within the church** it is past time for **alarm, it's time for action!**

It is now a common thing to find preachers and brethren in general who condemn debating as “a terrible disgrace to the cause of Christ.” They say, “Let error alone, it will eventually die out,” not knowing that error **never** dies out, but instead has to be **fought out!** In their determination to please the world and sign a truce with Satan, they deceive themselves into believing that their attitudes are acceptable to God and in harmony with the Spirit of Christ. They have forgotten, **if they ever knew**, that the very ground they occupy today was won by debating, devil fighting, name calling preachers of the gospel who gave their lives, generally without monetary remuneration, in the struggle to plant the cause of Christ all over

this nation, and who died in hope that those who inherited the obligation to continue the “good fight of faith” would not falter and faint under the force of divine duty. God be thanked, there is a remnant of brethren who are not ready to fail those grand old soldiers of the cross, count for naught their sacrifices, fail to appreciate our grand heritage, and turn traitors to the kingdom of God. Some brethren either cannot see, or do not care, that, in their efforts to retard the plain progress of the plain preachers, and able debaters among us today, they condemn and castigate both the **founders and restorers** of Christianity.

We have seen the result of this changed attitude both in meeting and local work. One of the quickest ways to be moved on “for the good of the Cause,” or to eliminate the possibility of being called back for another meeting in many communities is to **preach like Christ and the apostles.** While that is a sad commentary on many churches, it is, nevertheless, a true one. We've been told “not to use the words hell, denomination, and sectarian in the pulpit,” to “tell folks they will be condemned instead of telling them they will go to hell.” Brethren have demanded that we not “call names, preach on baptism, and instrumental music.” We've had our own brethren in the Lord to demonstrate more sympathy for sectarian preachers than for us in certain battles, and to apologize to Catholics for the plain truths we preached about them. We've heard members of the church **brother false teachers**, and compare the body of Christ to “other denominations.”

To preach in many congregations one must be highly skilled in the damnable art of **deviation and dodging** if he has set his heart to stay in the “good graces” of the brethren. Their idea of “conversion” is to rock worldlings to sleep in the cradle of carnality and wake them up in the saving arms of Christ without their ever knowing just

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what happened. If one tells folks that “every plant my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13), some brethren will “kindly” tell him to “move on for the good of the Cause” and forever brand him as “a preacher without the Spirit of Christ, whose attitude is not right.”

If one will stifle his conscience and burn his sermon outlines on hell, denominationalism, the all-sufficiency of the New Testament, and the New Testament church, he can be in “GREAT DEMAND” over night. If he will preach **everything in general and nothing in particular**, assure the visiting sectarians that they can come back without any fears of having their unscriptural names mentioned publicly or their damnable doctrines condemned scripturally, the brethren, and especially the socialite sisters will look upon him as “one of our best preachers” and go away singing his praises to the tune of “Isn’t he just wonderful?!” They will write him up in the leading papers as having “conducted the greatest meeting in the history of this congregation,” and before we know what is happening the preacher’s meeting schedule will be filled for ten years in advance!

On the other hand, watch the brother whose interest is “getting” **souls** instead of **meetings** and see how many times he gets “called back.” He will usually give dissatisfaction the first trip, and soon become known as “one punch Charlie.” If Godly shepherds are determined to feed their flocks on **sound doctrine** instead of **empty husks** and invite him back, some of their sheep will rebel, scatter, and boycott **them, the preacher and the meeting.**

What we have said is not to be interpreted to mean that we think **all** preachers and congregations have **changed their attitudes.** Let no one conclude that we are herein advocating **ugliness** or **unkindness** on the part of preaching brethren. **That is as unscriptural as compromise and we’d condemn it just as quickly!** We must never fail to let the sinner know that we love his soul, and that such love motivates us to be plain in our preaching. Many brethren need to study the word “love” and determine its meaning, and discover what it demands!

Brethren, unless this 20th Century attitude of compromise is not obliterated from the church of Christ immediately, the number of faithful brethren will continue to decrease by the year until finally those who contend for the ancient order of things will become like a “wee, small voice” crying in a wilderness of softness, sectarianism and professionalism, and the New Testament church will become an unknown organism. The time has come, yea it has past, for truth loving, God fearing brethren to strike, and strike hard! We must unsheathe the sword of the Spirit, and put on the whole armor of God and revive the scriptural manner of delivering the greatest message ever heard. Brethren may croak, the sisters faint, and many “church rolls” will be diminished, but ultimate victory is assured.

This editorial is to serve as a spring board for many articles along this same line. The editors and writers of **Bible Bulwarks** are not in sympathy with the movement toward professionalism among preachers, and general softness among brethren so prevalent today. We believe it must be smitten hip and thigh, and intend to discharge our obligations along this line. We kindly insist that brethren inspect their attitudes and determine whether or not they have changed them from what they should be, and if so, to be willing to get them in tune with the New Testament, in the interest of their own salvation as well as the salvation of others. The prevalent need of the hour is for brethren to read the works of God more and more, and the works of men less and less, and drink deeply of the spirit and manner of preaching exemplified by Christ and the apostles.

## Why I Do Not Believe In Salvation By Faith Only

by James A. Brown

**D**o you believe that a person is saved the very moment he comes to believe in Christ. If so, you believe in the very erroneous doctrine, as taught by many religious denominations, of salvation by "faith only." I do not believe that a person is saved by "faith only." Because the New Testament plainly teaches that:

- We are not justified "by faith only." (James 2:24)
- Faith without works will not save. (James 2:14)
- Faith without works is dead. (James 2:17)
- Faith without works is as dead as the body without the spirit. (James 2:26)
- Faith is made perfect by works. (James 2:22)
- If "faith only" was the only thing necessary for salvation then, the demons would be saved because they "believe—and tremble." (James 2:19)

*So, why do you believe in salvation by "faith only"?*

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