

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

September 28

2008

NO GRANDCHILDREN

The influence of godly parents can do much to shape the lives of their children, and it is to be expected that the younger generation accept religious concepts of their parents. While it is true that this sometimes results in a blind following, parents have an obligation to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and should feel no guilt for so doing. Following the guidance of parents need not be done blindly; nor is rebellion against the parent's teaching a sign of true independence and maturity. It sometimes indicates immaturity, blindly following poorly informed peers.

But when all this has been said we still must reckon with individual responsibility. I like the way bro. Ferrel Jenkins put it in a recent chapel talk: "God has no grandchildren!"

Certain Jews in Christ's day, and some brethren today, rest their hope in a sort of physical kinship with God. The Jews said, "*We have Abraham to our father*" (Matthew 3:9), and some brethren say, "My dad was an elder in the church," or, "My mother was truly a godly woman." I feel like asking, "Do you think they would approve of your present conduct or attitude?"

The family relation with God is spiritual, a "knowing" "indwelling" and "fellowship" that is established through individual self-denial and trust in Jesus Christ. Parents can no more do these things for their offspring than they can love, hate, or feel joy for them. Each one who comes to God becomes His "child" in the same sense that he becomes a lively stone built upon the true foundation, a laborer in God's vineyard, a soldier in His army, a citizen in His kingdom. These and other like figures depict the functioning serving

relationship of adults, freely giving themselves to God in Christ.

"He that **believeth** and is baptized" limits the relationship to those **who** can believe. Infants are **safe**, and in no need of forgiveness. "*All shall know me*" (Hebrews 8:11) further stresses the exercise of intellect and will that is essential to being a "child" of God. Genuine Christianity is not inherited. **GOD HAS NO GRANDCHILDREN!**

✍ Robert Turner



CHRIST AND MODERN RELIGION

Jesus said, "*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*" (Luke 19:10). He also said He would build his church (Matthew 16:18). Luke tells us that those who were being saved were added to the church (Acts 2:47). If we are to respect Christ and His authority we must, as His people (church), seek the salvation of souls. To accomplish this we must be busy proclaiming the gospel of Christ. Paul said, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*" (Romans 1:16). The gospel of Christ is the power of God and the **ONLY** power unto salvation.

Sadly, as we observe the modern religious world today you would think that Christ shed His blood to establish some social or recreational institution. Just this past week I read of churches in this area "hosting an animal blessing service," "hosting a barn dance," having a speaker speak on "How can a Christian serve as a politician in government?" and "holding free oil changes for single mothers." If you read the religious column in the newspaper you can add other such activities to this list.

Christ purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28). Can anyone imagine Christ dying on the cross so that such activities as those listed in the preceding paragraph could be accomplished? To think that such is the mission of the church is nothing short of blasphemy and says that Christ died in vain since any of these activities can be accomplished by man made institutions. However, that which is the mission of Christ's church (the salvation of souls) required that supreme sacrifice.

✍ James Hahn

A Problem Area for Preachers

Paul told Timothy to *"preach the word; be instant in season, out of season"* (2 Timothy 4:2). It has been suggested that this phrase literally means to preach when folks like it and when they don't. In another place the apostles prayed for "boldness" in their preaching (Acts 4:29). So, preachers are to boldly proclaim a message that will sometimes be unpopular.

In the process of doing this work, a preacher is in a precarious situation. This boldness may cause his hearers to think that he is over-confident. Some may imagine that he is close-minded. There may be the impression that he is not open to other points-of-view, or that he wants to stifle what others have to say. Sadly, in some cases and with some preachers, these accusations are true.

However, no preacher 'worth his salt' wants to discourage open discussion of issues. And, while he may speak forcefully on a given topic, he acknowledges his own limitations and the possibility that he can err in understanding the Scriptures. If he is obedient to the Word, he knows that he (like all others) must continue to *"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* (2 Peter 3:18).

In this age of "political correctness" it has become increasingly unpopular to tell people that they are wrong about anything. But, of course, that is a significant part of what preachers do. Those who are doing their best to *"reprove, rebuke and exhort"* (2 Timothy 4:2) will inevitably touch some areas that are 'close to home.' When this happens, we urge you to seriously consider what has been said. Honestly examine yourself to see if you need to apply the lesson. Be willing to rethink your previous position. And, finally, do not hesitate to share your thoughts and concerns with the preacher. If he is the kind of man he ought to be, he will gladly discuss any issue with you. Give him the chance to do so!

✍ Greg Gwin



Preachers & Opinions

"That's just the preacher, and that's just his opinion." With these words the sermon that has just been delivered is dismissed and the lesson ignored. Everything the preacher has taught is wiped away with the stroke of a very wide brush. "It's just his opinion, don't worry about it."

Do preachers have opinions? Of course, they do! Like everyone else, they have opinions about politics, sports, the weather, and a hundred other subjects. They also have opinions about the important judgments that must

be made in our personal lives and in our congregational work. In this, they are no different than any other Christian.

Do preachers express their opinions? Of course, they do! Like most other people, preachers will tell you what they think about subjects that are of interest to them. And, spiritual subjects are very important to them. Thus, they are prone to state their views on issues that relate to serving God.

There is nothing wrong with a preacher, or any other Christian, expressing an opinion. When they do, you may choose to agree or disagree. Typically, preachers have based their judgment upon sound principles and years of practical experience. Their opinions, therefore, should carry some weight to those who are concerned about following the best course in matters of expediency. But their opinions are just that, opinions, and they do not carry the force of divine law. You are invited to totally disregard them if it is only their opinion.

But, be careful! Preachers are also proclaiming God's commandments, and these MUST be obeyed. If the preacher has demonstrated by 'book, chapter, and verse' that what he is saying is the will of God, you cannot just overlook it by claiming it is only his opinion. If he has shown the authority of Scripture for what he is teaching, then it is NOT an opinion, it is law – it must be obeyed. If you fail to do so, you are ignoring God, not the preacher. As Paul said; *"he who rejects this is not rejecting man but God . . ."* (1 Thessalonians 4:8). Think! ✍ Greg Gwin

Greg will be with us October 19-24

Belleville church of Christ

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www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sun. Bible Study. 9:30 a.m.
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.
Sun. Evening Worship. . . . 5:00 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study. 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Charles Carpenter. . . . (317) 839-3873
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507

Deacons

Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
Don Perry. (765) 676-5825
Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514

Evangelist

James Hahn. (317) 745-1507