



# YOU CAN DO PERSONAL WORK

*“Let your speech be always with grace,  
seasoned with salt, that ye may know  
HOW ye ought to answer every man.”*  
(Col. 4:6)

BY  
OTIS GATEWOOD

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## PREFACE

CHRIST said: "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8). He stated a grim truth, but why should this be so? Why should business men be more zealous in carrying on their business than we are in spreading the kingdom of God? Why should they manifest more wisdom in their business relationships than we do in winning souls for Christ?

They will not do so if we but follow the examples set by Christ and the apostles. Christ and the apostles were the wisest men and greatest teachers the world has ever known. They gave us the gospel, and although we have been strong in preaching it in its ancient purity, we have been slow to follow the examples and instructions they gave us about *How* to teach.

Many books have been written about *What* Christ and his apostles taught, but this book is given to a discussion of *How* they taught. The gospel spread rapidly in the beginning not only because they knew *What* to teach, but also because they knew *How* to teach. And the gospel will spread as rapidly today if we combine the *How* with the *What*. You may believe that the *How* in teaching is unimportant, but if this is true why did Paul say: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know *How* ye ought to answer every man"?

In pointing out the *How*, I have stressed the need of personal teaching within the local congregation, I have mentioned some things we should and should not do, some questions we must answer and how to answer them; but another thing is very essential. One may learn these things as an individual, but still personal work will fail within a congregation unless it is arranged systematically under the leaders of the church. Definite supervision must be given, records kept, reports given, and classes of study continued if the work is to succeed.

I know that information on personal work has not been exhausted in this book. Much more could be said, but if these thoughts help you to know *How* to personally teach others the greatest message the world has ever known, I shall be most grateful.

OTIS GATEWOOD

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## CHAPTER I

### METHODS OF TEACHING

**B**E a good boy, Otis." These were the parting words of my mother as she left this world when I was only six years of age. Those last words made a profound impression on me, and they will remain throughout life. To me they are the most treasured of all words that she spoke; they were the last.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations"; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." These were the last and parting words of our Saviour. All his words are true and powerful, but just as the last words of our loved ones are the most impressive, so should these words of our Lord be to us. They were to the apostles. Christ had taught them many lessons during his personal ministry that they strove diligently to keep; but none inspired such zeal and sacrifice as, "Go . . . teach all nations"; "Go . . . preach the gospel to every creature." Governments, persecution, ridicule, cruel scourgings, and death could not stop them. They "went everywhere preaching the word." They were determined to do what the Lord told them to do. Only about thirty years after those parting words were spoken, the inspired writer said: "Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words *unto the ends of the world*"

(Rom. 10:18). "And be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached *to every creature* which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23). These Scriptures do not say that everyone was converted, but they do say that "every creature" *heard*. Not more than one hundred twenty disciples received the original commission, and within thirty years these statements were made.

Today, approximately 800,000 members of the church of Christ are faced with the same sacred, parting words of the Lord, "Go . . . teach all nations"; "Go . . . preach the gospel to every creature." Are we going to be able to say within thirty years as did the apostles that the gospel has been preached to every creature? We must bow our heads in shame and say that so far it has not. Before World War II there were congregations of the church of Christ in only twenty-one of the one hundred twenty-one nations. Didn't the Lord say, "all nations"? Didn't he say, "every creature"?

We claim to be great believers of the Word of God. We say: "We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where it is silent." In many respects this is true, especially in regard to baptism and the Lord's Supper. Why, if we found a congregation that was not observing baptism and the Lord's Supper, we would brand it as false. But how many scriptures teach on these subjects? About twenty-two show the necessity of taking the Lord's Supper, and approximately one hundred twenty teach on the subject of

baptism. I know that when the Lord says a thing one time, it is just as true as if he said it a million, but more than one thousand times in the New Testament the Lord has exhorted us to *teach* his word. Surely he believes it is essential that we teach in order to be his disciples or he would not have stressed it so much. I don't know a single Christian or congregation that does not believe in teaching and preaching the gospel in some form, but still it remains true that we have preached the gospel in only twenty-one of the hundred and twenty-one nations. The Lord said, "all nations." Do we believe we must do what he said? Yes, we all believe the last part of the great commission about "baptism," but do we believe the first part that says we *must* "go"? We say that we believe it, but let us examine our practice and see if we do. How do we go about carrying out that part of the great commission?

### *The Pulpit*

We erect a church building and hire a preacher. He preaches Sunday morning and Sunday night, teaches a class Wednesday night, preaches funerals, performs marriage ceremonies, visits the sick, and calls on interested nonmembers. He goes to see the brethren to keep them interested and to see why they were absent Sunday and Wednesday nights. What are the results? About thirty or forty baptisms per year, and if the exception happens, perhaps fifty or a hundred. And then to make sure (?) that we

preach the gospel to "every creature," we hire an evangelist about twice or three times a year; distribute a few circulars; make a few announcements; give a few sermons on the radio; put an ad in the daily paper inviting people to come; put up a sign in front of the building advertising the "preacher"; and then if they do not come, it is their fault and not ours—we have preached the gospel to "every creature" in our community! If that is true, why keep on doing it every year? Didn't the Lord tell us to go to all nations? The very fact that we keep repeating these "conscience-easing" processes each year while we do not go to all nations, is proof that we have not really done what the Lord said. We preachers are paid to do it, so why should we object? The members ease their conscience, so why should they object?

But brethren, let's be honest with ourselves and with the Lord. Are we really doing what he said? Are we preaching to "every creature?" I believe it truthfully can be said of any large city where the church is strong that there are thousands of people who know there is a church of Christ. In some way it has been called to their attention, but they do not really *know* the truth. The Lord said "teach." He did not just say, "Let them know you are in town." He said, "go teach." He did not say, "Invite them to come to hear you." Did you ever keep a record for one year to see how many non-Christians were being *partially* taught by "coming to church" to *hear* the sermons? I venture it would be a high estimate to

say that the average congregation exposes five hundred people per year to some kind of sermon which "happens" to be preached when they come. The lesson might not be the one they should hear, and in many cases it would be the sermon they should not hear in their present state of mind.

Perhaps I am painting a dark picture, and you may say that I believe we are unscriptural and impractical in our methods of teaching. Perhaps you are even angry with me by now. But before you judge, let us study for a while to see the effectiveness of our system of teaching.

There is no question about it; pulpit preaching is powerful—one of the most powerful means of preaching the gospel, and it will continue to be so. It was a pulpit sermon which converted the three thousand on Pentecost. Christ gave us the great Sermon on the Mount. Paul's Sermon on Mars Hill is known in literature as one of the world's masterpieces. Even in our day we can see the power of the pulpit. Many of us were thus converted. Many books could be written of all the faithful gospel preachers, the sermons they have preached, and the wonderful results that have followed. The pulpit has definite advantages over other types of teaching.

First, there is the advantage of being able to teach many at once. It takes very little more energy and effort to teach thousands than it does to teach ten. The larger the audience, the greater the opportunity for good and the better the preacher can preach.

There is also a certain psychology of persuasion in a large audience that is not present when you are teaching only one or a few. When people assemble, sing, pray, and study together, there is a certain uplifting, unifying influence that cannot be attained otherwise. For that reason we are exhorted not to forsake assembling (Heb. 10:25).

Let me say this before going further. Many have said that they did not believe pulpit preaching is as powerful as it once was. But I do not believe this is true, nor would I have you come to that conclusion from what is said. The pulpit is as powerful as it ever was. I know that people do not come to hear preaching as they once did, neither are gospel (revival) meetings getting the results they did in the past. For these reasons many are saying we should quit having so much preaching and gospel meetings—that the denominations have seen that revival meetings have lost their power and have ceased having them, therefore we should also. If we get ideas like that, the devil will have us defeated.

Many have become hysterical over the poor results that are seen from our pulpits and have advocated that we start trying to reach people in other ways. I agree that we should teach in other ways, but this does not mean that we should have less preaching. Acts 5:42 says the early church had preaching *daily* in the temple, and I don't know of many congregations that are having that much preaching.

The reason the pulpit has come to be so ineffective

is that we depend on it almost entirely. Peter's sermon would not have had such results on Pentecost if other things had not been done in preparation for it. Our gospel meetings and sermons on Sunday should be the *climax* of our other work. Sermons can accomplish results which personal work, tracts, radio sermons, etc., cannot accomplish. They should be the reaping of all our efforts. We should just get busy with more *other work* and not depend on the *pulpit* alone. But certainly that does not mean we should have less preaching. The more of *other work* we do, the more powerful the pulpit, and greater will be the need of more sermons to climax it all.

The pulpit has its limitations which we must all recognize and confess. Some believe that the only way to teach is through the sermon, but as we go further we can see conclusively that this is not true. This is the only kind of teaching to which some have been accustomed, so it is hard to break away from tradition. Often tradition is law in the minds of some (Matt. 15:3).

The pulpit is limited because the preacher has to guess and use his best judgment as to the lesson most people need. Many times have I delivered sermons when I knew full well that the lesson did not "go over." It was not the sermon which was needed on that occasion. I have preached sermons on first principles and had no one present but members of the church. They would have been profited much more by another kind of lesson. I have given sermons that



members of the church needed, when I knew they were not best for nonmembers who were present. A person may come to hear a preacher dozens of times and not receive the particular lesson he needs to move him. If the preacher had talked to him personally, he could have answered his question in five minutes; but not knowing the need, he may never touch his particular problem. A preacher cannot always give the lesson most needed. He is limited to preach to those *who come*. Thus we are woefully failing to reach the entire world because we have been content to preach heretofore to those who "come to church." In this way the pulpit is limited.

There are hundreds of people within a few blocks of the meeting house who will never be taught if we keep waiting for them to "come to church." We may try to convince ourselves that we have discharged our responsibility if we invite them and they do not come, but we must still remember that the Lord said, "Go teach." He did not say, "Invite." We may invite hundreds of times, but we have not done what the Lord said until we *teach*. We may believe that those who refuse to come would not be interested if we took the message to them, but that is not true. There are thousands who would be delighted with the message we have if they only knew what we teach. They have become so disgusted with denominationalism that they do not come to the church of Christ because they believe we are just another denomination. I have gone to the homes of many who have constant-

ly refused to "come to church" but would say after I taught them: "I didn't know there was a church in all the world that taught and believed that." They would never have known if we had depended on the pulpit and invitations.

Medicine is good for children, but they do not come and ask for it. The gospel is good for the lost and we know they need it. The Lord also knew, so he said for us to go take it to them. We have the method reversed. We expect the drunkard to come to us and say, "Teach me that it is wrong to drink," or the liar to say, "Teach me to tell the truth." Sinners do not want to quit sin, neither does the devil want them to; so why should they "come to church" to learn to quit? We know their danger of hell and they do not. Brethren, we must reach them, but if we wait for them to "come to church" to be taught, they will die in sin. We must do more than teach from the pulpit and advertise to get people to "come." We must do what the Lord said. We must "Go."

### *The Radio*

But how can we go? Many have answered, "Get on the radio and you can reach the thousands who would never come to church." Perhaps that is a good answer. The radio has its advantages. By preaching over the radio we can reach many who would never come to church, and we can reach them in a hurry. When we use this method, we put our work on a dig-

nified basis that it cannot attain in any other way. I have personally seen hundreds reached over the radio in Utah who would never have been found in any other way. We have kept close check on our radio preaching and have found that on an average there has been about one baptism for every three radio sermons. I do not mean to say that they were converted over the radio, but one was reached out of every three broadcasts who later obeyed the gospel. I believe that is just about as high an average as can be found from any broadcast, but very few who were taught over the radio alone obeyed the gospel without further teaching. The radio is more effective in some places than in others, and when good results are seen in one place, we are inclined to overestimate its effectiveness.

Radio managers and operators tell me that hundreds of radios are turned off during any religious program. Thousands of people will not listen to any kind of religious broadcast, and those that need it most and those the Lord told us to "teach" are among that number. So we cannot say that we have fully disposed of our responsibility to preach the gospel to "every creature" just because we have given them an opportunity to hear.

The radio is also ineffective because there is very little "personal touch" to it, and we cannot contact the listener personally unless we follow up with other teaching. Very few interested ones sit down and listen to gospel sermons without allowing other things in the

home to distract, so why should we expect those not interested to take greater interest? Many radio sermons are poorly given, therefore we cannot conclude that we have completely fulfilled the last request of the Lord by preaching over the radio.

### *Literature*

But there is another way we can preach the gospel. We can print it and give it to those who are interested. The printed message has its place, and it is effective within that field.

Tracts furnish people with information that they can read, reread, and check. We can thus teach many who never come to church. Tracts also collect all the scripture on a given topic so that the person who is not a Christian can study the subject intelligently. I think the power of the press in our land has proved the effectiveness of the printed message. The Adventists and Mormons have used this method very effectively and consistently. We should also awake to our opportunity and put the printed message of the gospel in every home in the land.

However, we may overestimate the value of the printed page. Many tracts are poorly written on poor paper, and the physical appearance has such a lack of appeal that it is destroyed because people judge the message by the appearance before it is ever read. Many people throw the religious tract into the waste basket as soon as they see what it is. Many are

satisfied with their own religion, or lack of religion, therefore they see no need to read and study. Most members of the church of Christ do not read our own literature. (Ask some of the publishing houses and you will see, or get some free tracts for distribution and check to see how many are read.) So why should we think those who are totally disinterested read? Most tracts are too long for people to read at a glance, therefore they are laid aside and never read. Then, too, the problem of distribution and expense of printing is so great that we have done very little in this field. We have had thousands of tracts sent to us in Salt Lake City. We have distributed as high as 47,000 in one month in that city, but as yet I have seen very few people come to church through tracts alone. Results are poor when tracts are distributed from door to door. They are very effective to give a person who has been taught on a certain subject or to those who are interested in a certain subject, but they are very ineffective to arouse interest.

### *Class Teaching*

Class teaching is one of the best methods, but even then we are limited to teach only those who come. We must depend on *personal work* to build up the class.

### *Personal Work*

This brings us to our subject of personal work.

The pulpit has its place. The radio, tracts, and the class have their place. We should study these methods carefully and strive to make each more effective. But if we reach "every creature" in "all the world," it will be by the *personal teaching* of *every member* of the church. I believe it is the most effective and surest way to reach all the world in the quickest way. We ask that you seriously consider why it is so effective, and decide now to learn *how* to do personal work.

### QUESTIONS

1. Shall we ever evangelize the whole world if we preach from the pulpit alone?
2. Why do we depend so much on pulpit teaching and so little on other types of teaching?
3. Name three outstanding weaknesses of pulpit preaching. Give the advantages it has over other teaching.
4. Would Peter's sermon on Pentecost have accomplished what it did with no preparation?
5. Why is it difficult to teach the sinner from the pulpit alone?
6. Have we fulfilled the Great Commission when we let people know that there is a church in town?
7. Can we teach "every creature" by preaching over the radio?
8. Why are many of the tracts that we publish never read? How can we improve their effectiveness?
9. Is the church fulfilling its obligation to teach by simply teaching in the pulpit, over the radio, through tracts, and through the Sunday School?

## CHAPTER II

### WHY WE SHOULD BE PERSONAL TEACHERS

**C**HRI<sup>S</sup>T was a great personal teacher. He is the Master Teacher of all ages. All great educators whether religious or non-religious recognize him as such. If we want to learn to be good teachers, we can learn best from him. We might think that Christ was a prominent pulpit speaker, but when we check the New Testament, we find only about sixteen public discourses. The rest of his teaching was done personally. The Sermon on the Mountain was a public discourse as well as other great lessons he taught, but some of his greatest lessons were to one individual.

Christ was going through Samaria. His apostles went into the city to buy food. While he was sitting on Jacob's well, a sinful woman came to draw water. Christ asked her for a drink, and before long he masterfully changed the subject to things spiritual. He told her that she was living in adultery and then taught her how to worship God. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). We probably think he should have given that great lesson to a large audience, but not so. It was given to only one sinful woman. But it brought such conviction that she went back to the city and brought great multitudes to hear the Lord.

Another time Christ was going down the road with a large multitude. He might have turned to teach them, but he did not. He saw a little shortlegged fellow up in a tree. He was a despised publican and sinner. Christ told him to come down, for he would eat with him that day. The Lord so effectively taught and changed this sinner that he could say before leaving his home: "This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19:9).

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). This is such a great lesson that thousands of sermons have been preached from it, but it was given to only one man, Nicodemus. John 19:39 tells us that he anointed the Lord at the burial, therefore he evidently was converted.

Most of the life of our Lord was spent in personally teaching those who needed his help. He came to change the entire course of humanity, and the way he did so was by taking time to teach the individual. Christ was more interested in the personal problems of the human race than he was in large audiences. We have it reversed today. We think that if we can have large audiences, we are succeeding; but the Lord succeeded best in his teaching when he taught only one. He came to be known as the "friend of the publican and sinner." The enemies of the Lord thought they were ridiculing him, but in that statement they paid him the greatest compliment. Today we love him and look to him—not because we believe he is



interested in large audiences, but because he is interested in our personal problems. If he as the Saviour of the world takes a personal interest in all our affairs, cannot we learn the lesson that we as Christians can best help him to save the world by being personal teachers?

### *Early Christians Were Personal Teachers*

Not only was Christ a great personal teacher, but also the early Christians. The church grew faster in those days than it has ever, and if we can learn that we should be personal teachers as were they, the church will grow likewise today. Acts 8:3, 4 tells us that when the church was scattered by persecution, they "went everywhere preaching the word." They were all scattered "except the apostles." But today we would say that it was the duty of the apostles to go while the Christians stay at home. We say that preachers should go and preach the gospel in foreign lands, etc., while the rest of the members of the church stay at home and support them. But that is not the way the gospel first spread. The early Christians went, and wherever they went they preached the Word of the Lord and started congregations. Both men and women went and taught. Acts 5:42 says that the early Christians taught from house to house, and we have found in the campaigns in Utah that many of the young ladies are better teachers than some of the young men. Those early Christians had to give up their homes, sacrifice, and die that they might do

this kind of work; but that is the reason the church spread so rapidly.

If we manifest such zeal, the church will also spread today. But most of the members think they are too busy with other work to take time to teach. They say, "That is what we are paying our preacher to do. Let him do the teaching, and we will work and make money to give. If we didn't work to make the money, he couldn't be supported; so we do not have time to be teachers." Well, brethren, the early Christians helped support the apostles, too. Acts 4:34, 35 says that they even went so far as to sell what they had and laid it at the apostles' feet, but you never heard them say, "We are paying the apostles to preach." No, they taught in addition to their support. Some of them became so poor that a collection had to be taken for them later on, but the cause of Christ spread; and the Lord cared for them, too. When we get back to the determination of those early Christians, we shall see the gospel spread as it did then. Thousands of our brethren today would not skip one meal or miss a little sleep in order to teach someone. Others will not even drive out of the way a few blocks in order to get some lost soul to take him where he can be taught. We need not expect the results of the early church until we manifest their zeal. Do we love the Lord enough?

*Every Christian Is COMMANDED to Teach  
Personally*

We have had the idea too long that the responsibility for teaching the gospel rests on the shoulders of a few preachers. Listen to these Scriptures and you will see that it is an individual responsibility. Matthew 28:19, 20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . ." Those who are baptized are to be taught to do what Christ told his apostles to do. He told the apostles to teach and baptize. Every Christian who is taught should teach and baptize. II Timothy 2:2 says that the words were to be committed to faithful men—not to preachers—who would teach others also. Christians are the "light of the world" and "the salt of the earth." Christ did not say that *preachers* are the "light of the world" and the "salt of the earth."

I Peter 3:15 is directed to all Christians, and we are exhorted to be ready *always* to give an answer for the reason of our hope. Members of the church come running to preachers to go teach someone who is interested. Christian, why don't you teach them? You are so commanded. Ezekiel 3:18, 19 says: "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his

life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Every time I read this passage I think of the song that says:

When in the better land  
 Before the bar we stand,  
 How deeply grieved our souls will be  
 If any lost one there  
 Should cry in deep despair:  
 You never mentioned Him to me.  
 You helped me not the light to see,  
 You met me day by day,  
 You knew I was astray;  
 Yet, you never mentioned Him to me.

In the light of all these scriptures, we must come to the conclusion that it is the individual responsibility of *every* Christian to teach others. We cannot pay someone to be honest for us, to be baptized for us, or to take the Lord's Supper. Neither can we pay someone to do our teaching. We might help support someone who is giving his full time to teaching, but still we must teach. We must teach individually in order to be apostolic, scriptural, and practical.

### *Personal Work Increases Teachers*

When Christ started out to convert the world, he did not begin alone. The first thing he did was to choose twelve to help him. Later he chose seventy

others. If we would learn a lesson from them in going into mission fields, we would profit greatly. We should send several teachers instead of just one. Christ chose those apostles and trained them because he knew that later he would be taken away and they must carry on. He knew also that it would be impossible to go personally to all who needed him, so he ordained and commissioned his apostles to do the same work (Matthew 10). We must do the same thing today. Most of the personal work of the congregation is done by the preacher. But he has funerals to preach, sick to visit, marriages to perform, social engagements to meet, sermons to prepare, etc., and he is not able to get around to all who need his personal attention. We must increase our number of personal teachers and workers in the congregation. One man cannot possibly do it all. Didn't the early church have certain ones set in as teachers (I Cor. 12:28)?

I once heard it said that if Christ had visited one home per minute from the day he lived until now, he would not have been yet once around. The people in China alone could march four abreast for eternity past a given point at the rate an ordinary army marches, and they would never all get past that given point. Three die every tick of the watch, I am told, who have never even heard there is a God in heaven. The work of preaching the gospel to "every creature" is a stupendous task, and we cannot succeed if we push all the responsibility to the shoulders

of a few. We should be "workers together" with the Lord.

*Personal Work Is Good for the Members*

In many congregations there are disinterest and unconcern which often terminate into church gossip and fusses. The members do not read their Bibles, they do not pray, and do not attend the services. In my estimation this can be remedied by the leaders' putting them to work teaching. Let some older and stronger Christian take the weak person and go call on someone who needs teaching. In doing this you will see a great revival in the life of the weak member. If he is kept busy at that kind of work, he will read his Bible—he will be forced to or be defeated; he will pray more because he will see the need of the help of God; he will come to church more regularly because he has been made a part of the work; and he will want to come to encourage those he has been teaching.

The old statement: "We can learn best by doing" is still just as true today as ever. All members of the church need to be given a part in the work of the church. It is no wonder we have so many cold, slothful, indifferent members. They are never given anything to do. I have found more dissatisfied church members who are complaining because the leaders do not give them anything to do than I have among those who think they are expected to do *too much*.

The Bible says: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." We sometimes won-

der why the members do not have any better appetite for the gospel than they do; but it is all because they never take any exercise. If we are to grow, we must exercise as well as eat; and the leaders of the congregations should see that the babes in Christ get the exercise. I have gone into many congregations to preach where there is nothing being done about personal work and found that members go to sleep on my sermons and gripe because I preach too long. But when I go to a place where the members are busy trying to teach others, they grasp every word and take notes on what is said so that they can use it in teaching others. It is a real inspiration to preach under these conditions, and anyone can preach better; but it surely is just as boring for a preacher to talk to an uninterested group as it is for them to listen.

Personal work will remedy such sickly conditions and will stimulate a "hunger for righteousness" as nothing else can do. The leaders of the church are greatly responsible when members of a congregation quit reading their Bibles, quit praying, and cease attending services. If the leaders will see that everyone is put to work, the problem will be solved. We would not appreciate our government or our homes if we were not a part of them; neither can we expect members of the church to appreciate the Lord unless they share in the work that is to be done for him.

*Personal Teaching Is the Most Effective Method*

I have already pointed out the merits and demerits of pulpit, radio, tract, and class teaching. They each serve a definite purpose. Personal work also has its weakness. However, personal teaching is the most effective method.

In personal work the teacher can know before he begins what is on the mind of the one to be taught. That is not possible in the pulpit, on the radio, or in the tract. Immediately the personal teacher can analyze the problem and give definite teaching on the part that is troublesome. In the course of teaching, the person being taught can express himself and thereby contribute to his own interest. He can also ask questions as they come to his mind. The teacher can make a personal application of the lesson that will make it more effective than it would be if he only saw the "general" application. You will also find that you can say things to a person that cannot possibly be said from the pulpit without offense. You can be more definite, condemn stronger, and expose more false doctrine in an easier way while talking to the individual.

All business and social life recognizes the effectiveness of personal work. When you go into a store, you get personal attention. Business people try to know your wants before trying to sell. If you go to a filling station, a drug store, or if you even buy a newspaper from a newsboy, you get personal atten-



tion. But in the church we have not been practicing this. We expect those who come to be interested and obey the gospel without personal attention. Love and personal consideration of the individual's problems will often have more bearing and persuasion than proof that we are teaching the truth. Christ surely must have recognized this to be true when he healed and manifested so many acts of kindness toward those he wanted to teach. We all want our friends and fellowship among those who are Christians. Why then, can we not realize that the person who is thinking of obeying the gospel is also seeking such association as well as obedience to the Lord? And why cannot we realize that such personal consideration makes the gospel of Christ far more effective?

We might be able to take a few lessons from the devil just here. He has more followers than the Lord. He makes many converts every day and holds them within his power. It isn't because what he has to offer is good, but it is the *way* he presents the temptation—he makes it attractive. If sin were presented in its true form, he would have no followers. The *way* a thing is presented has as much to do with its being accepted as *what* is presented. The devil is effective because he adapts every temptation to the one he wants to win. If he can make sin so attractive by personal work, can we not also apply the truth so personally and attractively that souls will be won to the Lord when they could not be won otherwise? I believe that we can.

*If We Want To, We Can*

Brethren, there are many more reasons why we should be personal teachers, but these should be sufficient to create a desire within us to do something about it. I know that many say they do not know *how* to do personal work. Well, later in the book, we shall give a few things to help you, but let me say before going further, that if you *want* to save a soul badly enough, you will make a way. There might be many rules to follow, but the greatest is the desire. I did not know how to tell my wife I loved her, but I *wanted* to tell her, so I did; and she thought that what I said was all right. You may not know best how to talk to people about their souls, but if you want to so badly that you cannot keep from it, your biggest battle is won. **KNOW DEFINITELY WHY YOU SHOULD BE A PERSONAL WORKER, AND THE HOW WILL NOT BE DIFFICULT.**

## QUESTIONS

1. How many sermons, of which we have a record, did Christ give to assembled audiences during his lifetime?
2. Could we look to Christ as the Saviour if he did not take a personal interest in our problems?
3. Were all of the members of the early church "daily teachers," or was all the teaching done by the inspired apostles?
4. Is the church today following their example? How can we do so?
5. Does God command "every member" of the church to teach? Prove your statement.

6. How long would it take to convert the world to Christ if each member of the church were to convert one each year? Is such a plan feasible and possible?

7. Why are so many members of the church so passive and inactive in their Christian life? Should such members be used in personal work? If not, why not? If so, how should it be done?

8. Explain how the personal worker has an advantage over the pulpit speaker.

9. How can the gospel be made more attractive by a personal presentation?

10. Can the gospel be made more effective by the *manner* in which it is presented?

## CHAPTER III

### WHY VERY LITTLE PERSONAL WORK IS DONE

**I**F personal work is as effective as we have pointed out, it seems that every Christian would be doing it, but this is not true. Very few are. There must be reasons. If we can find out what they are, we perhaps can help in eliminating them.

#### *I'm Too Busy*

Many members of the church actually believe they are too busy to do personal work. Too busy at what? Making money? Helping our government? Having a good time? Too busy taking care of a home? Yes, these things can take much of our time, but which is more important—saving souls, or doing these things? It is easy to make ourselves believe they take all of our time when we do not want to do the work of the Lord. But let us ask just a few questions. Do you have time to read the daily paper? Do you listen to the radio? Do you take time for recreation? Do you go visit your friends or chat over the back fence? Do you have time to go down town and window shop? Then surely you must have some time to talk with a soul who is on the broad road.

Suppose God had said that he was too busy to send Christ to this world that we might be saved. I am sure God had plenty to do. He must have been very

busy seeing about all the things of this world, but he was not too busy to tell us of his love. And we should never get too busy to pass the story of his love on to others. Didn't Christ say: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (temporal affairs) shall be added" (Matt. 6:33)?

The early Christians were persecuted and killed because of their service to God. Can't we skip a few meals or miss a few hours sleep in order to teach lost souls? If we love them we surely can and will. Jesus taught definitely while he was here that in order for us to be his disciples, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow him. But today we have not been willing to deny ourselves of anything in order to serve the Lord. Selfishness is condemned strongly, and we find such exhortations as: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak *and not to please ourselves*. Let every one of us please his neighbor *for his good to edification*" (Rom. 15:1, 2).

### *I'm Doing My Part*

Many do no personal work because they actually feel that they are doing all the Lord expects of them. Well, just what do you do, friend? "I go to church, lead in prayer, give of my money, and even attend on Sunday and Wednesday nights. I think that is just about all the Lord expects of me." Just what are you

doing when you take part in those things? Aren't you worshipping God? But doesn't the Lord tell you to do more than worship? Doesn't he say: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21)? We must do the *work* of the Lord in addition to saying, "Lord, Lord," to him. We have not worked for the Lord when we "go to church." That is not work—it is worship. But Christ said, "Let us work the works of him that sent us while it is day, because the night cometh when no man can work." We find many commands telling us to work, and I believe they mean "work," not just "go to church." I am sure that we should do something for the Lord during every week in addition to "going to church." When he said, "work," he meant to include *personal work*.

Did you ever try to rest when you were not tired? It is an impossibility. Heaven is described as a place of rest, and we will not enjoy it unless we are tired when we get there. Many are not going to be tired because they never "work" for the Lord. We think that we have done our duty by just "going to church." If everyone said that he had fulfilled his duty by going to church, how would the lost ever be taught? Doesn't Jesus include in the works of the faithful: "I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25:36)? When I think of my responsibility in being a personal worker, this little poem comes to mind:

Lord, help me to live from day to day  
In such a self-forgetful way  
That even when I kneel to pray  
My prayers will be for *others*.

Help me in all the work I do  
To ever be sincere and true,  
And know that all I do for you  
Must needs be done for *others*.

And when my work on earth is done,  
And my new work in heaven's begun;  
May I forget the crown I've won  
While thinking still of *others*.

*Others*, Lord, yes *others*;  
Let this my motto be.  
Help me to live for others  
That I may live like Thee.

### *No One Is Interested*

Many have refused to do personal work because they say that no one is interested. They think everyone is satisfied with his religion, but that is not true. Many are dissatisfied with denominationalism and are actually seeking something better. Many would graciously welcome teaching if it were offered in the right way. In fact in the congregations where I have preached, many people are interested and want help. I have never been able to do all the personal work that should be done. How do we know that people are not interested? One person may not be, but that

is no sign all are not. Even if the majority of people are not interested, that does not give us an excuse for *not trying*. We should try to get them interested.

I once sold books, and almost all said they were not interested; but I did not believe them. I went ahead and showed them the books and told them why they should be interested. As a result many bought and were glad. I have been amazed at the Mormon elders in this respect. You may tell them you are not interested, but they bear their testimony, and that arouses interest. If a man working for some business firm were to say that the customers were not interested, he would be fired immediately.

We cannot really tell who might be interested, and surely others will not be interested in Christianity if we are not. If we think that the other fellow does not want it, we must not realize its value ourselves. I believe that I teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I believe the whole world wants it and is interested in it. Likewise, if you will get to believing that, you also will find many who are interested. They will want to know the reason for your strong conviction. In Salt Lake City I have had as many as ten people in one week call and ask me to come teach them. They became interested in what we taught because we believed it, and because we believed that someone else wanted to know about it. Interest begets interest.



*I've Tried, and I Failed*

Many members of the church say there is no need for them to try to do personal work because they have tried more than once and failed. Are you going to admit that you are a failure? That is what you do when you refuse to teach others just because you have failed a few times. I was taught, while selling books, to go to another house when I failed to sell at one place. There were whole days that I did not sell a single book—one time I tried for three days without selling any. But did I quit? If so, I would have admitted defeat. I didn't quit, and I succeeded. Do you remember the little poem that says:

Somebody said it couldn't be done. . . .  
He started to sing as he tackled  
The thing that couldn't be done,  
And he did it.

Instead of quitting in the work of the Lord just because you have failed a few times, why not analyze the cause of your failure? The work is not an impossibility. Others have succeeded, and so can you.

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Heb. 10:35, 36). We must persevere in any worth-while work if we expect to be rewarded. Even citizenship in this land demands sacrifices that are difficult for us to make at

times, and so does citizenship in the kingdom of God. If we love God as much as we love our country, we will be willing to spend and be spent in the service of God. I had a hard time getting my wife to marry me, but I wanted her very badly; and because I persisted, I succeeded. The greatest men in the world have been those who were faithful at their tasks—not for just a short time, but until they succeeded. Great inventors have overcome long and disappointing hours, and so have many other great men. Nothing is more worth while than shaping and molding souls for the kingdom of God. We must not quit. Faithfulness is a duty and is absolutely commanded in the Bible; we cannot be saved without it. If you say that you cannot do the work the Lord wants done, you are questioning his ability to help you. Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and you will see a list of men who did, through faith, that which was seemingly impossible. If we ask the Lord to help us, he will. Moses said that he could not talk, but the Lord sent a speaker along with him to help. If you cannot be a great speaker like Peter, you can be an Andrew and bring a Peter to Christ (John 1:40, 42). Get someone else to help you if you cannot teach alone. Don't ever say "can't." "He only fails who doesn't try."

### *I Don't Know Enough About the Bible*

Many people think they do not know the Bible well enough to teach others. They want to wait until they know it better. Well, that sounds pretty good, but

those who give this excuse never do much toward learning their Bibles better. They are "ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth." A person who knows enough to become a Christian should be ashamed to make this excuse. If you know enough to obey the gospel, you know enough to teach another person. If not, why not? If you can just tell him why you obeyed the gospel, that should be enough. That is what Paul did (Acts 22, 26), and he was guided by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. You might not be able to defend the truth as well as some gospel preacher, but the very fact that you do not know much might be an added factor in your favor.

Many people feel definitely at a disadvantage when talking to a preacher, but they would not hesitate in the least to talk to someone who does not know "all the answers." The Mormons feel there is a definite advantage in sending out those who do not know too much. They send out boys and girls seventeen and eighteen years old who have had only two weeks of training. Often a person who is inexperienced as a personal worker, and who does not know his Bible well, gains an entrance into homes when others cannot.

Many members of the church of Christ do not know their Bibles, as they did formerly. If you feel your lack of knowledge, perhaps you are better qualified and know more than those who think they know so much. I once heard of a judge who used the head of a member of the church of Christ for swearing a per-

son into court, but such knowledge of the Bible has just about vanished.

Once I preached for a congregation which had about one hundred fifty members and I just wondered how much Bible they knew. One Sunday we passed out a sheet and asked them to give the plan of salvation, name the items of Christian worship, prove there is just one true church, and to prove that denominationalism is wrong. They did not have to give the quotation—just the proof text. I was astonished to learn that only three members could give the answers. The quickest way to learn the Bible is to become a personal worker and try to teach someone else. You then will have to study as you never did before. People will ask questions and make arguments that will make you study. Try teaching others what you know now, and you will soon know more.

NOTE: "Does the average member of the church know more than the average outsider? He should. If so, he can teach him something."—J. W. Roberts

### *No Leadership*

One of the main reasons why members of the church of Christ do more personal work is that they are not encouraged by the leaders. And if they do something without leadership, they are afraid someone will criticize. Some of us seem to have a mighty good case of "criticizeitis." We don't do anything ourselves for the Lord, and we criticize any person

who does, because he shows us up. We all will have to go to work if that person is not stopped. I have found members in congregations who are willing and anxious to do something but are afraid that the elders and deacons will criticize them and say they are trying to run things. And some elders and deacons are anxious to get some kind of systematic personal work started in their congregations, but they are also afraid to do so because of being branded as unorthodox by some preachers or brethren who are not accustomed to doing things that way. As one brother said: "That ain't ther way we ust ter do it, and thar ain't no ust ter start sumpin like that now'er days." For examples and suggestions about how to arrange systematic personal work in your congregation, see chapter X.

### *I Do Not Know How*

One of the greatest reasons why Christians do not do personal work—and it is the truth—we do not *know how*. There are a few suggestions in this book that should be of help to you, but you never will find a set of rules that will be an infallible guide. If you do not know what to say or how to go about it, get with someone that does know how and go with him a few times. If no one knows how in your congregation, get some preacher who does know to come there and teach a course in personal work. Such work and teaching is just as essential to the life of the church as is much of the other teaching that is

given. Some congregations have asked for just such a course of training over a period of a week, ten days, or longer, and more are going to be doing so in the future. I have seen congregations completely awakened and revived by such studies. Just remember this: It would be ridiculous for firemen to fail to fight a fire just because they did not know the best way. So we cannot fail to tell the story of Christ just because we do not know the best way. The instructions in this book should help you some, but always remember this little poem:

If you cannot sing like angels,  
 If you cannot preach like Paul,  
 You can tell the love of Jesus;  
 You can say he died for all.

If you cannot cross the ocean,  
 And the heathen land explore,  
 You can find a heathen closer;  
 You can find one just next door.

### QUESTIONS

1. Is there any real "reason" for a Christian's failure to do personal work?
2. Is there such a thing as a Christian's being too busy to do personal work? If so, is he too busy? What should he do?
3. How much personal work could be done if each member in your congregation were to give two hours to the work each week? Is that much time impossible?
4. Give Scripture proving that the ignorant are not saved.

5. What is wrong with the church member who says: "No one is interested"?

6. What is wrong with the church member who says: "I have tried and failed"?

7. If you find some person in your community who is living a good moral life, should you try to teach him to obey the gospel? What should you say if he tells you that he is as good as you are?

8. How much should you know about the Bible before you try to teach others?

9. What is one of the best ways to learn your Bible?

10. Does anyone fail to have enough talent to do personal work in some way?

11. If you do not know how to do personal work, what should you do? What should the leaders do to help prepare the members of the congregation?

## CHAPTER IV

### SHOULD WE STUDY "HOW" TO DO PERSONAL WORK?

**A**T preachers' meetings and on other occasions the idea has been ridiculed that we should study "how" to do personal work. Some say that we should stop trying to follow rules for teaching and get to work doing it.

I know that we can go to the extreme in striving to give rules, and some may go to the extreme in teaching them. As I have said before, the greatest thing about personal work is to get busy doing it, then you will learn how. No definite set of instructions can be given that will be practical and best on all occasions. Many different situations will arise in which a person must use his best judgment. He cannot then think about which rule he should apply.

#### *Poor Use of Tact*

We all must use "common judgment" in doing personal work, and often that is the best guide. I am far from the idea of going to the extreme in the use of psychology and tact. Tact and psychology, when used insincerely, are most distasteful and disgusting. The ones to whom you are talking can tell when you are just being tactful for the sake of showing how "nice" you can be. Such actions are nothing but hypocrisy,



and that is condemned strongly by the Lord. No personal worker can teach the word of the Lord at all times as it should be taught without offending someone, nor should we always try to do so. There are times when the one to whom you are talking should be told in definite terms of the dangers of the life he is living. When a person deliberately perverts the word of the Lord he should be sternly, yet kindly, rebuked. The language of the Lord in Matthew 23 and that of Stephen in Acts 7 should show us that often we must use strong terms.

However, even though there are dangers in going to the extreme in trying to be tactful, I am sure there are greater dangers in completely ignoring any rules or consideration for the other fellow. There are members of the church of Christ who believe that just because we have the truth, we should "get everybody told" and let him know he is going to hell if he does not change.

### *Must We "Skin the Sects"?*

We pride ourselves in being great debaters, and we say that no one is able to stand before us. Well, I believe that too, but our hateful, boastful, "more righteous than thou" attitude has driven many from the truth who would have become Christians if we had manifested a little kindness and consideration in our teaching. I have heard many members of the church brag about how strong a certain preacher preaches without "mincing words." Well, we should

not compromise the truth, and a preacher is a hypocrite who does so; but we do not *always* have to be "skinning the sects" in order to preach the truth faithfully. Some do not believe the truth has been preached strongly enough unless everyone who is not a member of the church of Christ has been made mad and unless several get up and walk out. Should we *delight* in "fussing" with people about religion? It is just like a man I heard of once who was baptized. Just as soon as he came up out of the water, he wiped the water hurriedly from his face and said, "Where's somebody? I wanta argie."

Such attitudes have done untold harm, and I believe they are strictly condemned in the Word of the Lord. We have come to the conclusion that just because we have the truth, it can be told any way that we want to; and the harder we tell it the better the Lord is pleased. But this is not true. Study these scriptures and they will help us to see that the HOW in teaching is very essential.

### *Bible Teaches Proper Attitude*

Matthew 10:16: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore *wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*" That is the first commission Christ gave his apostles, and you can see definitely that he told them "how" to teach as well as "what" to teach. I Peter 3:15: "But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give

answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, *yet with meekness and fear.*" (A.R.V.) Do we manifest *meekness* and even *fear* in our teaching? We go strong in stressing the fact that Christ had the spirit of a Lion, but we forget that he also had the spirit of a Lamb. Both spirits must be in the life of a Christian, but especially should the spirit of a *Lamb* be manifested toward the person who does not know the truth and is blinded in the midst of denominationalism. He needs love and help and teaching—not denunciation.

#### *Put Yourself in the Other Person's Place*

After all, if someone were trying to convert you, he would have to take out of your mind your former beliefs. In teaching another, you should remember that his convictions are just as sacred to him as yours are to you. What he believes may seem foolish to you, and it may be easy for you to see the error, but it is hard for him. It is difficult for him to give it up, so the Lord has told us through Peter to teach him in the "spirit of meekness." Galatians 6:1 says: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one *in a spirit of gentleness*; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (A.R.V.) Doesn't this scripture tell us to put ourselves in the other fellow's place when we are teaching? Try to be just as considerate of him as you would want him to be if you were in his place. Doesn't II Peter 1:7 tell us that we are to add "brotherly

kindness" to our lives? Doesn't Galatians 5:22 say that "longsuffering, kindness, and goodness" are part of the fruit of the spirit? Didn't Jesus say: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"? Some of us have failed to see and study these Scriptures and have manifested such haughty, egotistical, self-righteous spirits that many have concluded we surely do not have the truth. They think that we are not Christians or we would manifest kindness, gentleness, goodness, and longsuffering, in our teaching.

### *We Must Do More than Condemn*

Our critical attitudes have manifested themselves in our religious papers so much that we should be ashamed for those who are not members to read some of them. Such attitudes are also in our congregations. All that many of the brethren and sisters can do is fuss, and find fault with one another and condemn, while sincere souls are lost who would accept the truth if we would live godly lives and teach them kindly. We should show them the truth by the love we manifest for one another. Didn't Christ say for us to love one another, "and so shall ye be my disciples"? If we cannot love one another and manifest the spirit of kindness even in our words, how can we expect the world to believe that we are the true church? Doesn't the Bible say: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a network of silver"? (A.R.V.) How

then can we say that the "way" and "manner" in which we teach the truth does not matter, just so we teach the right thing? The *manner* in which we teach the truth has just about as much to do with whether or not we are pleasing to God as *what* we teach.

### QUESTIONS

1. Should we present the same message in the same way to every individual?
2. Why did Peter give a different message on Pentecost than Paul presented on Mars Hill?
3. Is it wrong to use psychology and tact in teaching the gospel? Is it wrong not to do so?
4. When Christ told his apostles to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" did he mean that they could preach and disregard the method in which they did so? What did he mean by that expression?
5. Why do nonmembers often fail to see Christianity reflected in the lives of members of the church of Christ?
6. How far should we go in manifesting the spirit of the Lion and the Lamb in doing personal work?
7. Is it wrong to condemn? Is it a sin to be too soft?

## CHAPTER V

### WHAT WE SHOULD NOT DO

**I**N doing personal work it is just as essential to know what not to do as it is to know what to do. Most mistakes are made by carelessness. We know them just as soon as they are made, but then it is too late. If we can learn what not to do and say, half of our battle is won. The idea that the truth offends most people is not true. Our unwise statements and unbearable attitudes offend far more than truth. Most people want the truth and will welcome it if it is presented correctly.

#### *Don't Begin With Criticism*

Some have grown so accustomed to "skinning the sects" that we think the first thing to do in teaching someone is to show him where his religion is all wrong. I admit that the Lord wants us to show where man is in error, but we should not *begin* with such destruction. I would not say to never do so, because some invite criticism and condemnation. If we see that more good can be done by condemnation, be cautious, but go ahead. Usually such a beginning is not best.

Now maybe you say such advice is not sound because it will make "softies" out of all of us. I do not believe so. After all, when Christ started his personal

ministry did he begin with criticism? Didn't he first stand in the synagogue and say: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21)? Didn't he also preach the great Sermon on the Mount and give constructive teaching in the beginning of his ministry? Are not most of his denunciations and criticisms near the close of his life (Matt. 23) rather than at the beginning?

I do not know of any letters Paul wrote which contain more denunciations than those to the Romans and Corinthians. But look how he started. Romans 1:8-12, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." And then following these kind words, in the rest of the first chapter, we find some of the bitterest denunciations and darkest pictures ever painted of man, yet Paul began kindly. I Corinthians 1:4-8 says: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony

of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This always was the attitude of Christ and his apostles. They could always find something good to say about the people even though there were many things wrong with them. They always said the good things first. The Holy Spirit guided them to do this. When selling books, I was always told to find something good to say about the Bibles people had in their homes, but then not to stop—go on and show them that I had a better Bible. When a person tells you of your good points before he tells you of your weaknesses, you are much more likely to listen to him and think his judgment is right.

There is something good about any religion, and we should recognize good wherever it is found. Some think that denominations can do nothing good. In the sight of God that may be true, but in the sight of the person who is a member, it is not. He sees many good things, and it is not wrong for us to tell him he is right in believing the things that are good. He then will listen as we show the things he should not believe and do. He will be in a better frame of mind when we show wherein he is wrong. I once heard of a preacher who said he would deny anything that members of the denominations would affirm. But this cannot be done. They believe in honesty, truth-



fulness, kindness to widows and orphans, and many other good things. We should not be determined to find fault with EVERYTHING they do. You can find something good in the worst drunkard that ever lived, and if you ever reach him, it will be by appealing to that good. On this point this little poem comes to my mind:

There is so much good in the worst of us  
And so much bad in the best of us,  
It hardly behooves any of us  
To talk about the rest of us.

The Bible surely does tell us to reprove and rebuke in our teaching, and we are not fully teaching the truth if we do not expose sin and false doctrine. But if we start by condemning and finding fault with the other fellow and his religion, he will start finding fault with us and our religion. If we find something good to say about him and what he believes, he will be inclined to see the good in us and the things we say. Didn't Jesus say: "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged"? James 4:11-12 says: "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?"

*Don't Act Superior*

I don't know a more egotistical group of people in all the earth than some of us members of the church of Christ. We think we know more than other people, and anybody who is not a member of the church of Christ is just plain dumb, ignorant, or dishonest. We think we are right and everybody else wrong. Now this may be true, but we do not have to be so haughty and boastful about it. Such attitudes have done untold damage and are strongly condemned by the Lord. Doesn't the Bible say: "Let each esteem others better than himself"? Doesn't it say: ". . . To every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith"? I Corinthians 8:2 says: "But if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." If we think we know so much, how about manifesting a little of our knowledge in humility?

I never have been able to like the attitude of the fellow who thinks he knows it all and no one else knows anything. Even though he may say something that is true, I am inclined to question it because he says so many other things that are prompted by egotism. And that is the way people are with us. If we are so haughty about what we believe, they are more likely to disbelieve than to believe; not because we have not spoken the truth, but because of our attitude.

When you go to teach some person, let him know you are studying with him rather than just "getting him told a few things."

I have especially been convinced of the seriousness of our offenses in this respect since living among the Mormons. There never was a group of people that reminded me more of the members of the church of Christ than they. We say we *know* we are right and everyone else is wrong. So do the Mormons. I have heard them say this so many times and act so haughty and proud that no matter what they said I resented it. They have made me angry at times because I thought we were the only ones who could be so sure we are right. I often wonder if we appear as haughty and egotistical to others as the Mormons appear to me. Brethren, I believe we do. We should buffet our bodies and keep them under subjection lest after having preached the gospel to others we ourselves should become castaways. I never did like to take teaching from a man who thought he was SO smart, but have always welcomed it from those who are humble. I believe that is the way most people feel.

### *Don't Be Dogmatic*

These statements are very closely connected with what I have said before, but they really cover more. You might be ever so sure that you are right, but if you are so radical and dogmatic about it, you kill the effectiveness of what you say. Especially is this true

if you are inclined to be dogmatic about other things. If you are considered a person who goes to extremes on almost anything, people will be inclined to take everything you say with a grain of salt. This scripture is especially applicable just here: "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Also, you might want to alter what you have said. I found that sometimes I did not say what was intended. The tone of my voice or the way I worded my sentence made me say something I did not mean. In such cases it is much better to back up and make yourself clear than to be dogmatic and try to defend what you have said. Unwise statements in personal work should be retracted.

*Don't Be Ashamed to Admit You Do Not Know  
the Answer*

Many questions can be asked about the Bible and religion in general that are hard to answer. I once tried to answer every question and show how smart I was, but when I did, often the answer was wrong. Later it was terribly embarrassing to have to admit I had made a mistake. No one can answer all the questions any person can ask, therefore it is not a reproach to say that you do not know. People will respect you more than if you try to answer and they find out by study you were wrong.

There are two other advantages just here. If you say you do not know, they will feel there is

some hope for them. They see that you must study also in order to get the answers. Not only that, but if you would like to talk to the person again, leave some question unanswered. That will give you an opening and a reason to come back the next time. If they ask something, you could say: "I would like to check on that a little more closely before answering you." When opening the conversation next time, you could say: "I checked on that question you asked me the other day and this is what I found, etc."

*Don't Always Try to Answer Everything the Other Person Says*

There are brethren who I actually believe were born in the "objective" case and the "kickitive" mood. They try to find fault with everything anybody else does. If they had done it, it would have been just a little better. Also, if they think of the idea, it is all right; but if someone else thought of it, it is all wrong. If someone else says a thing that he wants to say, he is not quite satisfied unless he words it differently. Many personal workers are failures just because of this weakness. They think they should answer everything the other fellow says.

It is not compromising to admit that the other fellow is right. The Bible says we should give honour to whom honour is due. When a person says a thing that is the truth, we should commend him and agree with him. Do not try to magnify differences and

see how wide you can make the gap. It is better to try to find something upon which you can agree, then work toward an agreement upon the things wherein you differ.

The Mormons often ask questions to hide a point they have lost. The question has nothing whatsoever to do with the subject. After several hours of discussion like this, we just about discussed everything in general and nothing in particular. I have learned not to answer every question they ask. Now I usually say, "Let's discuss this question we are on for awhile before we change." Then I drive home the particular point in mind. Many debates have been lost because the debater did not concentrate on a few points and drive them home. It is much better to clinch a few points in personal work than to discuss everything in general. We should decide what we want to teach and stay with the subject until it is taught.

Some questions and statements are propounded in order to arouse prejudice and resentment, and just in order to find fault with something you say. It is best to completely ignore such questions or refuse to answer them. Jesus did that. Once he was asked where he got his authority. Christ asked them a question, and when they refused to answer, he also refused. This is the safe and best course in answering such questions.

*Don't Do All the Talking*

James 1:19: “. . . Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak . . .” No wiser words were ever spoken, and yet they are often completely ignored. The Bible says: “If a man seems to be religious and bridles not his tongue, that man’s religion is vain.” It is much better sometimes to just think and listen than to talk.

Careful with fire, is good advice indeed,  
But, careful with words, is ten times doubly so.  
Boys flying kites can pull in their white winged birds.  
But you can't do that when you're flying words.  
Thoughts unexpressed often fall back dead,  
But God himself cannot kill them when they're said.

If you do all the talking in personal work, you fail to get the other fellow’s viewpoint. If you will let him express himself, you can work at the problem from his point of view and not from your own. After all, if you do not answer the thing that is bothering him, you have not accomplished your purpose. If you do all the talking, he might come to the conclusion that no one can talk so much and keep the truth well on his side. Study carefully to see when it is best to listen. Often it is best just to say so much on a certain point, and then change the subject. After you have said all that is advisable about religion, it sometimes is best to change to some secular subject and let the person talk about the thing in which he is interested.

I found while selling books that certain people

liked to hear themselves talk. They thought their ideas were right on everything. When I found such a person, I just took it easy and guided the conversation, and the first thing I knew they had talked themselves into buying a book. That same thing is true in doing personal work. You can often get the person to say the very thing you would like to say. If you had said it, he would have argued with you, but if you get him to say it, he would defend it to his last breath. You can help people talk themselves into obeying the gospel by just guiding their thoughts and conversation.

Also, it is much easier to listen to some person who believes some false doctrine and show him the weaknesses than it is to do all the talking and let him find faults. He will hang himself with his own false ideas if you will just skillfully watch your opportunity to show him where he has done so. When he talks himself out of his false doctrines and ideas, it is much easier for him to give them up than if you were trying to pound it out of him. Some feel they should defend their doctrine just because they are honor bound to do so, especially when we approach them with determination to have them give it up.

### *Don't Use Too Many Passages of Scripture*

It is much better in doing personal work to use a few passages of Scripture and drive them home, than to use so many that none will be remembered. Especially is this true if the person to whom you are



talking does not know much about the Bible. Press a few passages on his mind, and then write them on a piece of paper so that he can read and study when you are gone.) (If you use too many passages, he will come to the conclusion that he cannot understand any. After all, most people know very little about the Bible, and we cannot be too careful in making things simple and plain. Just yesterday I was talking to a lady who asked me what I meant when I said that a person was a Christian. She also asked me what Mark 16:16 means when it says that those who believe and are baptized should be saved.

If you cannot quote passages of Scripture to prove what you have in mind, you are not at too great a disadvantage. It is better to turn to the Bible and read than it is to quote. (And it is always better to read from the other person's Bible.) I have quoted Scriptures and people will say, "That is not the way it reads in my Bible." If you read from their Bible at first, it will keep them from making that embarrassing statement, and it will give them an opportunity to read for themselves. Not only read it *to* them, but let them read along *with* you. Now don't think you should do this on all Scriptures you give, but those you want to stress. Especially should this be done when you are talking on some controversial point.

### *Don't Get Angry*

Many members of the church cannot talk about religion without getting angry—especially when being

pressed on a certain point. (But you always lose, even if you win, when you get angry.) Such action is the surest confession of defeat. Even though you know a person is willfully perverting the Scripture, you still should be calm and considerate. He should be sternly rebuked, and you should stand for the truth with all your might; but if you do so kindly it will do far more good than all the anger and wrath you might shew. The Bible says: "Love suffers long and is kind." We will suffer long with the truth and still be kind if we truly love God, the truth, and the person to whom we are talking. Even if he gets angry, we should not. After all, we are supposed to show people Christianity as well as teach it to them. And isn't self-control a part of living the Christian life? I have always found that kindness carries as much weight in the heated discussion as logical arguments. The apostles once wanted to call fire down from heaven on some people, but Christ rebuked them. If you ever get angry in a discussion, you should apologize for it, but it is best to not get angry. Don't ever weaken the power of the truth by a manifestation of your temper. Anger always makes people think you have been defeated and that your Christianity is not practical.

### *A Few Final Don'ts*

Perhaps you have the "don't-itis" by now, but these "don'ts" are just as essential as the positive things to do. When you go to talk to a weak Christian or non-

member, (don't talk about the other members, the preacher, the elders, or the little petty difficulties that are in the church.) Don't be continually picking at somebody or something in the church. Don't nag. If you see a person is tired and wants to change the subject, do so. When you go to see the sick, don't talk about your uncle who died with the same thing, or about somebody who was left maimed or blind the rest of his life. Don't talk about yourself, your problems, or your woes. People do not care about them. They have plenty of their own. After all, you have gone to see them to help bear their burden, not to get them to bear yours. Don't be in too big a hurry with your visit, and don't stay too long. If you see that the people are busy or ready to go somewhere, don't stay—make an appointment and come back at a more convenient time. Common judgment will take care of most decisions you make on these occasions. In conclusion, don't let all these "don'ts" scare you into doing nothing. The biggest mistake you can make is doing nothing for fear you *will* make a mistake.

### QUESTIONS

1. If we criticise and condemn, when should it be done?
2. Does it help in doing personal work to first tell a person the good points you recognize in him before telling him of his shortcomings?
3. Did Christ and his apostles make a practice of this?
4. We know that we have the truth, but how can we present the message in humility?

5. Is it a sign of reproach to admit you are wrong? Does such an admission help or hinder you in teaching another the truth?

6. Name two advantages that might come by telling a person that you do not know the answer to his question.

7. Should we try to agree with a person just as much as possible, or should we try to show how "different" we are? How far should each go?

8. Do people always actually believe all the statements they make in a heated discussion? Should we be careful about unwise and quick statements?

9. Is it possible to use too many passages in teaching another? Is it best to use their Bible?

10. Is it ever best to manifest anger in doing personal work?

11. Name some of the things that should not be done in doing personal work.

## CHAPTER VI

### ATTITUDES AND DISPOSITIONS

**I** HAVE said several times already that on certain occasions and with certain individuals you can do and say one thing, and with others say and do something else. For that reason we cannot give definite, infallible rules that will work on all occasions. The method of teaching that will convert John will perhaps drive Bill away from the church and the truth. Bill would be receptive to other teaching but it would never have converted John. We must recognize these different attitudes and dispositions. We must study them and give lessons adapted to the personalities. Christ and his apostles did so. Christ did not give the same lesson in the same way to the Samaritan woman that he gave to the woman taken in adultery. He did not tell Zacchaeus the same thing he told Nicodemus. Peter did not preach the same sermon on Pentecost that Paul preached on Mars Hill. On all those occasions the Lord and his apostles studied the situation, the disposition of the people, and the need—then gave the lesson that was best. We shall be wise in learning to do the same and foolish if we do not do so. You can call it psychology if you wish and laugh at it, but it is just as essential to study the individuals to whom we are talking and their dispositions, as it is to study our Bibles in order to

know what to teach. We have been very slow to learn this lesson.

### *Your Attitude*

The first thing you should do is to be sure you have the right attitude. You may blame those you are teaching if they fail to obey the gospel, but many of the failures can be traced to your own attitudes. The motive behind your efforts will to a great extent regulate your success.

(*Be sure you have a genuine LOVE for humanity*)

If you try to be a personal worker just because it is your duty or just because it has been forced upon you, you are almost sure to fail. Duty should be one motive but not the predominating one. God did not send his Son to this world because of duty but because of love. We love him because he first loved us, and if we want others to love God, we must *show* them his love as well as *tell* them about it. God did not only tell us of his love. He manifested it in the gift of his Son. Why do the stories of Ruth and Naomi, the Prodigal Son, and the Good Samaritan have such appeals? Isn't it because they are manifestations of love?

I know it is often hard to love and have confidence in some people. It is a human inclination to see the bad in everyone rather than the good. Many brethren talk about how evil the world is getting to be, and it seems their minds dwell on the depravity of man.

We must remember that God loved us while we were yet sinners, and we must remember that Christ said the sick need the physician. We may want to turn away in disgust when we see the drunkard stagger down the street or the boy and girl who have brought disgrace on their names and that of the families, but we must always remember—that drunkard is somebody's father, some mother's son. Those young people are creatures for whom our Saviour died, made in the image of the living God.

If you have lost faith in humanity; if you think you are being cheated; if you think you had better get the other fellow before he has a chance to get you; then surely there's something wrong with you. If you have the attitude there is no use trying to help others for they must help themselves if they are to be helped; if you are a pessimist and always see the dark side of things; if you think of your troubles, heartaches, and pains, and that very few people can be trusted; then your personal work is bound to be a failure. You need to be converted rather than to try to convert someone else. Before you start, sit down and see yourself as others see you. Try to see if you are living in such a way that you will inspire others to want to live like the Saviour. Is your life narrow and self-centered? Be honest now. You may deceive yourself, but you cannot deceive the ones to whom you are talking. Remember the poem:

I had rather see a sermon than to hear one any day;  
I'd rather one would walk with me than merely tell the way,  
For the eye is a better pupil and more willing than the ear;  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example is always clear.  
And the best of preachers are the men who live their creeds,  
For to see good put into action is what all of us need.

Paul said that he could count himself accursed for Israel's sake. The best modern illustration of this point is Will Rogers. He said that he never saw a man in the world he did not like; and everybody liked him. If we are hard to get along with; if we have touchy dispositions; and if we are easily offended, we will fail as personal workers. But if we love everybody, they will love us and the God we serve. Remember that we love God because he first loved us. Love begets love. Love lost souls and they will love you.

*SMILE—Let the world know you are happy!!*

Doesn't the Bible tell us that the early converts rejoiced when they obeyed the gospel? Doesn't the Bible say: "Rejoice, and again I say rejoice"? Doesn't Paul tell us that the "fruit of the spirit is joy"? Why then do so many of us go around looking as if we could drink buttermilk out of a churn? Why do we sing "Count Your Many Blessings" while at the same time we are counting our aches, heart-aches, troubles, and disappointments? No wonder some people do not want to become Christians. They look at us and think that Christianity takes all the joy out of living. The Puritans taught it was a sin to



smile, laugh, or be happy. The Catholics try to present Christianity in its most holy state when someone is dressed in black robes, etc. And many of our brethren are just about as bad. We complain about all the things we have to deny ourselves in order to be Christians—of all the great sacrifices we are making.

Brethren, we should be ashamed of ourselves. Why, we should be happy, elated, delighted to be Christians! It is the greatest and happiest life there is, not only in this world, but also in the world to come! I'm glad to be on the road to heaven and wish I could take the whole world with me! Actions speak louder than words, so a smile says: "I like you. You make me happy. I am glad to see you." I never did like a growling dog and have always tried to avoid him, but when I meet one that is wagging his tail and happy to see me, I am glad to see him. If we could use a little "dog psychology" in this respect, it would help us greatly. Paul and Silas were in prison with their backs beaten and bleeding. But they were so happy they were singing. As a result, they had an opportunity to convert and baptize the jailer and his whole household. If we will smile and be happy, others will want what we have so they can also be happy. Remember:

Laugh, and the world laughs with you,  
Weep, and you weep alone.  
This old earth must borrow its mirth,  
It has troubles enough of its own.

*People want what I have*

We have the greatest message this world has ever known. Millions are searching for it. They have not found it, therefore they have accepted denomination-ism, Catholicism, worldly pleasures, etc. They would gladly give up those things for the pure gospel of Christ if they only knew. You may feel that they have just as good an opportunity as you have had, but they haven't. If they had they would also be Christians. Christ said: "Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me" (John 6:45). So we know they have not heard and learned or they would have come. When I was selling books, I always approached the door with the idea that those people inside want what I have and will get it only if I tell them. Even though they told me they were not interested, I would show them what I had if at all possible, and most of those who heard and learned, bought. That is the way it is with the gospel. Get this definitely in your mind: "People want what I have." Then you will be on your road to success as a personal worker.

*One soul is worth more than all this world*

If we could only realize how precious a soul is, we would not despair of any effort to teach the truth. When we fully come to know and realize this, we cannot keep from teaching. An infidel's statement has helped me: I pass it on:

If I firmly believed, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of Christianity in this life influences destiny in another world, Christianity would be to me, everything. I would cast aside earthly cares as follies and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Christianity would be my first waking thought, and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness.

I would labor in its cause alone.

I would take thought for the morrow and eternity alone.

Earthly consequences should never stay my hands or seal my lips.

I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a lifetime of effort.

I would go forth to the world and preach Christ in season and out of season, and my text would be: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

### *God is with me and helps me*

One of the greatest mistakes you can make in doing personal work is to get the idea that sheer weight of argument and glibness of speech will convert people. Yes, I know that the *gospel* is the power of God, but Paul also knew the power of *prayer*. When he told us to take the Christian armor, he said: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:18). Romans 10:1-3 tells us that Paul prayed for sinners, and we should do so. Then if we preach the gospel, the prayer will help. I have always found that it helps

if I pause just before entering a house or before talking to an individual and breathe a silent prayer to God, asking for help to say the right thing in the right way. The Bible says that if we draw nigh to God, he will draw nigh unto us. And Jesus says, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

### *Their Attitude and Disposition*

There are just about as many different attitudes, dispositions, and ways of looking at a thing as there are individuals. The Bible says: "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." It is best to have a little social visit with the person before beginning the teaching. You can then learn what kind of person he is. If you know his background, etc., you can know better how to talk to him and answer him when he makes certain statements. The Bible would not have said: "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know *how* ye ought to answer *every* man," if the Lord had not wanted us to study these things. We shall name a few different personalities which will help you to see why we should adapt our lessons to the particular individual.

### *The pessimist*

First, there is the pessimist. He finds fault with everybody and always sees the dark side. You can naturally expect him to be finding fault with everything you say and with everybody. Therefore, be careful to say and do everything to make him avoid

this. Get him to like you by being interested in his side.

### *The optimist*

Second, there is the optimist. He sees the good in everything and in everybody. He is likely to come to the conclusion that anything is all right if the name of religion is connected with it. He perhaps has such a bright outlook on life that he is not likely to take what you say too seriously, therefore you should be careful to impress the seriousness of the gospel on his mind.

There is the man who has been reared studying the Bible and would like to discuss some of the deeper things. But there is also the man who has never read the Bible. You should be careful to explain even the simplest things to him.

Then there is the man who believes the Bible and has no doubts about its authenticity. You can immediately build on the faith that he has already. Another is the man who is skeptical of almost everything you say, and even of the Bible, therefore you must be careful to make everything definitely plain and to prove every point.

### *Those who like Christians*

There are some who like to have Christians around. They believe Christians are the best people in the world. But there are those who believe that religion is only a racket. They think those who are religious

should be watched because they are all hypocrites and are using religion to cover up their evil deeds. There are some who are actually bored and embarrassed in the presence of Christians. You should try first to put them at ease, and your approach would be altogether different from the way you would approach those who are favorable to Christianity.

There is the man who has never been a member of any church, and he needs some good sound teaching. But there is the man who has been religious and has been disappointed in his brethren. He needs to have his faith restored. There is also a man who has been disappointed in denominationalism, and he thinks that the church of Christ is just another denomination.

### *Those who like to talk*

Some like to talk religion and the Bible, yet others do not. Some like to talk; others like to listen. There are those who are hard-hearted and unkind. Others are tender-hearted and easily touched.

All of these, and many other dispositions, must be dealt with differently. Not that we teach a different gospel, but we must tell the story to them in a different manner in order to adapt the gospel to their particular need.

## QUESTIONS

1. Should we study the individuals to whom we talk as well as the message we want to give them?

2. Should you do personal work if you have lost faith in humanity? Is such an attitude pleasing to God?

3. Do we preach Christianity by our attitudes? What is the first message that we should want to bring in our attitude?

4. Should Christians be happy or sad? Are we deprived of the real joys of life?

5. Are those who are lost interested in the message we have to bring? Why are no more interested?

6. How much effort should we expend in order to save one soul?

7. How does God help us teach as a result of our prayers? Is he actually with us, or did he just say that he would be?

8. What would be the difference in teaching the man who is a skeptic, and one who knows the truth and will not obey it?

## CHAPTER VII

### HOW TO AROUSE INTEREST

**I** WAS taught while selling books that there are three steps in a successful sale: the approach, the canvass, and the close. These three steps are also essential in doing personal work. We must be able to approach people, we must teach them, and then persuade them to action. I always was glad to get a person to sign on the dotted line in ordering a book, but often I was so anxious to get to that part of the sale that I neglected the other two steps, and because of that neglect, I failed to make the sale. The first few words often determined whether or not I got to show my books. The approach was the most important part of the sale. So it is in personal work. The first few words we say and how we say them may determine whether a soul will spend eternity in heaven or hell. If we approach the individual correctly, he will listen and be receptive, but if we do not, he will be stubborn and rebellious.

#### *Spend Some Time Getting People Ready to Hear*

Some are ready to listen to the Bible, and we can start teaching them immediately. We find more, however, who are not ready. The worst thing we could do would be to begin at once talking to them about the Bible. We must spend some time



in preparing them to hear. Didn't Jesus do that? He often healed people and fed them, and then they were in a proper frame of mind to listen. The conversions on the day of Pentecost were possible because the events before and on that day put those who heard in a receptive mood. If you are going to sow some seed in the springtime, you first prepare the soil, and the preparation you give the soil has as much to do with a successful crop as the planting and working. The Bible says the Lord opened Lydia's heart so that she attended to the things that Paul spake, and we should do things to open people's hearts and cause them to become interested in Christianity.

*Be Genuinely Interested in Others' Interests*

In choosing the apostles, didn't Christ become interested in the fishing of Peter, James, and John? And didn't he help them catch some fish? What were the results? Peter fell down and said: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. . . . And Jesus said unto Simon: Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land they forsook all and followed him" (Luke 5: 8, 10).

Christ is the Master Teacher, and we shall do well to follow his example. If a man is interested in fishing, talk to him about that. If he is a hunter, talk about that. If a mother talks about her children, ask about them. If a person has some hobby, try to be

interested in it. If we are not interested in the interests of people, they will not be interested in what we want to tell them. God and Christ are both interested in everything we do, and for that reason we believe we can go to them about all things and talk to them in prayer. So why can we not learn to be interested in the interests of others for the sake of their souls? If we do, they will become interested in the Lord.

### *Take Notice of Children*

Christ took little children and blessed them. Their parents must have been highly pleased. There are certain people whom we cannot possibly reach in any way but by the interest we show in their children. Some are naturally resentful, but when we show an interest in their children, their hearts melt. In Lubbock, Texas, there was an oil man who was almost ready to go into the Episcopal Church. He was extremely fond of his two adopted children. They were fine children, and we paid particular attention to them. Finally we were invited into their home. They played for us on the piano, and we showed them several little tricks. They liked us. Needless to say, it took very little teaching to get them to be responsive to the gospel.

A gospel preacher was once invited by a lady into her home to talk to her husband. The husband knew why the preacher had been invited, and he was bitter and resentful. The preacher purposely did not bring

up the subject, and he changed it when the wife tried to start talking about the Bible. The wife could not understand, but the preacher used good judgment. The situation was tense, and only harm could have come from discussing the subject. Before long, one of the children came and asked the father to mend one of his stilts. He refused to do so because they had company. In a few minutes the preacher made a good opportunity to go out on the porch where the child was playing. He started fixing the stilt. Before long the father was out there and they worked on the stilt together. The man liked the preacher, and they had a pleasant visit together. That night he went to church, and before the meeting was over, this man obeyed the gospel. His interest was aroused through interest in his children.

I would like to make this suggestion also before leaving this point. If you go to a home where there are some pets—a dog, a cat, or a canary—be interested in them. I never could like the man much who kicked my dog, but I always liked the one who petted him. After all, isn't God interested in small things? Not one sparrow falls without his notice. You may scoff at such advice, but wouldn't you do anything to win a soul who is worth more than all this world?

### *Help People in Time of Need*

Jesus fed the hungry. He healed the sick. And doesn't Christ say in Matthew 25 that we will be judged by deeds of kindness at his coming? Doesn't

Christ also say that those who give even a cup of cold water in his name will not lose their reward? Why then do we not seek for such opportunities of service? They furnish great avenues for preaching the gospel.

When we were living in Las Vegas, New Mexico, my wife and I noticed that across the street there were indications of sickness. We did not know the people but went over. We told them we were their neighbors, and had come to offer our help. They invited us in. We talked to them and found that their daughter was seriously ill. Before leaving we had scripture reading and prayer. They were Methodists, and their preacher had not been in their home. Within a few days the daughter died and was taken to Clovis for the burial. A minister of the church of Christ preached her funeral instead of a Methodist—all because we showed some little interest in their time of need.

A little kindness in time of sickness, sorrow, or death will go a long way. A poet expressed it thus:

A little word in kindness spoken,  
A motion, or a tear;  
Has often healed a heart that's broken,  
And made a friend sincere.

A word, a look, has crushed to earth  
Full many a budding flower,  
Which, had a smile but owned its birth  
Would bless life's darkest hour.

*Invite Nonmembers to Eat with You*

My wife has made it possible for us to teach many people to be Christians because she was willing to invite them into our home to eat. She believes it offers one of the best opportunities for personal work. It is easier to bring up the subject of religion at the table, or following a meal, than on any other occasion.

Didn't Christ eat with Zacchaeus in order to get him alone for proper teaching? And didn't he change his life? Christ performed his first miracle at a marriage feast. Wasn't the great sermon in the 6th chapter of John, about Christ's being the bread of life, given after a meal? Didn't Priscilla and Aquila take Apollos—perhaps after or during a meal—and teach him the word of the Lord more perfectly? And didn't those who condemned the Lord say: "He ate with publicans and sinners"?

Many congregations are failing entirely to keep in contact with those who are not Christians, and for that reason when a preacher is called for a meeting and he asks about prospects, no one knows of any. Christians should be trying constantly to make friends with those who are not Christians so they can ultimately be led to Christ. It is enjoyable to be associated with Christians who can give us a spiritual uplift. "Fellowship" is a part of the Christian life, and there is a mutual bond which binds Christians together or Paul would not have said: "especially to them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). I know

of nothing that is any closer to heaven than association with good Christians, but too often we allow these joys to take us out of contact with those we should be trying to reach.

We all enjoy going to the homes of our dear friends to eat and associate with them, and we enjoy having them in our homes. But didn't Christ say: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:12-14)? Christ says: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations" (Luke 16:9). Didn't Christ also say: "For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8)?

Any large successful company furnishes its salesmen with certain expense accounts which they are expected to use in entertaining and feeding their prospective customers. Why then can we not learn a lesson from these things? If each Christian would make friends of sinners by this method, it would not be difficult to get them to go to church, nor would it be any more difficult to talk to them about Christianity than it is for the salesman to talk to the prospective

customer about what he has to sell. I heartily recommend this as one of the best methods for doing personal work, and if the members of the congregation will practice it, many souls will be saved.

The deadest congregations and the ones which are having the most trouble are those where the members associate with other members alone and "go home with them for dinner" without inviting the nonmembers. Such practice reminds one of the religion of the Pharisees, and Christ said that our religion must exceed theirs. They refused to eat with sinners, and Christ called them hypocrites. Christ was called "the friend of sinners," and he is the Saviour of the world.

### *Be with Them in Play*

Many feel that Christianity takes all the joy out of life—that in order to be religious we must never have an enjoyable time and talk and be with one another for mere relaxation. But what does the word "fellowship" mean in the New Testament if it does not carry with it the idea of joy of association? We have no record in the New Testament of where Christ played ball or marbles or ran races with those he was trying to teach, but he did many things that were of the same nature. When he fed the five thousand he was on a vacation. When he walked on the water, he was returning from that vacation. Paul said that he became all things to all men that he might win some.

I have been able to reach more than one person by going on fishing trips with them, hunting with them,

playing ball with them, etc., and I shall always believe these pleasures to be an effective method of contact. And when I was engaging in these things with them, I was not constantly trying to poke my religion down their throats. You have won a great point if you can show that Christianity is practical while hunting, fishing, or playing ball. And you do not have to open a ball game with prayer or wear a sanctimonious face in order to do so. You can show that by fair and clean play you carry out the instructions of the Saviour. We can play in the sight of God just as purely and correctly as we can worship in his sight, and this is a point that will help people to see that religion is practical.

Young people are especially puzzled over the problems of play in this generation. The devil has used many things to tempt those who are young, and usually, about all leaders in the church do is condemn. We put forth little or no effort to help them solve the problem. Some are so radical that they say the young people do not need any entertainment, and that if we have to entertain them to heaven, they will not get there anyway. That is perfectly true, but the help that can be given young people in their play affords a great opportunity for teaching. I have found young people who were going to the bowling alleys, picture shows, skating rinks, and dance halls who would be completely rebellious if condemnation alone was given against those things; but when good, worthwhile entertainment was offered to take the place



of their questionable practices, they readily gave them up. If Christian parents will open their homes to young people, and if those who desire to do some personal work will help with the refreshments and entertainment, the activities can be made wholesome. Entertainments will then afford a great avenue through which some of the most effective personal work can be done.

When we say people should do personal work, some think we mean that one should stop the first individual he sees and start immediately talking to him about his soul. They do not think they have done personal work until they have done this. In my estimation you are doing personal work when you are associating with young people and helping them with their problems, whether you are preaching to them all the time or not. Teaching must be done at the proper time, but we must cultivate the ground before we try to sow the seed.

### *Association in Work*

Some of the best opportunities to win souls may come through one's associations at work. However, many never look upon this as an avenue through which to do personal work. I once heard of two men who had been working on the same elevator for twelve years. One day one of them accidentally said something about a certain preacher. The other said, "Why, do you know that man?" He answered, "Yes, he just finished holding a meeting for us where I go to

church." The other asked, "Are you a member of the church of Christ?" He said, "Yes, are you?" They accidentally discovered the fact after having worked together for many years. One should be ashamed to work with men and women day by day and never seek and make an opportunity to teach them the truth. You should not be constantly preaching so that you will be made a laughing stock and the religion of our Lord be disrespected. But we can be seeking constantly to make an opening for talking to people about their souls. In the next chapter we shall tell you how to bring up the subject to those with whom you work.

Christ surely used this method of contact. He took an interest in his disciples while they were at work and helped them catch fish. He helped the men at the marriage feast when they ran out of wine. He talked to the woman about drawing water from a well. Once while I was helping in the construction of the church building in Eunice, New Mexico, in the first mission work that I did, I was being bothered every day by a group of youngsters who were constantly around the building. They would climb the ladders, scatter the nails, carry off the hammers, etc. One day when I was there all alone trying to shingle the house, I could not keep them off the building. Finally, I asked them if they would like to work. They jumped at the opportunity. I got a straight edge and showed them how to nail on the shingles. They worked fine for about an hour and a half until they got tired. Then

I told them I would buy each of them a lollipop if they would finish that side of the house with shingles that afternoon. They finished it, and it cost me only thirty-five cents worth of lollipops—the cheapest work done on the building. That made a hit with those boys, and they came back and helped every day. When the building was finished, they were there for every service and listened attentively.

Some of the best personal work can be done by getting a group of young people to help in the distribution of circulars announcing a meeting, the mailing of tracts, or in other such work of the Lord. Christ did this. He told his apostles to help him in the work of teaching, casting out devils, and in healing diseases. He also commissioned them to do the baptizing (John 4). Christ made personal work a training school in which his disciples could learn to do what they saw him do. Teaching can be effectively done by showing the person how to do by doing.

#### *Other Methods of Contact*

If you find it is difficult to contact those who are interested, or that it is difficult or impossible to arouse interest by these methods, perhaps the following suggestions will help:

It is easier for some to work on strangers than on their friends. Often it is almost impossible to talk to friends and relatives about religion. When you find this to be true, get someone else to teach them, and you turn to others. Wasn't it necessary for Christ to

leave Nazareth, his home town, before he could get an audience? Doesn't Christ tell us not to cast our pearls before swine lest they trample them under foot and turn again and rend us? "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." So don't waste too much time on your relatives and friends if they are not receptive. After all, other souls are just as precious in the sight of God as they.

By going from house to house, you can find some who are interested. Some will be discourteous. When they are, be as agreeable as possible and pass on to the next house. If you find someone who is interested, take his name and address and go back again for a longer visit. Before you leave, be sure to give him some literature. If he shows an interest, it is best to stay as long as possible on the first call and tell him all you can about the church, because the next time you go, he may not be as receptive as you found him the first time. Don't be in too big a hurry when making these calls. The teaching you do on the first call when interest is shown will regulate the success you will have in calling again. Don't think that you will have a better opportunity the next time. You won't. Do all you can to teach him the first visit.

If you find it difficult to go from house to house, get some cards and take a religious census. Ask people for their names and addresses, what church they are members of, whether they attend regularly, whether they have Bibles, the names and ages of their children, and whether they go to church. Some will

not give you the information, but if you keep going, you will find someone who is interested. When you do, tell him who you are and that you are a member of the church of Christ. Try to tell them all you can about the church without being boresome, and have some tracts you can give. You will have to use your own judgment about following up these contacts for among so many different people reactions will be so very different. Perhaps you had better call back in the evening for a short social visit and meet the other members of the family. Don't stay too long if you do. You might suggest to them that you would come by for the children to take them to Sunday school. You should show some continued interest and get better acquainted with them in some way, but don't push yourself on them too fast. Remember that you are only a stranger. Mr. and Mrs. George Fowers, 1069 Emerson Avenue, Salt Lake City, Utah, who were formerly Mormons but are now faithful members of the church, were first contacted in this way.

Be sure to invite them to the church services, and if they show the proper interest, arrange for a cottage meeting in their home. You may not know what I mean by a "cottage meeting," but it is simply an appointment you make with a family to bring a few members of the church to their home for songs and Bible study. When you do this, you may provide the refreshments which follow, if any are served. Do not

depend upon them to do so. Generally it is best not to serve any.

The vacation Bible school is a good means to contact new people who are interested in the church. Be sure to take the names and addresses of those who attend church. They should be visited immediately. The Retail Merchants Association will usually give you the names and addresses of the newcomers in town. If you are on the radio, be sure to visit those who write in. These are only a few suggestions of the many ways we can contact those who are interested and arouse interest in others. You can find many who are interested and can arouse interest in others by being vigilant.

### QUESTIONS

1. Are all people ready to hear the gospel, or must we spend some time in getting certain ones ready to hear?
2. Give examples from the Bible of where Christ aroused a person's interest by being interested in their interests.
3. If it is possible to reach certain people through their children, should we do so? Should we ask them to come to church and obey the gospel for the sake of their children?
4. Give several examples of how we may reach people by helping them in time of need.
5. Why do you fail to invite sinners to eat with you? Sponsor a project within your congregation where several families invite sinners to eat with them. Check the results.
6. Are Christians commanded to eat with sinners? Why don't we do so?

7. Is it wrong to use entertainment as a method of contacting those who are sinners?

8. How far should you go in talking to your friends at work about the Lord?

9. Discuss the best methods to be used in doing "house to house work" among total strangers.

10. How can the Vacation Bible School be effectively used in contacting nonmembers?

## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW TO BEGIN CONVERSATION

ONE of the greatest difficulties in doing personal work is in knowing how to change the conversation from temporal to spiritual things. May I say again that no definite set of rules can be given which will work on all occasions, but a few suggestions should be helpful. I believe more blunders have been made in trying to begin a conversation on religion than at any other time in doing personal work. It is easy enough to contact people, make friends, and prepare the ground, as you have seen from the preceding chapter, but this is as far as many Christians get. They want to go further but they do not know how. Many try, but say the wrong thing and do more harm than good. They decide to do nothing at this point and as a result many souls are lost who could be won if wisdom were used. There is no more dangerous time than just here, but it is no more difficult or dangerous than any other part of personal work if it is done properly.

#### *Your Attitude*

One of the most important things is your attitude. Why are you afraid to mention the Lord to a person? You say you do not know what to say. Say *something*. That is far better than saying nothing! Remember that the only fellow in the world who never



made a mistake is the one who did nothing for fear he would make a mistake, but he made the biggest one of all by doing nothing. Sincerity and love are your best tools. Be sure that you have these two, and what you say will not be so important. It isn't *what* you say that plays the greatest role just here but *how* you say it. I didn't know just how to tell my wife that I loved her and that I would like for her to marry me, but I told her just the same, and she thought it was the best way because there was genuine love behind it. My fears disappeared because they were melted by love. When I was selling books I dreaded terribly knocking on doors. I often wished that no one would come to the door, but when someone had come and I had said "something," I found that most of my fears had been only imaginary. So it is in personal work. Start talking, and your fears will soon dissolve.

It is very hard for many members of the church to begin a discussion of things spiritual. Perhaps you might be one of them. Examine yourself and see. If you find yourself guilty, your attitude needs to be worked on. Is a discussion of the Lord and his work a part of your thinking and conversation in your everyday life around home? If so, you should have no trouble. But if you talk and think about everything else, you will have trouble. Is it embarrassing for you to talk about the Bible? Then before you start working on nonmembers, get around members of the church and purposely bring up a discus-

sion of the Bible at every available opportunity. Do this until Christianity and a discussion of the same comes as naturally with you as talking about any other subject. Tell members of the church who are able to help you if you find difficulty just here. They will understand and help you with what you are trying to overcome. If you will do this, your greatest battle will have been won. Then when you bring up the subject to the nonmember, you will not be excited and unnatural.

### *Their Dispositions and Attitudes*

And in stressing the fact that you should say something, I do not mean you should say anything which happens to come to your mind. Different persons must be approached differently. What would please one person and make him respond favorably would offend another and make him turn away in disgust. This should remind you that all the time you are associating with him, you should be busy studying his disposition and attitude. Most people do not resent being talked to about their souls—in fact they appreciate it. They will wonder about your sincerity as a Christian if you do not talk to them. However, there are some who do resent being approached. When you find someone like this, it is usually best to try to change his attitude before bringing up the subject. Association and true friendship will usually remove this barrier.

*Make It Easy for Him to Bring Up the Subject*

It is much better always if you can get the other person to bring up the subject. The reason for this is that if he brings it up himself, he will feel as if he started the subject and that you are not forcing it on him. Some bring up the subject with but very little opportunity. However, it seems that you could be with others forever and they would never mention the Lord. You may blame them for this, but you would do well to examine yourself to see whether or not you are responsible.

Here are a few suggestions which will help you make it easier for the other person to start such a conversation. Surely, after you have associated with a man and have made him your *real* friend, he will go with you to church. Invite him to do so, and when you are returning home, mention a certain thing about the sermon that was outstanding in your estimation, and usually he will feel obligated to continue the conversation. Once the conversation is started, be sure that you do not drift away to another subject, because it will be harder to get back to the subject than it was to begin. If this doesn't work, ask him directly what he thought of the sermon. If he doesn't respond to that, tell about something you read in the Bible or about an interesting event that happened in the life of a Christian or a good work some Christian is doing. Maybe an incident about a little child will start the conversation. Watch every chance, and just as soon

as he gives you an opening be sure to take advantage of it. In these ways, even though you bring up the subject, you can do it in such a way that he will believe he had as much to do with bringing it up as you did. If he will not go to church with you or bring up the subject, I suggest the following:

*What to Say When You Bring Up the Subject*

Before you start a conversation on Christianity, think about the way you are going to word the question you ask or the statement you make. Be sure that it is worded so as to give the right meaning. It is very easy to say something that you do not intend to say by improper phrasing of the sentence or the tone of voice. I was doing personal work only recently with a young man who said to the man with whom we were talking, "You *certainly* have no incentive to live right the way you are now." The man took offense, and said that he *certainly* did. When we were gone, the young man asked me what he had said to make the man so angry. When I told him that he stressed the word "certainly" and when I showed him how he said it, he was surprised and said that he did not blame the man for getting angry.

After you have decided what to say, how to say it, and the tone of voice you want to use (the tone of voice will usually take care of itself if you are genuinely sincere) then think about what the person is going to say in response to what you say, and how you should answer his possible responses. If you have

this thought through, you will not have great difficulties.

*Get the Person Alone*

Didn't Christ talk to Nicodemus alone? Didn't he visit with the Samaritan woman alone? Didn't he go home with Zacchaeus so he could be with him away from the crowd? On almost all occasions, it is better not to bring up the subject of religion in a crowd. However, I would not say that this is always true. Sometimes a good opportunity is presented, but wisdom must be used. Especially is this true on the job where you are working. Don't bring up the subject to an individual before a group. If there is one man to whom you would like to talk, wait until you are alone with him. If someone else starts a discussion of the Bible in a crowd, it is all right to enter into it, but I have seen times when that was not best. It is almost impossible in most cases to talk to a man about his soul before his wife and children. Generally it is better to follow our Lord's example with Zacchaeus.

*Begin by Saying Something Good About Him*

When selling books, I was taught to get the other person's Bible on every occasion possible, look at it, and say something good about it before I tried to show what I had. This put the person in a better frame of mind to listen. The same principle was practiced by the early Christians. Before Paul condemned the Romans he said: "First, I thank my God

through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8). He condemned the Corinthians severely but he first said: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge" (I Cor. 1:4, 5). Even when Paul was on Mars Hill in the midst of all that idolatry, he said: "I perceive that in all things ye are very religious," and he also complimented one of the poets for a true statement he had made, and used it as a foundation on which to build what he had to say. It has been an unchangeable law of God from the foundation of the world that like begets like. If you start with finding fault and condemning, you will get just that from the other fellow, but if you say something good about him as Paul did about the Romans and the Corinthians, he will truly appreciate it and be in a more receptive mood.

Here is the way I would usually start talking to a person after I have him alone: "Bill, we have known one another a long time. I have learned to love and appreciate you and our friendship. In many ways I think you are one of the finest fellows I have ever known. You are honest, kind to your family; you are a good citizen. But you are not a Christian. You may have wondered why I have not talked to you before now. I have wanted to many times, but I was hoping that you would bring up the subject. Since you haven't, I just couldn't go further without talking

to you. I surely would like to see you obey the gospel and become a Christian.”

Those are not the exact words I would say on all occasions, but that is the general idea. I have told him the good things I appreciate about him before telling him of his shortcomings. I usually do not say much more than this to him, but pause to give him a chance to say something. The response he gives usually regulates what I say next. If I know he has been properly taught and he answers that he has been thinking about it and plans to be a Christian some day, I try to persuade him to go ahead and act by setting a definite time for him to obey the gospel. If he has not been properly taught, and if he is not ready, he will give reasons for not obeying the gospel. Then I have an opportunity to discuss the points which are disturbing him.

If you are with some who are not very interested in Christianity, do not bring up the subject until after you are better acquainted with them. But if you are with those who are interested in the Bible, you might suggest to them before you part from them, that you have Scripture reading and prayer. However, this is not always best. Some will appreciate it sincerely but some will resent it. Most of those who are interested will appreciate it. Especially is it appropriate if you call at the home of the sick or at the hospital to offer to pray for the one who is ill. Don't make the reading and prayer too long. If you are visiting in a home where you think people would

be interested, when you find it hard to start the conversation, suggest to them that you have Bible study, and then start with the book of Acts or one of the conversions in Acts. If you do not want to do this, you might say: "It's just about time for us to go, but before we leave we were just wondering if there is anything about the Bible you would like to discuss." If they answer negatively, then suggest some question that you wanted to talk to them about if you can tactfully do so, otherwise just drop the subject.

### *House-to-House Calling*

You might make house-to-house calls to take a religious census, to advertise a meeting, or just to see whom you can find. You might call on someone who has visited church. Some of the leaders of the church or a relative may ask you to call on friends of theirs. In that case, make the first a social visit, and try to make an opening for a return visit. But whatever the occasion, I would suggest that you take someone with you. Christ knew best when he sent the disciples out by two's, and we shall do well to follow his example. There are several reasons for this. If a man is calling and finds a woman at home alone, he will not feel embarrassed to go in if someone is with him, nor will she be so much embarrassed to invite him in. Besides, you might need help in your discussion. Two minds are better than one, and when you cannot think of what to say, your helper can.



One person may know just the right thing to say at the right time when the other may not. It is usually better for one to do most of the talking. If both try to talk at the same time, you will have difficulty in keeping your ideas connected. Then, too, the other person will think you are unfair if both try to talk. One should take the leadership, and if the other can see a good opportunity to say something that should be said, or if he should take over for a certain point, the first should be quiet.

If you have been asked to come, when the person answers the door, tell him your names, that you are members of the church of Christ, and that a certain person asked you to call. If you do not want to tell who asked you to call, just say that you are members of the church of Christ and that you would like to visit with him for a while if he is not too busy. If he is busy, make an appointment to come back. If you are not invited in when you say that, then proceed to tell him about the church or whatever you have to say. If you are invited in, go in as courteously as possible. If he has some hobby, a pet, or children, take notice and talk to or about them for a while. But don't delay too long before telling your purpose for coming.

If he came to church services and you called to tell him you were glad he came, tell him this first. Then if he wants to change the subject and talk about other things for a while, do so. But before you leave, ask him if he has any questions about the Bible. If he welcomes a discussion, use your own judgment

about how fully the subject should be discussed. This might be your only opportunity, so make the most of it. The likes and dislikes of the individual must be the governing factors just here. Before you leave, it perhaps would be best to ask if he would like to have Scripture reading and prayer. Give him a friendly invitation to attend church, but do not insist. Have a good tract or two which you can leave—one that will give a good idea of the plan of salvation, the church, and the things for which she stands.

If you have been asked to call on an indifferent member of the church or on someone who has quit coming, be sure to let him know why you came; and if you can possibly discuss his difficulty, be sure to do so even though you may have to force the issue. However, if you find you are doing more harm than good, hush. If you ever find that you are not the right one to call, be sure to get someone else to do so. But don't give up too quickly. Maybe you *are* the right one, and you are just scared. You might even be lazy!

As I said in the beginning of this chapter, I cannot give you a set of rules that will work on all occasions, but this should give you some idea of what is best to do. If you have difficulty in knowing what to do, go with someone who knows and watch him for a while. But if there is no one who knows how, just start and do something with all the sincerity and love you have, and you will learn best by doing.

When Christ started a conversation about things spiritual, it usually grew out of the occasion and was so natural that his hearers did not resent it. Rather, they invited it. If we will "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" we can just as easily talk about God. We cannot keep from doing so because such conversations will be the great part of our life, and a conversation on things spiritual will be a natural outgrowth of what we live daily. Study Christ's example with the woman at the well in the 4th chapter of John, and it will show the masterful way he changed the conversation. Then when you try to change the conversation to spiritual things, let it be an outgrowth of your surroundings, and it will not be hard. You see, it is not as hard as you thought to begin a conversation on things spiritual.

### QUESTIONS

1. Should we not be especially careful about the first statements we make to a person after arousing his interest? Why?

2. Will you ever know infallibly just exactly what you should say?

3. Should you refuse to say anything for fear you will make a mistake?

4. How may you come to know how a person will respond before you talk to him?

5. Why is it necessary to have a person alone when you talk to him?

6. Should you tell him of his good points first? How should you begin?

7. Should you ever bring up the subject of religion to a man before his family?

8. How long should you wait before you discuss religion with your friend?

9. How is a good way to change the conversation from things temporal to spiritual?

## CHAPTER IX

### HOW TO CHANGE PEOPLE

**W**HEN a man is lost, he is on the road to hell. He needs to be changed. You want to change him. You may teach him, but he still will be lost if he does not change, even though he knows the truth. You may feel that you have done your duty in teaching him, but after all you did not start in to say that you had taught him. You started to get him to change his destiny. You have not accomplished your goal until he has changed. All the time you have spent on him will be wasted unless he does change. He still is lost until he obeys the gospel.

#### *Do Not Make Him Angry*

Some brethren have told me that they cannot convert a person until they have made him angry, but I have usually found that I cannot convert a person after I have made him angry. Different persons can succeed in different ways, and different people respond differently, but it is usually best to try to keep from making the person angry whom you are teaching. Many of us have the idea that we have not taught the truth firmly until we have made someone mad, and I know that the truth cannot always be taught without compromise without offense to someone. I have heard many boast about the number of

people who got up and walked out of the house while they were preaching.

We have been strong for the doctrine of "calling a spade a spade" and for "letting the chips fall where they may." I am conscious of the fact that some people can be appealed to by harsh, radical, and extreme statements, but at the same time we may win a few in this way, we may drive dozens from the truth and from the Lord. If I win one soul by harsh methods, while by the same method I drive ten others from the Lord who might have been won if I had been more kind, I have done more harm than good. Most people do not get angry because of the truth but because of some radical, extreme statement that had nothing whatsoever to do with the truth of the gospel.

I once heard of a preacher who was known for his "hard" preaching, who accused other preachers of being "soft-soapers" because they did not preach the truth without compromise as he did. I visited a meeting he was holding and got hit with a rotten egg before I left. But why? Because he was preaching the truth without compromise? No indeed. It was because while he was preaching he said, "All that it takes to make a ——— is two thousand pounds worth of ignorance and an insane asylum." His radical, unkind, false statement had nothing to do with

tend again. Some people get angry because of the truth, but in most cases it is because of some unwise, bitter statement that could just as easily be left unsaid.

### *Don't Be a Jellyfish*

Some have seen the mistake of those who have been too harsh and unkind, and have gone to the other extreme. They spend so much time trying to be nice and are so careful to try to keep from hurting someone's feelings that they never bring anyone to the Lord. There is just as much danger in being a "jellyfish" as there is in being a "hard-hitter." The Lord wants us to stand for his truth, and he wants us to stand for it without compromise, but we cannot do that if we say "goody-goody" to everything and everybody that comes along. Don't be trying to be so careful not to offend that your effort will be more apparent than the truth.

After all, you can say a lot of things in doing personal work that could never be said in the pulpit. You are not just trying to make the fellow feel good and make him like you. You are trying to turn him from the road of sin to the Lord, and you are not going to do that unless you say something that will be strong enough to change him from the things he has formerly believed and practiced. You want to convert him, and in order to do so, you must uproot his false and sinful ideas and implant the truth in their place, and this takes the pure gospel without compromise. If you are too soft and nice, he will never get your point,

and he may go to hell because you did not make him see the error of his way. After all, Christianity makes a person stand for some real truth and Christian principles, and the person you are trying to teach will not see this in you if you do not draw the line between the person who is a Christian and the one who is not. Kindness does not mean compromise, and we should be sure that we do not get the two mixed.

*Show the Advantage of the Change*

We have often thought that we have fully established the truth when we have shown the other fellow where he is wrong. You may be able to completely demolish false doctrine and sinful living, but you have not preached the full gospel until you have shown wherein the truth is better. I have often made this mistake while trying to teach the Mormons. I have been able to show them without a doubt that their religion is wrong, and in most cases they would say, "Well, do you have anything any better?" The strength of our position does not lie in the fact that others are wrong, and the Christian life is not right because sin is wrong. But the truth is the truth because it is true, and Christianity is right because of its positive merits. When we show those merits it will be easier for the person to give up other things. Christ said, "Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me." So the first thing to do in converting a man is to teach him the



truth, and if he is properly taught, you will not need to worry too much about the change. The results will naturally follow.

This is one reason Christ was so successful. He never worried about results. He taught the truth and he knew it would accomplish what he wanted. He knew it would not return to him void. Christ often appeared indifferent about results. When he was told that some were displeased with what he said, he did not make alterations nor did he modify what he had said to make it more acceptable. He laid a foundation in his teaching which produced fruit for hundreds of years after he had taught. Be sure when you want to change a man that he understands the truth. If you teach him properly, he will likely change. But perhaps you say you know this, but that you would like to know how to teach him the truth so he will change. Let us see if we can learn.

### *Stress the Things on Which You Agree*

Many have failed in personal work because they stress the things which cause differences. Differences must be discussed, and a true Christian will show the difference between truth and error, the life of sin and the life of the Christian. You have not faithfully taught until you have done so. People today think the church of Christ is just another denomination. They must be shown that this is not true. Another great tendency is for people today to say

one religion is just as good as another and it matters not what you believe. These false ideas must be dealt with, and you should show that there is a difference. If people are baptized with those false ideas, they will do the church more harm than good, and they will not obey the gospel from the heart. Their baptism will be only a formality. But even though those errors should be exposed, we must remember that we are not just trying to show them how far they are from the truth. We want to get them to accept the truth.

The apostle Paul is a good example for us to follow in this respect. When he was standing on Mars Hill, in the 17th chapter of the book of Acts, he not only showed those people that idolatry was wrong, but he took a statement from one of their own poets and reasoned to show them that they must also have a conception that God is not like stones graven by man. "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being."

When Paul stood before Agrippa, he asked him, "Believest thou the prophets?" And then Paul hastened to say, "I know that thou believest." And from this statement he concluded his sermon which caused even Agrippa to be almost persuaded to obey the gospel. Why did he do those things? He was guided by the inspiration of the Lord, and he stressed the things on which there was an agreement. Christ did this, too. When they condemned him for saying that he was the Son of God, he quoted the book of Psalms and said: "Is it not written in your law: I

said, Ye are gods. If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:34-36).

Let me give you a modern application of this principle. If a person tells you that he believes the churches should not be fighting one another and disagreeing, agree with him immediately and show him that we believe the same thing . . . that all Christians in the early church were members of the same church and they did not fight and disagree. They took the Bible and believed and practiced it as we do. I was talking to a man not long ago about instrumental music. He was a member of the Christian Church. He believed in instrumental music. I knew we agreed that baptism must be by immersion. I asked him why he did not believe in sprinkling. He told me that immersion was commanded and from all the examples we have in the New Testament, the early Christians practiced immersion. I then told him the same thing was true in regard to singing . . . that singing is commanded, and from all the examples we have in the New Testament, the early Christians sang. They never used the instrument. He saw the point and was convinced.

Now, do you see more clearly what I mean? In teaching, stress the things on which you agree and use those points of agreement to show the complete truth. Christ did it, Paul did it, and so should we.

*Follow the Golden Rule*

This is one of the best rules to follow that I know of in trying to change people, and yet very few people have thought of it as practical in personal work. If you are talking to a drunkard, talk to him as you would like to be talked to if you were a drunkard. If you are talking to someone who believes in sprinkling, try to teach him in the way you would like to be taught if you were in that error. In other words, remember that the golden rule should be applied in teaching the truth as well as in carrying on a business deal.

You do not know but what you would have believed the same thing and had the same ideas if you had lived under the same circumstances and had been taught the same things. So do your best to see the things you talk about from the other person's point of view. That has been one of the hardest things I have found in working among the Mormons. I can explain a thing, which from my point of view is as plain as can be, but from their point of view, and because of their training, they miss the point entirely. I often get disgusted with them, but then again I stop to think that they have been reared under very different conditions than I have, and they do not know the Bible. They have believed a working of error and that has blinded them. If I had been reared in Utah, I might have believed as they, but since I was not and they see it from another stand-

point, I must be patient and do my best to understand their way of looking at it. I must go further. I must get their point of view before I can show them the truth effectively. Often in personal work you should say: "I know that from your standpoint, you are right, but let us look at it in this way."

And then you will see miraculous results. Didn't the poet say: "Teach me to feel another's woe—to know another's pain." Doesn't the Bible say for us to weep with those that weep and rejoice with those that rejoice? You can show a man Christianity by practicing the golden rule while doing personal work much more easily than you can by preaching to him. It is easy to condemn and find fault, but it is hard to be sympathetic and try to understand why he believes as he does. But this is what the world needs. A little sympathy and understanding will do more to change some people than all the denunciations in the world. Christ knew this when he talked to the woman who had been found in the act of adultery, and we shall do well to remember the same lesson today.

*Let Him Think That the Idea Is His*

Different people must be handled in different ways. It is necessary to literally blast some people's ideas off the map. You just have to condemn with all the might you have and ridicule and show how absolutely foolish the idea is. There are certain people that I have actually laughed at and made fun of in their beliefs—and then end up by saying: "Now you know

good and well you do not believe that.” This method can be used very effectively if you are talking to a person who is argumentative and good-natured. But with other people it would be the wrong thing to do.

Some would not change for anything in the world if they thought by the change they would let you win a point over them. And this is true with too many people. They would change readily if they thought the idea was theirs, but if they thought it was your idea, they would not change for anything. I knew a man once who was the very personification of this principle. If he wanted to see something done, and if someone suggested it before he had a chance to do so, he would oppose it; but if you could find out that he wanted to do that thing and then make him think that he thought of the idea, he would be for it every time; and there would be no limit of his energy in pushing it to see that it was a success. You may think when you are doing this you are just humoring people and that you are not accomplishing anything if a person changes under these conditions. But didn't Paul quote on Mars Hill from the Athenian poets to let them see that they had already thought of the idea about God? Christ knew this principle should be used, so once when a person asked him what to do to inherit eternal life, he answered: “What is written in the law—how readest thou?” He let the man find his own answer.

*Other Suggestions*

Be sure that you remember there is something more powerful with which to change people than all the rules of tact you might follow. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Christ said: "*Every man* therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me." If they do not change, it is because they have not been properly taught. Do the job of teaching well, and the results will follow. There is real power in the gospel, and we are told that his word will not return to him void.

Some have attempted to bring about changes in the lives of people because of their wives or children, but this is a big mistake. Do not use that appeal. If they were to change for them, they would not be doing it to please the Lord, and unless they change with the idea in mind to serve the Lord, all is vain. It is good to show them the necessity of making a home completely Christian and that we should help one another because that is one of the principles of Christianity, but this should not be the predominant motive.

Be genuinely sincere when you are talking to someone about his soul. His soul is the most important thing in the world, and if he thinks you think so, he will see how important it is. But if he thinks you do not think so, neither will he.

## QUESTIONS

1. Have you accomplished your goal when you only teach a man?

2. Is it necessary to make a person mad to change him?

3. Is it possible to be too soft? Just how hard should a person be in teaching?

4. Have we fully established the truth by showing that denominationalism is wrong?

5. Should we be greatly concerned about the results in preaching the gospel?

6. Is it scriptural to stress the things on which we agree?

7. Should we try to put ourselves in the other fellow's place in teaching him, or should we just see the thing from our viewpoint?

8. How may the golden rule be followed in doing personal work?

9. Is it being weak or wise to try to let the other fellow think that he thought of a certain idea?

10. Give your own suggestions and ideas about how to change others.



## CHAPTER X

### SHOULD WE ORGANIZE TO DO PERSONAL WORK?

**P**ERHAPS many of you will be ready to disfellowship me when you read what I say in this chapter. But, nevertheless, I am going to say it. I believe this is both scriptural and necessary, and I am ready to go to the Bible with anyone who disagrees. I am definitely sure I can prove that what I say is in harmony with God's Word, even though it is not in harmony with what we have traditionally believed and practiced in many instances.

We have been so afraid of the word "organize" that we have worked with little or no system, or order. The denominations with their missionary societies and many other unscriptural organizations have caused us to come to the conclusion that we must have *no* organization. But if I read my Bible correctly, we are told to "do all things decently and in order." The church is a divine institution, and it is an organization, but it is not a man-made organization. It is a divine and scriptural organization (Eph. 3:10). I believe that Christ is the head of that organization (Col. 1:18), and that God should be given glory through that church (Eph. 3:21). The elders should exercise the oversight of the local congregation (I Pet. 5:1-3; Acts 20:28). I believe all the work of the local congre-

gation should be under their direction, whether it is the preacher who preaches the sermon, a person who teaches a class, the widows and orphans to be fed, or the personal work that is to be done. And I do not want anyone to come to the conclusion that I am advocating a separate organization or institution.

However, many believe that because the Lord did not designate the specific way all the work of the church is to be done, we should do nothing about a systematic and intelligent way of doing his work. For that reason, in many congregations very few are held accountable for any definite responsibilities. Each member holds back because he is afraid someone will accuse him of running the church. Hence, very little work of any kind is ever done by anyone. The Bible says that the elders are to oversee the work of the congregation, but that does not mean they are to do all the work. Their specific duty is to oversee the teaching, but that does not mean they are to do all the teaching. They can ask someone to teach a class—assigning one person to a specific duty, and no one doubts but that this is scriptural. They can ask another to lead the singing or a certain preacher to give a series of sermons. In these respects it is generally accepted that they can ask and assign to certain ones certain duties, and no one questions their right to do so. If they can do these things, why can they not do so in personal work?

In my estimation they are doing what the Bible says they should do when they ask a certain woman to

take the leadership in seeing that the sick are visited. I have known some cases where the elders of the church agree that a certain work of charity should be done. One of the elders will be given the specific responsibility to see that it is done. He will call a certain lady and ask her to get some other ladies to go where the charity work is to be done and report back to the elders through him what should be done. The elders thus function through the one elder who is given the responsibility to call on a capable lady of the church to get others to help. I have seen this same principle work in many other ways. The elders and deacons meet and decide that a building should be built or painted. One or more are given the specific responsibility to see that the work is done. Thus the entire eldership and the deacons work through the ones chosen. In another way it works. The leaders decide that they would like to hire a certain preacher. They ask one of their number to write. All of them are in agreement, but they ask one man to function as correspondent.

Now all these things lead to this: If it is scriptural in these respects for the leaders of the church to assign certain responsibilities to certain individuals, without being accused of starting a separate organization, why is it not possible for them to so function in doing personal work? Everyone who is half way awake to the possibilities of a local congregation is aware of the fact that the responsibility of personal work cannot be properly done by pushing it off on the

shoulders of just a few. It is no more scriptural to do this than it is to have such work *designated* to certain members of the church who know that the personal work is their specific responsibility. In other words, if it is scriptural for the preacher and a few of the members to be unofficially and indirectly held accountable for doing all the personal work and visiting of the sick, what is wrong for a larger number of the members to be officially asked by the leaders of the church to do such work?

In I Corinthians 12:28 we find the statement that some were set into the church as "teachers." Many of you perhaps will be ready to affirm that this scripture has reference to those who teach the Bible classes on Sunday morning, but I challenge anyone to prove that it refers to them and to them alone. It cannot be proved. I am sure that it refers to any kind of teaching that is to be done. If certain ones can be set into the local congregation as evangelists and be charged with a specific kind of teaching, if certain ones can be set into the congregation and be charged with the responsibility of teaching Bible classes on Sunday mornings; the leaders of the church can just as scripturally designate fifteen or twenty, fifty or one hundred members of the church to do personal work.

Almost all of us are convinced that nonmembers should be contacted personally in some way. Preachers preach on the necessity of it, and hundreds of times have members of the church been urged to do so. But usually nothing is ever done, and if some

interest and enthusiasm is aroused, it lasts only for a little while and then dies down. Then when the slump comes, it is almost impossible to arouse interest again. And when an effort is made, someone is ready to say: "I saw that tried once, and it lasted only for a short time and failed, so I am not interested." He never stops to think that the failure should be attributed to the loose organization and not to the work that is done. We get enthusiastic about personal work for a while, and somebody does it with no supervision of any kind by the elders or anyone else. Each person may work, but the others do not know what is being done—it is completely out from under the direction of any of the elders or deacons. If a widow or orphan is fed, it is just by a few individual members of the church who see that the work should be done, so they do it. Wouldn't it be much better if such work were done under the direction and in connection with the leaders of the church? Some stranger comes to church. No one is charged with the responsibility to meet him and make him feel welcome or to invite him back to church again. No one writes him a card during the week, and no one goes to see just how interested he may be. Members of the church are absent—they may have had their feelings hurt, or they may be growing cold and indifferent. No one pays any attention to them, and finally they are lost completely to the church. If someone had been charged with the specific responsibility of seeing about them, they would not have quit. If certain ones can be designated

to lead the songs, lead the prayers, or wait on the Lord's Table, others can be assigned to these specific responsibilities just as scripturally.

One congregation that I know met the problem in this way. The elders knew that the Bible said they should "watch for souls" (Heb. 13:17). In other words they should see that the members of their congregation were living and growing in the grace of the Lord. The elders are told to "feed the church." There were too many members in the congregation for each elder to know all their needs. So the elders and deacons met and worked out a plan so that each elder was assigned a specific number to see about. The names of the congregation were divided so that each elder had forty members for which he was responsible. Each elder had two deacons assigned to him as helpers. Those three were to visit those forty members each month. They were to know their needs and keep in definite touch with them to see that any problem which arose in their lives was properly cared for. If they missed church it was their specific responsibility to contact them the following week and see why, and then to do all they could to get them back again the next Sunday. If a problem arose that was too great, they could call for help. There were certain women designated to work with each elder and his two deacons, so that if they needed a woman to go to the home, they would know exactly on whom to call. They were approaching an intelligent arrangement of

the work of "taking the oversight" in their congregation.

I was with the Broadway Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas for two months in the early part of 1944. I have been doing mission work under their direction since 1937. While with them for those two months, they worked out a plan for systematic personal work that is being done under the direction of the elders of the church, and I believe it is worthy of imitation.

It was found that the Bible class attendance on Sunday morning was about two hundred twenty-five, or less. That was very poor for a congregation of more than twelve hundred members. The effort was made to double this attendance within a year, and, at the same time, contact and teach many who were not Christians. First, the elders asked that the members be given instructions on how to do personal work. The lessons contained in this book were given. Then we passed out sheets to those who attended the classes on personal work. On those sheets they could designate the kind of personal work they would be willing to do; such as, visit the sick, call on visitors, write letters or cards, call on the telephone, call on indifferent members, call on nonmembers, etc. Each one who signed a card agreed to give two hours per week to this work. They were to sign the card, giving their telephone number, their address, and the name of the person with whom they would like to work.

More than seventy signed the sheets. In other words, there was a potential working strength of one

hundred forty working hours each week within the congregation. It would take more than five full time preachers to do that much personal work. The local congregation will be benefited much more by doing their own personal work than by paying preachers to do it. One deacon, or good leader, in the congregation was placed over every ten workers. They each were charged with the responsibility of seeing that their ten did the work that was assigned to them. They were to hold meetings with those ten and help work out the problems that might arise. There were three others who made specific assignments to each leader and the type of work that should be done. Records were kept of the assignments, and definite written reports were turned in when the work was done. Some went through the church records and checked the names of those who were not attending Bible study, and a concentrated effort was made to get them to attend.

The personal work that these members did included: visiting the sick, getting names and addresses of all visitors at church, calling on them and writing letters to invite them back, calling on newcomers who had just moved to Lubbock to invite them to church, calling on the sick in the hospitals, a definite work to help in the juvenile delinquency problem in connection with the police department in the town, calling on indifferent members, calling on the new members as soon as they obey the gospel or place membership, to help each class teacher see that the



class grows regularly, etc. Definite written records are kept of all this work, and a young lady, who is good at keeping the records, was asked to assist the three leaders in taking care of them.

What have been the results? The Bible school attendance was not doubled within one year—it was doubled within two months. More personal work was done on the young married people's class than on any other. Brother Norvel Young teaches the class. There were about sixty attending the class when the personal work started. Within two months there was an attendance of one hundred seventeen. The last report I had of the class, it had grown to one hundred thirty-one in attendance. It was then so large that they had to divide it, and the very next Sunday after the class was divided, there were still one hundred thirty-one present.

Each leader meets regularly with his ten workers, and once a month all of the personal workers meet together with the elders and deacons of the church to give a report of what has been done. All the work is under the direction of the elders of the church. At those monthly meetings talks and experiences are given by different workers which are really inspirational. This work was first started in February, 1944, and it is now July, 1944, at this writing. The last report this week showed that the number of personal workers has increased from seventy to more than one hundred. Brother Young tells me that they are having to put chairs in the aisles at church every Sunday, and

the elders say that they will have to build a larger building if they grow more.

The personal work is not a hardship on anyone because no one is asked to do more than two hours of work each week. But with each of the one hundred personal workers doing this, that means more than two hundred working hours each week. That gets a great amount of work done, but it is not all done by just a few. It is good for the members and at the same time the elders are "taking the oversight," while they and the preacher do not have to do all the work. They are systematically doing personal work, but they have no separate, unscriptural organization through which the work is being done. Those who do that work have been designated as "teachers" within that local congregation, just as certain ones were set into the church as "teachers" in I Corinthians 12:28.

Now this may not be the plan that you would follow within your local congregation, but some kind of similar plan *should* be followed in *every* church. If it is done, each person will know what his specific work is. The elders will be taking the oversight and directing the work, and much more will be done than will ever be accomplished if the members are just told to work with no specific leadership taken to see that the work is done. In this way the weak members can be given special work which will help them to grow, and the older ones can help by taking the weak ones on the calls they make. No separate and unscriptural organization other than the church is used, and yet, the

personal work is done systematically so that the elders know what is being done and each member can know and have a part. Definite training and instruction is given each month, regularly, so that the work will not die. The Bible says that the local congregation is to function as a unit (1 Cor. 12:25) under the direction of the elders of the church, and the primary work of the church is to teach. I believe teaching includes more than that which is done from the pulpit and in the classrooms on Sunday. The teaching of the church should go on all during the week, and each person who is a Christian should help in the teaching. The elders of the church should see that they do the teaching. When this is done, the church will grow as it did in the beginning. Acts 5:42 says, the early Christians taught from house-to-house, and I am sure that the apostles and elders helped to see that the work was done systematically, else the apostle Paul could not have written in Colossians 1:23 that the gospel had been preached to *every* creature. All the teaching was not done to one man or in one locality, but it was distributed so that all creatures heard. If we do the same today, the church will grow now as rapidly as it did then. We have the same gospel; and if we manifest the same zeal, the same wisdom, and the same willingness to spend and be spent in the service of the Lord, under the direction of the church of the Lord, all the world will hear the gospel within a short time.

## QUESTIONS

1. Is it scriptural to have an organization other than the church through which to do personal work? Why?

2. Is it unscriptural for certain elders of the church to do specific work?

3. Why do many elders of congregations fail to oversee the teaching work that is done?

4. Name some good ways to contact those who are most interested.

5. Why does enthusiasm cease so easily in most congregations?

6. Who were the teachers spoken of in I Cor. 12:28?

2-10- ✓ 7. Did the early church have the "house-to-house" work, spoken of in Acts 5:42, arranged systematically?

✓ 8. Give all the suggestions you can think of to help intelligently arrange the personal work within your congregation.

## CHAPTER XI

### HOW TO ANSWER QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

**C**OLOSSIANS 4:6 says: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know HOW ye ought to answer every man." With this exhortation I think it is both proper and wise to try to learn HOW to answer people, as well as we should study to learn the scriptural teaching to be given. Many have failed in personal work because they do not understand how to answer people when questions are asked and statements are made.

One of the first things you should consider when you have been asked a question is the motive behind it. You can usually tell the motive by the expression on the person's face or the way the question is worded. Some are masters at wording questions, and if you are not careful you will walk into a trap and give an answer you will wish later you had not given. I have made many statements in answer to questions that I have wished a thousand times had not been made. Therefore, it is good for us to heed this admonition: ". . . Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Jas. 1:19). Even if you have to pause for a while before you answer, try to determine why the person asked the question or made the statement.

Some questions are asked just to start an argument. When that is done, it is usually best to disarm the person before you answer. Most of the times he will be caught completely unaware if you say: "I'll be glad to answer that question if you ask it because you sincerely want the answer, but if you just want to argue, I do not care to answer." In most all cases he will say that he is sincere and that he does not just want to argue. Even though an argument is still his motive, and you know it is, you have put him under obligation to prove by his answers and statements that he does not just want to argue. You have also shown that you are answering not just in order to argue, but because you are sincere and really believe what you say. It is easy to do much good teaching here that could not have been done if you had answered his question without making this definitely clear. Especially is this helpful if others are listening to the conversation.

Some questions are asked to arouse prejudice. A few of these questions are: "Do you think that everybody who does not belong to your church is going to hell?" "Do you think that you and your church are the only ones who are right?" "What if a man believes, repents, confesses his faith in Christ, starts on his way to be baptized, and a tree falls on him and kills him—will he be lost?"

Some statements are made and questions are asked in order to arouse anger. I have seen this happen many times, and members of the church of Christ fall

for the trap and get angry. But remember that most of the times when you are talking to people about religion, whether they are sincere or insincere, if you get angry, you are the loser. I have always found it is a real joy to be able to keep the other person from making me angry. You can show yourself to be the master of the situation and you can prove yourself to be a real Christian by practicing self-control. He might be wanting to show others that you are not a real Christian because you cannot control your temper under trying circumstances.

Some questions are asked not because the querist wants your answer, but that he might be able to answer the question himself. When that is the motive, it is usually best to let him be satisfied, and say, "What do you think?" Or you might say: "Perhaps you can answer that question better than I." After all, in many cases it will be just as easy or easier to show that what he says is not the truth than it will be to answer the question and let him find fault with what you say. Then when you have shown that what he says is not the truth, he will be more receptive to what you have to say in answer to the question.

Many questions are asked and statements are made in all sincerity, because the person really wants to know your answer and what the Bible teaches about it. In these cases you should answer the questions just as plainly as possible and do all within your power to help him see the truth. This will often require much patience and long-suffering.

*The Answer*

Before we discuss the different ways a question or statement can be answered, let us read carefully James 3:13-17: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

Remember always that questions and statements can be answered in more than one manner, and that is the reason we are exhorted to: ". . . Know *how* ye ought to answer every man."

*Answer Directly*

First, you may answer a person directly. Most questions are asked sincerely, and we should just as sincerely answer them. If a person is really seeking the truth, he does not want to be evaded. If he thinks that you are trying to use psychology on him and keep something hidden, he will very likely turn away in disgust. But if you answer, giving the information that he wants from the word of God, he will respect you and ask for more. Peter answered the



question in Acts 2:37 with a direct statement, and so did Paul in Acts 16:30. Some modern questions that many ask because they really want to know are "Why do you believe that baptism is essential?" "Why doesn't the church of Christ use instrumental music?" "Why do you attach so much importance to the Lord's Supper?" You can always tell the sincerity by the wording of the question, and such a person really would appreciate information. The direct answer that will give the information is always best. Matthew 23:23-32 and Matthew 23:34-40 are also good examples of this manner of answering.

#### *Answer with a Question*

Second, a statement or question can be answered with a question. In Matthew 21:23-27, we find a record of where the chief priest and the elders asked Christ where he got his authority. He answered by asking them a question about the baptism of John. When they could not answer, he said that he would not answer their question. Christ also answered a question with a question in Matthew 15:1-9. They asked Christ why his disciples transgressed the traditions of the elders by refusing to wash their hands when they ate. Christ answered, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" And then he pointed out where they had transgressed the law of God. These are two good examples, but they are not the only ones. Christ answered in this way many times.

A person may ask if you think it is wrong to smoke. You might answer by asking, "Do you think that it is a clean habit?" He will answer, "No." And then you can show from the Bible that uncleanness is a work of the flesh. Thus you answer his question with a question. Some ask, "Why do you people preach against other churches?" We might answer, "Why shouldn't we? The Bible says that every plant which the Father has not planted should be rooted up, and we as Christians should help with the rooting." Those questions will perhaps call for other discussions, but by them you can change the conversation to almost any course you wish. The Mormons like to ask us where we get our authority. If we turn the question on them, they are glad to answer, and then it is easy to show how Joseph Smith received his priesthood before baptism—a thing they say cannot be done. If someone says there are contradictions in the Bible, you need not argue with him a long time about whether there are any—just say, "Would you please show me one?" And then proceed to discuss what is shown.

#### *Answer with an Illustration*

You may answer a question with an illustration. In Luke 10:29, Christ was asked: "And who is my neighbor?" He did not answer directly nor did he answer with a question. He gave an illustration about a man who fell among thieves. The illustration is known as the story of the Good Samaritan. When he had concluded the illustration, he asked: "Which

of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise" A.R.V. (Luke 10:36, 37). In Matthew 21:28-32 Christ masterfully used this method of answering. He said: "A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in the vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented himself, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Which of the two did the will of the father? They say, The first." (A.R.V.) Jesus had given them an illustration to answer the question they had asked. The teaching of Christ is full of illustrations, and we shall do well to learn to answer questions and statements this way today.

Some people ask today: "If you believe that it is right to have instrumental music in the home, why not have it in the church?" You can answer by saying that there are a lot of things we can do in the home that would not be right in the church. Then you can give as an illustration that it would be all right to have angel food cake and punch on your table at home, but such would not be right on the Lord's Table. Some make an argument that the Bible does not say we cannot use instrumental music. You can answer that the Bible did not tell Noah to *not* use pine wood, but it would have been a sin because God told him to use gopher wood. Often people are amazed

because we are so strict in doing just exactly what the Lord says. You might give the story of Moses' striking the rock instead of speaking to it, and you might also give the illustration of how the Lord killed Uzzah because he touched the ark.

*Let Him Answer His Own Question*

You may respond, when a person asks you a question, by letting him answer his own questions. Often people ask questions, not in order to get what you believe about it, but that they might get to tell what they think about it. When you find this to be true, you might ask him a question that will put the explaining on his shoulders. Or you might ask him directly what he thinks about it. Jesus did this. Luke 10:25-28, "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: This do, and thou shalt live." (A.R.V.)

If a person asks you whether or not it is necessary to be baptized, you could say, "I'll just let you find your answer in the Bible. Turn to Mark 16:16 and read." When they have read from their own Bible, you might ask them to explain the passage as to what it actually says. If a person asks if you believe that

the church of Christ is the only true church, you can ask him what he thinks about it. He will be compelled to say that there is one great church of which we are all members. Then you can say that you agree with him, but that this church is not composed of differing sects which believe and practice different doctrines. You can then give him a lesson on unity and teach him the truth about the one true church; whereas, if you had answered his question directly and said that the church of Christ is the only true church, he would have closed his mind and would not have listened to anything you said. We should never be ashamed of the truth at any time, but when we are answering questions of that nature, we should especially remember that there is more than one way or manner of answering. We should do our best on all occasions to keep a person's mind open to the truth rather than close it by making some unwise statement before we have time to teach the truth on an issue.

#### *Refuse to Answer*

There are certain times when you should refuse to answer a question. If you are talking to a person about some issue and you get him pinned down to where he cannot answer, he will often ask a question on another subject in order to relieve the pressure. Sometimes it is best with certain individuals to let him change the subject, but in most cases this is not best. The Mormons are experts at this. That is one reason they go by "two." If one gets pinned down,

the other can change the subject by asking another question. When we first came to Utah, I would follow their questions, and by the time the conversation was over, we had talked about everything in general and nothing specifically. Now I have learned to stay with the subject and say when they ask a question, "We will discuss that later, but let us finish the subject we are studying now." And then I press the issue with all my might. Often you can drive a point home in such a forceful way when you have a fellow "pinned against the wall," that it will do much good, and he will never forget it. You might need to say often: "That has nothing to do with the point we are discussing." It is much better in doing personal work to spend an entire evening in a study of one subject which you teach thoroughly than to only touch lightly on many subjects. If the person really wants to know about the different things because he is sincerely seeking the truth, it is best to make an appointment to come back rather than try to discuss so many things in one visit that he will become confused. Stay with one subject as nearly as possible and drive your main points home forcefully, then you will do much more good.

### *Delay the Answer*

There are times when you should postpone answering certain questions. One reason for this is that you might want an excuse to call again. If so, the best way to do is to say that you would like to think and

study about the question for a while before you answer it. If you appear to be too smart and answer all the questions without study, they might think that you are egotistical. But if you tell them you would like to study before you answer, they will be convinced that you are genuinely sincere, and that you do not want to give them the wrong answer. You might be asked a question during a discussion that you do not know just how to answer. If that happens, you might ask the person to repeat the question, and while he is repeating it, you will have time to think what to say. If you still do not know what to say exactly after he has repeated, you might say, "Just why do you ask the question?" If you still don't know what to say when he has finished explaining, you could ask, "What connection does that have with what we were discussing?" Surely by that time you will have decided what to say, but if not, you had better postpone the answer until the next time you see him. Now all these questions will postpone your answer until you have had time to think best HOW to answer. I am sure that in doing this you will not be violating the Scripture which says: "... be slow to speak. . . ." It is better to take time to think and give the correct answer than it is to answer in a hurry and say something wrong.

*Answer Not a Fool According to His Folly*

There are two Scriptures we should consider in the book of Proverbs when it comes to answering ques-

tions. Solomon said in Proverbs 26:4, 5: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." Many have said that this is a contradiction, but it is not. The inspired writer was just giving two different ways to answer a fool. In the first statement he said that we should not answer according to the folly of a fool lest we be like him. During the first debate we had with the Mormons in Salt Lake City, they got a lawyer to debate us. He was very unkind and cutting in his remarks. We went to the extreme to be kind, and that kindness did more good than all the slander which we could have given. He was defeated more because of his slander than by the arguments. We did not answer him according to his folly.

*Answer a Fool According to His Folly*

However, later when we were having a discussion with the Mormons in the park at Ogden and each person could hand in questions from the audience, a question came in asking: "Why are you so nervous when you say that Joseph Smith is a false prophet?" I answered, "From the looks of the writing on this piece of paper I am not the one who is nervous." Another said, "After hearing you, Mr. Gatewood, I am a better Mormon than I have ever been." I answered, "It is a real joy to know that we can do something for you that the teachings of the Mormon Church could not do. For all



these years you have been listening to the Mormon doctrine and you have not been made as strong as you say you are now. It must be proof conclusively that we have something better in the teaching we give than the Mormon doctrine." In these answers the fool was being answered according to his folly, and from the response that came from the audience, we could see that more good was done than by all the other answers we could have given. A preacher once had a question handed to him asking, "Will you please explain the difference between you and a monkey?" The preacher replied that if the person who wrote the question would come to the platform and stand there by his side, the audience could see the difference. Another had the question handed in: "When did Job's turkey die?" The preacher answered, "From the looks of the scratching on this paper, he hasn't died yet."

Honest and sincere people should not be answered in these ways, but we must remember when we are dealing with the foolish, the Lord has told us to answer them in these ways. The time and occasion will regulate and govern the best way to answer. You will lower the cause for which you stand at times by getting on the level of the fool, but at other times you can completely deflate and expose him if you do so. The Bible gives two reasons for these two answers: "lest thou be like unto him" and "lest he be wise in his own conceits." Answers should be given with the right purpose in mind and on right occasions.

Let us read Colossians 4:6 and I Peter 3:15 again: "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know HOW ye ought to answer every man." "But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready alway to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, YET WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR." (A.R.V.)

### QUESTIONS

1. Explain the meaning of Colossians 4:6 and James 1:19.
2. What are the different motives a person may have for asking questions?
3. How may you determine his motive?
4. Should your answer be governed by the motive a person has in asking?
5. What should you do when you know someone is trying to make you angry?
6. Must every question always be answered in the same way?
7. Name eight different ways a question may be answered and give scripture for each.
8. Why should different foolish questions be answered in different ways?

## CHAPTER XII

### HELPFUL ANSWERS

**M**ANY members of the church have failed to do personal work because they are afraid someone will ask them a question they cannot answer. But there is no real reason for this fear. Usually the same questions are asked by everyone, and if you learn how to answer those few stock questions, you will have no great difficulty. I am listing in this chapter the questions that have been asked me most frequently in the personal work that I have done; also the answers I have found to be most successful.

The same questions can be asked in numbers of different ways, and the answers must vary accordingly. It is impossible for us in this chapter to ask all these questions in the different ways they might be asked and give the particular wording of the answer that would be best. But from the answers that we do give, you should be able to get the thought, and the particular answer you should give to fit the occasion should not be difficult.

#### *How Do You Know There Is a God?*

We do not *know*. It is a matter of faith. The individual to whom you are talking will be surprised at this answer, and he may say that he must know definitely that God lives before he would serve him.

You can answer that he can be definite even though it is a matter of faith. Most of us have no doubts that Napoleon, George Washington, Caesar, or the Pharaohs lived, but we must all rely on the records of history.

There is more evidence that there is a living God than there is to prove that these characters lived. First, nature proves there is a divine power. We could not believe that a watch accidentally came into existence, and yet this world moves more accurately than any watch. Man's existence is another great proof. We are intelligent, but we cannot create others. So some intelligence greater than ourselves must have made us. Man's unsatisfied longings is another proof. This great power that made us, made water for us when we are thirsty, food for the hungry, and sleep for the weary; but man's longing for immortality is not satisfied in this world. Yet, there is the desire. The power that is great enough to create the desire must be great enough to satisfy it. Also the Bible says that God lives, and it has never been proved false, so the statement must be true. The best of characters give this record, and if we accept reliable historians when they say that Caesar, Washington, etc., lived, we should accept their statement that God lives since they have known him intimately.

I would not have anyone conclude that I am trying here to give all the arguments to be used in proving that God lives. I am not. These are just a few of the approaches that I have found most successful. If

you will follow this line of reasoning and elaborate on these four answers you should be able to convince the ordinary person who is skeptical.

*If There Is a God, Why Does He Allow Sin and War?*

Some day God will stop war, and some day he will eliminate sin and the devil, but when he does so, the end of the world will come. But just because he has not and does not now is no proof that he does not live. Sin, heartaches, disease, and death are not only for our destruction. They can be used to lead us to higher ground. You might stumble at steps, but you may also use them to climb higher. The Holy Spirit surely had this in mind when he said: "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." I do not always see the good in sin, war, etc., but I know that good is going to come from it or God would eliminate such. The Bible says that all things work together for good to those who love God (Rom. 8:28). So if everything does not seem to be going as you think it should, become a Christian and put the Lord to the test and you will find that this promise is true.

When we look at this problem properly, these things all prove that God lives rather than that he does not. He does not force anyone to serve him. Service must come by choice. If you want to do evil,

he allows it, but he persuades you to do good. He could not force Hitler or others to do good and still be God. So the existence of these evils prove there is a God in heaven rather than disproving that he lives.

*Why Do You Believe the Bible to Be the  
Word of God?*

First, because it contains the loftiest ideals and records of the only perfect character who ever lived. If the Bible is not true, then either good or evil men fabricated it. Good men would not do such a thing and put off on the world the greatest fraud it has ever known. Evil men could not do so. The men who would be evil enough to make up such great lies could not possibly have given to the world the great ideals and character the Bible contains. Therefore it must be of God. This is the most convincing argument I have found for the ordinary person. There is no end to the ways it might be applied. Arguments from science and archeology are also very effective for the skeptic. If you would like some information in brief along this line, I would suggest that you order Brother George DeHoff's book on *Why I Believe the Bible*. It was published only recently and sells for only one dollar. It can be secured from any of the publishing houses operated by members of the church of Christ.

*How Do We Know That the Bible Has Been Correctly Translated and Preserved for Us Today?*

First, we have the promise of God that it has and will be preserved. I Peter 1:25 says: "The word of the Lord abideth forever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you." (A.R.V.) God said that his word would be preserved and I believe he is able and has kept his promise.

In addition to this promise we have three great manuscripts of the Bible and quotations from early Christian writers as evidence. Scholars who know Greek and Hebrew tell us that the Bible has been correctly translated, so why should we question them? They know the languages and we do not. They were all members of different churches, so they checked on one another closely to see that no mistake was made. The manuscripts are still in existence, and if we did not have a true record of what they contain the scholars of the world would expose the matter and give a correct translation. These manuscripts date as far back as the third and fourth centuries, so they were in existence before the corrupt church was in existence with desires to change. These three manuscripts are the Alexandrian, Vatican, and Sinaitic. But if we did not have those manuscripts, there are enough quotations from them in other writings that we could reproduce the Bible. These quotations are the same as the ones contained in the Bible. There are some books in the Old Testament that are mentioned such

as "the book of Nathan the Prophet and Iddo the Seer," etc. But we know they are not lost books or Christ would have restored them while he was here. They were only uninspired writings to which the inspired writers referred like Paul referred to the Athenian poets (Acts 17:28), and the Cretian false prophets (Tit. 1:12).

*I Would Be a Follower of Christ, But the Christian Life Isn't Practical*

It is true that one of the fundamental principles of Christianity is self-denial, but there is nothing that is good for man that he must deny. The denials are for our good. Anything that is worth-while requires sacrifices. We must sacrifice for homes, children, or our nation. Yet all these things are good. So is Christianity, and just because it asks for self-denial, it does not make us slaves.

The Christian life is the only kind of life that is practical. It advocates honesty, love, joy, truthfulness, kindness, peace, etc. The opposite to these things are dishonesty, hatred, sorrow, lying, unkindness, and war; and the very mention of these things shows how impractical they are. They may work for a time, but in the end they bring havoc and destruction. The Lord advocates anything that a person does that is good and practical, and he condemns everything that is not good. The man who says that Christianity is not practical does not have a true conception of what real Christianity is.



*There Are Too Many Hypocrites in the Church*

It is true that there is evil among the good. Even Christ had a Judas among his disciples, but that does not mean all the others were evil. If you can see where others are making mistakes, the thing you should do is to show them the life they should live rather than tell them. Christ condemns the man who tries to cast the mote out of his brother's eye while there is a beam in his own. You have a beam in your eye if you are not a Christian. You should not strive to be a judge, you should strive to be an example.

After all, if you do not admire the hypocrite why do you allow him to regulate your life? You do this when you refuse to be a Christian because of the hypocrite. What is a hypocrite anyway? He is one who knows his duty and will not do it, and he hides behind the church. Well, you are also a hypocrite because you know your duty and will not do it, hiding behind the hypocrite. You admit that the hypocrite is bigger than you are when you hide behind him. I cannot hide behind a pencil because I am larger than it is. But I might hide behind a barn. Don't admit that the hypocrite is bigger than you are by hiding behind him.

*I Don't Believe in Baptism*

You might then contrast those who believed in it and those who did not. Christ, John the Baptist, Paul, Peter, John, the early Christians, and all others who served God were believers in it. Who did not believe

in it? Herod, Pilate, the Devil, Caiaphas, and all wicked people. With which do you want to be classed? I prefer the former.

After all, baptism is very simple. The things that come before and after it are hard. It is a simple matter, so why not do it? No one will affirm that you have done wrong when you have been baptized, and everyone will affirm that you have done right. It is a simple thing; if you do it there will be no question, and if you never do so you will always be worried about it. So why not take the safe course? If you will reason with a person in this way and give him the Scriptures that teach on the subject of baptism together with the cases of conversion as recorded in Acts, you should have no trouble on this point. If he cannot be convinced in this way it is almost impossible. If you are talking to him about the purpose of baptism, you should especially stress, Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 3:27; and 1 Pet. 3:21.

### *I'm Waiting Until I Feel Differently*

It is true that people should feel differently when they become Christians, but they must not only feel differently—they must act differently. Now which comes first, the actions or the feeling? A few illustrations might help. When a man is hungry, is his hunger satisfied before or after the meal? Do you go to school to get an education, or get an education and then go to school? Do you call a physician in order

to get well or after you are well? To ask these questions is but to receive the correct answer. Likewise we cannot expect to be healed from our spiritual sickness until we come to the Great Physician.

Many believe that they can tell by their feelings that they are saved, but Isaiah 55:8 says that God's ways and thoughts are not our ways and thoughts, and the writer of Proverbs says that there is a way that seems right to man but the end thereof is the way of death. A person may feel that he is saved, according to these Scriptures, and yet be lost. The only way to be sure of your salvation is to depend on the word of the Lord. If it tells us that we are saved, we can be sure; but if not, we can have no real assurance. So the thing to do is to obey the gospel and we will have the assurance of the word of God that we are Christians. Matthew 7:21 tells us that we do not enter the kingdom of heaven by the expression of emotions but by doing God's will.

In all of the cases of conversion in the book of Acts we never find the change in feeling until after obedience to the gospel. So we can conclude that if we want good feelings, we should do what God says and then we shall feel good. Faith and repentance come before baptism, and in that respect a man's life and heart must be changed before baptism, but he can never expect real happiness and forgiveness until he has completed his obedience in doing that which puts him into Christ (Gal. 3:27).

*I'd Like to Be a Christian, But I Don't  
Know Enough Yet*

Some people do not have a real conception of Christianity and the life that is to follow, but the very fact that a person would make this kind of statement is proof that he has caught a vision of the seriousness of the Christian life. If you will urge such a man to go ahead, you will usually find that he will make a real servant of the Lord. It is those who never think of the seriousness of the step who usually make the weak Christians.

A person does not have to know much in order to obey the gospel. On the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2, three thousand were converted after hearing only one sermon and the plan of salvation. Many of them had false ideas about the Jewish law, we know by the actions which followed; but that did not mean they did not know enough to obey the gospel. The eunuch, Cornelius, Lydia, and others were converted and obeyed the gospel after hearing only one sermon. They surely did not know much, not having a New Testament to study and having heard the gospel only one time. But they understood enough to obey the gospel and become Christians. I do not have to know that the Bible tells me to be honest before I can obey the command to be truthful. If I learn that I should be truthful before I learn the other, I do not have to wait until I learn all the other commands before I obey that one. Neither does a person have to wait

until he has learned how to live the Christian life before he does what the Lord tells him to do to become one. Hebrews, the fifth chapter, describes the young convert as a babe. Many do not want to be babes in the kingdom of God, but such is *not* according to the normal process of growth.

*I Think I Shall Try to Live the Christian Life for a While Before Being Baptized, and If I am Successful I Shall Become a Christian*

Such a man is defeated before he starts. The man who stays in the kingdom of the Devil is under his dominion, and if he does not resist him, he will not flee. As long as you are in the Devil's kingdom, he can tempt you above that you are able to bear, but if you become a Christian, I Corinthians 10:13 says that you cannot be so tempted. Before you become a Christian you do not have this help, but if you become a Christian God will "deliver the godly out of temptation" (A.R.V.) (II Pet. 2:9), and he will make all things work together for your good (Rom. 8:28).

*I Don't Know Which Church to Join*

I know it is confusing to most anyone to see all the different churches as they teach differing and conflicting doctrines. There is some good in all. If I were going to join one I would not know which one to choose. In fact I do not think I would stop with joining one. I would just join them all and then I would be sure to get the good points out of all.

But if we read our Bible closely, we will find that God has not told us to join even one church. Becoming a member of the family of God is not a matter of joining. My little boy did not enter our family by joining it. He was born into it. So it is with the kingdom of God. John 3:5 says that we are born into God's kingdom. So you should cease worrying about which church to join. You do not have to examine all of their doctrines and choose for yourself. But you certainly are told in the Bible that you should find out what a person must do to enter God's family. When you have learned that and when you have done it, the Lord adds you to his church (Acts 2:47). Then stay in the one the Lord adds you to, never join anything else, and you will be a Christian.

*I Am as Good as the Members of the Church*

Perhaps you are. In fact, from the standpoint of moral goodness you may be a lot better than many of them, but goodness alone does not save a man. If so, God would have just given us a group of good laws instead of sending his Son to die on the Cross. A person may live by the law of Moses and be morally good, but it could in no wise save him, and for that reason God gave his Son. Philippians 3:4-7 tells us that Paul was a mighty good man, but he had to give it all up for Christ and count it as nothing. If you were the best man in the world you still would not be good enough to be saved. Even Jesus did not boast of

his goodness. Philippians 2:5-11 says that he emptied himself of all of his goodness and became obedient, and we are exhorted to be of the same mind. Even though Jesus were a Son, he learned obedience (Heb. 5:8, 9), and he is the author of salvation to those who obey him. We should not boast of our goodness in comparing ourselves with others. The Bible says that we should esteem others better than ourselves, and until we have learned this lesson on humility, all the goodness in the world cannot save us.

*I Believe in the Lord. That Is Enough*

According to the word of God, it is not. I Corinthians 13:2 says that you might have enough faith to remove mountains and yet it would be worth nothing without love. John 12:42 tells us of some rulers who believed but would not confess the Lord. John 1:11, 12 says that we might believe and still not be sons of God. Romans 1:16 says that those who believe need to be saved. Acts 11:21 says that those who believed turned to the Lord. They could not have been saved if they had not turned to the Lord even though they believed. Matthew 7:21 shows that we might believe and even pray, and yet we do not enter the kingdom until we do the will of the Father in heaven.

We read in the Bible of "weak faith" (Rom. 14:1); "little faith" (Matt. 6:30); "wavering faith" (Jas. 1:6); "faith without love" (I Cor. 13:2); and an "unsound faith"; but the man who says he can be

saved by "faith only" chooses the worst kind of faith—"a dead faith," for James 2:24 says that a faith that does not work is dead. The devils believe also and tremble, and our faith is just like theirs until we let it put us to action. Faith that works by love is that which avails (Gal. 5:6). When a man says he thinks faith is enough, he means to say that he does not believe it is necessary to be baptized. But faith in God is faith in anything he says, and God surely has commanded baptism. In fact, baptism is one of the greatest acts of faith. We can understand why God has told us to have faith in Christ—faith changes our hearts. We can understand why he said for us to repent—repentance changes our lives. Confession tells the world about our convictions. But we can see no reason for baptism except that the Lord has told us to do so. So it takes more faith to be baptized than in any other step. If a man truly believes, he should manifest that faith through doing what God says.

### *I'm Too Mean to Be a Christian*

If you are going to continue in your meanness you cannot be a Christian. But if you cease sinning, God will be merciful and forgive. I Timothy 1:15 says that Christ came into the world to save even the chiefest of sinners, so why should he not save you? You may have committed many grievous sins, but none would be so great as killing the Son of God. The people at Jerusalem did that, and yet in Acts 2:38 they



were told to repent and be baptized and their sins would be forgiven. You can get forgiveness, too, if you will do the same thing. If you intend to say that you are so mean you cannot give up sin, you just make the start and ask the Lord for help, and you will see that he will help and give you supernatural strength so that you can overcome. The Bible says: "Draw nigh unto God and he will draw nigh unto you." Just trust the Lord and do his will and you will see that he will make the humanly impossible, divinely possible.

*I Don't Know Why—I Just Don't*

When a person says this, it is usually best to try to make a definite time for him to render obedience to the gospel. Tell him that you will make arrangements at church and have the baptistry filled and clothes ready at a certain time. Usually this is all the fellow needs that is ready but just does not. If you will go after him and take him to church, do his work, or do anything else to make it convenient for him, he will go. Some are hesitant about going to the front to confess their faith when they obey the gospel. Tell them that you will go with them to the front. These are the best ways I have found to meet this situation.

I would like to say before closing this chapter that I know this does not answer all the objections and questions to be met in doing personal work. I did

not intend to answer them all. But these are some of the most prevalent ones. Most people ask the same questions and raise the same objections, and if you will learn how to answer these few, you should have no great difficulty. I am not saying that these are the only answers that might be given, but they are some that I have found most successful. I believe you can effectively use them.

If you need a small ready reference in addition to these suggestions, I would recommend Brother C. R. Nichol's *Pocket Bible Encyclopedia*. It sells for fifty cents and can be ordered from any of the publishing houses operated by members of the church of Christ.

### QUESTIONS

1. Name and discuss three lines of reasoning to be followed in convincing a person that God is.
2. When will God use force to stop war, sin, disease, etc.?
3. Could he be just to do so now?
4. How can God work good from war and sin?
5. Name three ways we can be definitely sure that the Bible has been correctly translated and preserved.
6. What are some of the things which make Christianity so practical?
7. Is the man a hypocrite who refuses to be a Christian because of hypocrites? Why?
8. If a man is lost, how can he change his feelings?
9. How much must a person know before he obeys the gospel? Give proof.

10. Why will a man fail who tries to live the Christian life without obeying the gospel?

11. Why would the man who is as morally good as members of the church be lost while the church members would be saved?

12. Give five scriptures showing that faith alone is not enough. How much faith must one have in order to be saved?

13. Is there any sin today worse than killing the Son of God? Can everyone be pardoned then who obeys the gospel?

## CHAPTER XIII

### EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL PERSONAL WORK

**T**HESE few suggestions we have given so far should be of some help to you in doing personal work, but in my estimation nothing is so helpful as living examples of what others have done. For that reason we give below a few samples of what can be done when we add the personal touch to Christianity and take a personal interest in those we want to reach.

I suppose there has never been in the church a greater believer in personal work and a harder worker at it than Brother L. S. White. In 1904, while he was working with the church in Gallatin, Tennessee, one of the members of the church in the country called him one day and told him that there was a certain poor family in a small house on the bank of the creek in that town. She understood that they were sick and in need of help, and if Brother White would go down and see about their needs and supply them she would repay him when she arrived in town. Brother White found that two children were sick with pneumonia and the others were dirty and ragged. The place where they were living was terribly dirty. The doctor had come, but they did not have enough money to buy the medicine they needed. They had no food and no fuel, and this was in February.

Brother White took the prescriptions and went back to town. He met one member of the church and told of the condition he found. The member gave him the money for the medicine. Another sent some food and another some fuel. Under the doctor's orders, he asked several women who were members of the church to go into the dirty home and clean it, give the sick people baths, and supply them with clothes. The ladies of the church nursed them back to health. That family never came to church, and within a few months they moved out of town and no one knew where they went. The Christians thought their efforts were in vain.

Here is the rest of the story as told by Brother White:

"There was a Catholic man in Gallatin, that owned a farm another poor family lived on. A young lady in the family was sick and he asked me to go see her, which I did. He said she was a very bright young woman, which I found to be true. Her mother belonged to a denomination, but was present, and listened to the talk I had with the young lady. The young lady came to the meeting house in a few evenings, when she got well, and I baptized her. In the fall, after I baptized the young lady, I was asked to hold the meeting for the church where I was preaching. The first person to come forward to obey the gospel was the mother of this young lady. Later in the same meeting I baptized her two sisters and their sweethearts. The next year, I baptized her father. Then I was called back to Gallatin after moving to Dallas, to hold a meeting and found that young lady and her people very faithful to the church. One day I asked her: 'Miss Inez, what induced you to become a

member of the church of Christ? So far as I know you had never heard a sermon by a minister of the church of Christ.' And she referred me to that incident of what we did for that poor family on the bank of the creek, and said that was the thing that caused her to fall in love with the church of Christ, and made her want to be a member of it. This is a true story, and I am glad you saw proper to give it to your readers, Brother Gatewood."

Here is another story as told by one of the members of the Riverside Church of Christ in Wichita, Kansas:

Brother and Sister Bill Black are faithful, zealous, happy working members of the Riverside Church of Christ in Wichita, Kansas. They were baptized in the summer of 1943. What is the story behind their conversions?

In 1939 Mrs. Mable Chapman of Mulvane, Kansas suggested to her sister-in-law, Mrs. Wm. D. Rhodes that some of the Wichita church members call on Billy Chapman, age 4, and his parents of Wichita, and invite Billy to attend church and the Bible classes. Mrs. Rhodes made several visits to the Chapman home and gave Billy's name and address to Mrs. Ralph Childs, teacher of the beginner's class. Mrs. Childs made several calls to the home and became friends of Billy and his parents. Billy had been attending church elsewhere, but he insisted that all they did was play. So his thirst to know about God and Christ was not filled. He not only began attending regularly himself at the church of Christ, but upon the suggestion and encouragement of his teacher, he started bringing his little friend, Eddy Sooter. The Sooter home was visited by the class teacher and the teacher in turn gave their name to those in charge of the systematized personal work program the church was carrying on. Thus several members of the church visited and

made friends with Eddy and his parents. Mrs. Childs had a party for her class and asked each pupil to bring one or two friends. Eddy brought a playmate, Donald Black. Donald liked the boys, and girls, and their teacher, and accepted the invitation to attend the Bible classes. Illness in the Black home gave the women in the church a chance to show their love and hospitality. Mr. and Mrs. Childs offered to drive by and give these three boys, Billy, Eddy, and Donald a ride to Sunday school and church each Sunday; and this is being continued to the present time. (The Blacks now have their own transportation and bring a load with them.) Following the Vacation Bible School in 1943, the church engaged Brother Otis Gatewood to do the preaching in a gospel meeting. Donald attended and one evening he expressed a desire to be baptized. He was then 10 years of age. Brother and Sister Childs and Brother Gatewood took Donald home and had a talk with his parents. They were happy over Donald's decision, so they were glad to attend the meeting the next night when Donald was baptized. A few months later Brother J. W. Roberts, the minister of the Riverside congregation, baptized both Mr. and Mrs. Black.

Eddy and Billy, now 9 years of age, are still attending regularly, and Eddy's parents are becoming interested and have started attending services. Three persons have already been added to the church—and why?

Because five years ago a little four-year-old boy was noticed, loved, and helped in learning Bible stories. The congregation was awake to the opportunity, the leadership was wise in guiding and encouraging, and some members had the desire to do some personal work for the Lord.

Here is another interesting story told by Miss Rita Rhodes of El Paso, Texas:

In the fall of 1943, two soldiers came to Brother J. A. McCall at Montana and Raynor Streets Church of Christ of El Paso, Texas. They asked for a conference immediately after services. One was an army officer and a member of the church. The other was an enlisted man and a Methodist minister. They wanted Brother McCall to discuss some points which were not clear to the minister. At the next service of the church the Methodist minister was baptized. He had been converted by the officer who, being a genuine Christian, did not let the ordinary barriers between officers and enlisted men, nor the unfavorable circumstances of army life, keep him from teaching.

Another very interesting example of personal work is told by Brother Harry E. Johnson who at this writing is minister of the church of Christ in Provo, Utah:

My father, Wm. Johnson, after sailing for sixteen years, settled in Toronto, Canada at the age of thirty-one. He had been brought up a Lutheran, but while traveling he had attended services where and when he could. During his sailing years he had kept company with a girl in Denmark. When he decided to settle in Toronto, he sent to Denmark and brought his girl and they were married. About a year later the first child was born and the mother passed away when it was only a week old. Grandmother had arrived just two days before the child was born.

When death entered the home, the Christians asked father if he had any special ones he would like to conduct the funeral, and when he told them he did not, they said: "Well, if it is all right with you, we will just take charge." He said that would be fine since he was a stranger and unacquainted. Two Christian ladies washed and dressed the body while others lined the coffin which some of the Christian men had made. Some of the men dug the grave and in other ways



they tried to save my father all the expense and trouble they could.

After the funeral was over, they invited father and grandmother to attend the services in the church where the funeral had been held. This invitation was accepted, and after just six months they were both buried with their Lord in baptism. Some time after this my own mother and father met and they invited her to the services. It was not long until my mother, who was also a Danish girl and brought up a Lutheran, obeyed the truth. They reared six boys and three girls, all of them Christians. All the boys are able to preach the gospel and two of them are devoting all their time to the Lord's work. This was made possible because some faithful members of the church back in 1884 did some personal work for the Lord by attending the sick and helping those in need.

Brother Olan Hicks tells of a member of the church in Dallas, Texas who decided that she could do something for the Lord in a personal way. She decided to call all the people listed in the telephone directory and invite them to church. It would take her several years to do so, but she started on the job, making a certain number of calls each week. One day a colored lady answered the telephone, but she would not be stopped. She invited the colored lady to attend the services of the colored congregation. She forgot about the conversation until about six months later. She attended a service at the colored congregation and she was introduced to a colored lady, who threw her arms around her neck and told her that she was a Christian today because of the telephone invi-

tation six months before. This Christian woman used the talent that the Lord gave her and saved a soul.

Brother F. T. Hamilton, who for several years preached for the church in Ogden, Utah tells this story:

While in Nashville, Tennessee, during 1933-34, working in a gas range factory, the fellows soon learned that I was a gospel minister. One day one of them, who was a former Methodist Sunday School Superintendent, came and asked me if I thought smoking were wrong. I asked him if he thought it was a clean habit, and he said, "No." Then I said, "The Bible says to abstain from all filthiness of the flesh." He thought a minute and said, "That's right."

This seemed to me an opportunity to teach the Word of God. So I asked him if he would get a group of the fellows together the following noon hour for a short Bible study after lunch and before the one o'clock whistle blew. He said he would and I got permission from the foreman to do this on condition that I stop when the whistle blew. I told him that I believed my time belonged to the company after the whistle blew and I would be stealing their time if I continued after that. So with this agreement we began.

The next day at noon I, with my greasy overalls and dirty hands, and a Bible by my side, sitting on an old work bench with eight or ten fellows sitting around on anything they could find, began a fifteen minute Bible class. This continued each noon hour five days a week Monday through Friday. Eight to twelve fellows continued to be there each time. We studied the New Testament and especially the book of Acts. The fellows were encouraged to read the New Testament for themselves and ask questions on any passage they did not understand. This was most interesting to me.

This daily fifteen minute Bible study continued for two

months at the end of which the former Methodist Sunday School Superintendent and his wife and another young man and his wife were baptized, and an unfaithful member of the church was restored. Soon an outstanding gospel preacher from Texas came to Nashville and held a meeting in which there were fifty responses, and three more of the fellows who were in the Bible class were baptized.

After working there eleven months, a brother of the foreman, who was a most wicked man, began to transform from a boisterous, foul mouthed, filthy minded man of the world to a quiet, decent, and Christian-like character. Some of the fellows told me that he had been attending the services of the Grace Avenue Church of Christ. So privately, shortly before I left to continue my college work, I had a talk with him telling him that I was certainly glad to hear that he was attending the services of the church of Christ and that it would be a most wonderful joy to me to learn that he had obeyed the gospel. He answered that he was trying to see whether he could live the Christian life, and if he thought he could, he would become a Christian.

When I left the foreman told me that if I ever needed a job and he could do anything for me, to come back and he would see what he could do. This was a wild and wicked factory before I worked there. One of the fellows with whom I worked had taken a piece of pipe and hit the foreman over the head. But when I left, the men were never nicer or more decent anywhere I have worked. I deserve no credit for this. The credit should go to the Lord who, through his Word, has helped me to at least try to live a Christian life as best I could from day to day.

Brother C. C. Morgan is an outstanding successful personal worker, and I think the following information from him should be most encouraging:

On May 17, 1944 I received a letter from Brother Gatewood in which he said: "I want about five hundred words from you on how you keep records and examples of successful personal work!"

*Records:* I keep the record of all members of the church by families. When I move to a new place the first thing I do is to visit in the home of every member of the church and make a complete religious record of every member of the family. For this work I have my own specially printed forms. This record shows the name, age, and religious belief of each member of the family from the tiny baby to grandpa. If one member of the family is a Christian, all the rest are potential church members. This family record then is prospect list No. 1

*Prospect List No. 2:* This record is kept in a card index box file. Blank prospect cards are printed. On one side there is space for name, address, phone, and reasons for thinking this prospect might be reached. At the bottom is space for signature, address, and phone number of the one turning in the card. On the other side is blank lines for reports of those visiting the prospect. (Samples sent on request.)

*Examples of Successful Personal Work:* In 1943 I conducted nine gospel meetings. In seven of them thirty-eight people were baptized, and without a single exception all were the result of personal work. During the other two meetings not a single personal contact was made and not a soul was baptized.

About a year ago a little girl started attending our children's Bible class. Her father was a Baptist and her mother a member of the First Christian Church. After a few months she obeyed the gospel. The usual family record was made and her parents became prospects or potential members. Wife and I visited them several times, and when Bro. Gate-

wood conducted our Spring meeting in April, he and I visited them with the result that both were won to the truth. Another example: About a year ago one of our faithful young women brought her boy friend to the young people's Bible class which I was teaching Lord's Day evenings. She and I both did personal work on him and soon he obeyed the gospel. The usual family record was made and his parents and little brother became prospects. They were visited by different members of the church and cultivated. When Brother Gatewood came for our meeting, he and I visited the home with the result the mother was baptized that night. The father is yet out but attending some and is still a good prospect. The little brother is not yet old enough to obey, but he too is being cultivated and educated and when the time arrives, he will no doubt obey the gospel. During the meeting referred to above, held in Pueblo, Colorado, twelve were baptized and without an exception all were the direct result of personal work.

From May 1st to 14th I conducted a meeting at Hereford, Texas where Brother L. H. Andrews is the hard working minister. There were twenty baptized and all were the result of personal work. During the afternoon of the last day of the meeting, Bro. Andrews and I went out into the country and talked to three different men, all heads of families, who had been attending the meeting but had not obeyed the gospel. Two of them we brought into the church house and baptized, but the third lived about thirty miles out and we did not have time for that, so we took his confession in his barn lot and baptized him in his own stock watering tank.

Yes, in soul winning personal work pays big dividends, and I would not help support a preacher who does not believe in it and do plenty of it. Call it door-bell ringing or whatever you please, it gets results when coupled with straight gospel preaching.

Mrs. E. T. Warren of Rotan, Texas, had tried for years to teach her dear friend, Jewel House, the truth. She had failed. A baby came to bless the home of Mrs. House. When the child was old enough to go to church, Mrs. Warren went by after it every Sunday and took it to Sunday school. Finally the little girl prevailed on her mother to come to church. Mrs. Warren would tell the little girl what to say to her mother, and after more than ten years of effort, a few months ago, Mrs. House obeyed the gospel. Now Mrs. Warren is helping Mrs. House teach her husband to be a Christian.

Mrs. G. W. Blair of Lubbock, Texas, was buying fish from a man who ran a fish market. One day she invited him to church. He said that he knew he should attend, but that he had not been inside a church for eleven years. Mrs. Blair asked some of us to call on him. We did so and taught him the truth. He came to church and obeyed the gospel, and the next morning I had the joy of helping him break his last bottle of whiskey. I received a letter from this man recently, and here are his exact words:

"I am still determined to make a preacher, if I can. Brother Pribble is helping me some, and Brother Morgan said he was going to call on me pretty soon to make a talk at the Wednesday night service. Do you remember this young fellow, Sortor, who works for me? He and his wife obeyed the gospel, and his mother came back to the church. I would like to thank you again for the interest you showed in me and what you did for me. I had never prayed in my

life, but since I have started back to church it is easy. In fact I enjoy praying now.”

While Brother Paul Southern was in a meeting in Lubbock, Texas, in June, 1945, he went to the Post Office after some very important mail one Saturday afternoon after the office had closed. The superintendent of mails got a young man to get the mail for Brother Southern. Brother Southern invited this young man to attend the meeting. He did so, and his interest was aroused. Before the meeting closed, he obeyed the gospel. He said that one thing that had helped to convert him was the life of Brother Jesse Chinn, one of the deacons of the Broadway Church, while he was working in the same office with him several months before. He said that Brother Chinn was one man that he knew who lived Christianity every day in the week and not just on Sunday. He was convinced that a religion like that was worth something, and therefore he started investigating the doctrine of the Bible. But perhaps he would not have obeyed the gospel for years if Brother Southern had not given him that personal invitation at that particular time.

### QUESTIONS

1. Are the results of successful personal work always visible at the time the good is done?
2. In what way did Brother White and the ladies carry out the great commission?
3. Why was the church in Wichita, Kansas, successful in their example of personal work?

4. Can you do something as simple as calling people on the telephone to invite them to church? Are such efforts wasted?

5. Would Brother Johnson be a Christian and gospel preacher today if some members of the church had not shown some kindness long ago?

6. Why were no people converted in two of Brother Morgan's meetings while numbers were baptized in the others?



## CHAPTER XIV

### JESUS AS A TEACHER

**W**E could give many examples of how to successfully teach others, and I know that we could learn a good lesson from each example, but the way Christ taught and influenced others should be our greatest example. Today there are approximately 576,000,000 believers in some form of Christianity, and this means that more than twice as many people believe in Christianity than in any other one religion.

It seems queer, since Christ has been able to influence so many people, that very few people who have been trying to learn how to teach have studied the methods of Jesus. For ages man has been searching after methods of teaching, and books have been written about teaching for generations, but only lately has it been called to the attention of teachers that Christ's methods of teaching are the best. Perhaps this has been because those who knew about Jesus did not know about the problems of pedagogy, or those who knew about pedagogy did not know about Christ. But if Christ could change the entire history of the world in three short years, shouldn't we follow his methods? Christ never gave an object lesson on how to teach, but the lessons he taught are the greatest lessons on *how to teach* that are available to man today.

When we say that we are going to learn from Christ

*how to teach*, we are saying that he was confronted with the same problems as we are today.

Christ taught his disciples *how* to pray, so he knew fully that he was confronted with the necessity of imparting information that others might know *how* to do certain things. The fact that he paused in the midst of the description of what would happen to Jerusalem and say, "Let him that readeth understand,"<sup>1</sup> is proof that he knew full well the difficulties and problems that confront a teacher in getting the message into the hearts of the hearers.

### *The Ideal Teacher*

Let us look first at Christ as a Teacher and see how he measures up to the ideals some have established for teachers today.

First, the ideal teacher must rise above nationalism and teach students that they are a part of the entire world, and that they should live so as to help the entire world. Christ surely meets this qualification. He said to his followers, "Go ye therefore, and teach all the nations"<sup>2</sup>; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"<sup>3</sup>; "Other sheep I have . . . them also I must bring"<sup>4</sup>; "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"<sup>5</sup>; and, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mark 13:14

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 28:19.

<sup>3</sup>Mark 16:15.

<sup>4</sup>John 10:16.

<sup>5</sup>John 12:32.

<sup>6</sup>Acts 1:8.

Second, the successful teacher must know the needs of the students. Surely Jesus was a master at this, for the Samaritan woman went back to the city and said, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did."<sup>7</sup> The inspired record says, "He needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man."<sup>8</sup> Christ knew Nathanael so well that, after seeing him only one time, he could say, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."<sup>9</sup>

Third, the successful teacher must be the master of the subject he is teaching. Christ meets this qualification fully, for when he was only twelve years of age he could ask and answer questions which were not answered by the doctors and lawyers of his day. The people said concerning him, "Never man spake like this man."<sup>10</sup> When he had finished his great Sermon on the Mount, it was said concerning him, "He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes."<sup>11</sup> After all the learned people of the day had questioned him and tried to catch him in some question he could not answer, we find this statement, "And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."<sup>12</sup>

Fourth, the teacher must live in harmony with his teaching. And no one ever lived any better than Christ. Many have denied that he is the Christ, but

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<sup>7</sup>John 4:29.<sup>8</sup>John 2:25.<sup>9</sup>John 1:47.<sup>10</sup>John 7:46.<sup>11</sup>Matt. 7:29.<sup>12</sup>Matt. 22:46.

no one has ever been able to find one single fault with his life. He is perfect, the ideal of the ages. Christ could say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."<sup>13</sup> He also could ask, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?"<sup>14</sup> Even his enemy had to say during his trial, "I find no fault in this man."<sup>15</sup> The thief on the cross said, "This man hath done nothing amiss."<sup>16</sup> Luke realized that Christ did what he taught, so he could say, "Of all that Jesus began both to *do* and to teach."<sup>17</sup>

There might be other general qualifications of a good teacher, but Jesus completely fulfills them all. A successful teacher must have a good physical body. Christ surely had that or he could not have fasted forty days and nights. He must have a good intellect, and we have already seen that Christ could reason with the most intelligent of his day. He must have emotions that will touch the hearts of the people, and Christ could say, "I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."<sup>18</sup> Also, "Jesus wept." The teacher must have plenty of energy. Christ was willing to work all day and then pray all night. He surely had a pleasing personality, for he could pass out of the midst of a group who desired to cast him down a hill, and go his way. List any good characteristic you might think a teacher should have and you will find that Christ had it.

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<sup>13</sup>John 14:6.<sup>14</sup>John 8:46.<sup>15</sup>Luke 23:4.<sup>16</sup>Luke 23:41.<sup>17</sup>Acts 1:1.<sup>18</sup>Matt. 11:30.

*Christ's Aims as a Teacher*

Now that we have seen the qualifications of Christ as a teacher, let us see how he excels all the aims of modern educators. Some have said that the successful teacher must be able to change the student physically, morally, esthetically, intellectually, socially, vocationally, and spiritually. Christ surely did this in the teaching that he did. He was interested in the *physical* body. We are told that he increased in stature.<sup>19</sup> But he was not only interested in his physical body. He ministered to the physical needs of his followers in that he healed them and fed those who were hungry. He tells us that we must minister to such needs if we are to be saved.<sup>20</sup> He surely lived and taught the highest *morals* of that or any other day. The morals he set before the world have never been exceeded. He appealed to the *esthetic* sense of his followers in pointing out the beauties of nature. He told us to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of heaven. He developed the *intellects* of his followers from the state of fishermen to some of the most outstanding teachers of the world. This is the most rapid training that could be given. Today those who are the followers of Christ are the greatest intellects of the world. He appealed to the *social* side of a man's life. He was interested in fishermen when they were busy with their work, he attended a wedding and proved to be a great guest by providing

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<sup>19</sup>Luke 2:52.<sup>20</sup>Matt. 25:30-46.

the wine for them when they were out of it; and he was a good citizen in the community in which he lived. He was a carpenter and engaged in *vocational* work and trained the apostles in the greatest vocation in the world and that is of winning the souls of men.

These were all secondary aims, however, in his life. He knew the greatest values of life, and therefore stressed the *spiritual* side of his work. We could not describe fully the spiritual significance of his teaching if we were to write volumes, but we can point out some of his aims in a few words. His first and primary aim in life as a teacher was to teach what God had told him to teach and to do what God had directed him to do. Early in life when his parents were worried about him, he said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"<sup>21</sup> He said while praying, "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me."<sup>22</sup> He also said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work."<sup>23</sup> And then when his life was coming to a close he said, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."<sup>24</sup> And greater significance was added to this when he bowed his head on the cross and said: "It is finished." He gave his time and attention to doing his Father's will, and taught while here that we should follow his example and "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Luke 2:49.<sup>22</sup>John 17:8.<sup>23</sup>John 4:34.<sup>24</sup>John 17:4.<sup>25</sup>Matt. 6:33.

Christ also had as his aim in life to establish the fact that he was the Messiah. Early in his ministry he said to the woman at the well, "I that speak unto thee am he."<sup>26</sup> He did not always go about declaring that he was the Messiah, but surely his words and actions were given to establish the fact. He said, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake."<sup>27</sup> He did not fully establish this in the minds of all the people while he lived, but he surely did get this message firmly established in the minds of his apostles. Peter said without a doubt, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."<sup>28</sup> Christ never swerved from this aim in life, and when they would crucify him for the claim; he did not deny but confessed and said, when he was asked if he were the Son of God, "I am."<sup>29</sup>

His third spiritual aim could be classed as his desire to win learners and to train them to be teachers. Those who were chosen were later called apostles. He did not leave this to a natural response, but set out with a deliberate aim to get them. He called them to be his followers, and commissioned them to help him in the work that he was to do. After he arose from the dead, he said, "And ye shall be witnesses . . ."<sup>30</sup>

Christ also came to give true religion for that which had grown cold and formal. He not only strived

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<sup>26</sup>John 4:26.<sup>27</sup>John 14:11.<sup>28</sup>Matt. 16:16.<sup>29</sup>Luke 23:70.<sup>30</sup>Acts 1:8.

to regulate the acts of his followers, but he appealed to the motives. He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."<sup>31</sup> He not only declared that adultery is sinful, but he also said that if man lusted after a woman he was an adulterer in the heart already. He gave us the example of the poor widow and her mite, and showed us that the gift, in the sight of God, is not acceptable for what one gives; but because of the spirit back of it. He told us to pray in secret, and God who sees in secret will reward us openly. He also said that if we worshipped God with our mouths while at the same time our hearts were far from him, our worship would be in vain.<sup>32</sup>

Christ also came to fulfil the law. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."<sup>33</sup>

We might continue to describe the aims that Christ had in this world and in his teaching. An entire book could be written on his purpose in this world, but these are sufficient to fully establish the fact that Christ taught with certain aims in view. A successful teacher determines his aims and then works to fulfil them, and he is successful only when he does so. But we are not primarily interested in his aims. We know of many who have had worthy aims, but they have failed to fulfil them. We are primarily interested in Christ, in this study, because he was able to carry out his aims in teaching. If we can know how he reached the end, we will know better *how* to teach.

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<sup>31</sup>Matt. 5:8.

<sup>32</sup>Matt. 15:8, 9.

<sup>33</sup>Matt. 5:17.



*How Christ Contacted People*

Before Christ could teach, he had to contact people, and arouse their interest. How was this done? Christ started his public ministry after eighteen years of obscurity, but before long he had contacted many and they were following him.

First, he associated himself with the people of his day. He went out to John the Baptist and submitted to baptism. He then went among the people and knew them in their life, work, and worship. He went into the synagogue and stood up to read. By this he knew more fully of the problems of their religious life. The apostles followed his example in going to the places where people were interested in religious problems. In this way they had access to all those who were already active in thoughts about God. When Christ went to the shepherd, he talked to them in terms of the sheep; when he went to the farmer, he talked about farming and the sowing of the seed. When he was with those who were fishermen, he talked with them about fishing for men. In this way he completely identified himself with those he wanted to teach. This was his greatest point of contact.

Second, Christ was able to contact his students because he took into account some of the small things of life. He told his followers how that God cares for them and that the very hairs of their heads are numbered. There is not a bird that falls to the earth but that God knows about it, and if we give a cup of cold

water in the name of the Lord we will not lose our reward. He noticed little children. Christ said concerning them, "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven."<sup>34</sup>

Third, he invited companionship. He said, "Come and see."<sup>35</sup> To others he said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."<sup>36</sup> Tax collectors were not of good reputation, but still Christ told Matthew to follow, and he would have a work for him to do.

Fourth, Christ knew characters, and he knew how to quicken their interests. He said concerning Nathanael, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."<sup>37</sup> Nathanael was astonished that Christ should know him, but Christ told him that he knew the kind of a man he was when he saw him under the fig tree. As a result of that statement, Nathanael said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God. Thou art the king of Israel."<sup>38</sup> Christ changed Simon's name to Cephas. He always showed a personal interest in his apostles.

### *How Christ Aroused Interest*

After Christ made contact with those he was to teach, he had to arouse their interest. Just how was this done?

First, he secured attention by the messengers who went before him. For years the prophets had been telling that the Messiah would come, and when Christ came they were ready for him. John the Baptist was

<sup>34</sup>Matt. 18:10.

<sup>35</sup>John 1:46.

<sup>36</sup>Matt. 4:19.

<sup>37</sup>John 1:47.

<sup>38</sup>John 1:49.

sent as a harbinger to prepare the people for the coming of Christ, and at times he sent his apostles into a certain place to prepare for his coming. When we work together systematically today, we can prepare those we contact for those who might come later as teachers.

Christ never belabored a point that he wanted to present to his listeners. We can take one of his statements in the Sermon on the Mount and preach for days on it, but Christ hastily gave the lesson and passed to another point. The subject must change to win attention. Christ did this most masterfully. Some of the greatest lessons are taught in the stories of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son; but Christ did not use many words to give us these vivid descriptions.

In order for a teacher to put over his lesson successfully, he must know it thoroughly and speak with authority on it. He must know more than those listening know. When Christ finished his Sermon on the Mount, the people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority and not as one of the scribes.<sup>39</sup> If we are able to speak with authority on a subject, others will listen. This should behoove us to study the Bible so that those listening will know that we understand what we are talking about.

The fact that Christ claimed to be the Messiah surely did attract attention. He said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." No man cometh unto the

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<sup>39</sup>Matt. 7:28.

Father, but by me."<sup>40</sup> When we teach today that there is only one way to be saved we also attract attention. They accused Christ of being possessed of the Devil, and some make such accusations against those who teach the truth without compromise today.

Christ also gained attention because of his miracles. After he had turned water to wine, the record says that his disciples believed in him. After Christ had helped Peter catch a large number of fish, Peter fell down and told him to depart from him for he was a sinful man.<sup>41</sup> After Christ had given the great commission, he told his apostles that signs would follow: "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."<sup>42</sup> After Christ had performed miracles, his fame spread far and wide and many became his followers. He performed so many miracles that Herod came and wanted to see a sign from him, but Christ knew this man and would not even speak to him. He even called Herod a fox. Signs also should accompany our teaching today. These signs should be true Christian living and help to those who are in need. When such signs follow a faithful teaching of the Word of God, great interest is aroused.

Christ attracted attention because of his social freedom. The Jews were particularly careful to keep the traditions that had been handed down to them, so they sent word to Jesus and asked why his disciples failed to keep the traditions by not washing their

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<sup>40</sup>John 14:6.

<sup>41</sup>Luke 5:8.

<sup>42</sup>Mark 16:20.

hands before they ate.<sup>43</sup> He disregarded their traditions and taught things that were exactly opposite. He would say, "Ye have heard that it was said . . . but I say unto you."<sup>44</sup> He mingled with publicans and sinners and ate with them. In fact he was called the friend of publicans and sinners. He was at home with the rich Simon, but also he gave attention to the poor sinful woman.

There were things about Jesus that would naturally interest people. He surely had an outstanding personality. His moral life was above reproach. He never did wrong, neither was any guile found in his mouth.

### *A Model Conversation*

One of the great things about the teaching of Christ is that he was able to teach the individual, or he was able to teach large numbers. We have records of more than fifty individuals on different occasions who were taught by him. In some of them, outstanding teaching situations were developed. Let us take his conversation with the woman of Samaria as an example. In this we have a complete teaching situation. Jesus is the *teacher*, the woman of Samaria the *pupil*, Jacob's well is part of the *environment*, the water of life is part of the *subject matter*, the transforming of her life was the *aim*, and we shall see his *methods* as he taught.

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<sup>43</sup>Matt. 15:2.

<sup>44</sup>Matt. 5:27, 28.

First, Christ utilized the situation as it arose. He did not seek for the student, nor had he thought what the lesson should be before the *occasion* arose, but he was the master of the situation. He made a *point of contact* by asking the woman for a drink of water. He immediately gained her *attention*, for she was surprised that he, being a Jew, would ask a drink of her, being a Samaritan. He did not start by preaching to her but used the *conversational method*. Seven times he addressed her and six times she replied. He used *association* as a method for teaching by asking her for a drink of water, and thus put himself on a common level with her. He *answered the questions* that had bothered her for so long. He dealt with the *problems* of her life as she brought them up to him. He even went further into these problems than she had intended. She was wanting to know about worship, but Christ saw that her home life needed to be remedied, so he talked about that. Christ appealed to her sense of *appreciation* by telling her that if she would ask of him he would give her living waters. Christ was very *definite* in talking to her, for he talked about Jerusalem, the water, her husband, and the fact that he was the Messiah. He was vivid in his use of *contrast* by comparing the water she had with the living water that he could give her. Christ's use of *motivation* appeared in his teaching. The conversation with her about water aroused her interest, the conversation about her husband caused her to examine her conscience and her life,

and the conversation about worship aroused in her the fact that she should worship God in spirit and in truth. Christ did not do all the talking, but received from her expressions that told him of her very needs.

We have already studied Christ's aims, his qualities as a good teacher, his points of contact, and how he aroused interest, but I have not as yet discussed these other points that I have italicized in Christ's teaching with the Samaritan woman. Let us now examine each of these things minutely and see to what extent he used them in all of his ministry as well as in the conversation with the Samaritan woman.

### *Christ's Use of Conversations*

Christ had good natural ability, for when he was only twelve years of age he could reason with the doctors and lawyers. The fact that he engaged in conversations with the critics of his day and silenced them is proof of his intellect. He was well disciplined in his conversations. His silence on certain occasions is golden. His good heart is always manifested. He called Herod a fox, which shows that he had a sense of humor. His healing of the sick showed his sympathy. His earnestness appears when he wept at the grave of Lazarus. His sincerity appears in the conversation with the rich young ruler. His modesty appears when he said, "Why callest thou me good?"<sup>45</sup> Christ used the conversation in talking to Nicodemus; in calling the twelve; in talking to the nobleman of

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<sup>45</sup>Matt. 19:17.

Capernaum, Peter's mother-in-law, and Zacchaeus; in addressing his mother and the thief on the cross while he was dying; and many others.

### *Christ Taught Through Intimate Association*

The greatest teaching Christ did through the use of the conversation was that which came through intimate association with his apostles. He did not start a college and strive to teach many with whom he could not be intimately associated, but he chose a few and trained them by being with them daily. Certainly Jesus had several very close circles of friends. On more than one occasion he took with him Peter, James, and John for special instruction. Christ also specially trained the twelve, the seventy, and perhaps he trained the group of women who went with Christ to help in his work.<sup>46</sup> We do not know what became of the seventy, nor do we know what happened to all the women and some of the apostles, but we can certainly see how effectively Christ reformed the lives of some of the apostles. Let us take Peter for an example. Peter needed much changing and training. He was at first impulsive, rash, bold, and impetuous. On the mount he wanted to build three tabernacles. He fell before the Lord, when he was called to be an apostle, and told the Lord to depart from him for he was a sinful man. He alone wanted to prove Christ by coming to him on the water. He rebuked Christ because he said that he must suffer and be killed. He

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<sup>46</sup>Luke 8:1, 2.



objected to Christ's washing his feet. He stoutly affirmed that he would not deny Christ, and then did so three times. He drew his sword and tried to kill; and even though John was the first to get to the tomb, Peter was the first to enter. Thus we can clearly see that much needed to be changed in the life of Peter.

Christ accomplished this by personal association and by personal teaching. He called Peter from catching fish to the more difficult task of catching the souls of men. He changed Peter's name and helped with the troubles of his family by healing his mother-in-law. He placed upon him one of the greatest responsibilities by giving him the keys of the kingdom. He allowed him to attempt an adventurous thing and fail when he tried to walk on the water. Christ humiliated him by calling him Satan, and told him to get behind him because he did not understand the things of God. Christ told him to put up his sword when he wanted to fight. He looked upon Peter in pity when he denied the Lord; and three times, before he went back to heaven, the Lord questioned Peter's love. Through all these circumstances we can see the character of Peter developing from one that was very weak to the strongest of characters in the early church. Christ truly was a master teacher through *personal association*. We can learn a good lesson from this today. If we touch and change the lives of a few men to the fullest extent possible, we have done much more good than if we influence many men only in a small way.

*How Christ Solved Problems*

But we have not treated Christ justly as a teacher if we consider only how he met the problems in the life of one man. Let us see some of the other problems of his day and how he dealt with them. We often fail in our teaching today because we try to teach without meeting and answering specific problems in the minds of our listeners. We might answer things that would be problems to us, but they are not problems in the lives of those we are teaching. Christ was most successful because he did meet specific problems. Christ taught frequently in order to answer the questions of the scribes and Pharisees. They were once concerned with the question about who was able to forgive sins,<sup>47</sup> and Christ answered their question fully by showing them that one who had power to say to the sick that they could arise and walk was also powerful enough to pardon sins. They were also concerned about the problem of association with sinners,<sup>48</sup> and Christ answered them fully by explaining that those who are ill are the ones who need the physician. Christ also told them that those who were powerful and well did not need help, but those who were weak. Christ answered the problem as to why his disciples did not keep traditions.<sup>49</sup> Peter and John were disturbed about the coming of Elijah, and Christ told them that Elijah had already come.<sup>50</sup> The

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<sup>47</sup>Mark 2:7.<sup>48</sup>Mark 2:16.<sup>49</sup>Mark 7:5.<sup>50</sup>Mark 9:11.

problem of divorce arose, and with only a few words Christ settled it by explaining that there is only one scriptural reason for divorce.<sup>51</sup> The Sadducees were worried about the problems of the resurrection, but Christ informed them that in heaven marriage relationships do not continue; but we will be as the angels of heaven.<sup>52</sup> Some were concerned about whether they should pay tribute to Caesar, for they thought if they did so they would be worshipping the Emperor; but Christ told them to render to Caesar the things of Caesar, but to render to God the things that belong to him.<sup>53</sup> Christ was successful in teaching because these were not problems of his own choosing, but of the people he was teaching. However, on some occasions he chose to make an issue of a question that was asked him. When the people accused him of casting out Devils by the power of the Devil, he made an issue of it and condemned his accusers. Judas thought he had done a good thing by rebuking the woman who anointed Christ, but Christ chose to make an issue of it and show that she had done a good deed. When some of the apostles wanted to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, he made an issue of it and taught them a great lesson on true humility. These problems are only a few of the many that Christ met in his day.

But this division of the subject leads us to another phase of the teaching of Christ. When he was confronted with a problem, he gave a solution. Just how

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<sup>51</sup>Mark 10:2.<sup>52</sup>Mark 12:23.<sup>53</sup>Mark 12:14.

did he solve all the issues that were brought to him? We are not so much concerned now with the *answers* he gave, but with the *method* he used in giving the answer. The first significant thing we note about Christ's dealing with a problem is that in response to the problem *he did something*. The disciples waked him when the ship was about to sink, but he calmed the storm and then rebuked them because of their little faith. After he had calmed the storm Christ did not reply to their inquiry, but to their real needs. He responded to this problem *with a deed*.

When Christ was confronted with the problem of why his disciples broke the traditions of the elders, he stated the purpose of his mission and then concluded by a quotation from Hosea, showing that God desires mercy and not sacrifice.<sup>54</sup> So a problem could be answered with a quotation from that which people accepted as truth. We find Jesus doing this most frequently, even in talking to the Devil he used it as a means of repelling him.

At times Christ refused to answer a question. When he was asked where he got his authority, he only presented a counter question.<sup>55</sup> He knew that the querists were not sincere, so he did not answer. We should refuse to answer today when we find people who just want to argue.

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<sup>54</sup>Mark 9:11-13.

<sup>55</sup>Matt. 21:23-27.

*Christ's Use of Parables*

One of the greatest ways that Christ taught and answered problems was with the use of parables. The word "parable" is used in the New Testament about fifty times. There are twenty-eight short sayings of Christ and twenty-five stories in the New Testament. One-fourth of all the spoken words recorded by Mark and one-half of those recorded by Luke were spoken in parables. Some think there are sixty-one parables in the New Testament. Sixteen were about things, seven were about plants, four were spoken about animals, but thirty-four were spoken about human beings. This is more than fifty-five per cent about human beings, and human relationships. Thus we can see that Christ used three books in teaching: the Old Testament, nature, and the book of life or human nature. A parable has been described as a comparison between familiar facts and spiritual truths.

At one time the apostles asked him why he spoke in parables. There are at least three reasons. First, he spoke in parables to conceal truth from the hard hearted and to reveal it to the honest and sincere. In that way he kept from casting his pearls before the swine who might have turned again to rend him. The words that Christ spoke will judge us in the last days, and if the people did not get the lessons he gave, it will be proof that they did not have receptive and understanding hearts. So Christ could say that with all their hearing they still did not hear, and with the

seeing they did not perceive. Second, Christ spoke in parables because his time had not as yet come. He said at the close of his public ministry that he had spoken heretofore in parables and dark sayings, but hereafter he would no longer so speak, for his time had come. So he used the parables as a method of self protection until his time of crucifixion. Third, this was an old way of imparting truth. Parables had been used by the Orientals and by the prophets of the Old Testament,<sup>56</sup> but they were left for Christ to develop to their perfection.

All parables are not of the same nature. First, there are those which might be known as proverbs, maxims, or aphorisms. They are short comparisons. They are composed of such statements as, "Physician heal thyself"<sup>57</sup>; "If the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch"<sup>58</sup>; or "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."<sup>59</sup>

Second, a parable may say one thing and mean something else. Christ said, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Christ did not mean this literally alone. He wanted to teach the principle that we should not return evil for evil. He also said, "And whoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."<sup>60</sup> Christ meant by this that we should be willing to do more than is required of us. A parable might be longer than these

<sup>56</sup>Ezek. 37.

<sup>57</sup>Luke 4:23.

<sup>58</sup>Matt. 15:14.

<sup>59</sup>Matt. 7:5.

<sup>60</sup>Matt. 5:41.

short statements. Christ gave the story about the lost sheep in order to illustrate the joy there is in heaven over one sinner who repents.

Third, the story may embody within itself the truth taught. The lawyer tempted Christ by asking him which was the greatest commandment. Christ answered and told him that the love of God was first, and the love of man second. But the lawyer was not satisfied, so he asked who his neighbor was. Christ then told him the story of the good Samaritan. It contained within itself the truth that Christ wanted to teach, that we are the neighbor to those who are in need of our help. The story of the Pharisee and the publican is the same. The spiritual and material worlds are combined in one, and the one great lesson is taught in the end.

The fourth class of parables might be called allegories. The story of the Good Shepherd is an illustration of this type of parable. In this the story and the meaning are closely interwoven, and the story is subordinate to the meaning. From the use that Christ made of parables, we can see that he used the carnal things of this world to illustrate heaven and its meaning. So there are two worlds in which we live, the spiritual and the material. The material is a picture of the spiritual, and the world in which we live now is but a foretaste of the greater world. The fact that Christ spoke of human beings in fifty-five per cent of the parables is proof that he dealt with the humanistic elements of this world, and that he was primarily

interested in human beings while he was not so much interested in the realistic and scientific.

### *Christ's Use of Scripture*

We have now found that Christ in meeting problems answered with a *deed*, a *quotation* from the Old Testament, he *refused to answer* some questions, and he answered with an *illustration*. Before we discuss how Christ answered questions with a question, let us observe a few more things about the way he used the Old Testament Scriptures. When we come to think of the life of Christ from this viewpoint, it seems as though most of his doctrine rested on his familiarity with the Scriptures. When Christ was tempted by the Devil after his baptism, three times did he repel the Devil with the use of Scripture.<sup>61</sup> His teaching about killing,<sup>62</sup> committing adultery,<sup>63</sup> divorce,<sup>64</sup> swearing,<sup>65</sup> returning good for evil,<sup>66</sup> loving your enemy,<sup>67</sup> giving mercy instead of sacrifice alone,<sup>68</sup> the messenger announcing the Messiah,<sup>69</sup> the inability of the people to understand,<sup>70</sup> the relation to parents,<sup>71</sup> true worship,<sup>72</sup> marriage,<sup>73</sup> his death,<sup>74</sup> rev-

<sup>61</sup>Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Deut. 8:3; 6:16; 6:13.

<sup>62</sup>Matt. 5:21; Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17.

<sup>63</sup>Matt. 5:27; Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18.

<sup>64</sup>Matt. 5:31; Deut. 24:1, 3.

<sup>65</sup>Matt. 5:33; Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21.

<sup>66</sup>Matt. 5:38; Exod. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21.

<sup>67</sup>Matt. 5:43; Lev. 19:18. <sup>68</sup>Matt. 9:13; 12:7; Hos. 6:6.

<sup>69</sup>Matt. 11:10; Mal. 3:1.

<sup>70</sup>Matt. 13:14, 15; Isa. 6:9, 10.

<sup>71</sup>Matt. 15:4; Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.

<sup>72</sup>Matt. 15:8, 9; Isa. 29:13.

<sup>73</sup>Matt. 19:5; Gen. 2:24.

<sup>74</sup>Matt. 21:42; Ps. 118:22.



erence for the house of God,<sup>75</sup> Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,<sup>76</sup> loving God,<sup>77</sup> loving thy neighbor,<sup>78</sup> the overcoming of his enemies,<sup>79</sup> his utterances on the cross;<sup>80</sup> and many other of his sayings were all based on direct quotations from the Old Testament. In addition to these direct quotations, Christ referred to the persecution of the prophets,<sup>81</sup> the gifts that Moses commanded,<sup>82</sup> those who will sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,<sup>83</sup> Sodom and Gomorrah,<sup>84</sup> Elijah,<sup>85</sup> David,<sup>86</sup> the Sabbath,<sup>87</sup> Jonah and Nineveh,<sup>88</sup> the queen of the south,<sup>89</sup> the blood of Abel,<sup>90</sup> the days of Noah,<sup>91</sup> the mourning of the tribes of the earth,<sup>92</sup> the second coming of the Son of man,<sup>93</sup> the widows in Israel,<sup>94</sup> the lepers in Israel,<sup>95</sup> the days of Lot,<sup>96</sup> Lot's wife,<sup>97</sup> searching the Scriptures,<sup>98</sup> what Moses wrote,<sup>99</sup> the witness of two men,<sup>100</sup> ascending and descending angels,<sup>101</sup> the rejoicing of Abraham;<sup>102</sup> and many other indirect references to the Old Testament, all show that Christ was very familiar with the Scriptures of his day. That should be an example to us today

<sup>75</sup>Matt. 21:13; Isa. 56:7; Jer. 7:17.

<sup>76</sup>Matt. 22:32.

<sup>77</sup>Matt. 22:37; Deut. 6:5.

<sup>78</sup>Matt. 22:39; Lev. 19:18.

<sup>79</sup>Matt. 22:44; Ps. 110:1.

<sup>80</sup>Matt. 27:46; Ps. 22:1.

<sup>81</sup>Matt. 5:12.

<sup>82</sup>Matt. 8:4.

<sup>83</sup>Matt. 8:11.

<sup>84</sup>Matt. 10:15.

<sup>85</sup>Matt. 17:12; Matt. 11:14.

<sup>86</sup>Matt. 12:3.

<sup>87</sup>Matt. 24:30.

<sup>88</sup>John 5:39.

<sup>87</sup>Matt. 12:5.

<sup>89</sup>Matt. 24:30.

<sup>89</sup>John 5:46.

<sup>88</sup>Matt. 12:40, 41.

<sup>90</sup>Luke 4:25.

<sup>100</sup>John 8:17.

<sup>89</sup>Matt. 12:42.

<sup>95</sup>Luke 4:27.

<sup>101</sup>John 1:51.

<sup>90</sup>Matt. 23:35.

<sup>96</sup>Luke 17:28.

<sup>102</sup>John 8:56.

<sup>91</sup>Matt. 24:37.

<sup>97</sup>Luke 17:32.

in teaching that we should rely very heavily upon the Scriptures in teaching. Since Christ needed the Scriptures for the development of his own soul, and in order to teach others, we should use them extensively today in developing our souls and the souls of others.

### *Christ's Use of Questions*

Now let us look at Christ's use of questions in answering the problems of those who came to him. Some have gone so far in their estimation of the work of Christ in life to say that he did not come to settle men's problems, but to ask questions that would arouse them to thinking about the real issues of life. I cannot agree with this idea. We find him asking many questions, it is true, but he in doing so only made clear the answer to those who wanted to know. The questions Christ asked were not to leave men in doubt, but to answer and to point men to the real values of life. A few examples are: "Have ye not read in the law?"<sup>103</sup> "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?"<sup>104</sup> "Shall he not much more clothe you?"<sup>105</sup> Christ answered the questions that were asked him so clearly that all could understand, but he asked questions that could not be answered. "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? And they could not answer him again to these things."<sup>106</sup> "The baptism

<sup>103</sup>Matt. 12:5.

<sup>104</sup>Matt. 5:46, 47.

<sup>105</sup>Luke 14:5, 6.

<sup>106</sup>Matt. 6:30.

of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men? . . . And they answered Jesus and said, We cannot tell."<sup>107</sup> "If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word."<sup>108</sup>

In summary we can say this about the answers of Christ: he never made sport of a question; he never ignored a vital question; he never said that he did not know the answer; he did not answer to satisfy the curious; his answer was always governed by the motive back of the question; sincere questions received sincere answers; the answers he gave led to more study; his answers motivated; he answered with simple illustrations; and he always spoke with authority on any question raised.

### *How Christ Motivated*

But this lesson about the teaching of Christ would not be complete if we did not see *how he motivated* his hearers. We would not be looking to Christ as such a great teacher if he had not brought about such changes in the lives of his followers. Today there are approximately 576,000,000 believers in some form of Christianity, and that is more than twice as many as are found in any other one religion of the world. This alone speaks for the ability of Christ to motivate and change people. How did he do so?

First, Christ appealed to fear. Solomon had said: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowl-

<sup>107</sup>Matt. 21:25-27.

<sup>108</sup>Matt. 22:45, 46.

edge,"<sup>109</sup> and Christ taught practically the same thing. He said, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him."<sup>110</sup> Christ also gave the parable of the shepherd dividing the sheep from the goats, and many other illustrations, to show men that they should fear God. This was not the primary motive of Christ, but it certainly was a motive.

Second, Christ appealed to the disgust of man. He said that if we could not control a member of our body to cut it off, for it would be better to enter into life maimed than to have all the members of our body cast into hell. He also told the disciples to beware of the doctrine of the scribes and Pharisees, and he described them as whitened sepulchres. The vices of these people certainly were disgusting to Christ and his apostles, just as sin is disgusting to people today, especially when it is robed in the hypocrisy of religion.

Christ also appealed to the curiosity and wonder of man. The working of miracles appealed to the curiosity of the people of Palestine. Christ never worked a miracle for the purpose of arousing the curiosity of man, but they certainly had that effect. Zacchaeus was curious to see Jesus and so was Herod. One

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<sup>109</sup>Prov. 1:7.<sup>110</sup>Luke 12:4-7.

follower of Christ was amazed because Christ recognized him, but Christ said: "Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."<sup>111</sup>

Christ also appealed to the humility of man. He taught that the people must deny themselves and take up their crosses daily and follow him. He also taught, "When ye shall have done all those things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants."<sup>112</sup> Christ also said concerning himself, "I can of mine own self do nothing."

But the greatest motive to which Christ appealed was that of love. Certainly the greatest appeal today is that expressed by Christ, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."<sup>113</sup> Christ helped the distressed, healed the sick, put his arms about the little children, and said to those burdened with sin, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."<sup>114</sup> More people were moved by such appeals, and more are moved today than by any other motivating factor. We love Christ because he first loved us, and we appreciate him because we feel that he understands.

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<sup>111</sup>John 1:51.

<sup>112</sup>Luke 17:10.

<sup>114</sup>Matt. 11:28-30.

<sup>113</sup>John 3:16.

*A Word of Caution*

Before closing this book a word of caution should be given to all. You may think now that you know exactly how to do personal work and therefore great results will follow. Such results will follow, but not without plenty of hard work, prayer, and study of God's Word. Remember, souls are not saved in bundles but one by one. You cannot work for a while and then quit and think that you have done all the Lord expects. The Christian life covers an entire lifetime, and if you grow tired, remember that Christ was also exceedingly sorrowful even unto death. The Lord says to us: "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." And, "Lo, I am with you always."

You should not be disappointed too greatly if you are not able to convert everybody. The Lord did not do so, and neither did the apostles. At times they left certain individuals and cities and went to others. You must learn the same lesson. If you see you are doing no good, if a person is being bored with your efforts, if you have been asked to leave him alone; do so for the present, and you perhaps will do much more good than if you keep nagging. Perhaps some day you will have a better opportunity. Remember this Scripture always: "But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord, being ready always to give an answer to him that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is within you, YET WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR." (A.R.V.)

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