

# The Sword AND Staff

*"Preach the Word!" (II Timothy 4:2)*

*"Feed the Flock!" (I Peter 5:2)*

## PROFITING FROM THE PROPHETS

By Victor Knowles  
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"DO YOU *really* believe what you say, preacher?" asked a condemned prisoner of the minister who was trying to bring him to Christ. "If I believed your gospel to be true, I would crawl across England on broken glass to tell men about it." Evidently this guilty prisoner could somehow see through the shallow surface of this visiting minister. He could sense the lack of conviction and heart-felt appeal that should ring out from the gospel story and so he simply asked, "Do you *really* believe what you say?"

Do WE really believe what we are preaching? Brethren, we have a God-sent, heaven-blessed mighty message to deliver but somehow, somewhere along the line we have lost the art of an urgent appeal. Romans 1:15 and 16 read, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Paul was READY to preach and maybe that is our problem--we aren't ready, we aren't prepared to preach! It takes long hours of diligent, studious, laborious, painstaking preparation to enable a man to be ready and pre-



pared to preach just one sermon. From the sounds of some sermons we could safely surmise that lack of preparation made the message what it was--a limp, left-handed delivery, totally devoid of any pleading, persuading or just plain "preach."

Paul was not ashamed of the gospel either. I don't think that we are actually ashamed of the gospel itself but to a certain extent we are ashamed to become totally submerged in the preaching of the gospel. Why, if a preacher moves out from behind the pulpit and claps his hands and stomps his foot and raises his voice to emphasize a particular point, eyebrows arch and mouths drop open agape, but WHY? *We have lost the touch of the Prophets, that's why!* Can you not see in your mind, Isaiah flailing out against the wickedness of his time? Hear the mighty Ezekiel as he thunders out, "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" "Peace, peace when there is no peace," are the flaming words vehemently spat from the mouth of Jeremiah. On and on we could go through the magnificent Halls of the Prophets reading their vigorous, vibrant messages which scorched the sinful nations of old.

It would be invigorating and challenging if we could have men such as Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, Joel, the son of Pethuel and Nahum, the Elkoshite come back to us and speak on a large scale rally. Their message would be exactly the same as it was in the days of yore but perhaps we could profit from their colorful, forceful delivery! The Prophets were urgent in their appeal, powerful in their delivery and honest in their truthful evaluation of a sinner. God had com-

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The SWORD and STAFF  
Post Office Box 681  
Galax, Va. 24333

Subscription rates: \$1.50 per year; next 5 additional subscriptions, \$1.00 per subscription; any number sent above this, 50¢ per subscription; other arrangements.

The Sword and Staff is published monthly by the Locust Grove church, Galax, Virginia. James E. Gibbons is editor. Second class postage paid at Galax, Virginia.

Proverbs of Today

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*It is easy to find fault with the person who finds fault with you, but it takes a real person to face up to his shortcomings.*

*"The cause of right will never win unless the righteous speak up."*

*Living without faith is like driving in a fog in the mountains.*

*"The greatest showers of blessings often follow the fiercest flashes of lightning and the mightiest reverberations of thunder."*

*Having nothing to hide doesn't change the fallacy of that which is not hidden.*

*"You can never reach up to God by being down in the mouth."*

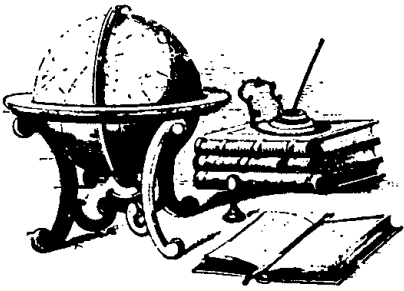
*A man's Christianity is determined by his living, giving and forgiving.*

*"A person's character is clearly revealed by what he does when he has nothing to do."*

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EDITORIAL  
COMMENTS...

DIVESTING OURSELVES OF DENOMINATIONALISM:  
THE CREEDS AND TRADITIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

THERE ARE just as many creeds with their accompanying traditions as there are denominations. They are interwoven together for each must have its own peculiarity to justify and support its separate existence, to hold its adherents together. Otherwise denominationalism would soon be a thing of the past.

We are not against creeds as such for the word *creed* simply signifies "belief," and what professor of religion does not have some belief? We are opposed to those creeds of human composition which discipline and hold men behind man-made walls, while at the same time filling their minds with limited and foggy ideas. Out of the Protestant Movement came several major denominations (and thereafter splinter denominations). It was evident that something was needed to hold their followers together, so creeds were written by their ecclesiastics. The sad story is that creeds have crystalized immature and reactionary thinking, as well as certain practices carried over from Catholicism. Not only have creeds crystalized this thinking, they have canonized it. In recent times some denominations have broken with the past to rewrite their creeds. Many times this has not been prompted by searching the Scriptures, but by rejecting them (at least in a measure). The current disbelief is wide-spread in the religious world.

Jesus asked the scribes and Pharisees of his day, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" (Matthew 15:3). Then he gave this alarming verdict: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). Beloved, this is where the rub comes with the creeds of Christendom! It is a grave thing to depart even in a small way from the teachings of the Scriptures (Galatians 1:8; I Timothy 4:16; II John 9; Revelation 22:18,19). Adam and Eve lost the paradise of Eden, and the human race became a dying race because one word was added to the Word of God (Genesis 3:4). In no other way can men justify and explain their embracing of certain doctrines but by creeds (although they may try). No where can you find sprinkling for baptism (and that for infants) except in creeds. No where else do you find "faith only." And what about church government and officers foreign to the Scriptures? This is found only in the disciplinary part of denominational creeds.

To conclude our remarks, we submit the following for your reflection and consideration:

"Any creed containing more than the Bible is objectionable, because it does contain more than the Bible.

"Any creed containing less than the Bible is objectionable,

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# SYSTEMATIC

## *Scriptural Studies*

### THE PROBLEM OF SINNING CHURCH MEMBERS

#### *Introduction:*

1. The word Church signifies the "called out" ones--people who are called out of a world of sin to live a holy life in dedication to God.
2. Therefore, it seems rather ironical to speak of church members sinning (Romans 6: 1-4).
3. But church members do sin, have sinned, and have outrageously sinned at times.

#### I. DO CHURCH MEMBERS SIN?

##### *A. They do not make a practice of sin.*

1. Notice I John 3:9 and then I John 1:8-10--what is the explanation?
2. Notice the Amplified N. T. rendering of I John 3:9, "No one born (begotten) of God (deliberately and knowingly) habitually practises sin, for God's nature abides in him--His principle of life, the divine sperm, remains permanently within him--and he cannot practise sinning because he is born (begotten) of God."
3. In other words a Christian does not make a practice of willfully, habitually and continually sinning (not that he cannot sin).
4. A continuance in sin means either of two things.
  - (1) He has never been converted in the first place.
  - (2) Or that he may reach the point where he can never be restored (Hebrews 10: 26-31).

##### *B. However, the New Testament shows many cases of sinning church members.*

1. The book of Acts.
  - (1) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5: 1-11).
  - (2) Simon the converted sorcerer (Acts 8: 12-24).
  - (3) The Judaizers (Acts 15: 1, 2).
  - (4) The contention between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15: 36-40).
2. The carnal church at Corinth.
  - (1) These people had been sanctified people (I Cor. 1: 2; 6: 11).
  - (2) However, they were guilty of the sin of partyism (I Cor. 1: 10-13; 3: 1-5).
  - (3) Fornication was tolerated in the church (I Cor. 5: 1).
  - (4) They were taking fellow Christians to law before the public courts (I Cor. 6: 1-7).
  - (5) They were eating meats offered to idols; they were sinning against their weaker brothers (I Cor. 8: 12, 13).

- (6) They were eating with the heathen in their feasts (I Cor. 10: 14-22).
- (7) They were making the Lord's supper a drunken feast (I Cor. 11: 20-34).
- (8) They were puffed up over who had the best spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12 & 13).
- (9) They were abusing the public assembly (I Cor. 14: 26-40).
- (10) Disbelief in the resurrection was evident in their midst (I Cor. 15: 12).

3. Practically every epistle in the N. T. deals with sins that were among erring church members.

#### *C. Remember, only those who are holy will see God.*

1. Those arisen with Christ (from baptism) are to seek those things which are above (Col. 3: 1, 2).
2. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).
3. Holiness is necessary to seeing the Lord (Hebrews 12: 14).
4. Nothing defiled will enter into that eternal city (Revelation 21: 27).
5. Be not deceived these will not enter the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6: 9, 10).
6. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24: 11-13).

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### EDITORIAL COMMENTS • • •

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because it does contain less than the Bible.

"Any creed differing from the Bible is objectionable, because it differs from the Bible.

"Any creed precisely like the Bible is useless, because we have the Bible.

"This covers the whole ground. There can be no other thought. A creed must contain more than the Bible, less than the Bible, differ from the Bible, or be precisely like it.

"No man defends his creed on the ground that it contains more than the Bible, or less than the Bible, or precisely like the Bible. If a creed is not defended on one of these grounds, on what ground can it be defended?

"Certainly on NO GROUND conceivable to mortal man. That is why we take the Bible, God's Word, as our *only rule of faith and practice*, believing that, ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

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missioned them to be spokesmen for Him and go and preach to the nefarious nations, plead for reform and repentance, persuade men to turn back to God, herald the coming of the Messiah, stand for truth, oppose error and warn of coming, eminent, unescapable destruction and there was not a single, solitary thing in this world that could deter them from preaching their God-given message. They preached against sin; brother, they denounced it, they pounced on it, yea, they **TROUNCED SIN!** Boiling oil, sharp swords, dank dungeons and threat of banishment and ostracism could not and would not stop them from their preaching. (Say, these boys weren't receiving \$100 a week either, they had no furnished "parsonage" to go home to at the end of the day, only a musty cave; an old stump was their pulpit and they had crows for a choir. A ragged cloak served as their Sunday suit but they still preached!) I'll tell you one thing that they *did* have though--they had a burning, unquenchable desire to completely deliver the Holy Word of God! When great throngs of wicked sinners left the old prophets standing exhausted and worn out at the foot of a craggy mountain or in the deserted marketplace *they knew that they had been to church and had heard a sermon!* Huge crowds walked away, some of them angry because they had been soundly rebuked but others walked away touched and with tear-filled eyes because they had heard God's Word preached in **ALL IT'S FULLNESS.** When the Bible is preached in all it's pristine fullness with nothing held back (and nothing added) the final results are manifold. The crowds will do one of two things: accept it as truth and change their ways and be converted, or reject it and go on living in iniquity. People are going to repudiate your message if you don't preach the truth in it's entirety *anyway*, just like that discerning prisoner shunned

the minister in the beginning of this article so why not pull out the stops and let the whole truth be heard? After all, a great preacher, Jesus Christ Himself experienced a few bitter rejections Himself. He even called people snakes!

"Oh," but you say, "times are different now." Really? If there's any difference in this world now as compared to Palestinean days I'd like to know what. Our country is far more rotten. "Oh, but we have more decorum, dignity and stateliness today." Prune juice! Rome was a pretty stately old country herself but she was wicked all the same and so are our cities where "things done in secret" are so lewd and vile we shudder to think of it. If sinners are so bold and blatant as to wilfully, openly and arrogantly sin against God Almighty and then piously put on the mask of dignity we ought to equally be bold enough unmask them by the preaching of the truth! Now I'm not advocating that ministers start donning outfits made out of camel's hair, eat a steady diet of locust and wild honey and then go down to the busy street corner and start calling passersby a bunch of vipers but I am championing the idea that we need more of John the Baptist's *spirit* of revival and evangelism in us and in our sermons!

This next paragraph is taken directly from the notes on "The Old Testament Prophets," an excellent work authored by brother Donald G. Hunt.

**Section V. THE WORK OF THE PROPHETS.**

1. Some suppose that their main work was to predict the future. But, this is far incomplete of their mission and work.
2. The meaning of the word "prophet" and its Scriptural confirmation.
  - (1) The meaning of the word:  
From Greek: "A spokesman for another;" "a divinely commissioned and inspired

person."

From Webster: "A proclaimer of a revelation;" "One who speaks for another, esp. from God."

- (2) Compare these meanings with Exodus 7:1,2 and Hebrews 1:1.
3. Their various functions:
  - (1) Primarily, they were spiritual reformers (revivalists).
    - a. They were sent out during days of great sin and apostasy.
    - b. Their message was that of a revivalist, pleading for repentance.
    - c. Check their messages, and you will see that their main work was that of preaching godly living.
  - (2) They were sent out to combat idolatry that sought to destroy the nation.
  - (3) They were also sent to pronounce God's judgment and coming vengeance upon persons or nations.
  - (4) They were sent to foretell the glories of the coming Messiah and His kingdom.

**Section VI. THE APPROACH AND MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS.**

1. Their general approach:
  - (1) They rebuked the nation for its sinfulness.
  - (2) They connected present calamities besetting the nation with its sins.
  - (3) They threatened the nation with certain doom because of its sins.
  - (4) They pleaded for national repentance and return to Jehovah.
  - (5) They told of God's mercy and the wonderful things awaiting the godly nation.
2. The Messianic element of the prophets is found in the last named.
3. The prophets never lost sight of the "remnant." Through the remnant, these glories were to be realized.

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# The Manifold Wisdom of God

By James E. Gibbons



THERE IS a legend of three blind Hindus who lived in a land where the elephant was the primary beast of burden. Thus handicapped from birth, they were cut off from the normal sights and sensations of everyday life. Nevertheless one day the theme of their discussion centered on the elephant--just exactly what was an elephant like anyway? To satisfy their curiosity they made their way to where they knew they could find an elephant. The first blind man placed his hands on the massive sides of the elephant. The second happened to reach out and touch the elephant's trunk, while the third managed to get hold of the elephant's tail. Satisfied that they had actually made contact with a real live elephant, they made their way back and immediately began to share their impressions. The first blind man said, "I am surprised, but I found the elephant to be like a great smooth wall." In disagreement, the second man said, "No, you are wrong. An elephant is like the trunk of a tree." Then, the third blind man could keep still no longer, "You are both in error! I find the elephant to be very much like a piece of rope."

And we ask, "Who was right?" The truth of the matter is that each blind man was right and each was wrong. In a sense all were right and all were wrong. Isn't the mass of humanity much the same way today? Blinded all of

their lives by human traditions and prejudice they grab hold of one verse of Scripture and loudly proclaim that they have all of the truth of God. As a result of the blind-man approach we have denominationalism; we hear of such doctrines as "faith only," "once-in-grace always in grace," et cetera. Sectarians naively lump everything religiously as being either Calvinism or Arminianism--perhaps each containing elements of truth, but not exclusive truth. Every coin has two sides, and no verse of Scripture can mean any less than what it says, but it can mean more in the light of other Scriptures. Other verses modify and qualify.

But, let us emphasize, *the wisdom of God is manifold*. Please carefully consider Ephesians 3:10. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." This word *manifold* is a combination of two words, many-fold. This wisdom of the All Mighty and Omniscient God of Heaven, as should be expected, has more than one side, fold or angle. It is a precious stone of many facets. The Greek word which *manifold* represents in English literally means "much-variegated; marked with a great variety of colors; of cloth or a painting." Beloved, you don't see this wisdom of many folds and colors all at once, nor do you learn it all in one sitting. It is a lifelong

endeavor. Jesus said that every scribe (teacher) in his kingdom "is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." (Matthew 13:52).

We see God's manifold wisdom manifest many ways in the Scriptures. What some people ignorantly or deceptively call contradictions in the Bible are really examples of the manifold wisdom of God. Perhaps what the Bible says about the "hardening" of Pharaoh's heart is but an illustration of the manifold wisdom of God. The four gospel accounts illustrate the manifold wisdom of God. In the "plan of salvation" we see the manifold wisdom of God. The book of Revelation with its series of sevens, the city foursquare, the streets of gold and varied precious stones again demonstrate the manifold wisdom of God.

Now notice these relevant references. Paul talks of the grace of God given to him that he "should preach among the Gentiles the *unsearchable riches* of Christ." (Eph. 3:8). In Christ we have a "gold mine" that cannot be exhausted! Read Ephesians 3:17-19. It speaks of comprehending the breadth, length, depth and height of the love of God. Then this seemingly contradictory statement follows: "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." We are commanded to know the love of Christ which passes knowing--again the manifold wisdom of God. I Peter 4:10 speaks of the "manifold grace of God." Oh, definitely God's grace is manifold! It is not just a matter of unmerited favor in initially getting our sins forgiven, but it is a lifelong experience as we surrender ourselves to Him!

Now, let us notice Ephesians 3:10 again: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Heavenly

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## THE MANIFOLD WISDOM • • •

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beings (angels, as well as mankind) learn of the manifold wisdom of God through the church. As observant and attentive listeners, they learn while the messengers of the church proclaim the Word of God; then the church itself is in actuality the unfolding and the working out of the wisdom of God among men. To reword it, the manifold wisdom of God is evident in the church's message (the gospel, the inspired Word of God), and it is seen in God working out His eternal purpose through the church.

## THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF THE WORD OF GOD

The Bible is the most marvelous and enduring book that has ever been written. It is not just a book, it is *THE BOOK*; it is a library of books. Here the most ancient and authentic history, combined with the wisdom of the ages, is to be found. Here we find the poetry of the soul tuned to God and the burden of prophets. Within its covers is found the most amazing and wonderful story (and true story) that has ever been told. It concerns the actual incarnation and humiliation of the very Son of God--followed by his consequent resurrection and glorification. The theme of the Christ is the adhesive which unites and binds this diversified book together. In the pages of its epistles are to be found the world's highest morals coupled with the most superb spirituality. This book transforms the soul of man and renews his spirit day by day. Heaven and the glory of God is its end. We have no trouble whatsoever accepting the apostle's explanation of its origin and manifold use. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16,17). Truly this is the manifold wisdom of God.

As before has been intimated, the manifold wisdom of God is manifested the most beautifully and completely in the Word that became flesh, the Son of God. The demands of the justice of God and the mercy of God met in Calvary. Then to the pardoned sinner, Paul says: "And of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:30,31). Jesus means everything to a Christian. In becoming a Christian we obey the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-6). We are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27). Thereafter Christ lives within us by faith (Ephesians 3:17), and we have the mind of Christ. We live like Christ, taking him as our example. We take up our cross daily and follow him (Luke 9:23). We are part of the church, which is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18). We meet every *Lord's day* to observe the *Lord's supper* (Acts 20:7). Prayer is made in the name of Christ; in fact, everything is to be done in the name of Christ (Colossians 3:17). Certainly he is everything to us. Christianity is Christ and in him is found the manifold wisdom of God in saving lost humanity.

The teachings of the New Testament are manifold in nature, and not just one-sided. To some Ephesians 1:4 teaches irrevocable, individual predestination for eternity, but notice he has "chosen us *in him*." In Christ "who-soever" can be saved (John 3:16). Paul declares that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," and that Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Timothy 2:4,6). Christ was the one who was personally predestinated (I Peter 1:20), and through him God planned for a people called the church to be saved. (We might add for those interested that

*predestination* and *foreknowledge* are not the same thing). The Protestant denominational world has long proclaimed that man is saved by "faith only." We are saved by faith, but that is only one of the many folds of the wisdom of God on this subject. We are not saved by "faith only" (James 2:24). The New Testament states at least 20 distinct things or combination of things which are explicitly said to save us. Then for those who would glorify man in over-emphasizing human effort and works, please consider both sides of Philippians 2:12. The command is given to: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." The next verse shows the other side of the coin. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure." In connection with this notice Ephesians 2:8-10; Colossians 1:29; etc. Some teach and preach "once in grace always in grace," that God will keep a Christian regardless, but this is but an imperfect view of only one side of the picture. Jude 24 asserts, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." To some this is a "clincher" for their doctrine. However, verse 21 reads, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Perhaps I Peter 1:5 combines both aspects of God keeping us. "Who are kept by the power of God *through faith* unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last times."

The story goes of this certain man who lived in a cabin situated in the mountains. On the east side in the wall was a knot-hole, and every morning he would behold a limited view of the beauty of the beauty of the sunrise. He became so excited about the knot-hole that he went near and far to invite men to come with him to peer through at the rising sun. When his neighbors told him that from their porches and the hill-

top they had seen the beauty of the sunrise in all its fullness many, many times, he became very indignant. Surely they were fools. Could any creature be so unreasonable as to suppose he had seen the sun other than through this glorious knot-hole?

And does this not illustrate the position of those people who give attention to one aspect of the manifold wisdom of God and neglect the rest? Does this not describe the man who will take one verse of Scripture out of its context to exaggerate it, even developing from it a doctrine foreign to the New Testament? Is this not the plight of denominationalism? The wisdom of God is many fold, and let us always remember that when we study the Scriptures.

THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF THE WORK OF GOD.

Contrary to what is commonly thought, the church is essential and is in the very center of the purpose and work of God. After speaking of the manifold wisdom of God being made known by the church (Eph. 3:10), it tells of God's eternal purpose in connection with Christ and the church. Paul concludes that chapter in Ephesians by saying, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:20, 21). In the later part of I Timothy 3:15 Paul calls it "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." God is very much alive today, and the unfolding of His wisdom is seen as He works to accomplish His purpose through the church.

The endwelling of the Holy Spirit of God is promised to everyone who will repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38,39), and hence to those who obey (Acts 5:32), to those who trust the Lord (Eph.

3:16,17), and to those who ask for the Spirit (Luke 11:13). The Spirit is given to us in conversion, and the extent of his dwelling in us and working through us thereafter is determined by our trust and obedience.

The Holy Spirit works through the Word in many ways to accomplish his mission, but to limit him in this fashion in the life of the Christian is to greatly restrain the power of God. What about answered prayer? What about the providence of God? According to Romans 8:26, the Spirit puts the proper words to ignorant prayers to carry them through to God. Because of this we read verse 28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Then, what about the presence of Christ in soul-winning? When giving the great commission, Christ promised to be with his disciples unto the end of the world (that includes today). He is with us by means of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not save people aside from the preaching of the gospel, but he does work through the preacher of the gospel in saving souls. God does not impose his will on one sinner and then leave another lost in sin--this would make Him a respecter of persons (Romans 2:11). But, according to the book of Acts, He has at times brought the preacher of the gospel and the receptive sinner together. He indicated that Paul and Barnabas should be sent out from the church at Antioch to preach the gospel. Let us realize that the wisdom of God is manifold on this subject.

It is not by accident that James says, "*The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy*" (James 3:17). God is at work in the life of the surrendered Christian. Hence Paul writes, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,

longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance..." (Galatians 5:22,23). The real Christian becomes an embodiment of the much-variegated wisdom of God. To put on Christ is to put on a coat of many colors. In contrast with the foolish and wicked children of this world, burdened by the works of the flesh and living under the wrath of God, here is wisdom indeed. In this world the character of the real Christian is a rare and precious stone of many facets.

Living in this world the child of God is many times confronted by trial and suffering, but even here is found the manifold wisdom of God. Suffering may be considered as a curse, a blessing, or as actual chastizement from the Lord. The child of God sees beyond the immediate discomfort and knows that his life is one of design and purpose. God is a personal God and is personally involved in his life. All things ultimately work for his betterment and the glory of God. The suffering Christian knows that trials purify and the sweet fruit of peace, patience, and gentleness follows (I Peter 1:7; Romans 5:3-5). He knows the Lord may be disciplining him and getting him ready for greater service (Hebrews 12:4-11). Then, he has this assurance: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17).

CONCLUSION

Most assuredly the wisdom of God is wonderful in its many, many folds, facets and colors! Let us humbly remember that when we study the Scriptures and as we behold the works of the Lord. It will save us from sectarianism, and will enable us to better give God the glory. Praise His name! We conclude our remarks, and with the apostle Paul cry out: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of

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4. Their message contained both doom and hope, both warning and encouragement, both God's wrath and God's love, and the nation both doomed and exalted.
5. They made no "pointless talks" -- they were PREACHERS with a compelling message that must be delivered.

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Section IX. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPHETS

3. Knowing the source of their message, they were bold and fearless and spoke with authority.
  - (1) They didn't hesitate to upbraid the people for their sins.
  - (2) They didn't fear to stand before kings and expose their sins.
  - (3) They shrank not in the face of persecution and death.
  - (4) With authority, they said, "It is going to be THIS way."
4. They were colorful preachers of God's message.
  - (1) They could describe a thing to a T with their descriptive words and illustrations, e. g. Isa. 1:2-9; Mic. 7:1-4; Mal. 1:8.
  - (2) Often they used object lessons to instruct and impress, e. g. Jer. 24:1-10; 19:1-15; Ezek. 5:1-17.
  - (3) Their preaching was not dry and colorless.
5. They were very plain-spoken in their preaching.
  - (1) Isaiah called Judah's rulers

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"Sodom" and the people "Gomorrha" (1:10).

- (2) Amos called Israel a bunch of cows (4:1).

End of quoting brother Hunt's work. On and on we could go telling how that the old prophets were different from the masses, how they stood alone in the midst of wickedness and remained holy and upright in spite of their ungodly surroundings. Tears fill my eyes as I think of these holy men of God who sacrificed, oh how they sacrificed, for the work of God. Leaving home, wives, children and friends they launched out into the sinning nations. With untold fear filling their hearts they approached huge cities, lonesome and unwanted. But by the help of God they marched into those sin-cursed cities and preached the whole council of God, sparing not they lashed out against existing conditions and evil practices only to be laughed at, jeered, mocked and utterly humiliated. Nevertheless they did *not* give up! With no encouragement whatsoever save from Above they journeyed to their next commission. Sleeping on lonely plains and in mountain caves they continued in their lonesome vigil. Eating inferior food and often nothing at all they kept on in their thankless duties. Suffering unimaginable ridicule they persistantly pursued their Holy task. From village to village and city to city and nation to nation the Prophets traveled acting as "spokesmen for Jehovah." HOW THESE HOLY PROPHETS OF OLD PUT WE MODERN-DAY PREACHERS TO SHAME!!! There is not a one of us that has ever suffered like the prophets and yet we complain. None of us have gone through situations as did they. It is true we cannot compare with them *but we can copy them!* We can incorporate into our lives and into our preaching the very style which they used. Yes, it is very true, *we can profit from the prophets!*

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THE MANIFOLD WISDOM . . .

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Romans 11:33-36).

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PRINTING PRESS PROBLEMS

Because of mounting problems with our printing press we have taken steps and obtained a new one. Also, the Lord willing, in the near future we hope to be able to get the equipment to do a better job of type-setting. We represent the Mighty God of heaven, and the vehicle of this representation (in this case the printed page of *The Sword and Staff*) should be the best in appearance. For those who are interested and concerned, please pray for our humble efforts. We believe that the message we present is greatly needed. Help us flood and fill the land with the Word of God. Time may be running out!!!



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Return Requested

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