



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Corinthians 1:21). So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading (Nehemiah 8:8). Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend (Proverbs 27:17).

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Vision Today for the Church of Tomorrow

A number of years ago, I heard a Mennonite bishop say that he sure hopes that he can live long enough to help to hold the church together as long as he lives. I thought that was a very poor statement. We should be interested in helping to hold the church together, not as long as we live, but as long as time continues on.

My assignment is speaking of a vision. I looked in the dic-

tionary for the definition of a vision. It says, "something seen in a dream. A supernatural appearance that conveys a revelation. Unusual discernment and forethought." The Bible says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he" (Proverbs 29:18). To perish speaks of going backward. By vision, we understand prophecy. We read in the Scripture of the prophets of

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old, Old Testament prophets that we have, the same in the New Testament so to speak, the prophets that prophesied in their day. In regards to speaking of the prophets I understand that to mean the preaching, expounding, and applying of the Word of God. That was the work of the prophet.

“Where there is no vision,” speaks of a person who is stripped of his armour, helpless, left naked (so to speak) in times of danger, cannot stand against

the pressures of life, and speaking of having lost their first love, if they had it one time. It speaks of falling into spiritual decay and apostasy — being drawn away from God and their duty in life.

Someone has said that having a vision speaks of faith in Jesus Christ and all that He has accomplished and all that He has spoken. Where there is no vision, there is no Bible connected with it. We are in a world of material things. I marvel at the

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vision that someone must have in regards to some of our highways. As we go along, there are roads going this way, and another bridge on top going this way and giving direction for whatever way a person is going that they get to their destination. I said it already, it must take an awful lot of wisdom to lay something like that out and see that it will work.

Then, as I was thinking about this message the thought came to me that the greatest vision that ever existed we read about in the book of Genesis, when our great God looked out upon what has been thought of as time. There we have a picture of what our great God saw in the future as time started from then. The first day that God divided day and night we see God's vision being unfolded as He created all things, "that are in heaven, and that are in earth" (Colossians 1:16). He had a view in mind as to what that was to accomplish. Finally, he made man after His own image. King David says in Psalm 139:14 for we are, "fearfully and wonderfully made." We need only think of the bodies which God has made for us and how God has put these bodies of ours together so that they function together. We get a little grain of sand in our eye and the first thing that happens is that

another member goes up to relieve it. There is the working together of each member of our body, filling the place that God has planned for it to fill. I call this a vision that God had back there in the beginning, when our great God made us, as we think of the makeup of how God made us.

Then, I think of the fact that regardless what our situation in life is, God knows our thoughts before we think them, and God has made provision for every one of our makeups. He knows each one of our needs. If we are a little dull in some area, He knows what help to give us. He knows how to work with us when we grow weak and strong. He knows how to work with each one of us even though each one of us is different. It is a great God we have that had a vision of all of Creation back there in the beginning. I think of that as a great vision and the great wisdom of God as He created all things and mankind.

Today, my assignment is a vision of the Church tomorrow. We think of the Old Testament Church, or the Jewish nation, so to speak — God's people. God said in Samuel's day, "Them that honour me I will honour" (1 Samuel 2:30). God is still saying that same thing today to you and

me. God has been doing this down through the years. We see a picture in the Old Testament Scriptures as to the different prophets that God sent to guide and direct His people to lead His people in the right way. The Bible shows how they were to live their lives and how so many times the people failed. They went down into apostasy time after time, and God sent someone else to again deliver them from the enemy, from those that had come against to destroy them. God, by His wisdom, brought them there for a purpose many times to bring them to their senses, so to speak, that they might realize their lost condition in His sight.

We have God speaking through the Old Testament prophets different times and mainly through His Holy Spirit. His Holy Spirit spoke to individuals time and time again, in the Old Testament and gave direction. Then, in the New Testament we have also the Spirit of God speaking. We have the account of Peter on the house top, when he had a vision and how that those unclean and clean beasts were set down before him. He thought that he could not have any use for some of those unclean beasts, in my words. We know what the Lord told him.

The Lord taught him a lesson in preparing him for what was awaiting him in the near future. As Cornelius was together there praying, God spoke to him by His Spirit. Then, we see how his servants went and found Peter on the house top. Then, we have there a vision, as I would think of it.

Therefore, as we think of a vision, "When the Son of man cometh," the question is, "shall he find faith on the earth" (Luke 18:8)? As we look about us today, in this world in which we are living, we are seeing many, many individuals that in my lifetime I have seen, who have strong convictions like we are endeavouring to uphold today, but have lost out along the way. I well remember a brother who said he was preparing a message and came across a statement that a brother he knew well had written some years before. He called that brother on the phone and asked him if it was all right if he used that statement that he read in his message on Sunday morning. This man said, "Well, on one condition. That condition is you must say 'when I wrote that,' because I do not believe it that way anymore." Therefore, we see all around us those who have lost out in their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ — many

church groups as a whole.

At a funeral a few years ago, I had the experience that I never had before in seeing four men going up into the pulpit that day with charge of the service. The moderator got up and used his hand. I saw a finger ring on his hand. Then, he introduced the bishop as the one that was bringing the message (a Lancaster Conference bishop). That bishop stood up with no sign of separation on whatever. Afterward I had a little opportunity to talk to that bishop. I asked him about this change that took place in his life. He said, "Well, it was this way, most of the people in the congregation had made the change before he did." He said, "There were five brethren yet that did not and so he went to them individually and asked if they would be offended if he made the change too," (to look like the world it was — be like the world) "And they said that they would not be offended in that. So," he said that he made the change too. However, he did not say that he asked the Lord about it. In spite of this he made the change.

Well, we see that about us. I look back to the time when I was ordained as a minister [1955], and I thought the church was in fairly good shape. I was happy in

relationship as I saw it then. Less than two years later, the second ordination came along. That is when my eyes were opened to what was happening in the church like I did not before. I found out that there were a lot of things in the church setting that I was not aware of. There was much television in our district and I knew what that meant. That meant a lot of hard work. We went through some hard times through that. Many of those folks left the church, but were received into another church in the same church group with their televisions.

We see things that go on the wrong way many times through our life, but today we are here. We look back to 1968 when the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church group was formed because of the worldward drift in the Mennonite Church in those days. One of the great reasons for that was that seminary men who had graduated from college at Eastern Mennonite College became ordained in a Lancaster Conference setting. They were taught differently in the college setting where they were. I well remember a young man in our district who graduated from college. That summer at an all day meeting he was a song leader. He appeared before the congre-

gation dressed in three different ways that day — in the morning, and in the afternoon and in the evening. That evening I touched him and said, “I would like to have a little talk with you sometime.” Therefore, he came to my home one evening and we talked. He told me he was planning to go to seminary yet two years and then he thought he would come home and be ordained as a minister in our district. “However,” he said, “The way it sounds here that cannot happen.” I said, “Well, if I have anything to do with it, with your thinking, it will not happen.” It taught me much that evening as to what they were being taught in the college setting where he was going in Virginia. It grieves my heart to think of those individuals that were there that were faithful in the early years and stood for the truth of the Gospel. They lost out along the way and got “itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:3), so to speak. They wanted the people to think well of them and satisfy the people to go their own way. It was a worldward drift in the Mennonite Church that took place.

Scripture tells us in 2 Timothy 3:1 “In the last days perilous times shall come.” It speaks of being exposed to those things which are injurious to a

person that wants to stand for the truth, those things that will lure a person away. Today we have the fact that the devil has brought a lot of these things through his pipeline into the home setting all around us, and those people who profess to be the people of God. First of all, the radio and finally the television and now the computer age is in. I am told that you can get anything you want, the most ungodly and immoral things on that thing to look at on the Internet that you want to get. It is there.

The enemy is busy. He is endeavouring to breakdown home life. He has accomplished it much in our day. The Church today is facing an increasing conflict in regards to the fact that they want to hold fast to the truth of the Gospel but there is much, where much of the enemy is working against it. Carnality is finding its way within our ranks about us. The enemy is busy and he is out to break down the convictions of all of us if he can possibly do that.

We think of the affluence of our day and how that God has blessed us with much of this world’s goods. There are many rich men in our circles. We need to beware that those riches will be the downfall of many of those individuals who have much of

this world's goods, and that it will be instrumental in breaking the whole church program. We need to be on our guard to the breaking down of the conviction.

Many things of the world are drawing our attention. (I do not know if I should say this or not but I think I will. It is a little burden to me). It used to be that we thought when we bought cars we would buy simple cars, like Chevy's, Ford's and Plymouth's. Today, I am seeing more Buicks and Oldsmobiles among our leadership in the church. Then, the next step is that they are buying their boys big cars like that. It burdens me to see what direction we are travelling, and what will happen in the future — what we can look forward to if our leadership at times is taking this course. The money is there and so it is easy to get today. Anyway, they tell me that they can buy cheaper big cars now than they can buy cheaper small cars. I would say that for the testimony we are giving we need to beware what the world is seeing.

The god of this world is beckoning the Church to come and compromise a little here and a little there. Too often we are buying their goods that they have to sell. The devil met with God in Job's day and God asked him, "Hast thou considered my ser-

vant Job" (Job 1:8)? Then he asked, "Hast not thou made an hedge about him" (Job 1:10)? Did He? Sure He did. Does He have a hedge built around us today? Certainly, He does. God has a hedge built around us. He told us He will not allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to have victory over (1 Corinthians 10:13). However, we must want to have victory before we can get it.

We must put our trust in the Lord and allow Him to help us before we can have that victory. So many times I fear that we are not asking God to help us do that and we lose out by the way. God is ready to speak to help us as an individual and as a church as we are keeping within the boundary line and as He has given us in His Scripture. Especially as parents and grandparents, what for example, are we giving for our children and our grandchildren as they are following after, as they see us spending our money for expensive things in these days. May God help us.

Along with this, our enemy is raising up many false teachers in so-called Christianity that are deceptive and are teaching Calvinism and we might name it, pacifism and unsound doctrine. Also, today the enemy has learned that he can accomplish

much by peer pressure. He is accomplishing more by peer pressure today than he was able to do during the days of severe persecution, when our Anabaptist forefathers were being killed for their faith. During those days, we are told that the Church grew by “leaps and bounds” much faster than it is growing today, as a fact, I am told. Therefore, we need to be on our guard that we are not being taken by the enemy or by the peer pressure that is around about us. They might mock and ridicule us, make fun of us if we are standing for the truth, but that does not matter. That is not what God says. God says that we are to stand.

David said in one of his psalms that he was standing, “in an even place” (Psalm 26:12). That is a wonderful place to stand. It is good to stand before the pulpit on an even place. It would not be very comfortable if one foot would need to be a little lower than the other one. It is comfortable to stand on an even place. God is saying we are to be standing on an even place in our spiritual life. We should know what we believe and stand for it. We should not allow the enemy or the peer pressure round about us in these last days to cause us to fall. Our government is continuously testing our stands on sepa-

ration of Church and State, and in regards to government aid to our schools and the co-ops that are around about us, and the fashions of the world. The government is continuously testing our stand on separation of Church and State in a few of these things like calling our members to jury service, the Social Security program, and the Medicare program, all about us. I get mail through the Medicare and through Social Security because I am a senior citizen. They want to help me time and time again and we need to be on our guard.

The Scriptures say that in the last days the Church will endure hardness. This tranquility that we have been accustomed to we have had it really good as a church to live our life. We have had an easy-going life compared to what many of our forefathers had in standing for the truth of the Gospel. I am thankful that God has permitted this, but let us be on our guard. It will not always be that way. We, in our day, are being tolerated by many people. They are recognizing us at times. The last number of years at Blue Rock we have been having street meetings in the square in Lancaster about four times each summer. However, when they went to make plans and get a permit for that for this

summer they were turned down, and they said that they would permit it anymore. Thus, little by little, they are pressing in to get rid of that which is godly and that which is according to the will of God. They are endeavouring to squash it down you see, little by little. We need to be on our guard even though we are being tolerated. Yet, part of that is because our government still guarantees religious freedom to us as God's people. Therefore, they can tolerate us for a while longer but little by little they are working and perilous times are coming, like we have never seen before if time goes on.

Along with this God says, "Them that honour me I will honour" (1 Samuel 2:30). There will be faith on the earth when the Lord returns. I am greatly encouraged today as I see the many youth among us who believe the necessity of living a godly life. I am strengthened. I want to encourage our youth all I can to be faithful to convictions which they have been taught. I want to encourage parents and grandparents to be faithful in the examples which we are living because as a child grows up they learn more by what is caught and what they see in their parents than what is taught. We can talk all day the truth but if we do not

show it in our examples it does not amount to very much in the minds of the children as they are observing our life.

We are seeing, as we go about life, many young folks who are growing up and not coming into the Church. I well remember one of my uncles and aunts. My aunt was finding fault with the church back there when I was growing up a number of times. I remember telling my parents one day I do not believe any of those cousins will ever be in the Mennonite Church, because of what their mother is doing. I was right. None of them are in the church. One of them is divorced now and out in the world. We as parents need to be on our guard what we say in front of the little children because they are hearing it and they are grasping those things that are finding fault. They find out soon if we are happy and satisfied in the church where we are or if we are not, by the things they hear along the way and by our attitudes toward some things that are being done. I am greatly encouraged today as I believe that most of our home settings are like they should be, are giving encouragement to the young folks as they are growing up that they are expecting the truth of the Gospel for themselves because they see it lived

out in the lives of their parents and their grandparents.

The Church will continue to be faithful as long as parents in the home are faithful. Also, as I think of what God has done for us through the years since 1968 when we left where we were and started our own program then. I marvel at His greatness far above what our expectation would have been back there, when we took the stand we did in the church. Today I thank our God for what He has done for us as a church group. His blessing has been upon us and the efforts are proving out as we think of the work in Guatemala, Paraguay, the Bahamas and where our mission stations are. There are those that are hungering and thirsting for the truth. Many of them are finding it in our circles. We are thankful for that. However, at the same time, some in our circles are leaving us because they are saying we are not living like we should be living. Thus, we see the two sides of the picture.

Today, as I look forward to the future *there are certain things we need to be doing if the church will continue to bring honour and glory to God and be winning souls for Christ*. We need to be doing our part as God has called us to be a child. The Scriptures say, “As many as received him, to

them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12). Believing in the name of Christ embodies the fact that we accept Him as Lord and Saviour and that we are willing to obey all that He has spoken — to live it out in our life. That is what it means by receiving Christ into our life as Saviour and Lord of our life. We allow Him to guide and direct our steps. It is not only by being called a Christian like many people are today but you do not see the evidence of living a Christian life as you observe them going about in life. If we will be a part of the bride of Christ — the Church which He is coming for one of these days (it might be today). I am not sure when it will be. None of us know that but God wants us to be prepared when that moment comes so that we can go with Him. It will be sudden it says. He will come suddenly when that time comes, and we need to be on our guard.

There are a number of things that are necessary if we will be prepared at that time. 1) *We need a vision of God and His holiness*. Isaiah had a vision like that. We read in Isaiah 6 that he saw “the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up” (Isaiah 6:1). As he saw the holiness of this God, he

saw himself as a poor, weak person, the lowest of the lowest as he recognized himself. That is the way we need to have the vision of our great God.

Along with this, He wants us to be communing with Him. This is why it is necessary for us, first thing in the day to start out with the time alone with God. It is very important that we take time, first of all, before something else can get our attention and lead us away so that we do not lose out. I found out in earlier life that if I do not do it first thing in the morning, quite often something comes along and I get busy until night comes. Then, I forget about it. That is what the devil wants us to do. We need to have a time first thing in the morning alone with God and seek His guidance and leading through the day and seek His will for our life and ask His help for us. Ask God to help us to be conscious that He has promised to be with us. He said, He will never leave us nor forsake us" (Hebrews 13:5). If we received Him in life and we are faithful to Him, "Them that honour me," God says, "I will honour" (1 Samuel 2:30). He has promised us He will not allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to overcome [see 1 Corinthians 10:13]. Therefore, we are called to walk with Him

day by day and follow in His steps. To do this speaks of being justified, as Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God."

A couple of years ago I was working with a certain man who had been with us as a member but the family left us. They went around to about five or six different groups since that time and now they are coming back again. They are not members with us but they are still coming back to church again. That man told me awhile before they started coming back one morning, when I went there to work for him, "I do not have any peace anymore." I asked, "What is wrong with you?" He said, "I simply do not have any peace anymore." "What happened?" He said, "I lost my first love." I said, "Well, there must be some sin in your life if you do not have peace." "Not that he knows," he said. "Well," I said, "The Bible says, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God' (Romans 5:1). That is telling me that if there is sin in my life I cannot have peace." I believe that is the way it is.

"Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God." By receiving Him as Lord and Saviour and repenting of our sins and turning from them is

what gives us peace — when we have repented of all our sins. This is one of the visions we need to have of our God and His holiness, and what our responsibility is in regards to obedience to His commands. We have been now transformed, our mind has been renewed, and we have a living witness of His saving grace by the experience that took place in our heart as the Scripture says that we have been “transformed” (Romans 12:2). That speaks of an inward and outward. Our whole being has been changed. First of all, the heart condition has been changed. The Spirit has come in and washed our heart clean with the blood of Jesus and gives us a clear title to be members of the family. The Scripture says that God says that we have not chosen Him but He has chosen us [see John 15:16]. That tells me that God knew every one of us by name before we were ever born, before the foundation of the world was ever laid. God knew each of us, and the course we would take in life, and the decisions we would make. Upon His foreknowledge we have what we have today in regards to our life. God knew whom He would call to be leading His people someday and prepared them for it. God knew the decisions we would make. Therefore, we are

here today and it is nothing new to Him what we are doing. God knew about the ordinations the other day at Churchtown, back there already. This is the kind of a God whom we are serving.

2) *Along with this we need to have a true understanding of what is right and wrong in the sight of God.* We have it right here in the book. It is clear to us if we want to understand it. If we want to know, God gives us understanding. He wants us to be living in a state of being that others can see that we have been washed clean by the blood of Jesus. They can see where we belong, and that we are not ashamed to be living a Christian life, or to look like a Christian. God wants us to. He wants us to be recognized as to where we belong as we go about in this life. That is why the Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 11:1–16 that sisters, as they wear the veiling, the power of the angels are with them to watch over them because they have this sign on their heads that they are submitting to God’s place of where they are to be submitting — their place of submitting to the headship of God and man. God recognizes that.

I remember hearing of a young sister in the northern Pennsylvania area. They had a railroad crossing their lane. One

day she went out the lane in the pickup and right on the railroad the pickup stopped and she could not get it started. She knew that it was soon time for the train to come. She did not know what to do. She ran out to the road and tried to stop the traffic. Several cars past and finally a man stopped and asked what the trouble was. She told him and he helped her to get the truck off the railroad before the train came. Then, he asked, "Do you know why I stopped?" "No," she said, "I guess not." He said, "When I saw that cap on you head, I knew you must be a godly person. You must be in trouble. That is why I stopped." Anyway, he went on to say that he does not stop for women along the road like that, but here he saw. We need to keep in mind that God has His angels round about to care for us and to deliver us from trouble.

I had an experience one day. One Sunday evening I preached at Simmontown. It was a wet Sunday evening and on the way home my wife and I were talking and forgetting minding my business, I guess, and finally there was a stop sign. "Oh," I said, "There is a stop sign." I put my foot on the brake quickly in the wet rain. The back end slid around and we slid crossways out in the crossroad. However, we

stopped just in time when a car coming our way swung right, passed in front of us, and did not hit us. We backed around and started on our way again and my knees started shaking. I said, "That was the angel of the Lord for sure that stopped us right where we did." It would not have been much further and we would have been hit.

We need to recognize God's way of working with His people.

3) *We need to have a commitment to maintain a clear church discipline.* There are many people around us who claim to be Christian. I well remember when we were in Sheep's Lane passing out invitations to Bible school. We came to one place where I met a young couple with barely anything on them. I said, "We are inviting you to our Bible school in a couple of weeks. Here is our invitation." Then he said, "Well, my wife will be at Bible school at our church," so they did not need it. It would not go long to give up some of these areas that we are seeing, and we need to be on our guard.

4) *We need to have a strong conviction to maintain the separation of Church and State.* "Can two walk together, except they be agreed" (Amos 3:3)? No, one wants to go one way and one the other way. We need to be agree-

ing together. I well remember when brother Isaac and I were in the judge's office one day because one of our brethren was asked to be a juror. We told him what our position is as a church. He said, "Well, I am a Christian too. Are you saying I am where I should not be?" "No," we said, "We are not talking where you should be, we are saying where we are standing, and that is what we believe is right for us." Therefore, I believe we need to have a clear perspective that we are separate from Church and State. We are not involved in that at all as God's people. Judgment begins "at the house of God," (1 Peter 4:17), the Scripture tells us and that judgment of God is an exceeding terrible and exact judgment.

5) *We want to do our part in preserving a faithful remnant.* We can look back in Scripture and think of the time when God told Noah to build the Ark. Noah was one man that He could see all around who was just, faithful to Him, was a good man, and was walking with God. God told Noah what to do and Noah did it. Then, God destroyed the earth with a flood but eight people out of all those maybe millions of people (I do not know how many) were saved because of obeying God.

We can think of the great group that came out of Egypt (several million people as we would understand). Moses led them forth to the promised land but because of disobedience they could not enter the promised land (most of them). They all died in the wilderness who were about twenty years old but two. God's judgments are just and severe. As we think of that then we think of Sodom and Gomorrah. Out of that whole city, you remember how Abraham prayed that if there be ten righteous if He would not save the city. God said He would, but there was not ten righteous there. Then it says that the angels got a hold of the hands of the father and mother and two children and literally led them out of the city but told them not to look back. You know the story. One of them looked back. I can see in my mind the enemy whispering in her ear saying, "That is only a little thing. You can look back one time yet and no one will ever know it." However, did anyone ever know it? It has come down to our day. It is in the Scripture. One little act of disobedience — God's judgment fell at that time immediately. God's judgment does not fall like that many times but it is coming someday if we are not repenting of it and taking the right course.

The Bible speaks about a little flock. There is the tiny remnant. God has had His little remnant of those faithful ones down through the years from the beginning of time. In Noah's day it was eight, coming down to that time it tells us different times. Today, in the day we are living there is a tiny remnant. The Scriptures say in every generation God has had those faithful ones down through the years who have kept the faith, been faithful, and passed the faith onto the next generation. That is why we are here today. Our fathers and grandfathers were faithful and passed it onto the next generations. Therefore, we are here today. We have a great responsibility that the Church might remain faithful by passing it onto the next generation in our day. There needs to be a strong passing on of the faith to these little ones that are following after us — the many young folks, boys and girls, young men and women that are among us today. I marvel as I get to our churches at the many faithful young people. I am thankful to God for the many faithful young people I see who are growing up today and that are bound on doing right.

Just last evening, a young brother came to my home and brought something there. We

were talking a little while and I told him about an individual that I have been talking to that left us that he says we are wrong in a number of areas. Then, this young man said, "Well, I would rather not be any place else than where I am." I said, "Thank you, I am glad to hear you saying that." I am sure there are a lot more of our young people who feel like that. They are happy where they are and I am thankful for that. I want them to be happy, because we are trying to help them to go right, and be right in the end. We need to keep in mind that there will be those upon the earth when the Lord returns. If it is us — if we are here when that time comes, we want to be the means of helping all we can to be in that state when the time comes for them to leave this world, whether by death or the coming of the Lord. We want them to be a part of the remnant in the Church and to come to the Church and be faithful to the Church which we are endeavouring to stand for. This is what God wants for His Church if we will be standing for the "all things," of His Word when He comes to receive His bride.

This tiny remnant is a group that is chosen of God according to God's election of grace. Provision is made for everyone.

It is not His will that “any should perish” (2 Peter 3:9). Rather, He has made provision for every person to be redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. That is the will of God for us. Therefore, God’s provision which He has provided for us to help us is a hedge round about us. I think about that hedge as our church discipline — the ruling — the position we are trying to take to help our people to stay within the bounds and not allow the enemy to get a grip on our life, or lead us away in any way. We are living in perilous times but we know that the Bible teaches us how to live while we are here in this ungodly society in which we are living today.

The question comes, “Are you prepared for a glorious future if you would leave this life today?” It is a question we need to face, because we do not know, any of us here, if we will get to see our home again which we left to come here. We do not know that. We make plans to do that but we never know. The time is coming that we will breathe our last breath. The true Church is awaiting our Lord’s imminent return as His bride to receive His bride.

The Scripture says in Malachi that God sees those that are sharing together the things of the Gospel and He is writing a

book in remembrance of them, as He comes to bring His jewels [Malachi 3:16-17], His inheritance, keeping in mind that God’s people are His inheritance. He has died that we might live that He might have us, and that Jesus might have us as a bride as His wife (so to speak) throughout all eternity. Therefore, the Scripture says that to them who watch for Him, or look for Him “shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28). The Church will be caught up out of this sinful society one of these days — caught up to safety, where we will be with our Lord and the angels. To be prepared for that great day, we need to meet the conditions here as a Church today, as an individual.

I am thinking of a vision of the Church tomorrow. A Church that believes God’s Word and lives it out is what is necessary. I have a number of things written down here that are necessary as we look forward to the Church in the future that we will be standing for.

- 1) Each member must have an inner spiritual life. We must be living true to God and His Word. We need to enjoy our service as we are living for Him, knowing that we are where God wants us to be, having that assurance within us.

2) We need also beside this to have a true love for God, and a true love for each other as brethren and sisters in the Church. We must endeavour all we can by our example, by what we do or say, to help each other to do what is right and go that way.

I well remember as a young fellow one of the girls in my home church started wearing white shoes which was against the rules of the church. I remember hearing that she told another one of her friends, "You wear them too. I got away with it so long, you can too." See, that is the attitude passing on the wrongdoing to the next one. In contrast, we need to be passing on that which is right.

3) We need to have a faithful leadership if we will be prepared for the coming of the Lord.

4) We need to stand firm and true on the solid rock foundation in regards to nonresistance and nonconformity to the world.

5) We need to be stand, and in a position that we are busy in our missionary program and evangelizing the world.

6) We need to be standing firm for a holy and Scriptural view of home life. The father must take his rightful place in the home and the mother takes her rightful place in the home. When

sisters are wearing their veiling, they are saying they are submitting to their head which is man and Christ and God. Some women have the veiling on but they have not submitted to that way. I have heard of those who are ruling the household. That is out of God's order.

7) We need a Church where each has a proper attitude toward raising children. We are in day where authorities will punish parents if they punish their children at times because they say it is cruelty to the child, when parents mean to help their children to walk straightly. The Scripture says that the rod needs to be used at times and it will not kill the child but it will help them to go to do right. There needs to be a proper training period in the home.

8) There needs to be a proper Scriptural Church discipline. I did say that.

9) There needs to be a good relationship between the older and the middle aged and the young folks.

10) A church needs to have a faithful teaching program. I am thankful that as of today we had the privilege as a church group to have our own school program. That is a real blessing we should be thankful for. We do not know how long that will be. We should

be thankful we have the privilege of being at Numidia Bible School. I believe that if I would ask for raised hands here today, “How many families here have been touched by Numidia Bible School,” a good many hands would go up. I will not do that. There are a number here that were at Bible school when my wife and I were there. We were there for sixteen years and I said we learned to know the cream of the crop, so to speak. Most of them were there because they wanted to be there. I was glad for that. Some were there because they did not want to be there but their parents said they must be.

I am thankful for what we see in the Church today. We are not perfect. No, we make some mistakes at times but by God’s grace we want to stand for that which is right and good in every area of life so that we might be the means of blessing to those who are following in our steps and that they too might enjoy the privileges and future glory which we are experiencing. We would have a picture in the last couple of chapters in Revelation that briefly speak of this. I will not read much here. First of all, in Revelation 20, we have a picture of the final judgment. Then, in Revelation 21 we have a picture

of the new heaven where there will be “no more sea” (verse 1) and where the tabernacle of God will be with men (Revelation 21:3). The abominable and the unjust will be outside. The new Jerusalem is described.

In chapter 22, we have the tree of life pictured again which we saw in Genesis. They were not permitted to touch the tree of life or eat of it in that day, but here the tree of life will again be seen. It will have a full life there. Verses 6–10 shows the importance of the book which is being written, the names of every one of us in our life in that book — that book of life, being written, We will be judged according to what is in that book in that day. Then, it refers in verses 11–15, to the day of grace, the last day of time when the final invitation and the final warning is given. I will read those last couple of verses from 16 to the end of the chapter 22. “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. (17) And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (18) For I testify unto every man that heareth the words

of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: (19) And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy

city, and from the things which are written in this book. (20) He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (21) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” May the Lord add His blessing.

Scripture References

	1 Samuel	3:16, 17	108	3:1	98
2:30	95, 101, 103		Luke	4:3	98
	Job	18:8	96	Hebrews	
1:8	99		John	9:28	108
1:10	99	1:12	102	13:5	103
	Psalms	15:16	104	1 Peter	
26:12	100		Romans	4:17	106
139:14	95	5:1	103	2 Peter	
	Proverbs	12:2	104	3:9	108
29:18	93		1 Corinthians	Revelation	
	Isaiah	10:13	99, 103	21:1	110
6:1	102	11:1–16	104	21:3	110
	Amos		Colossians	22:6–10	110
3:3	105	1:16	95	22:11–15	110
	Malachi		2 Timothy	22:16–21	110

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From a message by LaRay Martin

Sunday, April 17, 2005

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From a message by H. Lynn Martin

Sunday, August 29, 2004

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My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

— Hosea 4:6

Book Reprint
A Talk With Church Members

A TALK

WITH

CHURCH MEMBERS.

BY

DANIEL KAUFFMAN.

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that
needeth not to be ashamed.”

2 Timothy 2:15

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1900.

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MENNONITE BOOK AND TRACT SOCIETY

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1907

TO OUR DEPARTED BROTHER

JOHN S. COFFMAN.

Whom the Lord called home to his, reward, through whose labors I was
led to accept my Saviour, and whose memory is still cherished by the
many who were encouraged to a noble Christian life through the influ-
ence of his teaching and example. . .

THIS VOLUME IS
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

It is now over a year since the first edition of this book was exhausted. Owing to repeated demands for more copies, and believing that it will be upbuilding to the Church and glorifying to God to keep these “Talks” alive in our homes by means of the printed page, we publish this second edition.

When we wrote J. S. Shoemaker, the former publisher of this book, for permission to get out a new edition., he replied, “I have no objections whatever but would encourage the Mennonite Book and Tract Society to do so, because it is a book that should be in the hands

of every member of the church.”

If there is any one thing above another that will make the church a mighty power in the hands of God for the pulling down of the strongholds of sin in the world, we believe it is a *bold* and *consistent* stand for Truth on the part of every church member. This book will certainly help in that direction. We, therefore, most gladly lend our efforts to send this volume to every home where it will receive a welcome.

Trusting that God’s blessing may go with these messages, we send forth this Revised and Enlarged Edition of “A Talk with Church Members” for our careful reading and prayerful consideration.

THE PUBLISHERS.

PREFACE.

This little volume was prepared as a companion to "MANUAL OF BIBLE DOCTRINES." [now superceded by DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE (published by Herald Press)] The theme of the former volume is DOCTRINE; of the one before you, PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIFE. The former volume was prepared with a view to calling attention to those doctrines most clearly taught in God's word, and setting forth the necessity of accepting them. The present volume aims to set forth Christian duty as applied to daily life, with the hope that the thoughts herein presented may be considered prayerfully in the light of God's word.

The thoughts herein presented are addressed to "church members," because church membership implies separation from the world, and a desire to walk in the ways of God. The implied difference between those who unite with the church and those who do

not, is this: the first class recognizes duty, and tries to follow its path; the second recognizes duty, but counts Christian duty secondary to following "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." (1 John 2:15,16)

Recognizing that a different line of thought is needed to reach each class, we have chosen to address ourselves to one class exclusively.

The author acknowledges his indebtedness to our dearly beloved and lamented brother, J. S. Coffman, for assistance rendered during the preparation of this volume, and to J. S. Shoemaker, who assumed the responsibility of publication, and whose assistance otherwise deserves special recognition.

With gratitude toward all-wise Father for His sustaining grace during the preparation of this volume, and with the hope that the same kind spirit with which the former volume was received may mark the reception of the present one, we submit this for the

perusal of the reading public.

Persecution tempers Evangelism

Covetousness/Affluence/Materialism skews Evangelism and we lose our moorings. We either lose sight of evangelism or we become so engrossed that we gradually cease to preach or require discipleship/crossbearing and the necessity of being strangers and pilgrims in both our clothing and our walk of life/lifestyle.

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