



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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Why We Want to Produce Singing Children

Matthew 21:12–17 says, “And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, (13) And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. (14) And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. (15)

And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, (16) And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? (17) And he left them, and went out of the city into

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Bethany; and he lodged there.”

In this account we notice Jesus coming into the Temple. Immediately prior to this we notice the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the activity that surrounded that. Here, He moves from that experience on into the Temple and there He found those gathered together, some for worship, but others with wrong motives. He went about to correct the matter and in His way bring judgment to the matter. He

spoke words of condemnation on one hand, and yet I see in this words of commendation on the other hand, as we move further through verse 16 and see what He has to say about a certain group that is there, a certain group of children.

As we think of this account and especially verses 15 and 16, we notice how the chief priests and scribes saw two things. They saw the wonderful things that Jesus did. They also saw chil-

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dren. It was more than children that they saw, but they heard the children and they heard what the children had to say. They were displeased because of these two things — the workings of God in miracles and the working of God in these children. I think they were not satisfied and were very unhappy with what they heard. God had a word for them. Jesus had a word for them. He also had a word of commendation not to them, but as it relates to the children and how they were conducting themselves at this particular time.

Then, Jesus left them. He left them to think about these things and hopefully be moved by these things. We want to think about some of the things that are mentioned here, and as we think and meditate upon them to be moved and encouraged in the right way to the honour and glory of God.

As we think of the account here, especially in verses 15 and 16, this Gospel is the only one that records the account of the children and their activity here in the Temple. Matthew notices the children it seems. He speaks about the children at various occasions. In Matthew 2, we see how that he, by divine inspiration, records the account of Herod and his steps or his endeavours to get rid of the chil-

dren, to kill the children, destroy them, those who were “two years old and under” (Matthew 2:16). Matthew 14:21 gives the account of “five thousand men, beside women and children.” Matthew 15, the chapter that follows, again gives the account of a large assembly, “four thousand men, beside women and children” (Matthew 15:38). Again, Matthew refers to the children.

In Matthew 19:13, 14 again we read of children, little children being brought to Jesus and Jesus taking a definite interest in them. The disciples were minded to rebuke the mothers for bothering Jesus with their children. However, Jesus loved the children. He wanted them to be with them. He paid attention to them and He laid His hands upon them and blessed them. At other times too, we notice His interest in the children. Again, here in Matthew 21, the children are in focus and Jesus pays attention to them. He has an interest in them.

We want to think about children. We want to think about singing children. Jesus highlighted on the praise of these little children. As we think of children, and the children among us, and this thought of singing children, does it not touch a tender spot in our heart? Singing children. I think that the songs of

singing children are precious to God. I think the songs of singing children are precious to the redeemed as well, and have always been that way and will continue to be that way.

1) *Why do we want to produce singing children?* Why should we be interested in this matter of singing children? 1) *It is because of the praise that their praise brings to God.* It is here. We see it. It seems that the scribes and Pharisees were disturbed by their praise. They did not see it as praise. They saw it as a hindrance, as something that should not be there in the Temple. However, Jesus was not afraid. He was not ashamed to identify with this praise.

When the question was raised, “Hearest thou what these say?” Jesus said, “Yea” (verse 16). “Yea, I hear them. Yea, I hear them.” I think that is in essence what He is saying. He said more than that, but He said “Yes, I hear them.” God notices this praise — this praise that children make, the noise, the music of children. God notices and accepts it. God hears and it is precious to Him. God hears the praise. He identifies with singing children. He loves to hear their praise. It is in order for us to make our children aware of that at times as we hear them sing, whether it is in the

worship service, or family worship in our homes, as they work and play, and they sing at various times. It is in order, to comment on their singing and let them know that you love to hear them sing. Also, more than that, God loves to hear them sing. God notices this kind of praise.

When we gather for worship, do we listen with interest? It is not the first time that I noticed in the assembly the singing of the children, and it was music to my ear. It was sweet music. The music and the strains of the children are music which belongs with our singing. Their involvement is important and it is praise. It blesses my heart because I know that it blesses God’s heart to hear the praise of the children among us. I think that all of our praise should have been, and was a blessing to God, but to think of the children in the light of the message. It is in order to remind our children of that. The Lord hears your praise. God hears their praise.

Further, we notice Jesus says, “Yea, I hear it” and “have ye never read?” “Did you never read, and do you not remember reading ‘Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?’” Jesus loves, God loves to hear the praise of children because out of the

mouths of babes and sucklings He has ordained (perfected) praise or, “thou hast perfected praise.” It is a quote from Psalm 8:2.

What is this suggesting? Perhaps this is suggesting that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfect praise. Certainly, as we think of the praise and the songs of children, it does come from sincere innocent lips and hearts, does it not? Their hearts are not entertaining malice, bitterness, hypocrisy and anxieties, but so freely the praise can come. It is uttered and God hears it and it is perfect praise to Him.

Sometimes our praise comes to Him, but mingled with that praise there are anxieties in our heart. There may even be seeds of bitterness in our heart, unknown to others but they are there. There may be seeds of malice. There may be some hypocrisy there hidden, and we may be uttering a praise and the words coming from our lips may sound good and the commitments sound right, but in our heart it is not the way it is. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings — little children can engage in bringing praise that is perfect. It is free from that kind of thing. Certainly in that respect it is perfect praise.

Perhaps this phrase may also suggest that without this particular phase of praise, God’s praise and honour would not be complete. “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise” (Matthew 21:16). There is an element, as we think of the praise that ascends to heaven, and as it arises to heaven we have the praise of adults, the praise of the redeemed. However, it would not be complete yet apart from the praise of little ones, who “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.” “Thou hast completed praise. Thou hast complete praise.” Heaven’s praise would be missing if the infant voices would not be also blending with this praise of the redeemed. I think something would be missing. “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.” “Thou hast completed thoroughly.” “Thy praise is completed thoroughly.” “Thy praise is completely joined.” It is brought to completion. Therefore, in this way, God is praised through the praise and the songs of children.

2) *We are interested in this matter because God has ordained it to be this way.* God had ordained that children should sing, “out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected

praise.” In Psalm 8:2 we have that thought of the word ordained, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.” In the light of the thought of praise and perfected praise, God has ordained and planned it to be this way. There is something that is within children that will make them sing. God has planted that there. Therefore, we are interested in noticing that and I think further in helping that along so that it can continue to be to the honour and glory of God.

3) *We are interested in singing children because of the testimony that it is to others.* There is a testimony that the praise of children can be to others. There were many who were gathered in the Temple. We read of some who were there. We read of the money changers, and those who were patronizing the money changers and buying from them. There were also the scribes and Pharisees. The chief priests were there. There were also others who gathered and moved through the courts and who could hear the testimony that was coming from the lips of these children. It was a testimony of simple faith, trust, joy, and assurance.

Oh, we hear that, do we not, as

we take time to stop and listen to children when they sing. There is the simple faith that they can identify with, in their songs, and trust, joy, and assurance. These are thoughts that they might not even be aware of, or at least, and lofty thoughts at times. They may not really be able to identify with them personally but nevertheless their thoughts that they have come to learn of, they have heard others sing and it has become a part of their language and their song.

We should not stop them in their singing. We should let them sing and allow those songs to become a part of them because there will come a time when they will begin to understand the lofty thoughts of those songs and it will be already planted in them and in a new way. The light will dawn and they will understand and will thank God for those songs anew. Therefore, it is good for them to have that as a part of their frame of reference even though they may be innocent.

On the other hand there are simple songs that can yet be very precious to them and are good for us to hear as well. “Jesus loves me this I know, For the Bible tells me so.” It is a reminder. It is something children can identify with and need to identify with. It comes as a reminder to us, as

well as the older we grow, that Jesus loves us and He cares for us. The Bible assures us of that again and again. That is the testimony that this can be to others.

I remember being in a store and I heard the strains, or the refrains coming from the lips of a child of this song, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." I heard this song before I saw where it was coming from. I knew it was coming from the other aisle, so I made my way around to the other aisle and the next aisle and there I saw the child. There, I saw the mother of the child. There was a testimony that was coming from that child that would not have come from the mother of the child.

Really, I would not have guessed that really this child would have known songs like this, but the child did. The mother, of course, squirmed a bit and was a bit embarrassed and tried to hush the tone and try to tell the child to stop, but the child was not minded to stop. The child liked the song and continued to sing the song. I remember seeing an elderly lady come up and tap the little child on her hand and say, "God bless you." Her heart was blessed. There was a testimony that went forth.

Sometimes perhaps we can identify with the songs of chil-

dren at such places. We may also react a bit like that lady reacted, "Hush, don't sing so loud. You do not need to sing so loud." Yes, maybe a child can learn when to sing and when not to sing and how to sing, you know the proper time to sing. Yet, to sing at such a time, oh it is God's way of sending out a message that can give testimony for Him. While we may tend to hush and maybe even blush, we need not blush. No, we can thank God that here His message can go forth and move on.

4) *We want to produce singing children because of the inspiration that their song can bring to others.* It is not only the testimony that it is to others but also the inspiration that it can be to others, like that grandmother who I believed was inspired and touched by that little one's song. Likewise, it can be with us as well and others. I would like to think that there were some in the Temple who loved to hear the children sing. Although what we have recorded here is the record and testimony of those who did not appreciate the song. Nevertheless, I would like to think that there were some there who were sitting maybe by this post or that pillar and they heard and they assented, "Ah," and they went. There ascended, as a result

of that, a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the simple faith of these children.

Their hearts could have been bleeding as they saw the activity over by the side before Jesus came in and overturned those tables, as He saw individuals and as they saw maybe the scribes and the Pharisees in their pomp and show come in with their hearts filled with hypocrisy. Yet, these little children were able to work a way into their heart. There was inspiration there and they could take courage.

How often has it been when maybe we ourselves have taken courage anew as we listen to our children sing? Sometimes those songs come at very prime times in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the day while we think, and do not even think about singing, they think of singing. Their song proves to be a blessing to us and it is what we need to hear. It comes at the prime time. Maybe we are engaged in study in preparation for work that is before and then comes a strain from the room over, from another room or maybe from outside and it is the song of children again singing. It comes at the right time to encourage us and we receive inspiration.

Maybe it is the neighbours who hear the children sing. I do

not know how close your neighbours are. I know some of you have close neighbours and the children's songs may even float across the way to them, and I think that it can be an inspiration to them as well. Maybe it is as we go, move out into, or engage in service related activities and our children go along. Maybe it is at a rest home. Various times I have been impressed anew as I watched the response of those who are listening to our song and to our testimony of praise to our Lord and Saviour, how they will be listening and their hearts will be beating maybe with the song. You will see their eyes, and their face lighting up as they behold. Their attention is drawn, it seems, to little ones and their interests and their involvement, and maybe they do not know all the words and they stand there with their mouths open and maybe humming more than they are uttering words, but it is an inspiration to them. Maybe their book is held upside down, but yet they are involving themselves and it works its way into their hearts. There is an inspiration that they receive as they listen to the praise of children.

5) We are interested in singing children and continue to encourage such because of the contribution that they make and their

involvement in good singing in church life. I mentioned that before, but I mention it again. Something would seem to be missing if the little voices should be absent from our worship assemblies. I am aware of situations, at least, where you will have families coming in the door in the fellowship room behind the auditorium and the children go one way and the parents find a way into the assembly. The children have their service and the grownups have their service, so to speak, but there is something missing.

Children should always feel welcome in our assemblies and for more than one reason. We want them with us. We want them blending their voices with us, and in our minds as we consider the aspect of perfected praise why it contributes to the praise and the singing. We want them. We want them to be present and we listen for their praise, do we not? We thank God again and again for singing children.

II) *We want to consider how we might help our children become singing children.* I do not have all the answers and I do not feel we have arrived as we think of our own family, but we encourage one another together in this way. We want to think about a few ways in which we

can encourage singing children. 1) *We encourage singing children when we enjoy singing ourselves.* When we enjoy singing ourselves, fathers and mothers, big brother, big sister, grandparents, school teachers — it can touch all of us — those that children are looking up to. If they notice that we enjoy singing ourselves I think it will help them to enjoy singing too.

We enjoy singing. Our children should hear us sing. Our children should detect that we like it and that it is a part of us. Our children should observe that we put our best into it even if we cannot sing. We still have an interest in it and we like it. We enjoy it. Sometimes I hear people say that they cannot sing, but I think sometimes maybe we give up too easily. Maybe we are a bit too hard on ourselves. Maybe we mean that we cannot sing every note perfectly. I do not think that our children will notice that, whether we sing the notes perfectly or not. They will be more impressed with the fact whether we can or sing or not. Whether we sing a tune or not, whether we enjoy it or not, that is what will catch. It does not have to be that every refrain, or every strain is on tune.

No, we are singing because of a tone that has been set to tune in

our heart by the grace of God. Christ and God look for a song in our heart. When there is a song in our heart there will be an expression outwardly too, of that song. We will identify at times with singing and in singing because we enjoy singing. We sing the song that belongs with the redeemed.

2) *We not only enjoy singing ourselves but we will help our children become singing children when we believe that our children should enjoy it too.* We enjoy it and then we believe that our children should enjoy it too. Therefore, we sing with them. We not only sing, but we sing with them, and there are opportunities provided for that. In family worship we sing together. Around the table, we may sing together at meal time. As we travel, we sing together. At times, maybe we let them sing. We thank God for the praise that comes from their lips and their hearts, but we sing with them. That encourages them and helps them also. It is a way of helping them to enjoy this singing as well.

That begins very early in life. We sing to them probably first of all. Then, after a while they sing to us. Maybe it is not the whole song but only a note here or there and maybe it is on a monotone.

Maybe they never move off of that monotone. Maybe they are growing bigger and they are bigger still and they still in that monotone. Well, we help them to sing and work with them in that. There are others that pick up a tune very quickly. There are various abilities among us. We do not become discouraged in that neither do we give up quickly. We keep working and encouraging to sing and to do their best in the light of their ability that God has given.

Nevertheless, we sing and we sing with them. We provide times of opportunities for singing and in that we expect wholehearted participation. We expect them to sing to the best of their abilities. There are times when it is right to emphasize posture — the right kind of posture — how to hold a book, clear pronunciation and harmony — to pay attention to that. We do not pay attention to that always or our children will develop a distaste perhaps for singing. However, there are times when it is right to encourage them, and to help them develop the gift and the abilities that God has given them for His honour and for His glory in this way.

Good singing in our homes will definitely make a good contribution to good singing in

church life too, will it not? I think it tells in church life, and in congregational singing. Where there is good congregational singing it is a good indication that there is some work being done at home and in our schools too. I would commend you for that. We want good singing, where people like to sing. It says something that there is some work being done at home. We want to continue to encourage that and keep on in that good work.

3) *We help our children become singing children by giving direction to their music interests.* I hinted already that some direction must be given as they sing, but I would like to further develop that. We give direction to their music interests. We have children who have learned to sing and they enjoy singing. Now, we need to give some direction to that kind of singing lest it move in a wrong direction. The Lord's desire is that they would sing and that they would enjoy singing, but it is a responsibility given to us as parents to help them sing in such a way that they can abound to the honour and to the glory of God.

I would like to think that these children had singing parents who sang in the Temple. They had parents who loved to sing. They

had parents who taught them how to sing. Further, they likely had parents who gave some direction to their music interests so that when they were away from home they still could sing the right songs and they sang the kind of song that brought praise to God. We would desire that too. Finally, the real test as to how successful we have been in these matters is to what our children appreciate, and finally come to like themselves, and identify with when they are away from our presence.

We give direction to singing and the developing interests in our children. We give direction to their music interests and their musical inclinations. We can do this as we memorize songs together. It gives a direction to their music interests. The songs that are instilled in our children, in their youth, gives them a frame of reference. It is that kind of song that they will very likely appreciate when they leave home and when they establish homes of their own. It very definitely gives a sense of direction to them. It is a frame of reference. Therefore, we select the right kind of songs and songs that will help to direct them and will speak to them and can be a blessing to them.

We cannot memorize them all,

but we do a service to our children and to ourselves, as parents too as well, if we can help them commit to memory good songs, songs that will help them go right.

There will be times when we will need to give direction to the way in which they sing and some more than others. There are times, as we listen to our children sing, when we will detect a spirit that is not so good. It may be the way in which they sing the beat of a song and how they sing it. There is the upbeat as well as maybe the added slurs to the song and it does not sound quite right. Really, we know it will not lead in the right direction. Therefore, we give a sense of direction and we say "Now, way a minute. Slow down." Or, "Now wait a minute. Pronounce the words as they ought to be pronounced."

I remember some time ago, I visited Bible school and there were some young brethren singing. I was singing with them. I enjoyed that. I sang a certain song and they went on to another song and it seemed like each song became a little worse and there were some unnecessary slurs. It had some drawls to it. It sounded a little, "hillbillyish." It did not really fit. I was not sure what to do, but I thought I will

stop. We got to the end of this one song and I said, "Young men, I want to tell you something. I think we should do differently. Those slurs they do not sound right. We do not sing like that in our worship assemblies, do we? It will not help you appreciate the right kind of singing. It will not bring you out right."

I saw a few smiles developing. I said, "Do you know what I mean?" Then, I sang one of the phrases which came out so strongly. "Let the light of the lighthouse shine on me," how they sang it. You know the others ones . . . It seemed like the light began to dawn. Finally, one of them said, "You know a little bit like such and such." It was a singing group. I thought about it. I was not familiar with too many singing groups like that but I know they are around. It shows what can happen. We sing. We develop interests and somewhat tailor our singing after what we hear. That is what was happening there.

We need to regulate the diet, and what our children listen to, and make sure of the songs they sing. If it is a situation where there may be some recorded music that they listen to, we want the kind of music that finally will produce the right kind of interests. It will complement the kind

of singing that we want to preserve in church life. It is singing that comes from the heart that is not tainted with the slurs and all that this world has to offer, and that leads into a path where finally the beat appeals to the emotions but does not reach the heart. We need to be on our guard and give direction to that.

There is the other side, or another aspect. It may be the elite, or the professional touch in our singing when every word is pronounced so distinctly and so clearly and you know the voice, I guess they talk about culture, the vocal tones. They come out “perfectly” and with the right vibrancy and you move along and oh there is something about it. I enjoy listening to good singing. If it moves us away from appreciation for congregational singing and blending our voices together in this way, that kind of singing will lead us in the wrong direction. I am afraid before long we will not be satisfied with congregational singing, but we will want people to do the singing for us. Then, we are going back into a path that I remember we were delivered from.

Therefore, I think that it is a word of caution. Maybe we can become sloppy in our singing. We ought to be encouraging in our singing if it is worth singing,

it is worth singing right. Let us sing it correctly. Let us also remember that the devil can capitalize on some of those things too. We want to still have a song that comes from the heart to the honour and glory of God. God looketh upon the heart and He hears more than the perfect sounds. It is a song that comes from the heart.

We want to help our children develop the convictions along this line, so that there can be a song that will be preserved for the generations to come that God will be pleased to identify with. We can encourage our children in relation to their music interests and give some direction to it. As we make visits, as we move out into other homes, there are shut-ins to visit. There are shut-ins that would simply receive a lift, a boost, if we would sing a song or two for them as we are visiting. It is a healthy way of giving vent to some of these energies. We need to understand that we do not sing for the praise of men, to entertain, and of not exalting Christ and bringing praise to Christ. Finally, we lift hearts that need a lift and a boost in life. We can find a sense of fulfilment and it is a healthy. Therefore, we encourage in that way.

4) *As we think of how we might encourage singing children, we*

do so through perseverance. We must keep on keeping on. Employing the efforts that we have discussed will help our children develop in this good work. We must keep at it by the grace of God. It calls for periodic check. Maybe you will say, "I have missed it. Our children are grown. We have missed it." Well, there is another. Perhaps you have grandchildren. Again I think it is of interest for you to hear them sing, and to little by little, give them some direction and encouragement. Be the singing example yourself. Then also, encourage that kind of singing in them. Give the directions along the way that will be helpful. You can show an interest.

Maybe you say, "I do not even have a family. I am not even married." Again, I think your interest in singing and your example will be an example to the ones sitting beside you, the ones whom you influence day by day. You would be surprised how many little ones are looking up to you as well, and notice and will be encouraged by your life and by the encouragement you can give to them. Really, we say that children are the church of tomorrow. However, as we noticed they are a very definite part of the church of today.

Along with this, as I think of singing children and the interests of singing children, the interests that singing children develop today will be the music interests of the church tomorrow. That is a sobering thought too. Therefore, we are interested in giving direction in this matter. Singing children are the spark of our homes and churches. They dare not be neglected. Rather, they must be encouraged in a good way, not only for what it means when our children are growing up, to God, but also because of how it will serve our children when they leave. There comes a time when the singing children leave our tables, and our living rooms and go out and establish homes of their own, or they need to leave for the work place. It is the songs of youth that will help to direct them then as they move out and will help to give them that which they need, the fortitude, so that they can be faithful there and as they labour for the Lord wherever He calls them.

Also, there is a sense, in which we always remain children. We learn the songs in our youth and we grow up, and yes, our children learn the songs in youth and they grow up and they leave our homes. However, our children are always children in one sense.

They are always our children. There are times when they come back home and I think it must be a blessed treat to be able to have the children come back home and gather there together around father and mother. Maybe it is only mother who is there anymore, but maybe it is both and they gather together and they spend some time singing. Singing what? Perhaps it is the songs they learned in their youth. These songs strike tender cords and continue to give the encouragement and lift those that need to be lifted and will see many

thrill of singing children.

I also like to think that singing children will also be a part of that number in the eternal world. The children who have learned to sing here and continue to identify with that song through life will be able to find a culmination to that song in the eternal world for all of God's children will sing and sing to the honour and glory of God. May the Lord use these reflections and meditations to encourage us as parents in our homes and us as families to the honour and glory of God to raise singing children.

Preparing Our Children to Contribute to Publication Needs

Our assignment is *Preparing Our Children to Contribute to Publication Needs*. This is an important aspect of what gets accomplished in the Christian day school. Habakkuk 2:1–4 says. “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. (2) And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. (3) For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait

for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. (4) Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”

The prophet here, was waiting for a revelation from God and the Lord told him that he was to write what he saw and to “make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.” This is the purpose of the publication work of the church and all publication interests. First of all, it is to have something to say that comes from the Lord. It needs to be something that is valid that is truth, and enduring. He was told

to write the vision. It was what God would give him. Likewise, we must have something to write.

Then, we must have an understanding as to how to do it. He says, “make it plain upon tables.” Set it down. I think He was talking about more than penmanship. He was talking about argument, logic, and communicating skills. “Make it plain upon tables,” it says, “that he may run that readeth it.” Whenever there is a message that is given (we are thinking about in written form) when it is not clear, it cannot produce the best response.

I know that folks at Rod and Staff Publishers have this little rule of thumb (you might call it) about writing and clarity in writing. They say that if there is something that can be misunderstood it will be misunderstood. We tend to look at it the other way around and say, “Well, people will understand this,” but if it can be misunderstood it will be misunderstood. God said, “Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables.” The purpose in making our writing clear and plain is so that the reader gets the message and responds. That is a good place for us to start from.

I am impressed with the thought that God has chosen to give His message to us in writing. He has chosen to use human

instrumentality to do that. There are some times in the Scripture that God did write. One of those occasions we note in the account in Daniel 5:5 of the hand that wrote on the wall. We believe that was divine demonstration of writing and man — Belshazzar could not read it, but Daniel could. Daniel interpreted it so that they could understand it. Another occasion when God wrote was the Ten Commandments. Moses took the tablets of stone and God wrote upon them.

What we have in our hands is the Word of God, but it has come to us through human instrumentality, through human writers. What a privilege it is to have God’s message to us in writing. What a privilege it is to be literate and able to read. I would not know what the percentage is, but there are many, many people in the world tonight who cannot read. If you would give them a Bible it would not mean anything to them because they cannot read. Well, we have both blessings.

Furthermore, with the opportunities that we have to learn to write and to read, and in this country with the freedom of press that we have, I believe that God is holding us responsible in a way that few people have ever

been responsible. We must use this opportunity and privilege to put into writing the kind of literature that will be a blessing to individuals spiritually from the little children on up to the adults.

How do we prepare our children to contribute to the publication needs of the church? How do we prepare them to share, to take part in this? I) I would like to mention some general considerations first. II) Some specific considerations. III) Some direct points in practical areas and applications. I) *Three general considerations.* 1) *First of all, in our homes and in our schools we must nurture spiritual life, convictions and interests.* In doing that we provide our children with a frame of reference that is necessary to contribute to Christian publication interests. Some of us, because of some of our schooling came to a place in life where we needed to do what we call sometimes “unlearning.” We needed to unlearn some things that became a part of our frame of reference because of public school exposure and some other things.

Nevertheless, we must nurture spiritual life, convictions and interests for the good our children. In doing this we provide them with a frame of reference. I am impressed getting into our

schools to see our children learning, for example, Old Testament chronology. They learn which prophets were contemporary with which kings and nations that were contemporary and the whole chronological picture that our children often get in their Bible study classes. This is very valuable. It becomes a part of their frame of reference, and their Biblical knowledge. We must do this for the good of the individual, each child himself. In doing that we provide them with a frame of reference out of which God can bring forth writing abilities and communicative skills.

2) *We must cultivate a love for the Church.* We recognize that there are a lot of people who would have writing talents and skills. However, those writing talents and skills are largely wasted as far as the cause of Christ is concerned because they have never been taught to love the Church and give their loyalty to it. It is true that a good, skillful writer may be able to find employment in a number of areas that would pay well, would pay much better than it pays to write for our Christians publications, but where do we want our children to make their contribution? I believe in cultivating a love for the Church. We prepare them. We prepare them to give.

3) *Furthermore, we must foster a service mentality.* The reasons we must do that, I have already hinted at because the writers in our church are not the highest paid individuals. There is a certain amount of sacrifice that goes into this. There is a lot of the writing that is done, we might say, on marginal time, where people are not being paid to write. They have been asked to write an article for one of the periodicals or sisters maybe writing stories for the children's papers and it is not something that they are necessarily being paid for. They do it on marginal time.

We do not look to be paid for everything we do, do we? There are remunerations and rewards that cannot be measured in dollars and cents. We foster a service mentality in the minds of our children, when we do not pay our children for everything that we do. We teach them to give, and to give, and to give. Doing that is a general consideration in preparing our children.

II) Let us notice some more specific considerations. 1) *We must develop diligence and self-discipline.* People get *The Testimony*. They open it up and read the articles or maybe *The Christian Example*. They come to the end of the article and there

is the writer's name. Many people tend to think to think, "These people are writers and they have an assignment so they pull out a sheet of paper and a pencil and they start writing and out comes these articles and that is simply how it is. I do not think there are many that are produced that way. Most of them are produced with hard work and many hours of labour.

I believe that it was Daniel Kauffman who was the editor of *The Gospel Herald* for a number of years who claimed that the first editorial he wrote, he wrote it, and rewrote it, and rewrote it and he had written it the twenty-fifth time until he was ready to submit it for publication. I never wrote any twenty-five times. Probably there were some that I needed to. Writers must develop diligence and self-discipline because these things do not simply or automatically come off the end of the pen. It takes a lot of hard work. Then, when you have submitted your manuscript sometimes it returns all marked up in red and arrows and all kinds of things. It would be easy to lay it aside, but no, the editor may say, "Do this and this and this." Therefore, you get back at it again.

Incidentally, it seems like often the introductory paragraph

or some sentence in the article that you were so pleased with the way you had it worded for some reason that is the one that has an “x” on. That can be discouraging. If we do not develop diligence and self-discipline, we are liable to give up.

After Baruch had written all those words that Jeremiah’s mouth (at the mouth of the Lord really) and the king [Jehudi] cut the pages out one by one and threw them in the fire [Jeremiah 36:23], what did they do? They went back and wrote it again, and they added many more words besides. They were not doing that simply for their health. It was a burden that they had and the direction of God.

2) *We must teach mental observation and alertness to details.* When we read through the Bible stories, one of the reasons why our children love to hear the Bible stories read or told is because of the picturesqueness of the Scriptures. God directed the writers of Scriptures to include the details that hold our attention and the details that help us to see what was happening. When you read the story of David and Goliath, you can nearly see that boy down there by the brook picking out the flat stones. When you read about how Goliath said “Am I a dog, that

thou comest to me with staves” (1 Samuel 17:43). You can about see what is happening.

To be an interesting writer we must learn to give attention to details. We must learn to see things. I am convinced that there are a lot of things that we could see in life but we do not because we are too busy. It takes time to observe. We must teach our children mental observation and alertness to details.

We are, at least in part, familiar with the Laura Ingalls Wilder’s books. I am not necessarily passing judgment one way or another on the books but we need to admit that Laura Ingalls had developed an ability to see details. One of the reasons she developed that ability was because she had a blind sister. It was her responsibility to try to help her sister understand what was happening and to see the things she could not see. That is one of the things that we do in good effective writing. We try to help the reader not only know what is happening, but to see what is happening — to picture it. Therefore, we must teach mental observation and alertness to details in order for that to happen.

3) *We must teach order and organization and analytical thinking.* The Gospel of Luke

1:1-4 tells how Luke took up this responsibility for the work of writing. “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, (2) Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; (3) It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, (4) That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.” Therefore, Luke attempted in an orderly way set down the things that had transpired since Jesus had come. We are glad and appreciate that order and organization. We must teach that.

4) *We must cultivate the tools of logic and argument.* 1 Peter 3:15 says we are to, “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in [us].” And the word *answer* there means “to make a defense.” It is like being in court and you are called upon to give your defense of your position. We are to be ready to give an answer to those who ask us, “Why do you believe the things that you do?” We cultivate the

tools of logic and argument, where we take our subject and endeavour to present it in a way that convinces the reader that this is truth. It is not something that simply happens. That takes diligence.

Incidentally, this is one area where studying algebra in our schools makes a contribution. Sometimes students ask, “Why do I need algebra? This is something I will never need in life.” Well, you may need it. One of the things that algebra does is teaches a child to think logically and systematically and to follow this equation through to the end making sure that every step was done exactly right. That is valuable. It is valuable for more than mathematics and that is a mental development that I believe is good and helps in other areas.

5) *We must foster dependence on the Word and the Holy Spirit.* This is another thing that is important. Depending on how teachers approach students in the commendations they give, and so forth, this makes a difference sometimes. We want to be careful that we do not lift our children up or that we lift ourselves up but that we recognize our dependence on the Word of God and upon the direction of the Holy Spirit. There are some people who might have been very

effective for the Lord if they would not have thought so much of their own abilities. We must teach dependence upon the Word and the Holy Spirit.

III) *Some specific practical ways that we can prepare our children to make a contribution.*

A) We will look first of all at what parents can do. Then, B) We will look at what teachers can do. I do not think this is a comprehensive list by any means. I trust that the list that we have to share here maybe will stimulate our thinking.

A) For parents, I believe, we can prepare our children to make a contribution to publication needs 1) by introducing them early to wholesome literature. We need to teach our children to like to read. I remember a brother in one of our churches some years ago who told me, "I simply do not enjoy reading." It was not that he could not read and it was not that he was not a successful person in business and financial and economic things, but I must say that brother was never really effective in devotions or prayer meeting topics or that type of thing. I think it all related to the fact that he did not like to read.

A person who does not like to read will not spend the time with the Word of God that he ought to. He will not be reading church

periodicals and publications like he ought to. While we recognize that we do need to draw some lines and make some limits for our children lest they are "book-worms," as we say, and you know every time we turn around they are sitting on a sofa or in a corner somewhere reading a book. It is not wrong for them to like to read that book but it wrong for us to let them do that all the time. We need to teach them to do some other things too besides liking to read. Nevertheless, it is a good sign when children have learned to appreciate reading, and have learned to enjoy it.

When we introduce children early to wholesome upbuilding literature, we are doing them a favour. We are laying a groundwork and developing an interest that is important. We can start this, first of all, by reading to them. I would like to encourage mothers and fathers too, but mother may have more time for this than fathers. Do not neglect that time that you need to spend in reading to your children. Make time for them. I always felt that in our home that I could put up with some toys on the floor and some things that were not all readed [readied] up if I knew that my wife was spending some time reading to the children. That was far more impor-

tant to me than having everything else in the house perfectly arranged.

It is an important thing. When we read to them early, and read the Bible stories, the church periodicals on their level, and put those early thoughts of God into their minds we are doing something for them that will never be taken away from them. It is planting something that God has promised will bring forth fruit, and teach them the rewards, as they get older of being able to read for themselves. It is interesting, is it not, to observe the first graders and how they are really not in school too long until they are beginning to read words. Quite soon they are putting a few words together and it is sentences. Usually that is quite exciting for them. I think that we should encourage and nurture that and do what we can to help that because it is so important.

As children get older we need to make sure that they are reading the church periodicals on their level and let us not forget our older young folks and reading in *The Testimony* and some of the heavier church periodicals and publications. Do not overlook Church history books. These are ways that we can introduce them to wholesome upbuilding literature. Much more could be said to

that.

2) *Parents can help their children to make a contribution in this area by teaching them to analyze, remember, and to recount what they read.* In one home when the parents gave the child a book to read they would give Johnny a certain book and would say, "Now Johnny when you are finished reading this book we will give you an opportunity to tell the rest of the family what this story is about." That was an oral book report. That is what it amounts to. Book reports are in order in our homes, not only in school.

That helps the child to read for breadth and understanding and not only for the sheer enjoyment or excitement of reading. It is possible to read through something and enjoy the story and go on and forget about it. However, if a book is worth reading it is worth remembering what you read. By telling the child before he starts that when you are finished we will give you time some evening to tell the rest of us what this book is about, and tell us the story. That can provide very wholesome exchange in our homes. There are other benefits to that. This develops a necessary skill of comprehension and grasping what they have read, when we are able to retell that is

one step. What we want ultimately is for our children to be able to read the Bible and tell them what it means. That is what we are looking at and what we are aiming for. These are early steps that we can take.

3) *We help them by helping them with their school assignments.* This is important. Many times, at least for many of our children, it seems like when they have a writing assignment the biggest thing is for them to come up with an idea as to what to write about. They could spend an evening doodling on their tablet and thinking about this and thinking about that and before we know it is bedtime and they really have not started their story yet. We can help them by giving them some ideas. Many times the teachers do. They will say “Here are five or six different ideas. You select one of these and write your assignment about this.” However, the teachers do not always do that or they are not always specific, and by providing some ideas we help them.

We need to take an interest in what they have read, reading through it ourselves and offering them some suggestions, we tell them “Now, here this paragraph is not clear. I do not know what you are saying here. Therefore, you think about that and make

some adjustments to that.” Offer them suggestions for improvement. The same could be true with poetry. Maybe they have all the words that need to be rhymed and they have their metre correct but they have awkward sentence structure and they have things backwards so they get the rhyming word at the right place. We need to help them see that this needs some more thought. Even though it rhymes and has rhythm does not mean it is a good poem.

Offer suggestions for improvement. Give them encouragement when the going gets tough. These are all things that we can do that help them with their school assignments and that help them to improve their writing skills. It shows them that we consider this assignment is important. We know about how it works. A father tells his child, “Well, I never enjoyed math in school and never could do it either. You are taking after me.” We know how inspiring that is for the child. At the same time when we show an interest in the writing assignment that tells our children that we consider writing assignments important, and that it is worth putting themselves into this. Give them encouragement when the going gets tough. Sometimes when the hours get

late and it seems like the thoughts do not come maybe give a few suggestions or a few ideas to help them to get it completed.

Helping our children with their assignments keeps the pressure on till the job gets done. Writing is hard work. It takes a lot of time and diligence. When we keep the pressure on to help them get the job done you will help bring relief and a sense of satisfaction. Take an interest in the finished product and in the teacher's comments. We should be asking the child, "Well, that writing assignment you had, what grade did you get? I would like to see what the teacher had to say about that. Bring the paper home." If they are allowed to, take time to look at it. We are not only interested in seeing it get done but we are also interested in seeing how the teacher thought that they did on that assignment. Take a sincere interest in the finished product.

4) *Parents can help prepare their children to make a contribution to publication needs by providing a living example of sacrifice for the work of the Lord and of loyalty to the church.* In Judges 5:14 we have the song of Barak. It looks like he is lifting up the tribe of Ephraim because of some their abilities, Ephraim and Zebulun. It says here, "Out

of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of Machir came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer." Does this mean that writers are born? That is what a lot of people would like to think. They would say I was not born a writer so there is not too much hope for me. Evidently, among the people of Zebulun some emphasis was placed on this subject. I think that is really where our writers come from. They come from homes where the emphasis has been placed on that. It is true that it appears like God has given some people some abilities that He has not necessarily given others. For example, there are some that have poetic abilities that others do not have, or to a degree that others do not have. Generally speaking though, it is the emphasis that we put on it, the training that is put into it, and the prayer and the labour that finally produces this.

5) *We can help our children by taking them to visit Mennonite publishing houses.* We can give them an opportunity to meet the common people who are writing. We can help them get acquainted with the publication board and its work. A number of our congregations have gone through a

series of topics where they had a board member in from the various boards of the church to explain what that board does. The publication board members have done that at various times. I think that helps our children to see a little bit what is going on behind the scenes. There is a lot going on behind the scenes that does not meet the eye.

For instance, if you are traveling in Kentucky, why not stop at Rod and Staff publishing. They are glad to take visitors through the publishing house and show various stages from the editorial department, to the typesetting, to the camera and layout, and the printing press and all of the binding equipment. They will show you through the whole thing. It is very interesting. One of the things that it always does for me is it helps me to appreciate it all over again how we get this literature in our homes month after month. There is a lot of work that goes into it so that we can have this spiritual help and encouragement in written form. Take your children to visit Rod and Staff or maybe Grace Press or one of those places and give them an opportunity to get acquainted with the folks that are working there.

B) *Some helps for teachers.* There is some overlap in what we

will be looking at here. Teachers get an opportunity to do some of these things from a little bit of a different angle than what the parents do. 1) *Teach appreciation for the best in Christian literature and poetry, and the sacrifice that was made to bring it to us.* This is a help. Rod and Staff several years ago published a book on poetry especially for use in our schools for memorization. It is a very good book. It has a very good selection of poetry. Let us teach appreciation for this.

I would like to encourage teachers, do not overlook poetry that we have in our church hymn books. I appreciated very much what some brethren will do in the devotions by reading the poetry of a hymn. In some cases the author has taken one of the psalms and versified it. He adjusted the wording enough so that he could put rhyme and rhythm to it. That is very interesting that whole process. Hebrew poetry does not have rhyme and rhythm as we know it. Rather, Hebrew poetry has parallelism of thought. There are thoughts that are parallel or are contrasting. The way Hebrew poetry is written we look at the thought that it contains. That is where the inspiration is found.

I am not saying that in that poetry as we know it that the

thoughts are not important. Rather, when they are set into rhyme and rhythm, it has a little different effect upon us. Recently, I was thinking about that (I will drop this as a thought aside from my topic). I was impressed with this thought. Why did Hebrew poetry not have rhyme and rhythm? Was there some purpose that God had in making Hebrew poetry that way? I believe that He did. I think that one of the reasons that Hebrew poetry is that way is because God looked down through the years and saw all the people that someday would have His Word. I think we know that when we try and take a poem that has rhyme and rhythm and translate it from German into English it never quite lives. It is difficult to do that. I think that this is one of the reasons why God made Hebrew poetry the way He did, because Hebrew poetry can be translated into any language and it lives. It is because the thoughts can be put into another language. It is all there, and it is not cumbered by rhyming words and rhythm.

Well, that is beside the point, but we teach our children an appreciation for the best in Christian literature, and the sacrifice that was made to bring it to us. It is good to give some stories about writers and some of the

backgrounds of some of the hymns to help us understand what the struggles were and the sacrifices that were a part of the background there.

2) *Teachers can help children in this area by giving composition the emphasis it deserves in our schools.* I appreciate the emphasis that composition has in Rod and Staff material. In the English Revision composition gained an even more prominent place. That is important because we learn by doing. We learn composition skills by studying good compositions and by practice. Therefore, give your children a variety of assignments — story writing, essays, writing descriptions, writing explanations, outlining, poetry.

One of the things I have found very interesting with our school children is they are given an assignment to explain step by step to do a certain thing. Girls may want to explain step by step how to bake bread, or how to make a pie. The boys may explain a variety of things that boys are interested in. They need to analyze this whole thing and step by step explain how you do it so that if someone wanted to do that same thing they could take those instructions and come up with a finished product. That is a good writing exercise. I think the

children often enjoy that maybe more than some of the other writing assignments they get.

We need to teach children to outline. I remember in seventh grade my Social Studies teacher (I did not enjoy it at the time but I am so thankful now that he did this) often what he would tell us to do he would say, “Your assignment for the next class period is pages so and so to so and so and your assignment is to read that and outline it.” That was good exercise. I have been glad for that many times since. It was helpful.

3) *Another thing that school teachers can do is to place a good amount of emphasis on the school newspaper.* Keep this alive. Do not let it be a project that bogs down the last two months of the school term. What some of our school teachers do, they actually lay this thing out at the beginning of the year and throughout the year they are giving assignments to the students that will eventually find their way into the school newspaper, or will become the resource out of which they will draw for the school newspaper. Throughout the year they are working on this. I think that is a good thing to do. The school newspaper really gives practice in a lot of areas. It gives practice in writing articles

and reports. Arguments and debates are sometimes in the school newspaper, even poetry, charts and graphs. It also gives them an opportunity to do typing, copyediting, production, layout, and distribution. There are so many things that are practical as we think about Christian publication needs and what all gets involved in this.

While we are talking about that, we should not overlook artwork. We have been talking mostly about writing, but Christian publications need artwork also. It is important for our teachers. When we have a goal in mind, it helps us to be much more effective in our teaching. Maybe teachers could focus a little bit more on helping the children learn how to draw what could be used for illustrations or Christian periodicals.

One of the things that I would like to emphasize here is the importance of perspective in drawing. Our teachers should emphasize proper perspective. To draw something in perspective is to draw it the way it looks, not the way it is. For example, when you look at a building from the corner of the building the wall at the closest side and its corner may look a lot higher than that corner at the back. In reality they are exactly the same height.

It is perspective that makes that thing get smaller as you go back. Teaching perspective in drawing is teaching one of the things that is very foundational for good artwork. If something is drawn that may have a very nice picture of a bird or flower or something but if the house and if the other building or things on the picture are out of perspective it loses its value and its usability.

4) *Consider publication interests in your school trips.* This may affect school boards more than teachers but it is similar to an earlier point I gave. Our children at Brickerville have gone to Lebanon to a *Merchandizer* printing business there. The *Merchandizer* is like a weekly flyer that comes out to all the homes with advertisements. They take tours through the *Merchandiser* printing establishment. The students found it very interesting to observe that whole process. They have also been to Lancaster to visit the newspaper office there where the *Intelligencer Journal* is printed. Again, it is very interesting. It might be that Grace Press or something like that is open to take school trips. This helps to cultivate the interest of our children in these things.

5) *Emphasize letter writing.* You may think, “Well, what con-

tribution does that have to make to our subject?” Most of what gets published in our church periodicals is not letters. May I remind you that a sizeable portion of the New Testament is letters. A major portion of the New Testament is letters. When we read in *The Martyr’s Mirror* there are many, many letters. That is a part of the resource of written material that we have that is very valuable to us.

Letters have been a turning point in some people’s lives. I think that Onesimus is an example of this. When Paul wrote to Philemon and sent that letter, it appears like that was a turning point in Onesimus’ life. It is true that Onesimus had been converted. There were some obstacles that needed to be overcome. That letter was a help. I can give my own personal testimony that God has used other individuals by sending letters to me at a time when I needed them so much.

I remember one of those in particular was written by one of our busy bishops. He was on an airplane flying somewhere for an appointment or an assignment. He thought about me and wrote a letter to me while he was in the airplane. It meant so much to me. Some of us may never ever write anything that gets published, but you know if we write

a letter that helps to be a turning point in someone's life that would be much more important than seeing our name in print, would it not? It is much more important and maybe much more valuable.

6) *Teachers, do your best to keep your Bible classes inspirational.* It is a part of instilling our children's minds a love for the truth and a love for the Word of God. That is a frame of reference that we cannot do without.

I must conclude. I would like to remind you of some of the areas of need for you to keep in mind when we think about helping our children, teaching them, and the diligence and the effort that must go into this. Remember the continuing need for church periodicals and official church papers like *The Testimony* and outreach literature like the *Star of Hope* or *Living Waters* and tracts, Christian textbooks, Christian biography books Sunday school material, children's books, letters, hymns, and on and on. There is a great need. In every generation God will do some good things for us as we contribute to these needs.

We do not come to a place where we say, "Well, everything that ought to be written is written. Look at all that we have and we could simply recycle our

Sunday School books after seven years or fourteen years. It is all written. We can stop now." No, it is not. It is good for us to put down truth in our understanding in our day. Here are some of the areas where workers are needed and not all of them are writers. We do need writers, but we need editors, co-ordinators of the various projects, planners, outliners, idea people, copyeditors, artists, poets, typists, persons with layout skills, printers, mechanics, reviewers, distributors, representatives, and sales persons. There is a great area of need.

I am impressed to think about how many of our brethren and sisters today are actually contributing. It is a lot more than we think when you look at the broad picture of the publication needs of the church. I am glad to be part of a church group where this concept that we need to do the writing ourselves, that concept, has been revived. A number of years ago, in the Lancaster Conference the idea was promoted that the writing must be done by professional, trained people — professionals particularly. Therefore, the Lancaster Conference paid the bill for Herald Press, Mennonite Publishing House and the publishing house sold out the church. They did not print the truth. They succumbed to liberal

thinking. While Lancaster Conference was paying the bill, they were being undermined.

May God help us to see that there is a work for all of us to do

and to put ourselves to the work. Let us be doing what we can to instill this same burden in the hearts of our children.

Scripture References

	Judges	36:23	203	15:38	187
5:14		208	Daniel	19:13, 14	187
	1 Samuel	5:5		21:12-17	185
17:43		203	Habakkuk	21:16	188, 189
	Psalms	2:1-4			Luke
8:2		190	Matthew	1:1-4	204
	Jeremiah	2:16			1 Peter
		14:21		3:15	204

From the Previous Issue:

Nonresistance in Everyday Life

From a message by Delbert L. Eby

Waterloo Mennonite Church

May 18, 2003

Youth Book Reprint

Andrew Dunn: An Irish Story *continued*

Penance.

Father D. “Aye, I thought that was it; the matter is out now. You do not like the wholesome discipline of the Mother Church, and this is the real cause of your quarrel with her.”

Andrew. “Far from it, sir, for since I have read the Testament my outward conduct has been quite changed, so that, by the grace of God, I am no longer given up to different sins as I for-

merly was; but I want to know where you find it in the Word of God.”

Father D. “Have you not read what St. Paul says: ‘Deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus?’” (1 Corinthians 5:5).

Andrew. “St. Paul shows his meaning by what follows: ‘Therefore,’ he says, ‘put away from among yourselves that wicked person’ (1 Corinthians

5:13). From which it appears, first, that the priest is wrong when he takes upon himself what the apostle directs the society of Christians to do. Secondly, that when he causes the person to inflict punishment upon his own body he does what he should not do, because the order is not 'Make them do penance,' but 'Put such an one away from among you.'"

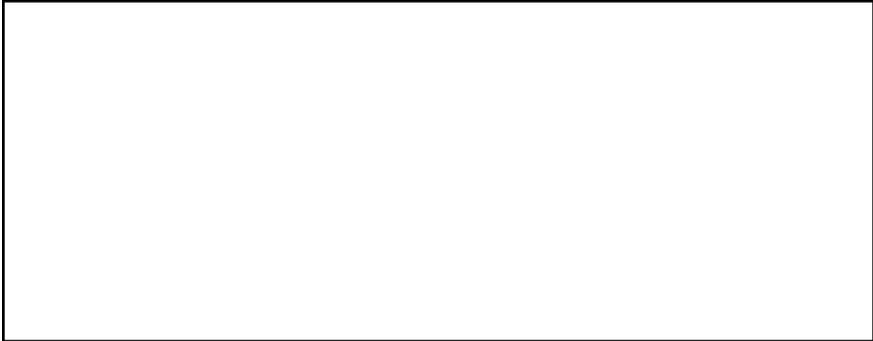
Father D. "Penance is a wholesome discipline, and answers an important end."

Andrew. "To the clergy it does, sir, because it keeps the people in awe of them, and makes them more afraid of the priest than they are of God Himself. And this is not saying more than the truth, for they are breaking God's commandments every day, but the priests commands must be done. I remember, sir, when I used to confess having been drunk I had a very light penance; but being led one day to go hear a sermon, which was not preached by a priest, You made me go round the chapel on my knees, and imposed many other hardships upon me which I was then simple enough to submit to. Now, sir, was it a greater sin to go hear a sermon than to get drunk? No; but doing the one looked like judging for myself, which you considered the greatest crime I could commit;

but, by the other, I only break one of God's commands, which did not effect the authority of the clergy.

Does it not appear, then, that penance is employed more as a matter of convenience for the clergy than for the purpose of preventing sin? And does it not serve rather to keep the people in awe of the priest than to keep them from offending God? You say penance of use; but how, sir? What are you able to effect by it? Can you keep your people from open and scandalous sins? You know you cannot. You can frighten them into the keeping of Lent, or observing a holy day, or you can keep them from praying with those whom you call heretics; but you cannot make them sober, or chaste, or honest. And as to your absolution, where is the need of it? If God forgives us, what occasion have we for the absolution of the priest? And if He does not forgive us, the priest's absolution cannot deliver from the punishment which our sins deserve."

Father D. "I tell you, man, as I told you before, you are in a very great darkness; for the Church has settled all this matter long before either you or I were born, and you may as well attempt to shake the foundation of the world as to overthrow the infallibility of the Church."



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