



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).

Volume 9, No. 5

Issue # 905

Pentecost Past and Present

Open your Bibles to Acts 2 and also you can open your hymnals to song #155 — *Come Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove*. This Hymn in *The Church Hymnal* has been a favourite of the people of God down through the years. It has a good message, I think, for us. The Sunday today, if you notice on the calendar today is Pentecost. Therefore, we would like to look at a message around Pentecost. I

have entitled the message *Pentecost Past and Present*. Let us stand together and sing #155.

That song certainly brings into focus the work of the Spirit in our lives. It is the Spirit that brings comfort from above. It is the Spirit that is our Guide. It is the Spirit that affects our thoughts. It is the Spirit that leads us to the Light of Truth. It is the Spirit that helps us to know which way to choose. It is the Spirit that

IN THIS ISSUE

Pentecost

Pentecost Past and Present

105

Book Reprint

Seven Laws of Teaching

122

plants fear in every heart. It is the Spirit that leads us to holiness. It is the Spirit that takes us to Christ the Living Way. It is the Spirit that leads us to God, our final rest.

We want to be where God is eternally. We want to be among the redeemed. We want to be in heaven its bliss to share. However, if we will be able to have that experience then we need to, as individuals today, be operating under the work of the

Spirit in our lives in a present way.

Acts 2 is a very familiar passage. It probably gets read often in our services. I would use Acts 2:1 as a text verse and also Acts 1:8. Those two we could put together. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in

Vol. 9 No. 5, Issue # 905. The Pulpit Exchange is a compilation of written sermons without commentary, published as often as possible, in the interests of promoting sound preaching in our conservative Anabaptist churches. All sermons have been transcribed and printed with permission. Names are removed so that we can focus on the message and content rather than on a certain speaker or style. (Names will be published in the next issue).

Messages have been selected on the basis of topic rather than the speaker. Messages have been selected from congregations or speakers within the Berea Amish Mennonite Fellowship, Conservative Mennonite Church of Ontario, Conservative Mennonite Churches of York and Adams Counties, PA., Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church, Mennonite Christian Fellowship, Nationwide Fellowship Churches, Ohio Wisler Mennonite, Washington-Franklin Mennonite Conference, and certain selected unaffiliated Amish Mennonite congregations.

We welcome submission of recorded sermons, topics, school meetings, writer's meetings, and special conferences by ministry and laity (where recording is permitted) provided permission has been obtained by the speaker for the recording. Submissions must have a title, the name of the speaker and the congregation responsible for recording (date would be helpful).

Published by Door of Peace Publications/Les Éditions «Porte-de-Paix» a conservative Amish Mennonite/Anabaptist publisher
c/o Keith G. White, P.O. Box 104, Blyth, Ontario Canada N0M 1H0

Cost per Issue \$4.95 + \$2.50 p& h Canada/ \$3.50 p& h USA

Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8 would give us the promise. Acts 2:1 would give us the fulfilment. We will look at some of that as we go along.

When we think of Pentecost our minds immediately go to this scene here in Acts 2. It has been often referred to that Acts 2, at Pentecost, the Spirit’s coming as the birthday of the Church. That also is in focus here. Pentecost in the Old Testament and in the Early Church was given a high place of priority. It always was in their experience. We will look at this here shortly, but the Old Testament feasts, of which Pentecost was a part, were given a high priority in the life of the Old Testament saints.

I thought also about the time in Acts 20:16 when it was Paul’s desire to be at Jerusalem for Pentecost. He wanted to be there for that special service. Today, in our settings, in our time, we place little significance on the day as such. Nevertheless, we do recognize that what happened on this day had an impact on God’s people. It set in motion an era of time known and understood as the Church age. We understand that. What has come into being on that day has set in motion the power, the vitality, and the life of

the Church.

Let us also keep in mind that Pentecost is only a value to us if we are experiencing a present relationship with God through the Spirit at work in our lives. Pentecost really does not mean anything, and Pentecost is really unable to affect our being if we are not experiencing the present reality of the work of Pentecost in life. Therefore, unless we are empowered and filled by the Spirit, we are nothing more than a form without life. That is all we are. In church life as we understand it today, there is a form that we go about that is so necessary but unless everything that comprises and makes up the church is empowered by the Spirit it is simply dead form. We rejoice in the Spirit’s work within.

Let us keep in mind the Church’s vitality, her strength, and her endurance is found right here in the work of the Spirit. No Spirit. No life. The third person of the Trinity is integral to the life of the Church and is integral to our Christian experience.

It is important to emphasize the place of the Spirit and to understand the present work of the Spirit in a manner that is Scriptural and in a way that is contrast to the charismatic movements and the Pentecostal

emphases of our time. It seems that the charismatic movement and maybe even some of the Pentecostal emphasis is not as strong in some respects as it had been in earlier years. However, I think we do understand there is still this charismatic emphasis afloat today, and is a wrong concept of what we see in Acts 2. It is a wrong concept, and we need to be clear in our understanding of that.

The day of Pentecost in the Scripture was outlined by God for a particular purpose. Before I look at the message proper I would like to look at a few more things in introduction as we think about Pentecost. *Let us remember that God never outlined a pattern without a goal or future fulfilment in view.* I was impressed with that as I was studying through this again. As God always moved in the Old Testament, He always had something in view in the things that He set in motion, in everything He did.

For example, let us go back to the Tabernacle furnishings and you could look at every one of the pieces of furniture, and all in the way in which they were made. It was all done with a goal in view. It was all done with a future fulfilment in place. In the middle of the Old Testament

feast then (I thought about the Old Testament feast) each pointed forward to a particular event. Every one of them did. It was not by accident that God set in motion the Old Testament feasts.

I am not sure if you have thought about the three particular feasts. I thought about that. There is the feast of Unleavened Bread (or the feast of Passover), the feast of Weeks, and the feast of Tabernacles. Those are the three that were most commonly mentioned.

Under those three a number of other feasts come into focus. The feast of Passover, the feast of Unleavened Bread, and the feast of First Fruits were happening in the first month, in April. The feast of Pentecost was the central one, sometimes referred to as the feast of weeks. It was the third one in June as we notice presently. Then, there was the feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the feast of Tabernacles, and the feast of Ingathering. Some of those are somewhat together. There are seven particularly, and yet there could be some others added to that. In October is when these feasts come into focus. These would be a subject of their own. I want to help us understand here that when God set in place the three holy convocations that brought into focus these

feasts, God had something more in mind than merely a feast itself at that particular point. We will look at some of that as we go along.

It is interesting also that Pentecost is the centre. Why is Pentecost the centre? It would be interesting to have some thoughts on that. Why is Pentecost the centre? Could we say it this way that for the Spirit to indwell a person and for a person to be taken home to God eternally and to enjoy eternal rest with God, the Spirit must be living and abiding within the heart of the child of God. There needs to be a relationship with Him. There needs to be a centre experience that is found through the work of the Spirit in our lives. Unless the Lord is central then there can be no relationship with Him.

I) Let us first of all look at Pentecost in the Past. Then, II) We will look at Pentecost presently. Pentecost in the past will be a bit of a review. 1) In Leviticus 23:15–22 we have *Pentecost outlined by God*. That would be my first point. Pentecost was outlined by God in Leviticus 23. It was outlined when it was to be observed. I will spend only a little time here.

This was in the centre of the feasts that we already talked about in verses 15 and 16. “And

ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: (16) Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.” It was fifty days following the crucifixion or as we would understand it, Good Friday outlined by God.

Exodus 23:16 refers to this also. It is sometimes called the feast of harvest. In Numbers 28:26 sometimes it is referred to as the day of first fruits. It was interesting in Deuteronomy it brought into the focus the fact that the feast of harvest along with Pentecost that they were to remember what they were saved from — from Egypt. It was supposed to be a new experience for them. It was something that they had never had before. Maybe Pentecost was new because it was a new beginning, a new life, a new relationship that they had not had with God before.

Leviticus also brings into focus how it was to be observed. The two loaves were in focus, the “fine flour . . . baked with leaven” (Leviticus 23:17). Again, I thought that was significant. Why were the loaves here “baked with leaven?” Why was it not

unleavened bread? Probably there would be some types in that. You and I today, as the people of God who have the indwelling of the Spirit of God are still living with the human nature, with the possibility of sin that needs to be surrendered and crucified to God.

There were the “seven lambs without blemish” (Leviticus 23:18). That is the number of perfection. There were “two rams,” and the “one kid” and the “two lambs” again in verse 19. You could read all of that. It was also a holy day when there was to be no work.

2) *Pentecost in the past was prophesied by the prophets.* In Joel 2:28, we have that verse also brought into focus in Acts 2:18 as was seen by the Old Testament prophets.

3) *It was also promised by Christ.* Jesus said in John 14:16, “If I go away I will send the . . . Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” Acts 1:8 says, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” It was prophesied by Christ when He was departing — “ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” It was then fulfilled in Acts 2.

Let us remember that God in all of His movings was preparing

a people to experience in daily life the Spirit’s presence. That is what He was doing. Today, we see the fulfilment of that. We enjoy the fulfilment of that. It is our responsibility to live in such a way that it gives expression of the Spirit of God within.

II) *Pentecost present.* We will spend the most of our time here. Is Pentecost a present experience for us? This would be a question for us to consider. Maybe another question would be, Is the Church still moving and expressing itself with the same dynamic as seen in the expressions of Acts 2?

Let us remember that the book of Acts was transitory from the old dispensation to the new dispensation, so there are some things that have somewhat changed. Let us also remember that what was witnessed in the beginning faded as you come to its conclusion in Acts 2. However, let us never forget that the same dynamic that moved the Church in the Early Church day is the same dynamic that moves the Church today. That has not changed. Maybe some of its expression has changed but the same empowerment is there. The Spirit’s presence is no less real today.

What results from the infilling of the Spirit? I would like to con-

sider that question as we look at the remainder of our discussion from Acts 2. What results from the infilling of the Spirit? What are the evidences of the Spirit's presence in my life personally? What are the evidences of the Spirit's presence as a group collectively? I think these two would all come into focus in Acts 2. I bring this as somewhat of my burden of the message. It is true that in our relationship to the work of God we often talk about God and His greatness and we talk about Jesus Christ and the One who has provided redemption for us.

However, the burden of my heart is that we are able to understand that there is a work of the Spirit which moves and empowers us. It enables us to relate to the work of Christ and to God in such a manner that is seen by a daily life. It gives expression of one who knows what it is to have the power of God through the Spirit at work within us. We need to ever remember that there must be a present reality of the Spirit's work within us if we truly will be people of God.

I will use the Word Pentecost in an acrostic to help us keep in mind the results of the infilling of the Spirit and what are the evidences of the Spirit's presence in my life. Therefore, we will not

go into the book of Acts in verse by verse form. However, some of these do somewhat fall together. We will move back and forth through it. I will not read this entire chapter. I think we are more familiar with the passage. Maybe we will begin at least the beginning of the movement and then touch on some things as we go. Read Acts 2:1-8.

Keep in mind verse 3 where it says, "and it sat upon each of them." Notice verse 4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Following verse 8 it gives a list of people which were in focus. Verse 11 says, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." That is significant. Today, when there are individuals who give emphasis on the tongues movement, the tongues movement here was not Peter and the apostles standing up and saying things which were not able to be understood.

Rather, we have in focus here that as they were sharing, God through the work of the Spirit transferred the message as it was shared, as I am sharing with you. If everyone in the audience knew a different language than I knew and would be preaching in, everyone in the audience heard it in their language. That is what was happening. That is all that

was in focus here. It says they heard them speak, “the wonderful works of God.” “And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this” (verse 12)? This had never happened before — something new was taking place.

Of course, there were the mockers in verse 13 who were not understanding and not even trying to understand. In verse 14 Peter stood up and shared the message that has brought into focus the core of the Gospel. He went back to the Old Testament. He moved through the Old Testament and brought them right face to face with the One whom they had nailed on the cross. The Gospel was yet, as it were, concealed in the Old Testament. Peter revealed it in his message in the New Testament era in Jesus Christ.

Verse 32 says, “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.” In verse 37 we see the outworking of this message and the response of the people.

What is the evidence of the Spirit’s presence in my life today? What is the evidence of the Spirit in your life? We ought to make this personal as we share. *The first letter in the word Pentecost is the letter “P.”* I suppose that maybe your mind goes

exactly to what I will share. What is the evidence of the Spirit’s presence within? *It is power.* That is what it is. What do we mean by spiritual power? I will simply use one word for each of the letters that I will look at. You could couple *spiritual* in front of each one of these.

We will maybe try and do that as we go along. Power — we are thinking about Spiritual power. What do we mean by spiritual power? As I was thinking about spiritual power, I raised this question in my own mind. What is power? Do we not say that power is strength or might? That is what power is. We have engines today which function in many ways and we say engines have a power rating. If we will buy any piece of equipment, probably one of the first things that we want to know is how much power does it have? They have a power rating.

How is power determined in an engine? We could probably have some discussion on that. There are a lot of things I do not even understand about engines. However, there are at least, a couple of things that are related to power in an engine and fuel injection would be one of the things. There is also the size of the pistons. There are the fuel pumps and all that go along with

that. You who are mechanics know far more than what I know, but some of these things determine power.

Remember, each is useless alone. You can have all the fuel in the world sitting out here in the parking lot and it is worthless. You can have an engine that has all the right components and has all the computer controls that put the right thing to it that it will work, but if you do not have any fuel to it, it is worthless.

You can have out here in the parking lot a pile of pistons and they are worthless unless they are put in something that makes them work right. Each are useless alone, but coupled together can accomplish the intended purpose. Likewise, as we think about spiritual power, what do we mean by spiritual power? We think about a connection to the source of strength which is both Christ and God. That is spiritual power. It is a connection to a source of strength. Christ and God are our connection, where we are able, in the midst of life's experiences, to have power to do what they would have us to do. We could say also that spiritual power is the dynamic that propels life. That is spiritual power. It is that which enables us to do what needs to be done in any given situation.

Maybe you have an assignment. What enables you to do it? Is it ingenuity? Maybe to some degree. However, if you will be effective for God, the ability upon which anything is able to be done is done by the power of God at work within. It is also true as it relates to personal victory. It is the dynamic that propels life. Remember, spiritual power is only possible if we cooperate with its requirements. It can never be experienced outside of that. As I said earlier, fuel by itself is worthless. Pistons, rings, gears, etc. are worthless by themselves.

Spiritual life is the same. Unless coupled with the will and purpose of God there is no life. There must be a coupling with the power of God. Spiritual power is never realized unless we cooperate with the confines of its operation. I would like to go back to Acts 1:8. It is interesting that spiritual power in focus here was found in the confines of its operation seen in Acts 1:8 and 1:4.

Do you remember with me, when Jesus ascended to the Father, what did He tell them to do in verse 4? He said that they were to, "wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me." In verse 8 what does it say? "But ye shall

receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” As we go down through these verses where do we find them? They were where God was. They were following the will of God. In Acts 2:2 it says that they were in the present will of God. They were in the house where they were sitting. They were where God was.

Spiritual power, the dynamic that propels life, let us keep in mind is not some tremendous show. Rather, it is witnessed by strength to pull consistently and to endure in testing. It is the dynamic that propels life and the apostles were where God was. If we cooperate with where God is, then there is power to do His will.

We have many examples in the Scripture including Peter and Paul, Joseph and Daniel. Joseph and Daniel yes, were Old Testament, and the Spirit was not given at that point yet. Nevertheless, let us keep in mind that every individual that ever did right always did right in connection with where the source of strength was. There must be a connection, the dynamic that propels life, spiritual power. Jesus said, “by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20). Spiritual power is the dynamic that propels life. We

will probably talk about that more.

2) The letter “E.” I wrote this down in my notes simply as *Enthusiasm*. The evidence of the Spirit’s presence within is enthusiasm. Now, maybe you say, “Well, can that not be taken too far? Probably. However, I would like to take you to Acts 2:14. I see Peter being enthused about what had happened. “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.”

I do not simply see Peter standing there mumbling along a bit about what all happened. Rather, Peter was enthused about what was taking place. His enthusiasm had caught on to those with whom he was sharing. Listen, brethren and sisters, when the Spirit of God works within our hearts, we ought to be a people who are enthused about the work of Jesus Christ, and excited about what He has done. The Spirit puts enthusiasm in the Christian experience.

I would raise this question. Are we excited about being a Christian? Do you ever talk about it? Do you ever witness and tell others about it? What people are enthused about is

what they talk about, is it not? What are you enthused about today? I take that challenge to myself. We get enthused about so many things that are related to time and sense. We get enthused about our work and we can spend hours talking about and trying to put things all together. However, are we enthused about being a Christian?

Acts 4:19 and 20 ought to be our motto. “But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. (20) For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” We cannot help but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

As I was studying my mind went to an illustration that brother Marion Hoover gave. I do not know if you remember the illustration or not? I remember giving this illustration here and maybe in another setting he gave the same illustration. An individual had gone to visit a person. He sat down to talk with him. He said that he tried to talk about spiritual things. He said, “I talked about the work of God. I talked about the Church. I talked about the Scriptures. And I could not get anything to happen.” “Then,” he said, “I changed my

method and I primed the pump with corn and hogs and did the old well ever come alive.” I suppose you can probably hear brother Marion say that.

Brethren and sisters, is it not true that what is within will come alive in our experience? Are we excited about being a Christian? Let us think about that. Enthusiasm — the passion for righteousness, the energy for service. What is inside will be evidenced by my enthusiasm for it. I do not think that means, brethren and sisters, that we ought not to be enthused about our work and haphazardly and “slip shod,” or carelessly go about things. Rather, can we not be enthused about our work and enthused about being a Christian at the same time? Can we? We need to be because as we labour in the time of sense we are here on a mission and may we labour in that call of duty.

3) The next one I would see in verse 40 is the letter “N.” I put this down as *nurture* — spiritual nurture.” One of evidences of the work of the Spirit is spiritual nurture. It is the willingness and ability to nurture faith. I am taking this from what it says about Peter, “And with many other words.” It does not say what Peter said. We have some of them recorded. However, appar-

ently Peter said a lot more than what was written down here.

Spiritual nurture is not accomplished in one confrontation but by a life-long process of “here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10, 13). It is as we go about our work, as we share together in visiting, as we gather for prayer meetings, for Sunday schools discussions, for the preaching services. The evidence of the Spirit within is seen by a willingness to nurture others in truth. It is not always maybe noticed by others, not always out front, but the Scripture says, “And with many other words.” We “testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”

Is not the work of the Spirit within an evidence of the Spirit within, with the many others words? We communicate as we go about our work. We share together in visiting. We are inspired one by another. We are helping each other to save ourselves from this untoward generation. Spiritual nurture ought to be a part of our lives.

4) *The next letter “T” is the thought of teachableness.* I take that from verse 41. “Then they that gladly received his word.” It is a work. It is an evidence of the work of the Spirit within. What characterizes spiritual teachable-

ness in our day? There are probably a number of things. I thought of a willingness to hear, and to evaluate what another says is certainly spiritual teachableness. We ought to be people who are open to be taught and not always say, “Well, that is his idea.” Let us be willing to listen. Let us be willing to be taught.

Right along with that, another characteristic of spiritual teachableness is an openness to be shown from the Word the way to life, and the way to live in life. When we are able to hear and to evaluate what another says, then we need to be as the Bereans were where they “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). If they are so, then we align ourselves with it. We are teachable. We are willing and ready to be directed by the Scriptures. We are open to be shown from the Word the way to life and the way to live in life.

Then, spiritual teachableness is also seen in the willingness to do what is according to truth. As you were reading the Word of God or maybe as someone was sharing a thought that you were ever impressed or suddenly riveted in your mind that “I ought to do something a little different about these things.” What do you do about that? We need a will-

ingness to do what is according to truth. Is that not the challenge to do what is according to truth?

5) The next one, the letter “E.” I wrote down two words here. I will look at one now and then another one in conclusion. *Enlightenment* is what I want to look at here. Spiritual enlightenment from verse 41, “gladly received.” It is the ability to see, the ability to discern, and the ability to understand issues. It is enlightenment to understand right from wrong. That is what I see here in relation to enlightenment. When we are facing issues or temptations the Holy Spirit guides us.

Another example is when one surrenders their will to God and when the Spirit moves in, the light turns on and the darkness flees. Truth comes alive and is made practical and applicable to one’s experience by the work of the Spirit. There is enlightenment that comes. Without the light of the Gospel, without the light of the Spirit we are really unable to understand the work, or able to understand its Gospel message.

I think about this many times. Individuals who are coming to an understanding, the Scriptures suddenly make sense. They have enlightenment because of the Spirit at work. Outside of that

“they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:4). Since, one is able to understand truth, there is an enlightenment that is found.

6) In the next area, the letter “C.” I look at this one as *commitment*. Another result of the Spirit at work within is commitment. We see this in verse 42, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Commitment is what I see in verse 42. I think we all recognize that it is surely the opposite of someone who is casual and indifferent.

Commitment is the test of any relationship. Keep in mind tests will always face every commitment. This is true whether it is a commitment to church, a commitment to a marriage relationship, or a business responsibility. Tests will always face every commitment. Spiritual commitment recognizes and is willing to endure at all costs.

As I thought about this, how many of you know what happened June 6, 1944. It was in D-day in Normandy, when there was a battle that was fought and it was the beginning of the German Army being driven out of France. That is an account that is heart rending to read and even to understand what all happened on that day. I discovered

in doing a little bit of looking at this that in the first twenty- four hours 250,000 men landed on shore, knowing that as they landed on shore they were to push the enemy out. I could not find out how many casualties there were. I am sure there are records of that, but in my quick search, I could not locate that.

The multitudes who landed on the shore, on the beach that morning knew that highly likely they would not be alive by evening. They knew that. It was a test of commitment. As I pondered that I raised two questions, “Does serving the Lord mean anything less to us today? Can it survive with anything less?” Of course, your mind and my mind goes back to our Anabaptist forefathers. They committed themselves to truth and they died for it.

Would you be willing to come to the front of the auditorium and be baptized for your faith knowing that highly likely if you went out the back door and your neighbour knew that you had now become an Anabaptist that you would likely die as a martyr? Would you do it? Would you be on the plane that lands to have given your life for a cause that is eternal? They gave their lives for a cause that was only for time. Are we giving our lives for a

cause that is eternal?

Spiritual commitment. Life today is so casual. Everything is fun and folly. Notice in verse 42 that there are four things that are significantly in focus which brings into focus this thought of commitment. It comprises in one statement with four things. It says, “they continued stedfastly.” They did not do this haphazardly. They did this understanding what all was involved and they surrendered their will to that which was truth.

Notice the four things: “They continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” There are four things that are significant here. Commitment involves these four. It involves a commitment to sound theology. That is what it involves. The apostles doctrine — there must be a commitment to sound theology. There must be a commitment to Biblical church life. There must also be a commitment to pure communion. Also, there must be a commitment to spiritual life. Those four things they understood and those four things they lived in.

Commitment to truth and to remain unmovable by the pressures of time and by the pressures of men will continue to require the dynamic of the

Spirit's presence within. It will always demand that. As it did then, so it is true today. Unless I have the dynamic of the Spirit's power and presence within then I am unable to understand what is true theology. I am unable to understand and sort through all the maze of church lives today. I am unable to understand the need and reason why there is effort in maintaining a communion table that is pure, and why it is important that we understand what true spiritual life is. The Spirit of God at work in empowering us, helps us to understand those four things. We couple all this with the work of the Church which we will look at in point number 7.

7) The letter "O." I am looking here now at the thought of *order and oneness*. Acts 2:44 says, "And all that believed were together, and had all things common." I see unity. We could say they were together in outlook and they were together in pocket-book. Or, we could say it this way: they were together in faith and they were together in practice. That is the oneness that was in focus here. They were truly in Christ with their brother. They truly understood that concept.

Remember, spiritual unity is accomplished when people are united on truth and when they stand together on truth. That is

where unity is always found. It is always found in a unity of truth and in no other way. There is no unity when there is diversity. Therefore, if we will be able to continue in our day to work and move together as a people of God we must be united in truth, and in practice. In that framework then, we can function with the blessing of God.

Probably some of you remember these terms in years gone by, where it went something like this: "Unity in the fundamentals, diversity in practice, and charity in all." We know where that all ended. That never works. There must be a unity in the truth, and unity in the Word of God. As we are united upon God, united with the people of God, then we can have God's blessing. People who are not united in truth always end in frustration and it always ends in a loss of faith.

8) The next one, the letter "S." I see in the last part of verse 47 the thought of salvation. The evidence of the work of the Spirit is salvation. It is the result. In verses 14–36, it was the work of the Spirit that inspired Peter's message. Let us remember that. These were not Peter's own thoughts that he shared himself. Yes, Peter was the vessel, but it was the work of the Spirit through Peter. In verse 37 it was

the Spirit that brought conviction. In verse 38 it was the Spirit that pointed to the remedy. In verses 41–47 it was the Spirit that gave the result.

The Spirit gives the message from God to man. The Spirit convicts man of his need before God. The Spirit points man to the remedy in Christ, and the Spirit produces unity with a church fellowship that brings soul rest. The evidence of the Spirit at work within gives the thought of salvation. The latter part of verse 47 says, “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Or, you could read it this way, “The Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved.” That is really what was happening. Those who were being saved, God was adding to the Church.

9) The last one I would have then is the letter “T.” We take this from a number of verses probably from verse 14 to the end. I thought about the evidence of the work of the Spirit within. It is the thought of *testimony* — spiritual testimony of what the Lord has done for you. This is somewhat maybe overlapping an earlier thought that I had about our enthusiasm to being a child of God. I thought about what the songwriter penned in

the *Christian Hymnal*. I did not write the number down where it goes something like this, “Have you found rest and peace within? Rolled far away your load of sin? Stepped from the old life to the new? Tell what the Lord has done for you.”

Testimony is an evidence of the work of the Spirit within. Maybe there are a few questions to raise. When did I, when did you last tell someone about your faith, about my faith verbally or by example? We could look at this in a number of ways again. Testimony is not always or only verbal. Rather, testimony comes maybe from a song on your lips. Maybe as you are going about your work you are simply whistling a song, a tune. Is that not a testimony? I think so. Maybe when you are away from home and you need something to eat and you stop to buy something. Is it a testimony to bow your head to pray before you eat? Or, are you ashamed to do so? It is a testimony, is it not? We must do that.

Attiring ourselves as the people of God as plain people is a testimony of what the Lord is doing within. Simply living our faith is the greatest testimony we can ever give. We can talk to others about what the Lord has done and how wonderful salvation is,

but you know, they only understand that by what I do. Therefore, let us be simply willing to live our faith. It is the greatest testimony we can ever give. Speak about God in the times of weather change. Speak about God in the times of disappointments. Speak about God in the times when things are going well and we are experiencing joy. Let us speak about God. That it is an evidence of the work of the Spirit within.

10) The last one I would conclude with is again (which does not follow in the word Pentecost, but I had this first of all on my paper) on the letter "E." I decided to hold again until the end. One of the evidences of the work of the Spirit within is the thought of *exaltation*. We see this in verses 33, 40, and 41. We are exalted because of the work of the presence within. We are exalted from a sinner to a saint. We have that exaltation. We are not longer a sinner.

Yes, we could say we are sinners saved by grace. However, is it not a blessing, brethren and sisters as we assemble that we can consider ourselves a saint? Are you a saint today? The Bible is

clear, and it has often been said that if you will be a saint in heaven, you will need to first of all be a saint on earth. We do not go around and proclaim to everyone that we are a saint. We rather say, "We are sinners saved by grace." Nevertheless, brethren and sisters we have been exalted from a sinner to a saint. From exaltation we will be exalted from earth to glory. We will be exalted to our eternal home as we live faithfully with Him.

Is Pentecost still alive in me personally today? Is the Spirit empowering me today? Is Pentecost still alive in the Church today? Is the Church today experiencing the dynamic that is necessary in the midst of a world of sin to be a light and a testimony in a lost world? Is that dynamic still there? Let us be a people who know what it is to be empowered by the Spirit. Let us know what it is as we move through the world to be able to give a testimony of what Jesus has done within our lives, and that we know what it is to be saved from sin and to be a child of His. Let us truly be individuals that are saints on the earth.

Scripture References

	Exodus		John	2:37	111, 119
23:16	109	14:16	110	2:38	120
	Leviticus		Acts	2:40	115, 121
23:15, 16	109	1:4	113	2:41	116, 117, 121
23:15–22	109	1:8	106, 110, 113	2:41–47	120
23:17	109	2:1	106	2:42	117, 118
23:18	109	2:1–8	111	2:47	119
	Numbers	2:2	114	4:19, 20	115
28:26	109	2:11	111	17:11	116
	Isaiah	2:12	111	20:16	107
28:10, 13	116	2:14	114, 120	20:18	110
	Joel	2:14–36	119	1 Corinthians	
2:28	110	2:32	111	2:4	117
		2:33	121		

From the Previous Issue:

The Casualty of Casualness

From a message by Fred Carpenter
 Sunday, December 17, 2006
 Rochester Mennonite Church

The Snare of Casual Christianity

From a sermon by LaRay Martin
 Sunday, July 13, 2003
 Culbertson Mennonite Church

Book Reprint *(continued)*

The Seven Laws of Teaching

CHAPTER VI

THE LAW OF THE TEACHING PROCESS

1. Our survey of the teaching art has thus far involved these four considerations: the teacher, the learner, the language, and the lesson. We are now to study these in action, and to observe the conduct of the teacher and his pupil. The previous discussions have already

brought these partly into view, but as each of them has its own law, each demands more careful consideration than has yet been given it. In the laws of the teacher and the learner, we found necessarily reflected the actions of both; but an actor and his part are easily separated in thought,

and each possesses aspects and characteristics of its own.

Following the natural order, the teaching function comes first before us, and we are now to seek its law. The law of the teacher was essentially a law of qualification; the law of teaching is a law of function.

2. Thus far we have considered teaching as the communication of knowledge or experience; more properly, we should say that this is a result of teaching. Whether by telling, demonstrating, or leading pupils to discover for themselves, the teacher is transmitting experience to his pupils; that is his aim and purpose, and his teaching is conditioned by that aim. But the explanation of the work of the teacher in terms of function is to be distinguished from the definition in terms of purpose. The actual work of the teacher consists of the awakening and setting in action the mind of the pupil, the arousing of his self-activities. As already shown, knowledge cannot be passed from mind to mind like objects from one receptacle to another, but must in every case be recognized and rethought and relived by the receiving mind. All explanation and exposition are useless except as they serve to excite and direct the pupil in his own thinking. If

the pupil himself does not think, there are no results of the teaching; the words of the teacher are falling upon deaf ears.

3. We are now ready to state

The Law of Teaching

Excite and direct the self-activities of the pupil, and as a rule tell him nothing that he can learn himself.

4. The second clause in this law is of sufficient importance to justify its position in the formulation of the law, although it is negatively stated. There are cases in which it may be necessary to disregard this caution in order to save time, or in the case of a very weak or discouraged pupil, or sometimes when intense interest has been aroused and there is a keen demand for information that the teacher can give quickly and effectively, but its violation is almost always a loss which should be compensated by a definite gain. Considered affirmatively, this caution would read: "Make your pupil a discoverer of truth — make him find out for himself." The great value of this law has been so often and so strongly stated as to demand no further proof. No great writer on education has failed to consider it in some form or another; if we were seeking the educational maxim most widely received

among good teachers, and the most extensive in its applications and results, we should fix upon this law. It is the same fundamental truth as the one found in such rules as the following: "Wake up your pupils' minds"; "Set the pupils to thinking"; "Arouse the spirit of inquiry"; "Get your pupils to work." All these familiar maxims are different expressions of this same law.

In discussing the principles of attention, language, and knowledge, we have considered to some extent the operations of the mind. We should now study these further.

Philosophy of the Law

5. We can learn without a teacher. Children learn hundreds of facts before they ever see a school, sometimes with the aid of parents or others, often by their own unaided efforts. In the greater part of our acquisitions we are self-taught, and it is quite generally conceded that that knowledge is most permanent and best which is dug out by unaided research. Everything, at the outset, must be learned by the discoverer without an instructor, since no instructor knows it. If, then, we can learn without being taught, it follows that the true function of the teacher is to create the most favorable conditions for self-learning. Essentially the

acquisition of knowledge must be brought about by the same agencies and through the use of the same methods, whether with or without a teacher.

6. What, then, is the use of schools, and what is the necessity for a teacher? The question is pertinent, but the answer is plain. Knowledge in its natural state lies scattered and confused; it is connected, to be sure, in great systems, but these connections are laws and relations unknown to the beginner, and they are to be learned by man only through ages of observation and careful study. The school selects for its curriculum what it regards as the most useful of the experiences of the race, organizes these, and offers them to the pupils along with its facilities for learning. It offers to these pupils leisure and quiet for study, and through its books and other materials of education the results of other people's labors, which may serve as charts of the territories to be explored, and as beaten paths through the fields of knowledge. True teaching, then, is not that which *gives* knowledge, but that which stimulates pupils to *gain* it. One might say that he teaches *best* who teaches *least*; or that he teaches best whose pupils learn most without being taught directly. But we should bear in mind

that in these epigrammatic statements two meanings of the word *teaching* are involved, — one, simply telling, the other creating the conditions of real learning.

7. That teacher is a sympathizing guide whose knowledge of the subjects to be studied enables him properly to direct the efforts of the pupil, to save him from a waste of time and strength, from needless difficulties. But no aid of school or teacher can change the operations of the mind, or take from the pupil his need of knowing for himself. The eye must do its own seeing, the ear its own hearing, and the mind its own thinking, however much may be done to furnish objects of sight, sounds for the ear, and stimuli for the intelligence. The innate capacities of the child produce the growth of body or mind. "If childhood is educated according to the measure of its powers," said Augustine, "they will continually grow and increase; while if forced beyond their strength, they decrease instead of increasing." The sooner the teacher abandons the notion that he can make his pupils intelligent by hard work upon their passive receptivity, the sooner he will become a good teacher and obtain the art, as Socrates said, of assisting the mind to shape and

put forth its own conceptions. It was to his skill in this that the great Athenian owed his power and greatness among his contemporaries, and it was this that gave him his place as one of the foremost of the great teachers of mankind. It is the "forcing process" in teaching which separates parrot-like and perfunctory *learning* from *knowing*. A boy, having expressed surprise at the shape of the earth when he was shown a globe, was asked: "Did you not learn that in school?" He replied: "Yes, I learned it, but I never knew it."

8. The great aims of education are to acquire knowledge and ideals, and to develop abilities and skills. Our law derives its significance from both of these aims. The pupil must know for himself, or his knowledge will be knowledge in name only. The very effort required in the act of thus learning and knowing may do much to increase the capacity to learn. The pupil who is taught without doing any studying for himself will be like one who is fed without being given any exercise: he will lose both his appetite and his strength.

9. Confidence in our own powers is an essential condition of their successful use. This confidence can be gained only by

self-prompted, voluntary, and independent use of these capacities. We learn to walk, not by seeing others walk, but by walking. The same is true of mental abilities.

10. The self-activities or mental powers do not set themselves at work without some motive or stimulus to put them in action. In early life external stimuli are stronger, and in riper years the internal excitants are the ones to which we respond more readily. To the young child the objects of sense—bright colors, live animals, and things in motion—are most attractive and exciting. Later in life, the inner facts of thought and feeling are more engaging. The child's mental life has in it an excess of sensation; the mental life of the adult has more reflection.

11. But whatever the stimulus, the processes of cognition are largely the same. There is the comparison of the new with the old, the alternating analysis and synthesis of parts, wholes, classes, causes, and effects; the action of memory and imagination, the use of judgment and reason, and the effects upon thought of tastes and prejudices as they

have been concerned with the previous knowledge and experience of the learner. If thinking does not take place, the teacher has applied the stimuli in vain. He perhaps will wonder that his pupils do not understand, and will very likely consider them stupid and incompetent, or at least lazy. Unfortunately the stupidity is sometimes on the other side, and it sins against this law of teaching in assuming that the teacher can *make* the pupil learn by dint of vigorous telling, or teaching as he calls it, whereas true teaching only brings to bear on the pupil's mind certain natural stimuli or excitants. If some of these fail, he must find others, and not rest until he attains the desired result and sees the activity of the child at work upon the lesson.

12. Comenius² said, over two hundred years ago, "Most teachers sow plants instead of seeds; instead of proceeding from the simplest principles they introduce the pupil at once into a chaos of books and miscellaneous studies." The figure of the seed is a good one, and is much older than Comenius. The greatest of teachers said:

² Johann Amos Comenius (1592–1671) was a Moravian clergyman, whose efforts to reform school practices have given him an enduring place in the history of education.

“The seed is the word” (Luke 8:11). The true teacher stirs the ground and sows the seed. It is the work of the soil, through its own forces, to develop the growth and ripen the grain.

13. The difference between the pupil who works for himself and the one who works only when he is driven is too obvious to need explanation. The one is a free agent, the other is a machine. The former is attracted by his work, and, prompted by his interest, he

works on until he meets some overwhelming difficulty or reaches the end of his task. The latter moves only when he is urged. He sees what is shown him, he hears what he is told, advances when his teacher leads, and stops just where and when the teacher stops. The one moves by his own activities, and the other by borrowed impulse. The former is a mountain stream fed by living springs, the latter a ditch filled from a pump worked by another’s hand.

Materialism and the Unequal Yoke

BY JOHN L. STAUFFER

1888-1959

This article (which was originally a sermon) was given/printed in 1948.

PROPER AND IMPROPER CHRISTIAN APPAREL

By John L. Stauffer

A Message for Christians

(Printed in tract form at the request of the 1939 Virginia Mennonite Conference.)

RADIO and TELEVISION

(This discussion is written for the consideration of those who profess to be Christians and have respect for the Word of God and for Christian principles.)

JOHN L. STAUFFER

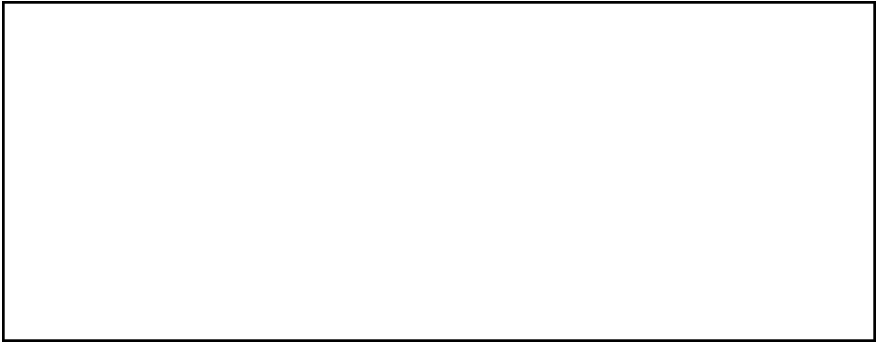
Published by TRACT PRESS, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 1954

THE RADIO PROBLEM

(Revised, enlarged and illustrated)

— J. L. Stauffer.

The Pulpit Exchange



Catalogue

Sermons transcribed and available on various topics.

Volumes 1 – 8 available.
Back Issues Available

Ministry Topics
Special Meetings Available

Book Reprints are available

- 100 Lessons in Bible Study
- A Talk With Church Members
- Bible Wines: Laws of

Fermentation

- Christian Attire
- Christianity and Dress
- Christ, The Apostles and Wine
- Dress: A Brief Treatise
- The Ideal Christian Home
- The Ministry
- The Temperate Life
- Wordly Conformity in Dress

New Series:

Practical Nonconformity

Vol 1 — The Christian, Cards, Contests, Games, and Other Amusements.

Others Currently in Progress:

10 Commandments
Exposition of Colossians
Nonresistance Meetings
Writer's Meetings
Literature Evangelism
Various Fellowship Meetings
Garden City Confession of Faith

Children's book:

The Folly of Procrastination

Full Catalogue available