

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.

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"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).

SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

"KIBROTHHATAAVAH"

"And he called the name of that place Kibrothhataavah: because there they buried the people that lusted."—Numbers 11:34

Israel had been gloriously delivered from bondage in Egypt, after 430 years of affliction. (Exodus 12:13; Gal. 3:17). The deliverance was wrought by the Lord God through the instrumentality of Moses, the man "very meek above all men which were upon the earth" (Num. 12:3). Having crossed the Red Sea, and witnessed the drowning of Pharaoh and his armies (Ex. 14:24-31), they had passed into the Wilderness of Sinai, where, being "camped before the mount", they eventually received the law as "ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19). Their journey, from that time forth, was marked noticeably by disobedience, murmuring, and discontent. God graciously fed them with "angel's food" (Psa. 78:25), and suffered none of them to be lame or sick; yet they "rebelled against His word" (Psa. 105:28). Our text is couched within a set of circumstances most grievous to the Lord. Forgetful of His mercy, Israel had "complained" and "it displeased the Lord" (Num. 11:1). As a result, the Lord's anger was kindled, and He sent a fire to the "uttermost parts of the camp", consuming the people that insisted on dwelling on the fringe - a most wholesome warning to those who stubbornly refuse to occupy the inner-circle of discipleship to Jesus Christ. At the intercession of faithful Moses, the fire was abated (Num. 11:2-3). The lesson, however, did not prove altogether beneficial for some, for they were a "rebellious people" (Ezek. 2:3, 5, 6, 7). They soon "fell a lusting" (Num. 11:4), desiring to eat flesh rather than "daily bread". Their memories were stirred within them toward Egypt, and forgetting the grievous toil and hardship that was placed upon them there, they reasoned thus: "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic; but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all be

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"PREACHING"

The Word of Truth

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"KIBROTHHATAAVAH"

(From page 1)

side this manna before our eyes" (Num. 11:5-6). They did not seem to perceive at all that they were actually being miraculously sustained in a deserted and barren place, independent of their own ingenuity. They did not plant, neither did they harvest; they merely gathered their bread daily after that God had dropped it from the sky. **Oh yes, fleshly appetites will warp your sense of perspective, dull your heart of gratitude, and veil the blessings of preservation!** So overcoming was their insistence upon having "flesh" that it moved Moses, the meekest man in all the earth, to cry out; "I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me" (verse 14). It was Moses' broken and contrite heart that moved the Lord, together with the uncomely voices and affection of the lusters, against Israel. Flesh they wanted, flesh they would get! God the Lord declared; "Ye shall not eat flesh one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even a whole month, until it come out of your nostrils, and it be loathesome unto you . . ." (Verse 20). It was not long until the flesh began to come - in the form of quails, a sweet and delicate meat, **most enjoyable to anyone whose "god is their belly"** (Phil. 3:19). A "great wind went forth from the Lord" bringing with it great droves of quail into the camp. It "let" the quails "fall by the camp a day's journey from the camp on all sides (a day's journey being approximately twenty miles), so that a ring of flesh encircled the camp two cubits high (about three feet) and about twenty miles deep. The people, "laden with sin" (II Tim. 3:6) ran into the quail-area, gathering, in accordance with their evil lusts, all that they could. The least amount that was gathered by any one individual was ten homers, or about eighty bushels, exceeding even their fleshly appetite. **Lust, as is here seen, will make one greedy - so greedy indeed, that he shall himself be consumed in his lust!** But, "While the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord

was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague" (verse 23). Those buried that day died because of their unlawful craving - their lust! Their graves were truly the "graves of lust", and thus Moses named the name of that place, "Kibrothhataavah", meaning "Graves of lust."

The text ought to speak to the heart of every "pilgrim and stranger." **Murmuring, meditating upon the place of spiritual bondage, and discontentment with the Lord's Bread - oh, this leads to spiritual death! God will give such people "the desires of their hearts", but "send leanness into their souls"** (Psa. 106:15). Be careful not to tamper playfully with "fleshly lusts", for they shall get the best of you! You are not strong enough to play with them, though you are strong enough, by grace, to slay them! **The old life is to be forgotten! It has great powers of allurements, though we be delivered from it. When looked upon in the flesh, it awakens within a discontentment with Jesus, and a longing and lust for the flesh!** The "old man" (Eph. 4:22) is very much alive, and susceptible to the allurements of the earth, even though he is "old." **Though you "reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin" (Rom. 6:11), the old nature within you is not to be considered dead!** We care to rather take good heed to it that we "make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14) - a real sign of sensitivity is this lusting! **Strong yearnings are embedded in the flesh**, and if you take your eyes away from Jesus, and your ears from His instruction, you will hear their cries, and the same thing will happen to you that happened to Israel; you will "fall a lusting", and eventually be buried in the "graves of your lust."

Fleshly appetites "war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11), and bring men down to destruction! **It is the commission of God to His saints that they "put off the old man . . . corrupt according to deceitful lusts"** (Eph. 4:22). God's grace instructs us to "deny worldly lusts" (Titus 2:12), and we are admonished to "make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14). Fleshly lusts and appetites are UNLAWFUL lusts or desires; **they have to do with the ambition and desire to satisfy the Adamic nature.** They proceed out of a desire for the carnal man to live and flourish. Lust, "when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin" (James 1:15); **it is a place of development where motives, purposes, and ambitions are so spawned as to lead to actual and overt "transgression of the law"** (I Jno. 3:4). Lusts are "divers" (Titus 3:3); i.e., they are multi-gender! They are not all the same, nor all heinous to the eye. **Some lusts appear quite respectable**, but yet they are "foolish and hurtful" (I Tim. 6:9). "Ungodly lusts" (Jude 18) centers about self - the carnal, natural self; that which is not interested in "the things of the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2:14), nor in the nurturing of the soul. There are also "youthful lusts" (II Tim. 2:22) - desires that are particularly leveled toward young people; ungodly desires that are designed to make a young person love the world and hate the Lord; lusts that are geared to cause the young one to cast his roots in this world, and remain in obscurity to the world that is to come. There are lusts which com-

PREACHING

INTRODUCTION

Preaching is a God-ordained activity; God hath ordained through "the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:18-21). Consequently, it must be entered into with the greatest solemnity. Frivolity has no place in it, for preaching is a most sober matter. Preaching and oratory are not synonymous. Preaching is not necessarily evidenced in intellectual persuasion; it is not conveyed alone through a pleasant personality. Preaching is not selling; it is not promoting; it is not overpowering argumentation. **Preaching is inspired proclamation**; a declaration of accomplished facts; the heralding of good news or of news of impending judgment, as was the case with the prophets of old. **Preachers are sent by God, not by men.** They can be developed by brotherly spirits, but they cannot be created through means of human ingenuity. Preachers are not mere "parrots", mimicking what they have been taught, or what they have read and heard in relation to their peculiar group. **True preachers proclaim from their hearts messages and truths that they themselves have embraced; truths that have had a spiritual impact upon their own spirit.** He is not a preacher which is one "outwardly;" this is not a social position filled by one specially trained in "pastoral duties" by "flesh and blood." **A preacher is one who PREACHES**, not one who merely fills a position.

This is not a social level that I am speaking of, or a denominated classification of "specially trained" men. **You cannot manufacture a preacher or preaching. Preachers are sent from God, and true preaching is borne of God!** Of preaching our Lord Himself said; "**Preach the Gospel to every creature**" (Mark 16:15). John the Baptist "**came preaching**" (Matt. 3:1), and Nineveh "**repented at the preaching of Jonah**" (Matt. 12:41). Jesus Christ "**came preaching**" (Mark 1:14). The early disciples, upon being scattered abroad "**went everywhere preaching the Word**" (Acts 8:4); and it is witnessed of Paul that "**he was long preaching**" (Acts 20:9). The prophets, the Son Himself, the Apostles of the Lamb, and the early disciples, together with deacons and bishops of good report, and evangelists such as Timothy, **preached** without shame. This was a worthy occupation, praise the Lord, and it yet continues to be. Most contemporary "preachers" preach no more than two, or at the most, three times a week. Their sermons are generally "canned", and are but the "rehashing" of traditional teachings received and perpetrated by their particular denomination. Actually, their preaching ministry, if it may so be defined, is considered by them to be secondary in importance, and hence little time is devoted to it, or to preparation for preaching. But, as the disciple of Christ and student of the Scriptures will perceive, **this ministry of the Word and of the Gospel is actually primary and fundamental in nature.** The greatest respect ought to be given to this subject; ears ought to be attuned to the sound of Gospel preaching! I am not referring to those formal times, saturated with cold and icy atmospheres, where professionalized speaking is used as an induce-

ment to bring men into a local congregation. **I am speaking of that spiritually forceful proclamation of the truth of God, whether done on a "large" or a "small" scale** (terms adapted for earth). That man who speaks to your heart, and makes you feel a need for a closer and more intimate walk with Jesus, has a "preaching" from God — listen carefully to it, and take heed.

True Preachers Ordained and Appointed

The Apostle Paul was "ordained a preacher" (I Tim. 2:7), a man "appointed" by God to the activity of **preaching** the Gospel of Jesus Christ (II Tim. 1:10-11). His mission was not to "baptize", but to "**preach the Gospel**" (I Cor. 1:17). His commission did not involve running up a tally of believers to his account, which would contribute to a great and renown name, but rather to "**preach the unsearchable riches of Christ**" (Eph. 3:8). He was not averse to baptism, nor did he refuse to baptize (I Cor. 1:16). His mission, however was **FULFILLED IN PREACHING**, not in baptizing! Would to God that the pretending preachers of our day had such a commission and were faithful to it. **A preacher's faithfulness is not measured by the amount of favorable results, but rather by his incessant energy being expended in the work of preaching — proclaiming the "truth as it is in Christ Jesus"** (Eph. 4:20-21). "Woe is unto me", declared Paul, "if I preach not the Gospel" (I Cor. 9:16).

It made no difference whether or not anyone joyfully received his message (although that was most surely desired and aimed for). Paul was held responsible for preaching, not for results. His judgment was going to be according to His stewardship of the Gospel, not the cumulative total of disciples which he gathered. **(No career can be built upon the calling of God, praise the Lord!)** This is true of every true preacher — he will be held accountable before the "judgment seat of Christ" for his faithfulness in preaching Jesus! not for his administrative abilities, or his achievements in building churches, or his accomplishments in increasing attendance figures and mushrooming budgets. "It is required in stewards (of the Gospel) that a man be found faithful" (I Cor. 4:2), and no amount of impressionable activity can erase that solemn requirement! **A "steward" is a man that has been entrusted with a stewardship; with something that was originated by and belongs to another. In this case, a "preacher" is one that has been entrusted by the Lord God with the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** He is "appointed" unto this function, being "set" in the church "as it hath pleased Him" (I Cor. 12:18). These are men that are selected through Sovereign Grace by God, and given an understanding of the Gospel, together with a fervent desire to proclaim it.

The true "preacher" may not be endowed with extraordinary oratorical talents, but he does have wisdom and power. **The Holy Spirit moves people through his messages as he declares out from his heart those things which have conformed his life to that of Christ.** To speak in the language of the Holy Ghost, "no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God" (Heb. 5:4). Men just do not decide to be preachers; they

are "called" by the Holy Spirit of God to this sacred occupation. The church is, strictly speaking, "the church of God" (I Cor. 1:2); i.e., **God is the Originator of the church, and it is His enterprise.** He maintains it as He pleases in order that it might accomplish His will. Those who suppose that men are placed into the ministry under the auspices and by the wisdom of men are bringing reproach upon the Lord God of the Church. "Let Him do as seemeth **Him** good!"

I address here those who consider themselves to be "preachers". Why do you so identify yourself? Because you hold a position, or because you have felt by faith the call of God upon your life? Do you preach in the worldly sense of the word, or does God Almighty consider you to be a preacher of His Son? Are you preaching "the word of faith" (Rom. 10:8), or the words of men? Your flesh-appealing titles, phrases, and words — whence do they come? Do you suppose that God is well pleased with them? Do you seek to persuade men or God? Are you a servant of men or God (Gal. 1:10)? So you have made an impression with men — **have you been faithful to God?** Are you more concerned with statistics or preaching?; achievements or preaching?; organization or preaching? Come now, you are going to stand accountable before the "great white Throne" for your preaching! Ought you not to consider, then, the matter of preaching seriously? What really satisfies you; results, or a good conscience in the matter of being faithful to the Lord in your preaching. Do you preach with "enticing words of men's wisdom" (I Cor. 2:4), and so cause men's faith to stand in the wisdom of men and not the wisdom of God? Are men impressed with your wisdom or God's? For that matter, have you been "commanded to preach" (Acts 10:42) by the Lord Jesus, or have you "taken this honour unto yourself", not being "sent" of God (Rom. 10:15)?

Preaching is not a career, it is a "stewardship", or a "dispensation of the Gospel" (I Cor. 9:17). True preaching may not always be eloquent, but it is a powerful demonstration of the "Spirit and power" (I Cor. 2:4) as men are brought to see themselves and Almighty God! Though men may speak of their testimony, true preaching is declaring the "testimony of God" (I Cor. 2:1). **A true preacher lacks confidence in himself,** and stands before his audience, whether large or small (by earthly standards only) in "fear and trembling" and in "much weakness" (I Cor. 2:3); not because he is complacent, indolent, or slothful; but because he speaks on the behalf of the Lord God of heaven and earth — declaring the truth as he hath "seen and heard" (I John 1:1-3). He is not desirous that men see him, or give credit to him, or honor him; but that they might see Jesus, and "Jesus only" (Matt. 17:1-7). How utterly unlike the grinning, polished, and finely appearing preachers of this day, with whom we are altogether too familiar. In their smug self-confidence, they mount the platform to display their fleshly wisdom and puffed up mind. They speak of themselves more than Jesus, and their experiences more than the "mighty acts" of God. Their achievements and opinions hold priority in their sermons — and why? **Because they have no word from God! The word is not burning within them,**

as it is written; "**His Word was as a fire shut up in my homes, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay (be quiet)**" — Jer. 20:9.

In view of the Apostles, prophets, and preachers since their days who have preached faithfully the Word in view of dreadful persecutions, hard criticism, and continual harassment, the professionalized "preacher" of our day appears as a weak and insipid example of pure "flesh!" Such great men as Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Whitfield, Moody, Spurgeon, Manton, Bunyan, Pink, Pool, Henry, Scott, etc., wore shoes of which the "clergy" of this day are not worthy to unloose; to say nothing of those greater still; Paul, Peter, James, Apollos, Timothy, Titus, Jude, Luke, Silas, Barnabas, etc., who are more worthy than to be placed in the same breath with the sophists of which I am speaking.

True Preachers Are Sent

As is declared by the Holy Ghost, true preachers are sent, and they cannot truly preach unless they are "sent"; "How shall they preach except they be sent" (Rom. 10:14-15). Now, it is freely acknowledged that this text is almost consistently used by Christendom for purposes of persuading local congregations to send forth missionaries. That is a most noble purpose, and we should never be guilty of discouraging such an activity, as it is directed of the Lord. But, it is also admitted unhesitatingly that such a use of this text is abusive and contemptible. We personally cannot submit to such a flagrant tearing of Scripture from its message of truth to adapt it to ambitions spawned within faithless hearts! The context of the passage clearly (to the "spiritually minded" — Rom. 8:5-8) sets forth the truth of **Divine sending.** These "sent" ones, are that "BRING glad tidings of good things" (Rom. 10:15b); i.e., they are bearing a message in the behalf of Another to a people in need of that message. The Sender, in this case, is the Lord, as is testified in II Cor. 5:20; "Now then we are **ambassadors for Christ,** as though **God did beseech you by us;** we pray you **in Christ's stead,** be ye reconciled to God."

The Lord Jesus Himself, the "Head of the church, and the Savior of the body", set forth the truth and need of sending in Matthew 9:38; "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that **HE WILL SEND FORTH** laborers into His harvest." Again, in the example of a preacher cited by Paul in Romans 10:16, we have a true type; "For Esaias (Isaiah) saith, Lord who hath believed our report"? Now, Isaiah was one "sent" of the Lord in answer to his petition after cleansing; "Here am I, Lord, **SEND me**" (Isaiah 6:1-7). It is tragic, but true, that the vast majority of preachers I have known have neither been cleansed nor sent! They have no message from God, but are spokesmen for their church! They set forth the principles of their denomination; the traditions received from their fathers, that were too vain for them, to say nothing of their offspring! As for these men, there is no fire within their bosom, no enlarging of the heart for the people of God who stand in need of edification and comfort, and exhortation. Not being content with failing to feed Christ's sheep, they feed off the sheep themselves, filling their god, who is their belly, while the sheep dwindle in spiritual fervor and strength from lack of care

(Jer. 23; Ezekiel 34). **But, our God will requite them well for their diabolical usurpation of the preacher's position—the man sent from God with a message of glad tidings! God does not speak well of those whom He has not sent, declaring a woe unto them; "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken unto them, yet they prophesied. . . . Therefore, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use THEIR tongues, and say He saith"** (Jer. 23:21-31). Preacher, if God has not sent you, endowing you with a message and the boldness to proclaim it even in face of the fiercest opposition, then you are a fraud, and had better come down from your lofty place, else the Lord will weigh you in the balances, and find you wanting!

Some very respected preachers that I personally know, and whom I could name, were it proper to do so, readily confess that they ought to be declaring more of God's truth, and less mental drivel. Yet, because such a course would have an adverse effect upon their financial situation, they have chosen to keep silence. **Thus are the children of the Devil and imposters manifested!** God sends no men without a fervent and effectual message! God sends no men who overpower His purpose by keeping silence. Though they may run like Jonah, they shall not be long away from their calling; the belly of the fish shall season them for obedience, and their mouth shall speak the message that was given them!

True Preaching A Matter Of Faithfulness

True preaching is a matter of faithful adherence to the Lord's revelation. As was declared by Jehovah to Jonah; "Preach unto it (Nineveh) the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2). Any other preaching would have been fraudulent and a lie. Jonah was told to declare unto Nineveh; "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4b). That was his message, his "preaching!" He was not to preach repentance, not faith, not grace, not longsuffering, not godliness — but impending judgment upon the city. No reason was given; no call unto repentance was sounded; no message of grace was heralded! Jonah just marched about crying out; "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." He was to "cry out against that wicked city" (Jonah 1:2) because their wickedness had come up before God. Doubtless, this was impressed upon Jonah through his conscience, which he sought in vain to escape. **Had Jonah preached salvation to Nineveh, he would have been disobedient to the Lord, and violated his own conscience, instantly becoming a "false prophet."**

Though God was (and still is) "gracious" and "longsuffering", "not willing that any should perish" (II Pet. 3:9), this was not the message God sent to Nineveh! **Truth is more than mere words, phrases, or sentences of expression! It is spiritual reality; reality which liberates from sin!** Because truth is in the Bible does not mean that every sounding of it is a truthful declaration. For instance, if I should preach to a willfully disobedient transgressor of God's will and Law; "The Lord is with thee", or, "the Lord sees no transgression in you"; I should not be a faithful proclaimer of the "preaching." To promise the pres-

ence of the Lord to a disobedient child; grace to a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God; judgment to one broken and contrite of heart; vengeance to one of a pure heart; is but to manifest an unwise handling of the Word of truth! **God's truth is adaptable to certain situations; grace for faith, judgment for sin, reward for labor in the Lord, forgiveness for confession, gifts for repentance, salvation for believing, etc.** Oh, there is much need for submission to the Lord among the "ministers" of this day; and may God grant that beginning afresh right here, it may spread with Holy Spirit swiftness. **Preacher, preach the "preaching" that God has given you; and if He has given you none, then take that as a token from Him that you ought not to be preaching!** Declare, oh preacher, the truth that God has given you, saying, "Thus saith the Lord!" Be comforted, oh preacher of the Word who hath met with continual opposition and discomfit! The Lord will gird thee up and make thee "strong" by His "Spirit in the inner man" — only be faithful to Him, and fear not men nor be afraid of their looks (Ezekiel 2).

God did not tell Jonah to go to Nineveh and peruse the city and then declare what he thought was needful. He was to preach the "preaching" that God bid him! And so are you, my preacher brother. Christ and Him crucified; that is your message! Sin and atonement for sin — that is what you are to herald! Preach it loud and long, a Savior has been sent into the world, and he has thoroughly satisfied the God of heaven that was angry beyond human description with man! How we ought to thank God that our message is not limited to impending judgment; that we do not have to preach; "Yet forty days and this city or that shall be overthrown."

It is "repentance and remission of sins" that Jesus has declared must be "preached" (Luke 24:47). Paul declared to Timothy, and to all preachers; "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). The words "reprove, rebuke, exhort" show that the preaching was to deal with specific needs and situations; rebuke for disobedience; reproof for error; exhortation for feeble knees and weak hands. **The substance of the preachers preaching is the Word of God!** But, this word of God is not to be "handled deceitfully or corrupted" (II Cor. 4:2). We do not preach grace to wilful sinners, but "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" (Acts 24:25); nor do we preach judgment to the penitent, but rather salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). To the slothful we preach "labor", to the laboring, we preach "rest"; to the complacent, "diligence"; to the diligent, God's "faithfulness"; to the faithful, "glory"; to the unfaithful "judgment"! **No man must be made comfortable in sin; and no one must be made uncomfortable in grace!** Our speech is to be "seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:6) in order that it might "minister grace to the hearers".

It has been observed by this writer that far too many preachers live, however, at such a distance from God, that they have no conception or cognizance of His will. They have no means of discerning the "preaching" that the Lord desires,

nor do they possess that sort of fellowship with Him that makes possible a perception of His bidding! Consequently, they stumble through sermons, either worked up by human ingenuity or snatched verbatim from some other preacher. **But, such as do such things are really not preachers — they are actors; stage players; imposters, unsent, unanointed, unfilled, unwise!** Their mask shall soon be stripped off of them, however, and they shall be seen for what they are; for all shall be made manifest at the judgment seat of Christ, and then shall “every man have praise (as it is meet) from God.” There are still “dumb dogs” that “cannot bark”, sleeping and loving to “slumber” (Isa. 56:10), and it is no matter how high the hair stands on their back, or how rigid they hold their tail, they are never able to bark, so as to warn God’s people of the dangers that loom before them. But, let those that are truly “sent” by the “Lord of the harvest” “cease not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42). That is the great message that the Lord has given His preachers today — “JESUS CHRIST!!” Jesus — Savior of His people from their sins; Christ — the anointed of Jehovah God, who upheld Him through the treading of the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God! It is He that is “The Way, the Truth, and the Life”; the “Judge of all men”; the “Captain of our salvation”; the “Minister of the circumcision”; The “Rock” upon which is built the church. He is truly “all in all.”

Whether grace, repentance, faith, or works is taught — Jesus is the focal point of the doctrine! “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit (life) of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10). If it is sin; “Ye through the hands of lawless men have crucified and slain” this Christ (Acts 2:23); “of sin, because they believe not on Me (Jesus)” (John 16:7-11). If we preach grace, it is “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Cor. 13:14). If we preach faith, it is “the faith of Christ” (Phil. 3:9); “through faith in His blood” (Rom. 3:24-25); “through faith in His Name” (Acts 3:16). If it is judgment, God shall “judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, and whereof He hath given assurance to all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31). If I proclaim righteousness, He is “The Lord, our righteousness” (Jer. 23:6), and it is “by the obedience of One that many are made righteous” (Rom. 5:19). You may test your preaching in this manner; whatever preaching God gives you, Jesus shall be at the very center of it! That is the “preaching” that you **MUST** preach! **God will impress this truth upon His preachers; He will give them an awareness of the need to proclaim the truth; wisdom concerning those to hear this truth, and spiritual power to declare it with a forehead made of flint.** Those who are so identified are truly preachers sent from God — **hear them!** All others are merely speaking vanity; they are mouth-pieces for the organizations and programs of men!

True Preachers Are Sometimes Forbidden to Preach

A true preacher is not always permitted by God to preach. Sometimes his mouth is stayed, his thoughts halted; his speech slow. He is even stirred away from a given area by the Holy Spirit. It is testified in Scripture: “. . . they . . . were FOR-

BIDDEN of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia” (Acts 16:6). There has been some speculation by foolish men concerning the areas in which the Gospel was preached; how that certain areas were neglected, and others given the Word. **The spiritually barren places of the earth are not theirs by mere coincidence; the Holy Spirit forbade the Apostles to go into these areas.**

I do not pretend to know the answer, but I do not question the wisdom of it. God obviously was reserving these areas of the world for a later proclamation of the Word — which areas have, by His Sovereign grace, now been opened up. To the Apostles, no reason was given for not preaching the Word in Asia; they were simply forbidden to do it. The Holy Spirit, guided by the immutable will of the Father, does not always give reasons for His moves, His restraints, His motivating power, etc. **It is a basic postulate here that those forbidden were sensitive to the leading of the Spirit.** They were not “unwise”, but knowing what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). Undoubtedly, this message was conveyed through the means of circumstance, but the Apostles spoke not of circumstance, but of the Holy Spirit’s forbidding. We should do well to learn from this to “acknowledge the Lord in all of our ways” (Prov. 3:5-6). Too, these men were not intent upon going where the Holy Spirit said “No”, nor did they “resist the Holy Ghost” (Acts 7:51).

This ministry of silence was also exemplified in Ezekiel the prophet. To him the Lord declared; “And I will make thy tongue cleave unto the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: he that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house” (Ezek. 3:26-27). There truly is, as Solomon declared, “a time to keep silence” (Eccl. 3:7), i.e., a time and place when the Holy Ghost forbids the word of God to be preached. It was when Paul “assayed to go into Bithynia” that the vision was seen of a man in Macedonia crying out, “Come over into Macedonia and help us” (Acts 16:7-9). Of that time, Luke records, “After they (Paul and company) were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but **THE SPIRIT SUFFERED THEM NOT**” (Acts 16:7).

I am convinced that there is far too much time wasted by permitting the time and place of preaching to be determined by flesh and blood; i.e., human ingenuity apart from a cognizance of the will of the Lord! **It is only by submission to the Lord that we may truly learn “what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God”** (Rom. 12:1-2). The Holy Spirit led Ezekiel to preach the Word to an unresponsive and disobedient people; He led Jonah to preach to a people who “repented” at His preaching; He led Stephen to preach to a spiritually uncircumcised people such preaching as provoked them to stone him to the death; He led Paul to preach to the Thessalonians, who “received the Word in much affliction”. These were not mere coincidences — **the will of the Lord was being accomplished. There is no set pattern of results that dictate the value of preaching the**

Word; the Holy Spirit does not make His way in etched stone, but more often in the sea.

Working through the conscience of the submitted believer, through means of assurance and confidence, together with wisdom, understanding, and the "communion of the Holy Ghost", the Lord impresses upon His preachers not only the need of proclaiming, but often of being silent; not only of going into given territories, but also of refusing to enter certain ones. His preachers are bidden, but often forbidden; directed to go, but also to leave; to speak, but also to keep silence. Oh, you do not want to lose sight here of God's Sovereignty and Christ's government. If He forbids, suffer it; if He bids, be swift to go! Always be a preacher from the Lord, declaring His Word, never taking matters into your own hands or depending upon your own wisdom.

True Preachers Preach With Proper Words

Some preachers are truly orators, but not all of them. Some speak eloquently, as did Apollos (Acts 18:24), but others, like Paul, are "rude in speech" (II Cor. 11:6). **Compelling words do not identify a man as a preacher, but rather powerful words; i.e., proper words which quicken and make alive** (John 6:63). As brother Paul declared; "And my speech and my preaching was **not** with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power" (I Cor. 2:4). His speech was not "excellency of speech" (I Cor. 2:1); i.e., speech that was basically rhetorical in nature, couched in terminology that spoke of earth, and in earthly language. He does not mean that his speech was clumsy, devoid of the basic rules of language, of a butchering of the local tongue. **He rather means that his speech did not conform itself to the thought patterns of the earth; it was not the sort of speech which carnal men could appreciate and understand; not the type of speech which tied men to Paul; but rather that testified of the Lord God!** He spoke not of world issues and earthly niceties, but spoke in accordance with his determination not to know anything "save Christ and Him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2).

This was sheer foolishness to the cultured Grecian mind, which had not been "renewed" by the power of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 1:18-27), and it was rejected as mere jibberish, unworthy of their attention. It spoke not of the "dignity of man", or of man's potentiality or achievements, but centered in "the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5). **Proper words in preaching, then, consist first of an emphasis of and priority of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, His achievements, His grace, death, life, and favor with God.** This is "preaching Christ" (Acts 7:3; 8:35; 9:20; 17:18; Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 1:23; II Cor. 1:19; Col. 1:28).

Secondly, proper words refer to the nomenclature employed to convey spiritual truth. Often has it been said of much good preaching that people could not understand it that the words were unfamiliar to them. But, these people have shelved their Bibles, and have addicted themselves to all sorts of literature that speaks not in the language of the Holy Spirit. **God's truth may not be effectually conveyed to men in language designed to present temporal things — language of the earth.** By that, I mean psychological language, philosophical language, or language of the scientific world. Paul

said that he spoke, "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the **Holy Ghost** teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual (words)" — I Cor. 2:13). **Our Lord has, in Moses and the Prophets, set forth a spiritual nomenclature which is to be used in conveying the message of reality.**

The experiences that are common to man have been recorded and given spiritual interpretations; the will of the Lord has been demonstrated in actuality within a chosen people, and the proclamation thereof will best serve to illustrate to desirous hearts the course which they are to choose. **The things of God cannot be properly expressed in mere philosophical language.** Not that there have not been some sound philosophers who have proclaimed spiritual truths. However, even though the truth be understood by the proclaimer, and he have a perfect understanding of that which he is attempting to declare, **he will be unable to communicate the truths of God to others without the language of the Spirit of God.** The Lord Jesus and the Apostles give us examples of this usage, and you must appeal to them for the proper understanding. **When trying to proclaim spiritual truths in words that are earthly in nature, you at once communicate earthly concepts, and spiritual truths are hidden.** The world understands the language that they use to communicate earthly concepts, but their understanding of it is limited to those thoughts and patterns which they are meant to convey.

They cannot associate them with spiritual reality.

Our Lord Himself told us of parables, that they were designed to darken the truth, and hide it from the minds of disinterested people (Luke 8:10). When our Lord spoke of a sower going forth to sow, the people understood that a sower went forth to sow; but they caught no glimpse of spiritual truth from the parable. It was later that the disciples inquired as to the meaning of it (Mark 4:10). **Our Lord and His Apostles spoke in the language of Moses and the prophets.** Redemption, blood, repentance, reprobate, elect, salvation, grace, heart, sacrifice, etc.; all had meanings developed in the message of "holy men of God" who spake as they "were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:20-21). There must be a removal from the sort of preaching that pervades our world today, and a return to the preaching of the Word. I am not referring merely to the quoting of a given version of the Bible; the matter goes deeper than that! I am speaking of **concepts, thoughts, principles, precepts,** and the basic message.

The old Puritans set a fine example as they spoke and wrote of the things of the Spirit of God in the language of the Spirit of God. But their writings are little appreciated today; indeed, many confess that they understand them not; but that is only because they are better schooled in the psychological jargon of the world than in the language borne of the Spirit of God! **The Spirit activates the principles and precepts which He Himself has expressed — none other.** A preacher cannot eternally motivate the people of God to holiness and virtue with "smooth things" (Isa. 30:10), "enticing words" (I Cor. 2:4), and "great swelling words" (II Pet. 2:18). "The Seed is the Word of God" — plant it, preach it, scatter it abroad. The

Word of God is TRUTH; reality! **You have preached the Word, brother, when you have expressed properly principles and foundational truths which have constrained men to live Godward!** Until such time as that is done, you must be brought to understand that "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (I Cor. 4:20). **Preacher, become familiar with the Scriptures; not merely of the letter of them, but the Spirit of them.**

We are not to be ministers of the "letter", but rather, ministers of the Spirit (II Cor. 3:1-4). Timothy knew the Holy Scriptures from a child" (II Tim. 3:15). Some preachers, in fact too many, acknowledge their basic ignorance of them after decades of being what they term "preachers of the Gospel." Put away your seminars, your conventions, and your outings, until such time as you can speak the things of God fluently to spiritual people. Biographies and autobiographies are fine, and worthy of your time and study; but the very men of whom you read expended their entire lives in the Word of God, as Paul put it, "laboring in the Word and in the doctrine" (I Tim. 5:17); that is why their speech and their writing is able to build you up and strengthen you in the Lord. If you would imitate them, then spend your life in the Word also — is it not worthy of your time?

(to be continued)

Kibrothhataavah

(From page 2)

pel men and women to "heap to themselves teachers" (II Tim. 4:3) who will pacify their religious indolence, and speak "smooth things" (Isa. 30:10), because they have "turned away their ears from the truth unto fables" (II Tim. 4:4). This sort of lust is very prominent in our day, as it has always been; and, as it was before, so it is now, that many false prophets are heeding the call, meeting the requirements of godless congregations in order that they might fatten their wallets and gain prestige in the world. May the Lord reward them according to their works.

All unlawful lusts are basically "fleshly lusts" (I Pet. 2:11), having to do with the baser and unregenerate nature of man. They are "worldly lusts" (Titus 2:12) because they crave **only** what this world has to offer; and this is that world which "lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). It is called the "lust of concupiscence" (I Thess. 4:5) because it is many times very ardent, and has to do with the perversion of the body, using it for fornication. All lusts, whether of the eye, or of the flesh, will bury you; they "drown men in perdition" (I Tim. 6:9). Warring against the soul as they do, if fed and nourished, they will cause men to "err from the truth" (James 5:19). They "bring forth sin" when they have conceived (James 1:15), and eventually so attach men to the world as to render their case hopeless. **Beginning in the mind, lusts spread their venom into the whole person, until finally the man becomes "alienated and an enemy in his mind by wicked works" (Col. 1:21).** That is spiritual "burial," and by nature all men have been so overcome. But, blessed be God, the Lord Jesus has quickened us by His Holy Spirit and through His death in order that we might "no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (I Pet. 4:2).

God forbid, that those so liberated, who have "clean escaped the corruption that is in the world through lusts" (II Pet. 1:4) should return to that life of lust and "evil" revelings of the mind! Ought we not rather to be "ashamed" of those things wherein we had no fruit" (Rom. 6:21). **Those lusts tied us to the "weak and beggarly elements of the world" (Gal. 4:9). If they slew us once by nature, how catastrophic will they be to us now if we again embrace them. "The second state is worse with them than the first", and all who nurture and feed the lusts from which Christ has called them are likened to a sickened dog "returning to his vomit", and a "sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (II Pet. 2:20-22).**

It is vitally important that the saint remember that he cannot play with his lusts with impunity! **Lusts kill and bury - doubt it not!** The desires for notoriety, wealth, attention, fame, esteem, sensual satisfaction, and power, cannot be held, nurtured, or entertained, without terrible harm being brought to your soul! **Do not overestimate your strength!** No person, even though redeemed, is strong enough to entertain these unlawful lusts, and retain spiritual composure at the same time. We are besought, as "strangers and pilgrims" in the earth, to "abstain from fleshly lusts which WAR against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11). **Though lusts are unseen, they are infinitely more powerful in potential than any overt action. They eat and gnaw at the soul until its life is taken away.** Unless captured "unto the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-6), they will overthrow you, and compel you to commit open sin. The battle arena is the mind, and it is there that the real victory is found! Meditation (Psa. 1:2), pure thoughts (Phil. 4:8), and spiritual hunger (Psa. 143:6; Matt. 5:6), are means granted of God whereby we may conquer lusts - evil cravings and desires. These lusts are things that militate against our knowledge of God (II Cor. 10:5); and unless overcome within, they shall overpower us, and cause us to "draw back unto perdition" (Heb. 10:38-39). **"KIBROTH-HATAVAH" - graves of lusts!** Let not this epitaph be written over your spiritual headstone.

Now, I beseech you by the mercies of God, to not receive the grace of God in vain; but rather permit it to properly teach you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously and soberly, and godly in this present world. Prayer is an effectual weapon in overcoming these lusts, for the Lord Jesus Christ, being Himself tempted "in all points like as we", is able to "be touched with the feelings of your infirmities" (Heb. 4:15-16). Run swiftly to Him, make no delay about it; He will dispatch delivering strength, and thou shalt "glorify Him."