

# In Remembrance of These Things

by Connie W. Adams

Some things ought to be forgotten. To dwell on past blunders gives rise to despair. Paul wrote, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14). Nursing old wounds sours the spirit. We cannot go into rewind and undo what is done.

Some things must be remembered. To Israel God said, "Remember that thou wast a stranger in the land of Egypt . . . therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day" (Deut. 5:15). The blessings of Canaan could best be appreciated against the background of Egypt. The feasts of Passover and Tabernacles were intended to help them remember how God spared them from the death of the firstborn in Egypt and how God supplied their needs in the wilderness.

"Help me to remember how short my time is" (Psa. 89:47). "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth" (Eccl. 12:1). "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord" (Jn. 15:20). "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). "Remember ye the words which were spoken before the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 17). The remedy for loss of "first love" is to "remember from whence thou art fallen" and repent and "do the first works" (Rev. 2:5).

Peter said, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yes, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" (2 Pet. 1:12-13). Timothy was charged, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" (1 Tim. 4:6).

Like Timothy, I aspire to be "a good minister of Jesus Christ." To that end we have prepared a special issue of this paper to take us back to some fundamental Bible lessons which we are in grave danger of forgetting.

## The Need For This Special

Historically, gospel preachers have repeatedly emphasized the truths you will find in this issue to help people in denominationalism see the difference between truth and error. Again and again these same passages and illustrations have been called in-to service when brethren in the Lord were flirting with apostasy whether in worship, work, organization, or whatever threatened the peace and welfare of the kingdom of God.

The institutional brethren have a crisis on their hands now with some going so far that they are advocating a "new hermeneutic." Commands, examples and necessary inferences are too limited for their fertile imaginations. Never mind the fact that Jesus used them in teaching truth, the apostles used them, and the first doctrinal issue facing

the church was settled by an appeal to all three (Acts 15). This "new hermeneutic" is subjective. We are called upon to practice whatever we think "Jesus would do." How shall we know that without Scripture to show it? While this "hermeneutic" may be new to some institutional folk, it is far from new to the denominational world. The denominational approach to Bible authority has been largely to ignore it in favor of whatever the majority want.

There are some men among the ultra-liberals who often speak of themselves as "on the cutting edge" of the kingdom. A few years ago an article appeared in Mission Magazine entitled "The 301 Cubit Ark." It ridiculed the idea of an exact pattern. It was chosen as "article of the year." Another magazine which has been on "the cutting edge" is Image. Now comes Wineskins with the avowed purpose of remaking the church. "Pattern theology" is out. The gospel when first given was new wine in new wineskins. It was not poured into the old wineskin of the law of Moses. It was not a patch on the old garment of Judaism; it was all new cloth. But what these men forget is that it is ever new. It does not need revision nor updating to make it "relevant." It is relevant. It always will be relevant.

Among those who have resisted the burgeoning institutionalism there is also a need for remembering passages which help us see the danger of human wisdom as opposed to divine wisdom, the danger of trifling with divine instructions, the folly of confusing the broad way with the narrow way, the disaster which comes from "going onward." Illustrations help to impress truth. But in our search for sermon illustrations, let us not overlook the most useful source of all -- the illustrations in the Bible itself. Tell me, how long has it been since you heard a sermon on Cain and Abel? How about "Make Thee an Ark of Gopher Wood"? or, "Nadab and Abihu"? or "Uzzah's Sin"? What about "Naaman the Leper," "To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice," Jesus on "The Traditions of Men," "Plants to Be Rooted Up," "Are There Few Saved?", "Mark 16:15-16" or "Going Onward"?

I dare say that if you were to preach a couple of these subjects in a gospel meeting there would be older people who would tell you they had not heard that in a long, long time. Some of the younger ones have never heard it. I was in a meeting a few years ago in a large southern city where there are many congregations and we were having day services. A preacher in the area attended each day. Toward the last of the week he said, "I want to thank you for making it worthwhile for me to bring my Bible. I have sat through many meetings in this city where I might as well have left my Bible at home."

What is happening about preaching? Check the shelves of preachers' libraries and see what they are using for source materials. Catchy, glitzy, witty works of Swindoll, Lucado and a few others will often be found. Motivational preaching has become the order of the day. Don't get me wrong. We all need to be motivated to do what we know is right. But there is the catch. All too many among the Lord's people do not know what they ought to know. There is a dearth of Bible knowledge. That sets the state for heartache down the road. The last few times I have preached on "Bible Authority" in meetings, invariably some older brethren have commented that they had not heard a sermon on that in twenty years. It may be that they forgot, or just didn't pay attention, or that they were just "carried away" at the moment. What if they are right?

The purpose of this special issue is not to suggest that these are the only passages on which we ought to teach. The Bible is an inexhaustible treasure. From it we are to declare "all the counsel of God" and to "keep back nothing which is profitable" to the hearers. Our work must be balanced. Error must be exposed and reprovved. Sin must be rebuked. Struggling saints facing the pressures of an increasingly irreligious society must be given help from the word of God to keep their poise and not lose sight of their goal. Babes in Christ must grow. So must those who are more mature. If they stop growing they will die. Older Christians need to have their spirits lifted. Elders, deacons, teachers, and preachers must all be encouraged. No faithful preacher of the gospel should ever be afraid of running out of material. The word of God is admirably suited to supply all our needs.

But through all of this, God's people must ever be cautioned about taking liberties with what the Lord said. The consequences of disobedience must be clearly understood...

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