

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

October 15

2017

## LET US WHO TEACH EXAMINE OURSELVES

One of the greatest responsibilities that a man or woman can undertake is the work of teaching God's word, and the teacher who realizes his responsibility will want to continue to improve himself. Let us look at some areas which may need improvement.

We may need physical improvement. By physical, I mean we may be nervous or irritable. If this be the case, we have a definite handicap as a teacher. Our students soon find this out and become uneasy and afraid to ask questions that they would like to ask for fear they will get their "heads snapped off". A nervous teacher who cannot express what he means and is always "playing with something" makes his students nervous, causing them to get their minds off what he is teaching. A teacher who speaks so low that his students have trouble hearing does not do the job of teaching that he could do if he would talk just a little louder.

Some of us who teach may need social improvement. I mean by "social improvement" the ability to get along with others. A person who cannot get along with his fellow-man is never going to be able to do an effective job of teaching. The inability to get along can be a very serious handicap to one who aspires to be a teacher. Many good men in the pulpit have been total failures as preachers because of their inability to get along with people.

Some may need improvement in the spiritual realm. No teacher can be effective in his teaching who does not try to live what he teaches to the very best of his ability. One who does not live what he teaches brings shame and reproach on the cause he is trying to advance. Also, an

insufficient knowledge of the word of God will result in a poor job of teaching – all of us can use improvement here.

*Donald Townsley*



## It All Depends - -

The song leader was young and inexperienced. He used poor judgement in the selection of songs, and made mistakes in pitch, time and rhythm. We could be embarrassed because we put on no better program for the visitors; OR, we could be thankful for our young people for trying, and of the church for encouraging the development of each member.

An elderly brother led in prayer. He used poor grammar, and his manner of speech was crude. We could criticize the elders for calling on such an unlearned man; OR, we could appreciate the sincerity and directness in the heart of this old soldier of the cross, and add our hearty amen! to his plea to God.

The preacher spoke plainly and forcibly. He delved into the scriptures concerning the church and its work, and made a sincere effort to explain what God had said. But effort on our part was necessary in order to follow his reasoning, and he lost us. We could resent his discussion of points unfamiliar to us, and be embarrassed because he distinguished so clearly the Lord's church and denominationalism; OR, we could be thankful for the services of this man of God. We could listen attentively, make a few notes, and continue our learning in private.

At the invitation a woman came forward, crying bitterly, to confess her sins. She asked the prayers and help of brethren that she might do better. We could feel a bit uneasy, and say, "What's she doing down here again?"; OR, we could rejoice with the angels in heaven, and determine to visit and encourage this weak sister.

The Lord's Supper could be a time-consuming project, with opportunities to gather coats and books in anticipation of dismissal; OR, it could be a true fellowship with the Lord. We could use these quiet moments waving at a baby; OR, looking deeply within ourselves, thanking God for cleansing us from sin, and asking His blessing.

And, we could go home complaining about how they do things down there OR, we could go forth renewed in spirit and determined to make this our best week yet for the Lord.

*Robert F. Turner*

## DEEP OR MUDDY?

Through the years there have been individuals, usually preachers, who feature themselves as being "free thinkers" who present "thought provoking" lessons that are usually attacks upon what they call the "traditionally held" views. The "in depth" lessons presented by these individuals usually leave many in the audience wondering just what they have said and thinking that the preacher is so "deep" in his thinking and presentation that they do not understand simply because they do not have the knowledge or ability the preacher has.

These men have at times caused confusion and strife by their preaching and when questioned about their teaching they usually reply, "You just don't understand what I am saying." Again, the implication is that any problem that may exist is due to the lack of knowledge or ability on the part of the hearer to comprehend the "deep" things taught by the preacher.

I think it is time to start putting the blame where it belongs. Are these men the "deep" thinkers they want us to believe they are? I often think of a statement I once heard made by an old country fellow. He said, "Just because you can't see the bottom of the river doesn't necessarily mean the water is deep, it may just be muddy." I am convinced that this is the case with some of these "deep" thinkers. They have the ability to present their thoughts in such a confusing manner that they just "muddy the water."

The apostle Paul said that he wrote the things revealed to him by the Holy Spirit so that "when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:4). One of the characteristics of faithful gospel preachers through the years has been their ability to present the truth of the gospel in a way that made it easily understood by those who heard. If these men who fancy themselves as being such "in depth" students of the word really have the knowledge and ability they want us to believe they have then why don't they just teach what they believe to be the truth in a simple understandable manner. If we are misunderstanding what they are teaching then we plead with them to use their "superior" ability and present their teaching so that we "inferiors" can understand. The gospel of Christ remains the same today as when first preached on the

day of Pentecost. When someone has to preach something that has never been preached before or preach it in a way no one else has ever preached it we had better beware.

I certainly do not want to discourage any study of God's word nor do I condone those who become satisfied with "the way we have always done things" and will not change even when change is necessary to conform to God's word. However, I do not approve of those who seem more concerned with impressing men with their ability to be "deep thinkers" rather than helping men understand the plain and simple teachings of God's word. All preachers need, from time to time, to ask themselves the same question Paul asked in his epistle to the Galatians; "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?" (Galatians 1:10). Paul said, "if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

I have often said that the two greatest compliments that could be paid to one preaching are: (1) "He preaches the truth" and (2) "He presents it in such a way that all can understand." When we become more concerned with "making an impression" than we are with "preaching the word" we are making a grave mistake. Our concern must always be the salvation of souls and not self-glorification. If the gospel is preached souls will be saved and God will be glorified.

Don't be intimidated by those who try to make you feel inferior in your ability to understand truth. Their teaching may not be "deep," it may just be "muddy."  
*James Hahn*

### Belleville church of Christ

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[www.bellevillechurch.net](http://www.bellevillechurch.net)

#### Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study . . . . .	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship . . . . .	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship . . . . .	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study . . . . .	7:00 p.m.

#### Evangelist

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