

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

November 25

2018

ARE WE "NARROW-MINDED"?

When we seek to persuade people to abide within the teaching of God's word and point out that we cannot please God unless we do so, we are often accused of being very *"narrowminded."* It is very easy for someone to make this accusation and think that in doing so he has answered any questions you may have raised in his mind.

The expression *"narrow-minded"* has come to have a bad meaning in the minds of most. Most people say they do not want to be *"narrow-minded"* and this may be fine in some areas of life, however, when it comes to our soul's salvation I am persuaded that we must be *"narrow-minded."* In Matthew 7:13,14, Jesus said, *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* Jesus tells us that if we are going to receive eternal life, we must follow the strait and narrow way. This is the only way.

Truth in any area is narrow. There may be many false ways, but only one true way. In math we see that truth is very narrow. When we say two plus two equals four, we state the truth. We could give many wrong answers to the equation, but only one correct answer. How sad it is that many will readily be very *"narrow-minded"* when it comes to the truth in secular matters, but these same individuals are ready to throw the truth out the window when it comes to things spiritual. They are ready to be very *"broad-minded"* then. I encour-

age you to read again Matthew 7:13,14 to see the consequences of following the *"broad"* way.

Yes, I plead guilty to being *"narrow-minded"* when it comes to the teaching of God's word. We must teach and practice ONLY that which we find revealed therein. To go beyond the teaching of Christ is to "have not God" (II John 9). Will you follow the *"narrow"* way? You must if you would have life.

✍ James Hahn



Homosexuality

There was a lot of publicity a few years ago about studies indicating a "genetic predisposition" to homosexuality, but there has never been anything near proof that homosexuality cannot be helped and is genetic. If someone contends that it is genetically driven, the burden of proof is on the one making that contention. It cannot be proven. Some other thoughts:

1. Homosexuality is "conduct". We do not deny that someone may have homosexual thoughts or temptations. But what makes someone homosexual is committing homosexual acts. Most people confuse a "tendency" or a "temptation" with the act. I may be tempted to rob a bank, but that does not make me a bank robber. I am a bank robber only when I rob the bank. I would not dispute that someone may have "homosexual tendencies." That does not mean that they have no choice but to commit homosexual acts. People choose the kind of behavior they engage in. Someone with the temptation to commit homosexual acts must discipline themselves and work to overcome their temptation just as someone tempted to commit heterosexual fornication or someone tempted to steal.

2. The fact that a condition has a genetic background does not make it good. The very same genetic studies that have been used to justify homosexuality also produced information about a number of genetic defects such as Down's syndrome. If there were a way to prevent or correct that genetic defect, we would do it. Should we be looking for a way to prevent or correct the "genetic defect" which supposedly causes homosexuality?

3. We know that there are "genetic predispositions" to certain behaviors. For example, there is evidence of a genetic predisposition to alcoholism. If someone knows they have such a genetic predisposition, they would be wise to avoid the behavior (drinking alcoholic beverages) that can cause them a serious problem. Furthermore, they have that choice! That person is not forced to drink, or to become a drunkard. He may have "predisposition" to alcoholism, but whether he ever takes a drink is a matter of choice and behavior.

4. If the person with whom you are discussing has regard for the Bible, I would point out that passages such as 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 teach that homosexuals (as well as drunkards, thieves, adulterers and idolaters) learned to cease that behavior. If they could learn to cease it, it must have been something they originally learned to do. Nevertheless, whether it was learned or inherited behavior, they still could stop the behavior, and had to do so to be right with God.

✍️ Tom Moody



PLEASING PULPITEERS

There has been a growing tendency among the churches in the last two or three decades to lose sight of the fundamental importance of teaching, and to emphasize more and more the social characteristics of "friendliness," "hospitality," "good fellowship," etc. And such has been made a pretty general appeal for the attention and accession of the public.

Stemming from this point of view have come a whole flock of troubles within the church, chief of which perhaps has been the clamor of the churches for that type of individual in their pulpits who would best fit into their scheme of things; who would have made a better Good Will Ambassador, President of a Chamber of Commerce, or greeter in some Social Club or Night Spot, except perhaps for the fact that he didn't have enough above the collar bone to qualify in such a competitive field, and so he made a preacher! And now is described by certain women in the congregation as, *"Our preachuh is jus' the sweetes' man."* *"He's jus' the mos' social-minded person you evah saw... ev'ry body jus' loves him to death."* *"You know he's jus' always on the go; why I bet not even the meta reada makes more calls than he does. And in the pulpit he jus' nevah hurts anybody's feeling!"*

And the reason the preacher himself specializes in these things is

because he knows that brethren who hired him expect it of him, and that if he is to hold the job, he had better comply. And so, like the gadget seller from the department store, he leaves his books and his Bible behind and takes to the town, street by street, knocking on the doors as he comes to them, seeking recruits for the yearbook, having forgotten that Paul said, *"Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ"* (Gal. 1:10).

People who "join the church" under the operation of this sort of fellow do not become Christians, they only "join the church," and as far as their salvation is concerned, they may as well have joined the Kiwanis Club. The Lord, Himself, said **teaching** precedes discipleship and is the means by which such an end is accomplished. Leave off the teaching, and substitute admiration for the preacher, the congeniality of the congregation, the inoffensiveness of the pulpit, etc., and you do not make disciples of Christ, but just plain, ordinary sectarians, with no convictions, and who continue to live about as they have in the past.

The only hope of the world in general and the churches in particular is faithful gospel preaching and teaching. Elders and churches, therefore, ought to desire and require of their preachers that their chief qualification be the ability to preach and teach the gospel effectively. And then, realizing that such requires much application and that application requires time, try not to load them down with such trifling, time-stealing, and fruitless tasks as gadding for gadding's sake. ✍️ Hugh Clark

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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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