ON THE HOME FRONT

Gary Colley

The brochures for Getwell’s 41st Annual Spiritual Sword Lectureship are now ready for distribution. If you desire a copy (or several copies), please contact our office at 901-743-0464. There are to be 3,000 of these mailed to the congregations over several states. Hopefully, many will find the theme Eternal Security challenging, and the speakers and assigned topics desired for our growth in the Faith of the Gospel (Jude 3). We appreciate each of our speakers, who have been carefully chosen to speak October 16-19, 2016. Their abilities are second to none! Please make your plans to be with us throughout Sunday – Wednesday. Sweet fellowship will be enjoyed by all.

While it is true that there are many important things to be cared for in our lives, no other care is as important as the care for our souls (Matt. 16:26). All else in the world pales in comparison to the desires of our Heavenly Father that we live a pure life, being members of the glorious church of our Lord, and remembering the precious souls we are charged to teach. These are all collected in our pleasing and humble worship and service. We cannot overestimate the importance in our lives of fervent prayer and faithful stewardship. It is important to our fellow Christians to exhort, encourage, and to seek meaningful fellowship with each member of the Lord’s church (Heb. 10:23-25). There is no price tag that can be attached at death like steadfast faithfulness to the loving family of God (I Tim. 3:14-15). Honoring Almighty God by living morally upright, respecting His standard for marriage, is not only meaningful to our present life, but also to our children who see our example (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:8-9). ARE WE LETTING OUR LIGHT SHINE? OR HAVE WE ALLOWED OUR LIGHT TO BE DIMMED BY SIN?
How the Holy Spirit Converts?

We have long believed that if anyone is ever saved it will be by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit operates upon the heart of the sinner in conversion, but it also declares that He exercises His influence through the written word. The Holy Spirit and the Word are not the same any more than God and His Word are the same, but the Word is the instrument through which these operate on man’s heart today. The same Truth is used in every conversion of the first century in the New Testament, as well as every conversion today (Mk. 16:15-16; Heb. 4:12). While there is no conversion without the Holy Spirit, there is no operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion independent of God’s Word. Often the same things are ascribed to the Word in conversion that are attributed to the Holy Spirit’s work in conversion. Notice several things that are said to be done by the Holy Spirit and the Word in conversion:

1. ENLIGHTENS. “The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes” (Psa. 19:8).
2. CONVERTS. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul” (Psa. 19:7).
3. GIVES LIGHT. “The entrance of thy words giveth light” (Psa. 119:130).
4. GIVES UNDERSTANDING. “Through thy precepts I get understanding” (Psa. 119:104).
5. SAVES. “Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jas. 1:21).
6. PURIFIES. “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit” (I Pet. 1:22).
7. PRODUCES FAITH. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).
8. IS SPIRIT AND LIFE. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn. 6:63).
9. JUDGES US. “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jn. 12:48). From these and other verses of the New Testament, we conclude that the Holy Spirit uses His Word to convert the souls of men today.
“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Heb. 10:24-25).”

We come together each Lord’s day to worship the most high God. But there are blessings that come from assembling together. One blessing is the fellowship we engage in with one another. Another blessing is the encouragement we receive from one another and from the Word of God. Lastly and closely akin to encouragement, as pointed out in Hebrews 10:24, we are to provoke or stir up one another unto love and good works. I am reminded that Reggie Jackson, of baseball fame with the Oakland A’s and New York Yankees, called himself the straw that stirred the drink. His attitude and zeal was contagious and inspired his teammates. The question arises, are we the straw that stirs the drink and encourages others to better serve the Lord? As a side note regarding our responsibility toward one another, Paul used the phrase “one another” 38 times in his writings, and the phrase occurs 68 times from Acts to Revelation.

On a strictly secular point of view, what if we viewed attending a sporting event like some view attending worship services? Let us look at some excuses offered for not attending a ball game. They have a strange similarity to excuses offered for not attending worship service. (1) Every time I go they ask me for money. (2) The people who sit by me are not very friendly. (3) The coach never comes to call on me or speaks to me. (4) The seats are hard and uncomfortable. (5) There is too much movement going on. (6) The referees make decisions I do not agree with. (6) Sometimes the game is boring. (7) The game goes too long and I get out late. (8) My parents took me to too many games as a child. (9) The children present are noisy and fidgety. (10) I have trouble finding a parking place. (11) The public address system is too loud, or I can’t hear the public address system. Pretty lame, huh?

Let me finish this train of thought with the story called “The House of Many Lamps.” There was a church built in the 16th century in southern Europe with no windows and very little inside lighting. Each pew had a holder for a lamp, and each family brought their own lamp. If a family did not show up, their pew was dark. If several families did not show up, entire sections of the building were dark. You can draw the lesson from this story. We all have a responsibility to share the light of Jesus Christ with others and to dispel darkness.

David Looney in our summer series spoke of kitchen table evangelism, meaning we are more likely to convert a friend or relative to Christ than a stranger. Several years ago there was an evangelism program called “friendship evangelism” that was built on this premise. Years ago when I was at Freed Hardeman, the textbook for the personal evangelism class was titled Go Ye Means Go Me by Ivan Stewart. It stressed our personal responsibility to tell others about Jesus. Currently, in the Memphis area we have the Fishers of Men Bible study outreach program overseen by the Cordova congregation.

At Getwell on a congregational level we have the fine lessons from the pulpit by brother Colley. We send THE SPIRITUAL SWORD throughout the world. The Truth In Love radio program has been on the air for over 60 years in the Memphis area. On a more personal basis we have our Bible correspondence courses which are regularly sent out. This work is coordinated by Raymond McCoy aided by others in the congregation. Let us not forget our selection of tracts available to the congregation for outreach and edification. Two particular tracts stand out published by House To House written by Allen Webster. They are “What To Expect When You Visit the Church of Christ” and “What Makes the Church of Christ Unique.”

Last but not least is the Jule Miller video Bible teaching series. This series started with filmstrips, then video tapes, and now Digital Video Disc. Only eternity will tell how many souls were saved because of this video series. Please avail yourself of these resources to reach others with the Gospel.


—Ron Wallace