

# STRAIGHTWAY

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"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" [Mark 1:18].

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## CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

The Witness Outreach

Foundations Bible College

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### THE BIBLE IN OUR TIME

by Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, Founder & President  
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**But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ (I Peter 3:15-16).**

From almost every quarter of the earth we are hearing criticism of two major questions: first, what is the genuine **Text** of the Bible?; and second, what is the genuine **Interpretation** of the Text? No other questions are equal to this outcry. What is the Text, and what is the Interpretation of the Text?

#### **The Bible For Our Time**

We were reluctant to set our title for this article as: "The Bible In Our

Time." Here again, some might think that we are suggesting that the Bible in our time is different than some other time in the past. No, that is not the purpose of the title. This title represents the fragile condition of our world concerning what is the Text and what is the Interpretation of the Text in our time. Or, what are we, as fundamentalists going to do with the Bible, the Word of God, in our time of the flourishing apostasy?

Well, the Bible in our time is the very same Bible in any time past. There is nothing new that is true; there is nothing new about the Word of God in any generation. We need the Bible for our time.

#### **A Fresh Affirmation**

It is true, however, that God's people must give a fresh, distinctive, and appropriate reaffirmation of the Bible in each new generation. We must address the age with the Bible in each succeeding generation of the mutation

of sin and the advancement of the apostasy. The Devil is not original at all; he cannot really create anything. All he can do, which is quite influential, is to pervert the Word of God and Truth in any field of Natural Theology and Revealed Theology into a new thing. In our time, we are simply flourishing with "new things." The Christian must address these "new things." There is: neo-orthodoxy, neo-pentecostalism, new charismaticism, neo-evangelicalism, and the very new "Promise Keepers," who simply perpetuate the ecumenical fellowships while criticizing all who would not join their own, human "promises." This is impossible for us as fundamentalists, because we have already made, and long ago now, promises to keep the biblical Promises of God.

There is a great need to address and reaffirm God's Text and the Holy Spirit's Interpretation of the Text for another generation. We must pass on the Holy Torch that our forefathers gave us when they fell in death.

### **A Series of Questions Now**

There are at least seven series of questions which we must ask in our

time concerning the Christian and the Christian Faith. Whenever a Bible Church is born in our time, there must be a line of demarcation drawn by the Word of God for the clarification of exactly what is a Christian and what is his Christian Faith? The following areas of questions must be answered if we are to save the public extinction of Bible Churches with a biblical witness in our time. They are:

First, why are there so many English versions being written and published in our time? Was not the King James Version sufficient to settle what is the Text of the Word of God for English people? Did it not serve us well? Will we bring confusion and doubt now through over 100 new English Versions?

Second, why have three particular, popular Christian religions come together in fellowship and doctrine at this time? Why are the Charismatics, the Ecumenists, and the Roman Catholics involved in fellowship? Why are others coming along, like the Promise Keepers, maintaining the same kind of fellowships? Will there be a return back to Rome in our time?

Third, why has there been a shift away from the historic orthodoxy and the fundamental teachings of the Bible? Is the current emphasis on the teachings and gifts of the Holy Spirit bringing in a change away from biblical doctrine and interpretation through interpreted Texts? Will a new teaching on Spirit become the catalyst away from the dogmatic biblical doctrines of the past? their Creeds and Councils?

Fourth, why are most of the protestant denominations liberal and ecumenical in their new, biblical interpretations, while the conservative

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biblical interpretations have had to make an exodus to independent congregations? Why are so many professing Christians changing to ecumenical churches in the United States and elsewhere in the world?

Fifth, why are fewer and fewer people presently identified with a fervent belief in the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures? confirming verbal, plenary inspiration? Why has historical research become a greater liberal influence to interpret the Bible? while on the other hand, new-revelationism, through the Charismatics, are bringing doubts, if not the end, of the Old, Holy Scriptures in at least some sections of the visible church?

Sixth, why do only 28% of Americans believe in biblical absolutes? Why is there a falling away in the theological and practical belief in objective truth as espoused by the Word of God? Why do we not hear more direct teaching on the daily Christian life, godliness, conscience, piety, and prayer? Why almost a complete desertion of Christian Ethics?

Seventh, are we entering into a new world religion which was believed and prophesied before? Or, are we observing a “falling away,” after Adam’s Fall, of the historic Christian Faith, which is called the Apostasy? Are these the days of the nearness of the coming of Antichrist and the False prophet, understood to come to past before the actual second coming of the Lord Jesus back to the earth? Are these indeed like the days before the Flood in Noah’s time?

### **Presuppositional Apologetics**

No one should expect a Bible Christian to be in a generation when these questions and these observations

are before us without dealing with these pertinent points. It is improper, and unbecoming of us as Bible Christians, to simply watch these things come to past so swiftly in a single generation without the people of God rising up in the defense of their Faith.

In some quarters we are hearing intellectual talk about “presuppositional apologetics.” Having read considerable material and seeing a variety of meanings to this phrase, it is indeed becoming God’s people to at least see a biblical need of presenting an apologetic defense for their personal faith, addressing, and even attacking, the presuppositions of the time in the context of their own criticism.

We have spoken in several articles of the past, as well as our most recent book, *The Eclipse of Hope*, that the presuppositions of the 1980’s and 1990’s have moved into the dark spectrum of great doubt of much of modern, modern christianity. Some believe we are even living in post-modernity, past pre-modern and modern beliefs. We have heard so much heresy, apostasy, and erroneous christianity in the last half of the twentieth century, that the more honorable sinners have come to conclude that christianity is no longer credible, and perhaps not even plausible. Personally, I believe the modern, apostate false Christian teachers and preachers have deeply hurt the world with a damaged announcement of the Gospel. We have been viewing a “crucifying afresh” of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. There are quite a number of honorable deists, atheists, pantheists and agnostics in our time. The last is the most pathetic of all. The agnostic reluctantly

contemplates atheism, but leaves his mind in the agnostic state. Of course, all of these are false, but may God help us not to present the Bible in our time in such a weak and/or false way that it will cause anyone to stumble because they are confused about what is the Text and what is the Interpretation of the Text.

Yes, we need Christians who are willing to defend the Bible in the light of the presuppositions of the time.

This is what this author means by “presuppositional apologetics.”

The work of the entire Trinity is needed in our lives: the love of God, the Father; the grace of the Lord Jesus; and, the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit, if we are to meet this challenge of another segment of people who are lost.

This is what we mean by the preaching, teaching, and presentation of “The Bible in Our Time.”

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please write:

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## The Definition of Separation

Any definition of separation that does not seek as its first motive and final goal the exalting of the Lord Jesus Christ in all of His beauty and glory is not worthy to be called biblical separation.

Every garden that God plants has a tree of forbidden fruit. Every tabernacle that God erects has a pattern. Every promised land has a boundary. Every wall God puts up has a plumb line. Every kingdom God ordains has a rule of life and a Ruler. Every Christian called by God has a plot of spiritual ground in which he must reside—separated, holy ground! It is only as we live within this boundary, planting and building according to the pattern, laying forth godly character with the plumb line, obeying the rule and the Ruler of the Kingdom of God, can we ever hope to please God.

Even in the creation of the world separation was present. There were many divisions named, and each one was marked with a holy separation that was placed there evidently to exalt the Creator of life (Genesis 1 and 2). There was a separation between heaven and earth (1:1), light and darkness (1:4), day and night (1:5), evening and morning (1:5), waters under the firmament and waters above the firmament (1:6-7), waters under the heaven and the dry land (1:9), earth and seas (1:10), food that man may freely eat and one he may not eat (2:16-17), and man to leave parents but cleave to his wife (2:24).

God achieved all of these dichotomies through the method of divine

separations—the *dogmatic divisions* and the *delightful gatherings* of God. Biblical separation involves both directions: God separates *from* and God separates *unto*. Scriptural separation never consists of either/or in this matter; it is always both/and. If this divine paradox lays hold upon man, there can be a consistent effectiveness of this great truth in all of our lives as we stand steadfastly against the Lord's enemies.

Unfortunately many so-called Fundamentalists have made the presupposition of their motive *for* separation or *against* separation to be something less than the exaltation of Christ. We read of "The Mastery Test" which is spoken of as a motive for separation.

**All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any (I Corinthians 6:12).**

There is also "The Temple Test."

**What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (I Corinthians 6:19-20).**

Then there is "The Stumbling Block Test."

**Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend (I Corinthians 8:13).**

Finally, there is the “Soulwinning Test.”

**For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more (I Corinthians 9:19).**

In all of these “tests” there is a danger of *only* interpreting them in the light of the horizontal affairs of the generation in which we live. No one of these tests should be taken away from the supreme vertical “test” which governs all other motives or reasons for separation in the Christian life. The Vertical Test is not just one of several tests which the Bible gives in the matter of separation: it is the highest and most noble reason or motive for separation, and it governs all else.

**Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31).**

**And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Colossians 3:17).**

**And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men (Colossians 3:23).**

**And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence (Colossians 1:18).**

This might seem to be a distinctive without a difference; yet this principle

from the Word of God could make the difference between whether we see separation as a necessity, an option, or a precious privilege. When man begins to think horizontally, even in his thoughts of God and truth, he could ultimately be dominated by the horizontal influence. Man must begin with the vertical—the objective revealed Word of God. There may be a lot of good, *human* reasons why we should build evangelism around the dialogue and direction of the direction of the generation in which we live; but in the final analysis, the question centers on the biblical reason why we should extend evangelism on the base of biblical separation. Methodology is linked with motive. And the presupposition by which man acts is indicative of whether the means or the will of God are more important. The means and the methods never justify the end; the end dictates the means. It is not as simple as saying that the “Hyper-Fundamentalist Complex” is a result of “negative-separatism” as demonstrated in the “loneliness” (“Only a few of us are serving God.”), which leads to “self-pity” (“I alone am really pure in my motives.”), which leads to the “martyr complex” (“I’m alone, therefore I’m right.”), which finally leads to “negative-separatism.”

Neither is it as narrow as a contest between “worldly evangelicals” and “hyper-fundamentalists”—a word-battle between tolerance and intolerance, relativism and absolutism, compromise and militancy, flexibility and inflexibility, conformity and separatism, strong social emphasis and weak social emphasis, infiltration and confrontation, dialogue and

proclamation, political liberalism and political conservatism, leadership by pastors, being pro para-church and being pro local church, or having a tendency to split left and a tendency to split right. All of these signify only the partisan, personal, and selfish aspects of argumentation in these matters.

Anyone who speaks of biblical separation with such a low view does not understand the heart of a godly man pleading with God against apostasy. Calling a biblical Fundamentalist a man with a “hyper-fundamentalist complex” does not make him a “hyper-fundamentalist” with a “complex.” Tagging “worldly” or “hyper” does not explain the war. There are people who desire to be called Fundamentalists who do not follow historic Fundamentalism. They cry against the biblical Fundamentalist as being among the “lunatic fringe,” suffering from a “separation-isolation cycle,” or “extreme.” It is not a “hyper-fundamentalist complex” that we are suffering from; we are suffering because so-called Fundamentalists have reproached the Lord

Jesus with a claim of separation that does not exalt Him. If a *different* “Fundamentalist” is going to call names of other “Fundamentalists” as being self-styled dictators who act without love, what about their own self-styled dictatorship which does not glorify and exalt the Lord Jesus in truth and love? If we should not speak against what *some* might believe as “God’s anointed,” should we not shut our mouths entirely on the subject for fear of being inconsistent with our premise? Is it sane to call another a dictator if we are dictatorial in the matter ourselves? To be consistent, as well as pure and honorable, one must live with his own criticism. However, if one because of his love for God and the Bible believes that apostates must be identified personally, and crusades, movements, and organizations must be restrained, then the Fundamentalist is truly living consistently. To *dialogue* means to follow the people; to *relate* or *conform* to an age is to follow error. It is because of God and His Son that we do battle.

O.T.S.

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*"Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves,  
and let us enter into the defenced cities"  
(Jeremiah 8:14a).*

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*“Should all the forms which men devise,  
Attack my faith with treacherous art,  
I'd call them vanity and lies  
And bind the Bible to my heart.”*

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## THE FALL SCHEDULE

August 23, 1995	Fall Semester Begins; Worship, Orientation & Registration
September 28, 1995	Board of Trustees; Program Service, <i>USS Indianapolis</i>
September 29, 1995	Founder's Day; Special Meetings
October 1, 1995	"Operation Richmond"
November 16, 1995	The Pastor to South Korea
November 23, 1995	National Thanksgiving Day
December 15, 1995	Christmas Oratorio
December 16, 1995	Semester Recess
December 19, 1995	Faculty-Staff Recess