



THE CHALLENGER

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PROCLAIMING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

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PROFILES IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY JOHN WESLEY –

John Wesley was born in June of 1703, in Lincolnshire, England. He was the 15th child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. His father was the son of a minister who left the Church of England during the Great Rejection of 1662 (a great study in itself). John's father eventually distanced himself from the Dissenters and rejoined the Anglican clergy. His mother, Susanna, was raised in the home of a Puritan Dissenter. She also left the Dissenters and became an Anglican at age 13. This background had much to do with John Wesley being loyal to the Church of England all his life. His conversion to Christ is one of the most familiar in all of church history. From his journal dated Feb. 17, 1736, Wesley recorded:

On landing in Georgia I asked the advice of Mr. Spangenberg, one of the German pastors, with regard to my own conduct. He said in reply, 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' I paused, and said, 'I know He is the Savior of the world.' 'True,' said he; 'But do you know He has saved you?'

It was two years however, from this entry until his famous Aldersgate Street conversion in Feb. 1738. And almost immediately after his salvation, John began preaching wherever doors were open to him. As his message became clear to the established clergy, he soon found those doors closed. No other pulpit was made available to him, so he began to preach to people in open-air meeting. God honored His Word faithfully delivered with a great harvest of souls. For the next 53 years, Wesley preached over 40,000 messages to people scattered all over England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, and the United States of America. His converts were organized into groups and were shepherded by an itinerant band of traveling preachers trained in Wesley's methods. Eventually they became known as Methodists. In addition to his preaching and writing ministry, John played an important supportive role in the musical ministry of his brother, Charles, who wrote over 6,000 hymns.

The Lord granted Wesley, along with George Whitefield, an important part in the First Great Awakening. On one famous occasion Wesley stood on his father's tombstone and preached to a large crowd of hungry hearers gathered outside the church closed to Wesley. The Lord gave to Wesley the boldness that the Apostle Paul asked the Ephesian believers to pray for him to have (Eph. 6:18-19), that he may preach the gospel wherever he went. This is the same boldness that all believers should be praying for themselves and for each

other – what a difference we would make in the world and in our local churches! Ultimately and sadly, theological differences between Wesley and Whitefield prevented any joint ministry together, though they remained close friends. How often don't we find great and intense defenses for a system today, without any desire for a continued friendship, fellowship, or encouragement? That too, is sad, and an indictment on us. Wesley was tireless in the efforts of the ministry, writing about it in his journal:

"I entered my eightieth year; but, blessed be God, my time is not 'labor and sorrow.' I find no more pain or bodily infirmities than at five-and-twenty. This I impute (1) to the power of God fitting me for what He called me to; (2) to my traveling four or five thousand miles a year; (3) to my sleeping, night and day, whenever I want it; (4) to my rising at a set hour; and (5) to my constant preaching, particularly in the morning."

Like any and all other men used of God, John Wesley had his faults, he made mistakes, and his judgment may have been wrong at times; but, if we take him as a whole, what an example he was to the day in which he lived and served the Lord, a benefactor to all men, with the mind of Christ for the souls of men, "**a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.**"

LET'S GO FOR A WALK

Have you ever considered how the Bible likens the Christian life to a walk?

- Gen.3:8, "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the cool of the day."
Gen.5:24, "And Enoch walked with God."
Gen.6:9, "Noah walked with God."
Deut.13:4, "Ye shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him..."
Rom. 6:4, "... even so we should walk in newness of life."
Eph.2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
Eph.5:8, "walk as children of light."

When we go for a walk we sometimes trip. That happened especially when we were learning to walk. We probably tripped more than once. As we got older we gained strength, coordination, and confidence, though we still needed to keep our eyes on where we were going. As children of God through faith in Christ, the longer we walk with Him, the fewer times we trip. The second thing that happens when we walk is that we sometimes encounter dangers. Before having my knees replaced I jogged quite often. On this particular morning, I was finishing up and was very tired, slowing to a walk. Ahead and behind a fence was a pit bull digging frantically in the sand to get under the fence. He did and came directly at me - full speed. I did not have many options at that moment. I recognized immediately the danger that I was in. You don't need the details - just that the Lord changed his heart. Walking with Christ exposes us to danger and attacks from the devil. He is described as a roaring lion trying to devour us. II Timothy 3:12, declares, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The third area when we go for a walk is that we sometimes meet people. We will meet people that we never would have met otherwise. And the same is true spiritually when you walk with the Lord: He will put people in your path to be a help to, as well as to witness to them. He also will bring people into your life to be of help to you.

The word, walk, then is appropriate to illustrate a life that is being lived for the Lord.

Eph.4:1, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." What kind of a walk therefore, is a worthy walk?

1. It is a unified walk (vs.3-6) You and I have to make an effort to have unity (oneness) of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This is the unity which the Holy Spirit is the author of. Do we all have the same Master? Do we believe the same doctrines? Do we all have the same baptism? Do we all have the same God and Father? A worthy walk does not attempt to criticize, malign, and divide. We have more people than ever defending "systems" than God's Word. And guess what

(Continued on page 4)

WORTHWHILE TO REMEMBER

"In our day we have a lot of foolish people who believe that the old Rome is now a harmless old pussy cat sitting on the banks of the Tiber River; she purrs so contentedly. They say, 'we never understood Rome. What a pity we ever saw the Reformation take place at all!' Many are the church leaders who go to Rome to see the Pope, to have a talk with him and see if he would not take us back on moderately easy terms.

"What foolish people, who have long ceased to protest against evil doctrine, forgetting the millions of lives that were sacrificed for the precious truths [of God's word]. Depend upon it, if the day ever comes that the Pope gets back in the saddle again, and gets control of the proposed union, it will only be at the expense of life, that is, if people will worship scripturally at all.

"Religious leaders are dazzled with the thought of a great united church, and are hurrying on to a union with Rome, which scripture shows clearly enough will yet take place."

Dr. H.A. Ironside (written in 1919)

WORTHWHILE ILLUSTRATION

The Rev. C.H. Spurgeon was once shown a Bible which was carelessly put by a servant into a damp cellar. A certain kind of worm had eaten a hole through the Bible from the front board to the back board. The lady of the house expected Spurgeon to say, "What a careless servant," but he didn't. He held the Bible in his hands, lifted his eyes toward Heaven and prayed, "Lord, make me a worm like that." Every believer should have the desire to be worm-like with regard to the Bible.

Personal Word from the Editor



By now the mid-term elections in our country are over. There are three emotions at play: elation and hopeful, downcast and angrier than before, or neither, keeping one's eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ as a citizen of heaven, knowing that we are pilgrims and strangers, and that we are merely passing through this world. I surely do not discount our responsibility to our country – we should have voted – we still have that freedom and right. I know however, that apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, our country, any country is gone. There will be no peace, nor godly wisdom. It matters little whether one is conservative or

liberal; it matters little how many talk show hosts or commentators are out there: none ask the true born again Christian for his input. All we are is fodder for anyone to discriminate or rail against, or laugh at. We have been discounted, and yet we are the very ones who have the answer to salvage any country. The Preacher, the book of Ecclesiastes, tells of a man who rescued his city from destruction. He was described as a poor, but wise man, and by that wisdom delivered the city. Yet when the city was delivered – nobody remembered him (see Eccl.9:14-15). The summary statement declares:

“The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

“Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.”

Ecclesiastes 9:17-18

All readers of this material need to be saved people to understand the spiritual base that this literature is coming from, and apart from receiving Christ as Savior from sin, through faith alone in Him, this is merely the ranting of ‘unlearned people.’ The gospel is still *“the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth...”* (Rom.1:16). The song writer declared, *“My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus blood and righteousness.”* Our salvation is found in none other than Jesus Christ. If you have not received Him as yet, He paid your sin debt and suffered the penalty for that debt – for you. You cannot save yourself – ever. If you die without Him, the debt and punishment fall back to you and then you will understand, for eternity, that you can't pay it. Trust in Him completely while there is the opportunity, for there may not be that opportunity tomorrow. This wisdom comes from God and is essential to spiritual success, whether personally or corporately. Continue to keep our country and its leadership in prayer for salvation and wisdom.

It is staggering to reflect on what we who are saved have in Christ. And we ought to reflect on Him. He is our life, our source of power, blessing, truth, leadership, wisdom, calling, joy, peace, love, and sound doctrine. He is the head of our local churches, present within us in the Person of the Holy Spirit, and present whenever or wherever two or three saints are gathered together. He has given to us His inerrant, infallible, and inspired Word. Without Him we can do nothing: with Him we can do all things, as He strengthens us.

The apostle Paul wrote in II Timothy 3, a detailed description of the character of church people in the last days. Verse 2 says, *“For men shall be . . . unthankful, unholy.”* Included with quite a few other things, it is a sad indict-

ment on our day to see many who profess to be saved people, so ungrateful and unthankful for what they claim to have been given in Christ Jesus. Couple that with not being holy, set apart to God, or separated from the world, and it has normal Christians going around scratching their heads in confusion. The ungodly teaching is rampant and growing like a cancer everyday. The historic Christian faith is an endangered species at this moment. We are being passed by, and what is passing itself as Christian is in many instances apostasy and rank unbelief. Paul described it this way in II Timothy 3:5, *“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”* These are people who have the words, but not the divine power that comes with genuine salvation, behind the words. We have been told that it would come. Many of us knew that it would come. Few of us thought it would be in our lifetime, and in the manner that it is happening. Let us together, this season of thanksgiving emphasis, take heart and give thanks with our hearts, our souls, our strength, our bodies, as well as our words, prayers, giving, and loyalty, to the One who gave His all for each and every one of us, that we may be saved and spend eternity with Him who loved us beyond measure. It is only our reasonable service.

May the Lord bless you this Thanksgiving and beyond. All of us who volunteer to make this publication possible are thankful for each and every one of you. Our hearts have been blessed beyond words in serving you.

Gifts That Keep on Giving

*In memory of:
Pastor Dwight Porter*

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(WALK Continued from page 2)

it has caused?

2. It is a maturing walk (vs.11-16) If a baby doesn't seem to be able to walk well, nobody seems to mind too much: it is a baby. But if the baby grows in years and isn't able to walk well, the parents usually take note and go to the specialist to straighten their legs or feet, and get therapists to help them learn to walk correctly. God has given to us several sources to help us walk worthy: the record of the prophets and apostles are of great help to us today;

Evangelists go about to be of help to pastors and local churches, and often pastors engage in this ministry as well; and Pastors and Teachers are given to us to challenge and encourage us to be growing, maturing, and changing as we walk with Christ. They let us know that there are things to put off (Eph.4:22), as well as things to put on (Eph.4:24). We should expect as Christians, to be told and taught to change . . . and change. You can't do some things and bring honor to Christ or claim that you are walking worthy. Some things must "go," while other things replace them in Christ. It is all part of growing up and being normal as God's child.

3. It is an honest walk (vs. 25) The truth of God's Word applied, cleanses and sets the conscience free. It is alarming that there are those who profess to be saved who believe that they can be dishonest and still walk worthy of Christ. Honesty is genuineness, and is sorely needed, appreciated, and rewarded.

4. It is a kind walk (vs.31-32) Where exactly does kindness begin? With a change of attitude! In verse 31, there are a number of things to put away. As a believer that is to walk worthy of the Lord, put them out of your lives! Then you will have room to be kind, tenderhearted, and quick to forgive. Some declare that we should have an attitude of forgiveness before an offense is committed against you, so as not to be caught off guard. I call it a predetermined commitment, dedication, or response. The days are evil, we are to be a people that walk with our eyes wide open, seeing what is going on, while prepared ahead of time how to deal with it. We are to walk kindly on the basis of our forgiveness obtained through the substitutionary atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ for us.

III John 4, says, "*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*"

A worthy walk is a kind walk, an honest walk, a maturing walk, and a unified walk. Amos 3:3, declares, "*Can two walk together except they be agreed?*" We all need to be walking as one. Christian, let's go walking for Christ!

Dr. T. Michael Eccleston—Editor

REVISED VERSION OF A FAMILIAR POEM

*Too long I've laid me down to sleep, and prayed my soul to keep.
I should awake before I die, and realize time is passing by.
I should arise and go tell the lost, despite the plans, despite the cost!
Too long I've laid me down to sleep, while multitudes around me weep.
I must awake before I die, and realize **my** time is passing by.*

Dwight Porter, D.D., Founder
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*"Therefore, my beloved brethren,
be ye steadfast, unmoveable, al-
ways abounding in the work of the
Lord, forasmuch as ye know that
your labour is not in vain in the
Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:58*

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