

BE NICE TO HIM!

I have held a number of gospel meetings in a town a few hundred miles north of where we live. Through at least three of the meetings I stayed in a motel owned by one of the members. In the fourth I stayed with one of the elders. This good brother is in the insurance business and has a lovely big house just off one of the main highways. He has, for all practical purposes, two houses in one. There is a large living room and on either end are bedrooms, private baths, etc. Brother and sister Foy E. Wallace, Jr., made their home with this Christian man and wife (their children have had their own homes now for several years), and the Wallace name is a dear and revered name in that household.

This good brother has a dog--I mean a real dog--a Doberman Pinscher, and he stands guard around the clock and people who have been there just once never forget it. His name is "Brutus" and I think the name is in keeping with his character. Now Doberman Pinschers are not lap dogs as you well know if you know anything at all about this particular strain of "doghood." People keep them for one reason only--to threaten anyone who dares invade the premises. With me a threat is enough. The Dobermans are usually very vicious with strangers. They have a bite that can come down on man or beast with a one hundred forty pound impact. That's almost enough to remove a limb.

When the elder led me out to his house after the first service--I had gotten there just prior to the service--he told me to stay in my car until he assured Brutus that I was okay. I didn't argue the point. I stayed in my car. Brutus heard us coming and knew that one car didn't belong there. He came out with a friendly look toward the lead car and with a challenging look toward my car. My friend got out of his car and came over to my car with Brutus right by his side sizing me up. I had rolled the window down and that long cold nose was very close to the lower part of the opening. The dog was waiting for some instruction from his master. Then it came in these words: "Now Brutus, this is brother Smith. He will be staying with us for a week. He's our friend and you must be nice to him!"

Does this sound crazy to you? Well, that dog seemed to understand every word his master said. His tail began to wag as he stepped back as if to say, "Come on, Buster, get out. It's okay!" Believe it or not, I got out without a bit of fear, bent down and put my arm around the dog's neck. He laid his long nose and face against my face and from that minute until I left we were bosom buddies! I would go in during the day and he would greet me as if I really belonged there. No matter how dark it was at night I did not hesitate to call his name and get right out of the car. Here he would come and I knew I was as safe as I could ever be. I spoiled him some through the week by letting him in the house a few times when he wasn't supposed to go in, and that just endeared me to him even more.

This is a true story. Now you possibly can see my main point in telling it. It is not just to tell a rather unusual dog story. The main point is taken from the introduction my friend gave the dog: "Now Brutus, this is brother Smith ... he's our friend and you must be nice to him." As I look around over our brotherhood and observe all the trouble we have among us--hatreds, strife, divisions, petty gossip, slandering, and maligning of characters, I think we need to reintroduce ourselves to each other. "Now brother Smith this is brother Jones. He is our friend. Be nice to him." We have some real human-Dobermans among us today! They have forgotten that we are brethren. They have forgotten how to love if they ever knew how. They have been completely negative so long all they know how to do is stand and bark, show their teeth, and bite.

The church is the family of God and we are told to "love one another" (1 John 4:7). What if God bared his "teeth" at us every minute of the day? He loves us. Oh, how much He loves us! He loved us when we were His enemies (Rom 5:10). He loved us enough to give the greatest gift of all--His Son (John 3:16). This does not argue for compromise. Love will not sell-out the truth. This does not argue against rebuking when we must. Love will rebuke. My point is this: we hear much about love and most of it is a distorted view and definition of what love is. We talk about it and then cut each other to pieces. Have we forgotten that we are "members of the same body"? We often act like it. What a lesson I learned that night in that back yard staring into the eyes of a Doberman! "Brutus, this is brother Smith.... he is our friend and you must be nice to him!"

*Foy I. Smith deceased
Gospel Advocate, 05/05/83*

BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

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HEEDING WHAT GOD SAYS

"And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men" (Mark 8:31-33).

Jesus came for the "hour" that He spoke of in this passage. The prophets spoke in times past of this. Jesus spoke of it, He said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:27-28). At the Passover, Jesus knew His "hour" was near, "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). Jesus said that this "hour" was the hour for the religious leaders, "Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:52-53). Jesus made mention of His "hour" in His prayer to the Father, "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee" (John 17:1).

Even though Jesus spoke these words, Peter rebuked the Lord. Matthew records, "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee" (Matthew 16:22). It was at this point the Lord rebuked Peter. The Lord tells us the reason for His rebuke of Peter, "for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."

Beloved, when God speaks, we must be careful to hear, heed, and accept what God says. We can surmise why Peter said what he did -- he didn't want the Lord to suffer and die; yet this was the hour for which He came. We must have the attitude of Samuel in the long ago, when Eli told him what to do. It was written, "Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:9-10). God knows best -- hear Him in everything that He speaks!

Beloved, listen to all of God's word, God will do thee good!

Thought For Today, 01/23/2007
Jimmie Z. Gribble, Portsmouth, VA

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.
Morning Worship 11.00 am.
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663

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CONVICTION

A number of years ago, Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, a politician who, in her time, was known as having strong convictions. stated, "Do you think you would have ever heard of Christianity if the Apostles had gone out and said, 'I believe in consensus'?"

I am sure that Mrs. Thatcher didn't have in mind the importance of conviction of among New Testament Christians. However, I believe her statement does relate to those of us who are members of the Lord's church. In the 21st century we find more and more members of the body of Christ who are ready to settle for a consensus of opinion rather than standing firm on conviction. If Christianity, in the days of the apostles, could not have spread if the apostles, and indeed, other 1st century Christians had been such who would have settled for a consensus of opinion among themselves, it certainly will not spread today if members of the Lord's church are satisfied to be a people of consensus rather than conviction.

The concept of consensus may sometimes be acceptable in the political arena, but not in the church of Christ. Sadly, there are those today who are willing to compromise the truth of God's word in order to get a consensus. The idea being that we can only take a firm stand on those things about which we can gain a consensus of opinion among brethren. Some are going even further than this and seek to reach a consensus with those in the denominations. However, the unity of the Lord's church is not based on an agreement with respect to our opinions. Unity is found in the truth of God's word, in the doctrine of Christ. Paul wrote to the brethren at Corinth urging them, and us, "*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (I Corinthians 1:10). We must have conviction with regards to the doctrine of Christ and stand firm on that doctrine. In John 17, Jesus prays that those who would believe would be "one" just as He and the Father are one. Can you conceive of the Father and the Son being divided with respect to matters of doctrine? Obviously, they are in harmony one with the other. That is the kind of unity that we must have as brothers and sisters in Christ if we are to please God. We need to have a firm conviction of the truth and be unwilling to compromise the truth to settle for a consensus of opinion in order to have a facade of unity.

The Belvedere congregation must continue to be known as a church of conviction and not of consensus. We need to continue to stand for a "*Thus saith the Lord*" in all matters of faith and practice. As a congregation of the Lord's people, we need to stand together for the truth of the Gospel. We need to continue to reach out to the community with the Gospel because we are convicted of the fact that outside of Christ and His Gospel there is no hope of salvation but in Christ, that hope is ours. We need to teach the truth of God without fear or favor in order that those who are lost in the darkness of sin might come to know the salvation that is found only in Christ Jesus.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Let us continue to keep in our prayers Helen Culpepper, Dot McLemore, Pam Gossett and her mother, Kathy Treadway's mother, Lanny Niver's father.

Susan Arnold was not out Sunday because she had the flu. She, along with some of the children, were still sick on Wednesday evening.

There will be a pot luck following the morning worship today. Plan to stay and eat with us.

January 21, 2007

Attendance:

Bible Classes	21
AM Worship	23
PM Worship	22
Wednesday PM	20

Giving:

Contribution:	\$ 1137.00
Contribution YTD	\$ 2836.00
Budget:	\$ 1000.00
Budget YTD	\$ 3000.00
Weekly Average	\$ 945.33

WHAT IF.....?

- > ...God couldn't take time to bless us today because we couldn't take time to thank him yesterday?
- > ...God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we did not follow Him today?
- > ...we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain?
- > ...God didn't walk with us today because we failed to recognize it as His day?
- > ...God took away the Bible tomorrow because we would not read it today?
- > ...God took away His message because we failed to listen to His messenger?
- > ...the door of the church was closed because we didn't open the door to our heart?
- > ...God stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to love and care for others?
- > ...God would not hear us today because we would not listen to Him yesterday?
- > ...God answered our prayers the way we answer His call to service?
- > ...God met our needs the way we give Him our lives?

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:10).

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