



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## THE POWER OF SIMPLICITY

- by Bill Hall

Jesus Christ had a deep appreciation for simple things. His teaching was profound, but always simple. He reached the hearts of His hearers, not with high-sounding philosophical jargon, but with illustrations and "to the point" teaching. He could see in a farmer sowing his seed, or a lily showing forth its beauty, or a shepherd leaving his flock to seek one lost sheep, or a loving father welcoming a wayward son, a lesson that could teach some spiritual truth.

His apostles were chosen from the humble class. He could appreciate people, not for what they possessed, but for what they were; and, in some cases, not for what they were, but for what they could become. He recognized true quality, and true quality is often found in the simple and humble.

The worship He ordained was simple in nature. "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul... spoke to them ..." (**Acts 20:7**). Even the poorest could worship, for all that was required of a material nature was a little bread and fruit of the vine. Those of little talent could worship, for God was listening in view of the heart rather than the beauty of the voice.

He authorized a simple organization for His church, with each congregation appointing its own bishops and deacons (**Philippians 1:1**). There were no denominational associations, conferences, or synods. There were no inter-church organizations or societies.

Yet, through the simple organization given the church by the Lord, the world of the first century was thoroughly evangelized and the needy among them provided for. The Lord knew that success in His work would not be brought about through complexity of organization, but through dedication, faith, and commitment on the part of His followers. We make a terrible mistake when we try to substitute the former for the latter.

Why this simplicity? "That no flesh should glory in His presence" (**1 Corinthians 1:29**). The complex systems which men devise tend to bring glory to themselves rather than to God.

To return to the simplicity which our Lord ordained might not be impressive to the worldly-minded, but, then, Jesus Himself is not very impressive to the worldly-minded. Besides, our purpose is not to impress the worldly-minded, but to please God and bow in submission to His will. Let us do away with our super projects and complex systems. Let us learn to appreciate simple teaching and simple ways. Above all, let us learn to appreciate Bible teaching and Bible ways.

Someone has said: "How foolish we are to think that God will be impressed with our voices when we sing; after all, He hears the angels sing! How foolish to think He will be impressed with our cathedrals; remember, He made the Grand Canyon!" What He is seeking for is a heart that is pure, loving, and obedient to His will. And that's simple.

## THE FIGHT IS ON

by Al Diestelkamp

Edmund Burke is quoted as saying, "All that is required for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing." We know that in the end God will triumph over evil despite what men do or do not do, but in the meantime, here on this earth, evil will triumph if we don't do anything.

That evil will increase if good men fail to stand against it has been proven time and again. Much of the increase of evil in our nation can be attributed to this failure. God warned through Solomon that "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11).

The same is true in the increase in religious error. Apostasy comes when good men fail to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12) and do not "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3). Indeed, the battle against evil in every form is the Lord's battle—and make no mistake about it—He *will* win! The question is, which side will we be on when the final victory is celebrated?

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## "You Didn't Read Far Enough!"

by Alex D. Ogden

After a recent sermon I was stopped at the door and informed I had made a terrible mistake in the presentation of my lesson. Inquiring as to the mistake I was told, "You didn't read far enough!" It seems I failed to read far enough in the text to see the passage itself made the point I had to labor to make. I stood guilty of not reading far enough.

My mistake is one all too common in the religious world today. The Baptist and others read we must have faith to have salvation (cf. John 3:16) but fail to read on to see it must be an obedient faith (cf. John 3:36); thus they reject baptism as necessary to our salvation (see Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6; Galatians 3:27). They fail to read **all** of God's word and come to the sum total of His will for us. They don't read far enough.

Some of our own brethren are also guilty of not reading far enough. Some have read what they must do to become a Christian but fail to read on to see they have many responsibilities as a disciple of Christ that must be fulfilled. So they forsake the assembling of the saints together (Hebrews 10:24,25) and fail to take the gospel to the lost around them (cf. Matthew 28:19; 2 Timothy 2:2). Others show they haven't read far enough when they ask the church to be involved in and sponsor activities the church has no business being involved in. I refer to activities such as church sponsored recreational activities and church support of benevolent institutions. If these brethren would read far enough in the New Testament they would see the church of the first century was involved only in Evangelism, Edification and Benevolence (cf. Ephesians 4:12). Furthermore it would be seen from the book of Acts and the epistles they always sent their support directly to the preacher, not through some "sponsoring church", and the physical aid they gave was **always** to the saints, and not general benevolence as practiced today. Not reading far enough is a problem which plagues the Lord's church.

Brethren, what all this should tell us is it is vitally important for us to study the word of God. We should meet with the brethren regularly to study the word and also spend some time on our own learning His will.

I was accused and stood guilty of not reading far enough. Have you read far enough to be assured a home in heaven?

<http://www.aogden.com>