



## THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH (PART 3)

GARY W. SUMMERS

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is the remaining New Testament passage that limits with the role of women in the church. It is also part of a text that deals with the proper use of spiritual gifts. The main point that Paul makes is that in the church it is more profitable to speak understandable prophecy than to speak in unintelligible tongues. Paul compares these two spiritual gifts because some brethren were obsessed with speaking in an unknown language, which edified no one.

Paul states what should be obvious to anyone not carried away with the thrill of possessing a gift: a message in another language carries no meaning for the church unless someone interpreted it. How much edification would the church in America receive if we were addressed in French or German? For that reason, a lesson taught in a language we can understand is much more valuable than the most superb teaching in a tongue unfamiliar to us all. (Consider Paul's arguments in verses 5-6, 18-19, and 27-28.)

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 deserves careful analysis. The subject of the passage is women: "Let your women keep silent in the churches...." The word translated "women" is used 221 times in the New Testament and is translated either "woman" or "wife," depending on the context. In 1 Corinthians 7, for example, "wife" is more appropriate than "woman" because the subject of marriage makes it clear that Paul is dealing with husbands and wives (see verses 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 16).

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Most translations choose the more general term “women,” perhaps because it is more inclusive than “wives.” But with the mention of “husbands” in verse 35, it may well be that this problem was a marital one. Were the wives interrupting, questioning, or contradicting their husbands in the assembly? If so they were wrong on two grounds.

First, it was a violation of the general principle of I Timothy 2:11-14 (as discussed earlier). God gave to men the leadership role, which includes public teaching, preaching, and praying. Whereas the quietness ascribed to women in that passage arises from within (a person’s character and manner of life), “keeping silence” in 1 Corinthians 14:34 involves exercising restraint. The Greek verb *sigao* is frequently translated “to hold one’s peace” (Luke 20:26; Acts 12:17; Acts 15:12-13). The word is also used two other times in this very text! If there was no interpreter, the tongues-speaking brother; was to “keep silent in church” (1 Cor. 14:28). Also, if God revealed something to a brother while another was speaking, the first was to “keep silent” (1 Cor. 14:30). Thus, there is an intentional silence imposed upon oneself for the reasons ascribed above.

Some foolishly argue that if a woman cannot speak in the assembly then she cannot sing. Well, then, neither could the tongues-speaking brother who lacked an interpreter or the brother who was speaking when another received a prophecy. The context must determine the appropriate time for anyone to keep silence. Obviously, singing is not that time, since all are expected to sing praises to God (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

The women, then, are not to speak in the assembly (for the purpose of teaching or exercising authority

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and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52) Christian schools seek to further complete growth into mature Christian adulthood.

Areas that are blessed with a proliferation of Christian schools reap the benefits in society. Parents have a choice about an education for their children. Solid citizens are the ones who receive diplomas. They grow old with principles of marital purity, brotherly kindness and neighborly behavior controlling their lives. They seek to serve others. They work for the general good.

To be sure, in areas without Christian schools, public graduates often, carry the same noble characteristics. They have learned them at home. They’ve learned them at church. But, my argument for the further proliferation of Christian schools into new territories goes something like this “Wouldn’t the world be better if the young people spent their six to eight hours a day at school learning the reinforcements - and not, as is often the case, the contradictions - of the same principles?” Forty hours a week is a lot of time to spend away from the standards we, as Christian parents, hold dear.

Then, there’s one more sincere disclaimer to make. Not nearly all public school classrooms are so tainted as the pictures painted above. Many devout and noble people buck the tide to implement in their students the noble character of Christianity. They do it by example, and, often at risk of job loss, by word. Many principals guide their schools of charge with a genuine moral concern. No, this article is not to berate anyone who has ever believed in the virtues of a public education. Where atheism and amorality are absent, public education still produces fantastic citizens and great societal results!

Our point is simply that increasing antagonism toward Christianity in the public arena may necessitate the establishment of more Christian institutions as a counterbalance. It is worth considering. Perhaps, where you are, you are the one who is prepared to get the ball rolling. Who knows what amount of good can be accomplished? At least we know that some can, and that is reason enough to try.

over the man, as per 1 Timothy 2:8-14). “They are not permitted to speak.” This reason would apply, to all women; virgins, wives, widows, the scripturally divorced, and, the deserted.

But there is a second reason for their silence, and it involves the marriage relationship. They “are to be submissive, as the law also says.” The law which Moses revealed did not cover the role of men and women in the church, but it does deal with the role of men and women in the home: “Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you” (Gen. 3:16b). For a wife to openly challenge her husband in the assembly violates her submissive role set forth since the introduction of sin into this world. It would be difficult to find many principles more long-standing than that.

That 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 refers to the husband-wife relationship is seen not only in the reference to the law, but also in the fact that Paul commands her to ask questions of her husband at home. Even if she were not disputing with him and only needed a clarification, she still had the opportunity to do so at home. The assembly was not the place to satisfy an inquisitive wife. Furthermore, her interruptions would only add to the confusion and disorder that already existed in the Corinthian church (1 Cor 14:33, 40).

Women should hold their peace in the assembly based on the general teaching of 1 Timothy 2:8-14, and wives in particular should ask their husbands questions in a submissive manner in their home (Is it possible that some women had said, “I wasn’t trying to teach, I only asked a question”?).

Paul mentions that it is *shameful* for a woman to speak in church. The Greek word is used only in 1 Corinthians 11:6 (“It is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaven”) and Ephesians 5:12: “For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret” (referring to “the unfruitful works of darkness”). The root word (the verb from which the adjective comes) is always translated “ashamed.” For a woman to exercise authority over the man is just as much cause for shame as any immoral act of the Gentiles. She has not been chosen as the one to exercise leadership over the man either in the home or in the church.

### Various Arguments

Despite the clear teachings of 1 Timothy 2:8-14 and the reinforcement of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, some make an effort to try to find a verse here or there which they think will reverse or circumvent the Bibles teaching on the subject. The person who would do so lacks respect for the integrity and consistency of the Word of God. Actually, they are seeking contradictions.

When someone will ignore the plain teachings of the Scriptures in hopes of finding a loophole or an exception (as has often been the case with divorce and remarriage), there already exists a major flaw in their hearts. They possess an attitude which seeks to justify what they refuse to obey. A lack of submission to the Word of God is the first and worst problem that anyone can have.

Sometimes the Bible emphasizes one aspect of a process (grace, faith, obedience), and some have mistaken the emphasis for exclusion of anything else. Thus Scriptures must be harmonized (Romans with James). Also, the meaning of some verses may be obscure with our current knowledge (1 Cor. 15:29, for example). So we tread lightly and avoid being dogmatic about the meaning. But there is nothing ambiguous about God's assignment of the leadership role to men, neither is it a process that will find a different emphasis in a different passage. Other statements in the New Testament must be harmonized with the overall principles already set forth, they cannot contradict them or seek to supplant or modify them.

1. The "women can't sing" argument has already been commented upon. It is an argument born of desperation and runs contrary both to proper interpretation of the Scriptures, as well as common sense. Whatever we do mutually can scarcely fall under condemnation. In fact, we sing, pray, give, observe the Lord's Supper, and are taught together. Men just have the lead in all these matters. No one can successfully affirm that women exercise authority over the men when we are all participating in the same action.

2. Philip's daughters were considered under "Other Occurrences of Prophetess." Although these sisters may have exercised their gifts in

quickly branded fanatical and dangerous. At Christian schools, they are noted as those who genuinely care for the whole development - academic and spiritual - of the precious child.

The difference is in the control Public schools are controlled by a government so overwhelmed with some overblown concept of separation of church and state that Christianity is regarded as the only enemy of an adequate education Let the faith of evolution reign supreme (and believing it takes a great deal of faith) but don't present evidence for an intelligently designed young earth. Let the Qu'ran and the Baghavad-Vita be stored in the lockers, but keep the Bible off the premises. Let sex education and birth control enlighten and free hormonally controlled minds, but don't impose a protective, safe moral code of abstinence. Education organizations' highest officials often un-admittedly but practically relish the religion of secular humanism. Its lack of moral education deprives individuals and devastates society. There is no good reason, in their atheistic, amoral system for students not to become immoral, unkind and even violent. The fault is in the atheistic control.

Christian schools ideally are controlled by boards of directors made up of Christians with sound moral and doctrinal convictions. Even when the convictions are questionable, they generally rise far above the standard-less officials of public education. They, therefore hire teachers of science who will offer evidence of creation. They hire choral and band directors who will use the music to reinforce spiritual and emotional well being. History teachers will focus on the characters of moral courage and base their bold decisions on Christian faith. Computer science instructors will warn of the abuses of the internet. Math teachers will emphasize integrity in accounting. Above all, Bible teachers will be employed. Daily discussions directed by God's Word will compose one seventh of the school-day's time. And that's not even counting the daily devotions in chapel.

Christian schools are operated by a principle that still regards the whole person. The faculty and staff know life is not broken into secular and religious segments. The child is an emotional, spiritual, social, physical individual. One area of growth can not be adequately achieved without the others. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature

# THE NEED FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS

BY ANDY ROBISON

Recently, the Kansas State Board of Education nobly decided to exclude the theory of evolution from testing standards. The decision drew rude criticism from arrogant liberals. This reaction of prejudice underscores the basic need for Christian education.

After a summer of healing, Columbine students and teachers return to school with understandable anxiety and admirable hope. The circumstances that led to the senseless acts that rocked their school and world last April point further to the need for the proliferation of Christian-based schools.

My call for more Christian schools is not based on a decision. Never have I, nor will I, believe that Christian schools offer a utopia wherein brotherly love rules uninterrupted and wrong ideas are never presented. In the most guarded of settings; students will have to be disciplined and teachers reprimanded. Some will face dismissal due to the lack of moral or doctrinal integrity. In these negatives, nevertheless, lie the blessings.

At public schools, students living immorally are applauded by peers, and sometimes by teachers. Their behavior and such insidiously positive reinforcement are powerfully negative influences on the young Christian trying to live "in, but not of, the world." At Christian schools, the enrolled can be disciplined for things like promiscuity and drunkenness, even if those things took place outside of school hours. At public schools, students who wear advertisements for hate groups and satanic cults are defended by the ACLU. At Christian schools, their display is stopped, most likely before it degrades into bitter, rebellious acts of violence. At public schools, teachers trying to integrate a faith in God into any subject, especially science, will be

a setting such as the one described in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, there is no indication that they prophesied publicly in the presence of men.

3. Strange as it may seem, some have asserted that Priscilla was the leader in the family over her husband Aquila. Some aver that she took the lead in their spiritual work, also, and the basis for both of these allegations is that her name appears first in three (and perhaps four) of the six verses which mention them together (in one of the verses there is a textual variation).

The six verses are Acts 18:2, 18 and 26, Romans 16:3, 1 Corinthians 16:19, and 2 Timothy 4:19. Aquila's name appears first in Acts 18:2 and 1 Corinthians 16:19. Priscilla's name is first in all others except Acts 18:26, some manuscripts have his name first, and some list her first. What does this alternative listing of the two names prove? Are we supposed to believe that there was an ongoing struggle for supremacy between this husband and wife? This argument is absurd on the face of it. Some manuscripts call her Priscilla; is that a significant fact? Was she sassier and more prone to take the lead with the shorter name? Obviously, some are trying to find something not stated explicitly; so they send their imaginations into hyperspace. There are many couples whose names we reverse when referring to them, sometimes putting the male name first, sometimes the female. Sometimes Barnabas' name precedes Paul's (Acts 11:30; 12:25; 13:2; and 14:12); does anyone wish to argue that these two servants of God also exchanged positions of prominence? Such observations lack substance.

If Priscilla tried to lead in the home or in their spiritual work, she would have violated the teachings given by the inspiration of God, but absolutely nothing indicates that she did so. The teaching of Apollos was done privately anyway; Priscilla did not oppose publicly the eloquent, but mistaken, preacher. This text provides no justification whatsoever for women preachers.

4. Romans 16:7 is sometimes cited as proof that there were female apostles: "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who were also in Christ before me." Some are quick to jump to the conclusion that

Junia, a female, must be an apostle thus showing a willingness to ignore all the other principles which apply to this subject

First of all such presumes that these two are apostles, when in fact Jesus chose twelve men, and one male was selected to replace the son of perdition, Judas (Acts 1:15-26). Paul was chosen one “born out of due time” (1 Cor. 15:8). Others are called apostles in the general sense of “one sent,” but no one else ranks with the twelve except those already mentioned. The best argument that could be made is that Andronicus and Junia were outstanding as a team of missionaries (not unlike Aquila and Priscilla).

The far more likely explanation, however, is that these two were considered, among the apostles, outstanding workers. *The Pulpit Commentary* says of this verse: “The phrase, however, will bear the interpretation that they were persons held in honour in the circle of the original twelve” (18:2:455). No one would think otherwise unless hard-pressed for some kind of authorization from the Scriptures for women preachers. Those who make such attempts are like golfers whose shots have gone awry. They think that every candy wrapper and dandelion gone to seed is their ball—only to be disappointed by the truth the object they seek remains elusive.

## A NATION’S DEMISE

ROGER A. RUSH

Bismarck (1st chancellor of the German Empire 1871-1890) said, “Some people learn from their mistakes. I on the other hand make it a practice to learn from the mistakes of others.” That certainly is the wise course. Those who do not learn from the mistakes of the past are destined to repeat them.

By way of example, look at **The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire**, by Edward Gibbon. We can learn much of value from his observations. In it Gibbon identifies the following causes for Rome’s demise: 1) rapid increase of divorce, with the undermining of the sanctity of the home, which is the basis of society; 2) higher and higher taxes; the spending of the money for bread and celebrations; 3) the mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more

One of the greatest needs is the need for all to understand the oneness and unity taught in God’s Word.

Another example of not cutting it straight, or not handling the word of God aright, is the way many misuse passages in the Bible which say salvation is by faith. Salvation is by faith; the Bible plainly and emphatically teaches this. But the Bible, does not teach that salvation is by faith without obedience. The faith identified in God’s Word as the faith that saves is the faith that one has that is accompanied by one’s obedience to God’s commands.

One misinterprets Holy Scripture when he thinks the Bible teaches that one can be saved and become a Christian by faith in God and in Christ without being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins, because the scriptures teach that baptism is the act by which one can get into Christ so he can be saved by the precious blood of Christ (Mark 16:1 5-16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27).

### IMPORTANT INSIGHT

What I have stated above is a tremendously important insight to the Holy Bible. The Bible does not contradict itself. The Bible does not teach the many conflicting doctrines and creeds of so-called Christendom. If we treat the Bible fairly, and interpret it carefully, it will bind us all together in Christ.

We cannot conceive of the power and thrust of all who are now involved in what is called Christendom if all these were united as the Bible teaches all followers of Christ to be united. Those who truly follow Christ are united. Where there is division, some (or all) are not really following Christ.

*orthotomounta*. This word literally means *cutting straight*. Paul may have been alluding to his work of making tents wherein he cut materials. He had to cut such according to a pattern, or cut them straight so the pieces would all fit together properly to form a tent.

Careless and wreckless interpretation of God's Word is a violation of a command of God to be very careful in interpreting the Bible, or the command to **cut it straight**, and, results in religious confusion and chaos. Man's easy way out of such pandemonium is to say God's Book, the Bible, is to be blamed, and that just anything can be proven by it. This is blasphemy, and it deceives and misleads precious people and destroys souls. Peter said the unlearned wrestled some Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16-18). People are to blame for the confusion of Christendom, not God and his Book the Bible!

### EXAMPLES

"I am the vine, ye are the branches..." (John 15:5). Jesus said this to his disciples. He said many things to describe his church before he actually established it. The analogy of the vine and the branches emphasizes unity, because each branch on a vine is the same kind of branch; the branches on a vine all bear the same kind of fruit. Despite these facts, some misuse the beautiful analogy of the vine and the branches that our Master used and try to make it mean that Jesus taught division. They say that each branch represents a denomination.

Such an interpretation, or misinterpretation, is not "cutting it straight," and instead makes what Jesus said that is recorded in John 15 contradict what he said in prayer as recorded in John 17. But Jesus did not contradict himself. He did not teach his disciples to be divided on one occasion and then pray for unity on another occasion! The word branch does not refer to a denomination in John 15. It refers to an individual Christian. Each person in Christ is a branch. John 15:6 clarifies this because in that verse Jesus said, "If a man, abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch. Each one in Christ is a branch. "A man" is a branch! A branch is not a denomination, it is one person! Paul wrote that there are many members, yet, **but** one body, and he said that one body is the church (1 Corinthians 12:20, 27).

exciting and more brutal; 4) the building of gigantic armaments, when the real enemy was within; the decadence of the people; 5) the decay of religion; faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, and becoming impotent to guide it.

History does tend to repeat itself. Nations crumble from within. Freedom without restraint leads to ruin. It was Solomon who wrote nearly three thousand years ago: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). It may be the hardest lesson of all to learn, but it's true, internal decay is a far greater threat to the welfare of the state than any external force!

What do we see when we survey the American horizon? 1) Marriage is under assault. The family has been redefined. Homes are crumbling. 2) Taxes have reached an oppressive level. The national debt has become a heavy burden. Yet, citizens continue to demand more entitlements. 3) Sports figures command multimillion dollar deals while educators struggle to make ends meet. 4) Billions and billions are spent on national defense while nothing is done to combat internal decay. 5) Religion has failed. More and more profess faith, but fewer and fewer allow God in their lives; Conviction has given way to compromise

It's still not too late! But, time is running out! If we don't learn from the mistakes of the past, we are destined to repeat them. As Christians we can be a powerful force for good, but only if we raise our voices in unison to call our nation back to God.

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

BY KEN CHUMBLEY

In recent weeks the topic of Capital Punishment has been in the news again with a number of executions by lethal injection having taken place. Some were hardly mentioned, others, like that of Gary Graham in Texas, where headline news both in the print media and on television. Particularly because this is an election year and a number

of these executions have taken place in Texas, where one of the Presidential candidates is the Governor, the various commentators have been offering their views. Many of the views that have been expressed have been those of the liberal elite in the media with their own special slant. However, for Christians the matter of the rights and wrongs of capital punishments should be settled by what God's Word teaches, not by the opinion of the latest guru on a talk show or on the editorial page.

Some have argued that since God prohibited killing in the Ten Commandments, "*Thou shalt not kill,*" that this rules out capital punishment. However, if that be true, then God commanded His people to violate that Law in the very next chapter (Exodus 21). In that chapter God lists certain crimes and stipulates that for certain offenses the penalty was death (Exodus 21:12, 14-17, 23, 29). The truth of the matter is the command against killing was a command against murder, for that is what the Hebrew word used in Exodus 20:13 actually means.

When we come to the New Testament, we find that Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit points out that civil government "*beareth not the sword in vain*" (Rom. 13:4). Remember, the sword is a lethal weapon. God grants the power to use the sword to the civil authorities because they are "*a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*" (Rom. 13:4). It is not for man to take personal revenge, but it is within the power of civil government, as ordained of God, to carry -out the ultimate penalty, that of taking a life. Remember this was in the days of the cruel Roman government. Paul, himself, was not afraid of death if he had committed an offense worthy of death, capital punishment (Acts.25:11).

A little over two years ago there was an outcry when the first woman, Karla Faye Tucker, executed in this country for many years died by lethal injection for two brutal axe murders she had committed. An outcry arose among denominationalists saying that she should not die as she had been converted to Christ. If it were true that she had been converted, it did not change the fact that she had committed that heinous and brutal crime. She was sentenced for that crime and she had to bear the consequences of taking the lives of two fellow human beings. This does not mean she would not, if converted, have

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace (1 Corinthians 14:33) The Bible does not teach the contradictory doctrines and creeds of Christendom.

We read in the Bible about the Lords church. It is not a denomination. It is not a conglomeration of factions. It is the body of Christ. Denominations were started over a long period of years because of failure to follow the Bible. The Bible contains the truth which makes people free and binds them in Christ, or in his one body which is his church.

The confusion of Christendom did not emerge from the Bible. The Bible stresses unity. Jesus earnestly prayed that all who follow him be one as he and the Father are one (John 17). The holy apostle Paul, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, begged divided Christians to do away with divisions (1 Corinthians 1:10; 3:1-3). He also begged united Christians to put forth their best efforts to keep their unity in the bond of peace in the one body, which is the church for which Jesus gave himself (Ephesians 4:1-6; 5:25).

### **CARELESS INTERPRETATION OR MISINTERPRETATION**

The Bible is in harmony with itself. Careless interpretation of the Bible makes it appear to be a book that teaches contradictory doctrines.

An example of misinterpretation, or careless interpretation, is when one understands a passage in the Bible to teach that which causes him to have to deny another passage or passages in the Bible. Careless interpretation can make it seem that one passage of Holy Scripture contradicts another passage or passages in the holy book. Careless and wreckless interpretation even causes people to conclude that one can prove just anything he wants to prove by the Bible.

### **VIOLATION OF A COMMAND**

The Holy Spirit has directed that the Word of God is to be handled aright, or rightly divided (2 Timothy 2:15) The Greek word of that text which is translated "rightly dividing," or "handling aright," is the word

first-century commerce. Unless we endeavor to ascertain meanings based on these principles, the Bible would mean nothing at all in particular and everything at the same time. The Bible, under those circumstances, would be wholly subjective and meaningless. It is a serious mistake and a violation of legitimate hermeneutics to ignore responsible exegesis. In this regard, the immediate context surrounding a passage, the larger context of a book and the general context of the Bible must be evaluated. Jesus sufficiently illustrated his teaching that no one need wonder about what Jesus was talking. In keeping with the immediately preceding consideration, one has no excuse for attempting to teach some otherwise novel doctrine from the illustrated teaching of Jesus. Any details in a parable, for instance, that conflict with other, clearly understood passages or the nature of God pertain to background and color in the narratives.

Another way in which Jesus Christ masterfully illustrated the teachings which he presented was by the way in which he lived his life. Jesus exemplified what he taught. We might say in our own vernacular, "He practiced what he preached!" Our Lord was a precise teacher who taught with clarity, conviction, power and authority. His life was a demonstration of what and how he taught. He did not in word or conduct subscribe, to the vain philosophy of "Do as I say, not as I do!" Jesus illustrated the way to heaven no less distinctly than trails blazed through the dense woods in young America by frontiersmen. All we have to do is follow Jesus and stay on the narrow path he marked for us.

## THE CREEDS AND CONFUSION OF CHRISTENDOM

BY BASIL OVERTON

Christendom is the name used to refer to the many churches that propose to follow Christ, but are divided into about three hundred denominational groups. Each one teaches doctrines which separate it from all the others. Each has its own creed. This is very confusing to many people and constitutes a barrier which has kept many from Christ.

been forgiven by God. One can commit heinous crimes and still be forgiven by God, if truly repentant. You probably remember that appalling case of Jeffrey Dahmer a few years ago and the brutal crimes he committed. Did you know that he was baptized for the remission of sins while he was in prison, after he had been convicted of those horrible murders? He was baptized into Christ by a faithful gospel preacher. If he were truly converted, he will be in heaven. God can forgive even the vilest of sinners, as was Saul of Tarsus (Paul) if they will obey Him.

Let us never be guilty of denying to civil authority that which God has granted to it.

## THE DURATRON OF MIRACLES

BY LARRY G. REYNOLDS

An understanding of the purpose of miracles enables one to understand the duration of miracles was only temporary in the early church. The apostle Paul emphasized in his teaching that the age of miracles would end. This emphasis is found in the letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 13), and to the Ephesians (Eph 4:7-15). There are other allusions to this fact and principles are to be found in other inspired writings which will verify beyond question that the "age" of miracles would cease at a specific point of time within the framework of the gospel age. The age of miracles was a "temporary" age and when the purpose for miracles ended, the miracles ceased.

Paul writes to the Ephesians: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended upon high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors; and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be

no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but which is the head, even Christ.” (Eph 4:7-15.) .

Please observe the following brief analysis of these verses:

**I. Christ is the giver of supernatural gifts. (Vs. 7-11)**

- A. He was given the right to give gifts by his ascension. (v. 8)
- B. The captivity of verse 8 refers to a multitude, among which was the power of Satan to operate through demons in men. (Giving **gifts** – plural –to men contrasts with “captivity.”) Thus the end of an era when Satan could exert extraordinary powers among men is indicated. Men no longer need to be apprehensive about the unknown.
- C. Christ must descend before ascending in order that all might be fulfilled. (Vs. 9-10)

D. Miraculous gifts accompanied five works in the church in its earliest years: Apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors (bishops or elders), and teachers. (v. 11)

**II. The purpose of the supernatural was**

- A For (pros) the perfecting of the saints. (v. 12a)
- B. Unto (eis) the work of the ministry. (v. 12b.)
- C. And the edifying of the body of Christ. (v.12c)

**III. The duration of the miracles. (v. 13.)**

A. Till (merchi, a preposition of time) we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, and unto the measure of the stature of Christ.

B. This indicates the whole gospel, **the faith** as a unit (Jude 3), once for all time revealed to the saints.

**IV. Obtaining the purpose would result in: (v. 14)**

- A. Christians would become mature (no longer children, i.e., posing only a partial basis for judgment as opposed to a full basis or revelation.)
- B. No longer moved by every wind of doctrine.

There is a very vital point to be learned in respect to cessation of miracles from points 2, 3, and 4 of the brief analysis. Miracles were to serve a purpose and then cease with the results of that purpose attained continuing throughout the gospel age. What was the purpose? For the perfecting (for the purpose of bringing to a perfect, or full-grown stage) of the church. Was this in reference to the

they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Matthew 13:11-17).

In verse 11, Jesus cited two purposes of his parables (1) to **reveal** divine truth, and (2) to **conceal** divine truth. Essentially, God determined to reveal his will for man’s redemption to those who long for it and desire to respond to it. God also determined to withhold his plan for man from those who sought only to distort and otherwise not comply with it. Jesus quoted from the prophecy in Isaiah 6:9-10 regarding the then future arrival of the Messiah and his message. The same prophecy is also quoted in Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10, John 12:39-40 and Acts 28:26-27. Whereas Jesus embalmed the divine message with parabolic narratives for lovers of truth the same parables proved to be obstacles to comprehension to souls neither really nor sincerely interested in God’s Word. Another fascinating characteristic of parables is that often one accepts the validity of the parable before he realizes that it applies to him. Overall, though, parabolic preaching triumphed revealing divine truth in such a way that every accountable, truly pious soul could know God’s will for him. The purposes of Jesus’ parables included the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies and the unfolding of information from God not previously available. “All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 13:34-35).

Our Lord applied Psalm 78:2, “I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old,” to himself in the verse cited above.

Our mission today is to understand what the original recipients of inspired writings were expected to understand. With a little effort to acquaint ourselves, with the biblical environment, the parables and similar illustrations can greatly enhance our understanding of spiritual truths. The audiences to whom Jesus spoke comprised an agrarian society. Hence, our Lord’s parables speak of farmers, crops, sheep, shepherds, vineyards and fruit trees. Complimentary illustrations included references to fishing, religious life and

About 2,000 years ago, before the advent of electricity, overhead projectors and transparencies, Jesus Christ proved himself to be the master illustrator. Jesus did this through the effective use of picturesque speech. Frequently, our Lord employed **parables** in much the same way Brother Frank uses the overhead projector. Christ's discourses were often accentuated with parables as a vehicle through which to endear heavenly truths among his auditors. In his parables, Jesus referred to physical circumstances with which his audiences were abundantly familiar to teach them spiritual truths about which they knew little or nothing. One popular definition of the biblical parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Jesus Christ was a master in the use of pictorial speech. Though Jesus was not the first to use parables, his parabolic instruction excelled that of all others so simply the mention of parables causes one to immediately think of our Lord.

The popularity of our Lord's parables has mesmerized all who read Matthew, Mark and Luke. This is evident from the 50 or more books that have been published concerning the parables of Jesus. Though the number of these parables may be disputed, most commentators number them from 30 to 35. Almost our Lord's entire ministry resorted to some form of illustrative speech, of which the parable was one tool.

The purpose of parables is stated by Jesus himself in Matthew 13. In verse 10, his disciples asked him why he was speaking in parables: "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" Our Lord's reply was: "He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for

personal state of each saint or for the purpose of providing the saints a universal stage of development which would be of help to each individual? The latter seems obvious from the context. This state would immediately aid in the work and edification of the whole church.

## IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTIONS

BY D. GENE WEST

Question: What is the difference between worship, praise, and glorifying?

The word "worship" is found in the New Testament some forty-two times. Thirty-four of those times it was translated from a Greek word, "proskuneo," which means to lean forward and kiss the hand of God, as a dog licks the hand of his Master, to prostrate oneself in homage to God, to adore, to reverence, to worship. This is generally what we consider ourselves to be doing when we come into the public worship of the church.

One time in the New Testament the Greek word "doxa" is translated by the word "worship," and it means, to honor, to praise, to worship. This is the word used in Luke 14:10 (KJV) when Jesus was urging humility upon the disciples. It is not only something that man can give to God, but it is something that man can give to man.

Still another word that is translated by the word worship in the New Testament is the Greek word, "eusebeo," and it is found in Acts 17:23 in which Paul spoke to the Athenians regarding the objects of their worship. When the word is used with regard to God, it means to be pious (devoted) toward God, to show devotion. This one can do in every day life, and he can also do this in public worship of the church. It would be a fatal mistake for a Christian to turn, his devotion away from God.

A fourth word that is translated "worship" three times in the New Testament is "latreuo" and this word means to minister to God, that

is, render religious homage, or to serve. This word is more often translated by the English word “service” since that is clearly what it is. Service can be rendered to God in public worship, in private worship, or in doing the will of God in any sense. Hence, we can say that all acts of worship are acts of service, but not all acts of service are acts of worship in the sense of a coming together for the stated and specific purpose of rendering worship from our hearts to God. One can go to the home of a widow and mow her lawn and be rendering an act of service to God, but he is not worshipping in the sense in which we worship on the Lord’s Day.

A fifth word translated worship, which is found in Luke 4:7, is the Greek word. “enotion,” which means to turn the face toward, that is, to look upon one as a Master. This is the word used by Satan in the above mentioned passage when he told Jesus he would give him all the kingdoms of the earth if the Lord would worship him, that is turn his face away from God and toward Satan. When we walk with our faces toward God, that is always ready to do the will of God, we are worshipping in this sense.

A sixth word that is translated worship in the New Testament is “sebomai.” This word is found three times and means to venerate, to adore, to worship God. This we are to do at all times during our lives during every waking moment. This word is used in Acts 18:13 when the Jews accused Paul of persuading men not to worship according to the law of Moses.

The last word translated worship in the New Testament is “ethelothreskeia,” and means a voluntary, arbitrary, unwarranted piety (devotion) shown to someone, or to something and is translated by the words “will worship,” in Colossians 2:23.

Without going into all the uses of praise and glorifying in the New Testament, let us summarize this part of the answer by saying that every scriptural act of any Christian may serve to praise and glorify God, including the public worship of the church, as well as in those times when we offer thanks to God. Offering thanks before a meal is an act of praise, and serves to glorify our Father in Heaven, and so does the eating of the memorial supper of Christ on the Lord’s day. There is developing within churches of Christ a thing called “praise

teams.” We have had them for years, and they have been called the congregation, the song leader, the preacher, the servant at the table, and those who serve the assembly. Today, however, a concept which is highly unscriptural is being borrowed from the semi-charismatic community church concept in which both men and women take microphones and override the singing of the congregation in what they call song leading. They most often do this either by standing before the congregation, or by sitting on a front seat. They call themselves “praise teams.” These are not leading the church in praise, for it is unscriptural for a woman to do this, but they are trying to showcase talents of which some have very little. I will show you the authority for a song leader in the command to sing, but you cannot find the authority for a male-female singing group leading, and more often overriding the singing of the congregation, nor for calling them a “praise team.” These are egotistical and frustrated entertainers who are foisting themselves on the church to satisfy their ego, and they should be seated at once, and take their part in the congregation like the rest of us wretched souls who do not have their so-called talent.

## JESUS CHRIST, MASTER ILLUSTRATOR

BY LOUIS RUSHMORE

Frank Higginbotham is a renowned Gospel preacher in the Upper Ohio River Valley. For about three and half decades he has served the Chester, West Virginia congregation in an outstanding way. Brother Frank’s **claim to fame**, so to speak, is his unflinching use of transparencies and an overhead projector. With **tongue in cheek** he has been accused of using the overhead projector on his radio program and even using transparencies when he performed the wedding for his sister Nita a few years ago. I have seen the (re-enactment) photos of the wedding ceremony! Seriously, his transparency sermons in conjunction with basic and simple biblical truths have contributed greatly to edifying the Virginia Avenue church, of Christ. Additionally, those well-illustrated sermons have built up audiences wherever brother Higginbotham has preached in Gospel meetings, camps and lectureships.