

THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS MESSENGER

May 31, 2009

Concerning God's Book And Man's Books

I was writing a sermon just a few days ago when I took my fingers off the keyboard and leaned back in my seat to give my brain a moment's reprieve. After I ran a hand over my eyes and took a sip of water, I took a look at what was before me on my desk. Six commentaries on five different books of the Bible stood open taking up every available spot on the desk. A concordance and dictionary were open on the floor at my feet because there was no room for them anywhere else. The scene struck me for a reason that I could not immediately put my finger on. I sat there for a good five minutes just looking at all of those books pointing to and explaining portions of God's Word. Then it hit me: God's Word *never* tells a man that he needs to look outside of it's pages for instruction concerning spiritual things. I found myself reflecting on Peter's words. **"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence"** (2 Peter 1:3). As we follow the apostles doctrine as revealed in the New Testament, we find that not only is revealed everything *essential* to life and godliness, but even everything that *pertains* to it! There is absolutely nothing that can help us grow to greater spiritual life and godliness that we will be required to search outside of God's Word to find. All I really needed was a single book open on my desk!

Let's be careful not to conclude from all of this that commentaries and the such are wholly worthless things. There is a place for them. In fact, it is somewhat foolish not to use them when you have them at your disposal. My goal in preparing a sermon, particularly if it is a textual sermon, is to get every last drop of practical information that God put in that verse out of it without inserting anything that God did not intend. Because of that the context must be considered, the audience must be considered, the known religious and political climate of the time must be considered, the purpose of the writing must be considered, and the nature of the instruction itself must be considered. The writings of men who have spent many years studying those things as they pertain to a single book of the Bible can be incredibly beneficial and useful. They can also be full of opinion, speculation, prejudice, and plain old error. Thus, there will always be the need to examine carefully the writings of men, whether they are members of the church or not, because uninspired man is always going to be subject to weakness and error.

This is not so with a good translation of the Bible. The reason is simple and is explained by Peter in 2 Peter 1:19-21. **"And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from anyone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."** This proves the inspiration of the Old Testament, but what of the New? Note Paul's words from 1 Thessalonians 2:13. **"And we**

also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in your believers.”

As you read the observations of folks who have had the opportunity to be around some of the most serious and conscientious Bible students who have ever lived, there seems to be one thing in particular that always struck those people who walked into their study. Generally, their libraries were quite extensive. They were full of the greatest commentaries that man had been able to produce up to their time, the deepest theological treatises of the day, lecture books from famous Bible teachers, and similarly impressive works of men. Yet each of those books spent the majority of their time on the shelf. Only two books received constant use and they were sitting alone on the person’s desk next to pen and paper. These books were the Bible and the best concordance they could get their hands on.

There are some wonderful commentaries out there today that do a marvelous job of explaining portions of the Bible. In fact, should you desire, I can give you some suggestions if you are looking to do some serious, in-depth study of a particular book in the Bible. Yet, however beneficial these books may be, they are still but the works of fallible man. It will do us all well to remember that no where in Scripture did God ever instruct us to seek out a commentary to better understand His spiritual instruction to us. Rather, we are instructed by precept and example to keep ourselves within His Word. If we seek wisdom in understanding it, we are not instructed to turn to anything that man has produced, but to simply ask God with the upmost faith that He will give it (James 1:5-6). Open up your Bible, get yourself a good concordance that is keyed to the words of the version of the Bible that you are using, and you will have everything that you will ever need to understand God’s Word.

In Need of Prayers	General Information
<p>Sister Kimberlin has some health problems and needs our thoughts, prayers, and calls.</p> <p>Sharon Tirey is set to begin her treatments. This will be a difficult process lasting a few months. She and Ron need us now. Let’s be there for our brethren!</p> <p>Adam Daniels’ friend, Will Markem, has come out of his coma. Praise God for His mercy! Let’s pray now that he considers his soul.</p> <p>Kristy Kidd, Ron Tirey’s niece, was doing some better in her pregnancy.</p> <p>Kristen Osterling’s unborn baby (friends of the Thompson’s) has been diagnosed with a serious illness.</p>	<p>The Summer Bible Study Series will be here before you know it (July 20th-24th). We need members who are willing to teach or to assist in the children’s classes. Classes will be held for ages toddler through pre-teen. If you are willing to volunteer we would very much appreciate it as we hope to have the teachers for each class in place soon. Please let David Collins know if you would be willing to teach. Thanks!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Peter and Judy McPherson 323 Lindan Ave. Peterborough, Ontario K9L 1KL Canada</p>

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