

Discipleship, 3

(Colossians 3:1-4)

Charles B. Hodge, Jr.

“If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:1-4).

SEVERAL things are remiss concerning our discipleship. One which is very crucial is totally neglected—the future. “Where there is no hope for the future, there is no power for the present.” Christianity has a future life. Without this hope Paul says, “Christians are to be pitied” (1 Corinthians 15). No one trains without a purpose. Without the Saturday game boys do not practice football. Heaven, the future hope, the general resurrection are the foundation of discipleship. When hope wavers, faith dies.

WE MUST TALK MORE ABOUT HEAVEN

Mr. Gallup says 71 per cent of us believe in heaven . . . yet few talk about it. We claim to believe in it yet do not prepare for it. Do you know that 99.99 per cent of our lives will be lived in eternity? We had better know where we are going! Moderns are in a “health kick.” “Thin is in.” The body is important. People live in bodies. The resurrection will be bodily! We are to glorify God in our bodies (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 6). However, one with a healthy body can still go to hell! Life is more than physical health.

Again, moderns are seduced with reincarnation, UFO’s, “out-of-body experiences.” Shirley MacLaine has made a fortune with the extra-terrestrial. This is “hot stuff” today . . . but not heaven!

An old preacher had a great habit. Every day

he devoted thirty minutes . . . thirty minutes . . . thirty minutes to think, read about, and pray about heaven. This gave him a priority system, a value system. One peek into heaven would totally demolish our obsession with earth. Without heaven, too much of earth is junk. Toys, gimmicks, gadgets are our downfall. God’s family must be on its way home. Do not drive your tent pegs too deeply! “The afterlife will not be attained by an after thought.” Disciples can only be made and kept with a hope in heaven.

WORLDLINESS/MATERIALISM IS OUR PROBLEM

Mr. Gallup again says, “There is no discernible difference between the church and unchurched.” This is blasphemy! Christians must be different! Affluence is killing us! Our life span now is seventy-four; when I was born it was sixty-one; in Jesus’ day it was forty. Science, medicine, technology now provide what God used to. Moderns do not think they need God. The twentieth century believed it would build heaven on earth. This has led to catastrophe.

Brethren are not “homesick” enough. We like it down here. We now have too much to lose. The poor still wish for heaven. The rich fear they will lose what they have! God calls us to “move out” while we are more interested in “settling down.” We know more about football than heaven.

Again, “The Prosperity Gospel” encourages more selfishness! We sing about heaven, but we do not preach about heaven. Our kids know us best. Peer pressure is to be like the world. The kingdom is *first* (Matthew 6:33, 34). We are not to be pressed into the world’s butter-mold (Romans 12:1, 2). Believing and behaving go to-

gether. We must give our children heaven.

SO EARTHEN-MINDED WE CAN BE NO HEAVENLY GOOD

You have heard it said, "he is so heavenly-minded he is of no earthen value." This statement is 100 per cent false! No one can be too heavenly-minded! Being naive, out-of-touch, and in a dream world is to fail. Do not confuse naivete with spirituality. Without heaven, earth does not make any sense. Heavenly-mindedness, "What, on earth, are you doing, for heaven's sake?" (Matthew 6:33, 34; Philippians 1:21, 22; Galatians 2:20, 21; 1 Peter 1:3).

Besides, the earth is the only environment in which Christianity is to be lived. We are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. Heaven will be won or lost here on earth. Life is not a dress rehearsal. Eternal life is now (John 10:10; 14:6). Jesus is a synonym of eternal life (1 John 5:11-13). If there is no life *now*, there will be no life *then*! Upon salvation Christians are not carried immediately to heaven. We are called to discipleship here. The earth is where God put us. If you read history, you will find those who did the most for this present world were those who thought the most of the next.

WE HAVE RESURRECTION HOPE

Disciples have resurrection power. This is the power of the New Testament church. Read Luke 24:52. The disciples "returned to Jerusalem with great joy." These are the same disciples who fled. The women were clinging to Jesus. Now He ascends. The disciples did not cry, quit, or collapse. *Resurrection!* They saw that Jesus was risen. He had won—over sin, death, hell, Satan. There were no other enemies to be conquered. This is resurrection power. We share in His resurrection. Jesus is all we need, but this may not be known until He is all we have. If Christ is my life, nothing else matters; if Christ is not my life, everything matters.

Read Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, . . ." Familiar Scripture must be read more closely. This is not a definition of faith; it is a definition of hope. We have a creedal faith; we do not have the excitement of

hope. Someone asks, "How can you have hope in a world like this?" *Right!* There is no hope in this world. Hope is the one thing the world cannot provide. What oxygen is to the lungs, hope is to life. Hope is in Jesus—the One who came and is coming. "Lord Jesus, come."

OUR GOAL IS HEAVEN

Heaven makes disciples. Christianity is an adventure of faith. We are pilgrims, nomads, sojourners. Our citizenship is in heaven. Heaven! The only event where the event exceeds the expectation is heaven, the home of the soul. Disciples of Jesus are kept on course with heaven.

CONCLUSION

Something is *first* in our lives. Roger Staubach was a great football player. Now he is a successful realtor. He is being groomed to be governor, or senator. In an interview he was asked, "What is your ultimate goal in life?" He gave a profound answer, "My ultimate goal is not in this life."

Are you a disciple?

QUOTATIONS

"When God measures a man, He puts the tape around the heart instead of the head."

"So live that when death comes the mourners will outnumber the cheering section."

"Always there must be the prayer of pilgrimage, 'Lord, I'm nearing home. Help me to be homelike.'"

Roy L. Laurin

"The great essentials of happiness are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for."

Alexander Chalmers

"Regret can be an appalling waste of energy—you can't build on it. So acknowledge your sin, accept God's forgiveness, and get on with living for His honor and glory."