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PRESENTS

Frankly Speaking Notes . . .

Published as time and opportunity permit, usually a few times a week.

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Ed Smithson, Editor

A FORGOTTEN WORD

A few weeks ago I had lunch with the preacher and intended to ask him if there was some kind of taboo against the use of “Amen” in the congregation. I forgot to ask him the question and last Sunday he made a couple of points I liked well. I said “Amen” to them, aloud.

For the last several years I have had a nagging question in my mind that I have been unable to settle. Why have our brethren stopped saying “Amen” at the conclusion of prayers and when something good is said of which they heartily approve.

The word “Amen” is found 61 times in the American Standard Bible. It was used a great deal by Israel during the giving and receiving of the law. People in the New Testament also used it extensively. I grew up hearing it ALWAYS at the conclusion of prayers and OFTEN during sermons when the preacher made a good point.

The word, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is “*used to express solemn ratification (as of an expression of faith) or hearty approval (as of an assertion).*” We know it was so used in New Testament times because of Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 14. “*Else if thou bless with the spirit, how shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned say the Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he knoweth not what thou sayest?*” (Verse 16 emphasis mine)

I don’t know what has happened to us on this. It didn’t happen just overnight but over a period of time, as most things do. I always thought it was a good thing and appreciated it when I was a young preacher. As the years passed it seemed that it was used less and less.

One time I heard an old preacher say, “saying amen to a point when a preacher is preaching is like saying ‘sic em’ to a dog.” (Of course, some will not understand.) What he meant was that it was encouraging to the preacher.

So I have decided that I will say Amen when I think it is appropriate and when I think it is needed. I may get some strange looks from “modern day” brethren but it will make me feel good and the preacher too.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Smithson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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October 29, 2010