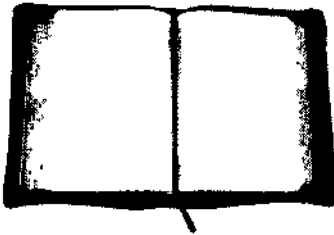


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11.

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BIBLE TEACHING ON THE ELDERSHIP

J. P. Miller

The New Testament teaches the necessity of elders in every church just as plainly as it teaches the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins. It is almost unbelievable that some brethren are not favorably disposed toward having elders in every congregation even when men are qualified according to I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Elders are in God's plan for directing the work and leading the local church in its activity. The preaching of any man against the divine organization of the New Testament church labels him as untaught and unsafe as a teacher.

The organization of the New Testament church calls for elders or overseers in every congregation (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). They are called "elders" (Acts 20:17); they are called "overseers" (Acts 20:28); they are called "pastors" (shepherds or feeders) (Eph. 4:11). All of these terms refer to the same persons in the New Testament, the elders. These various terms describe the nature of their work and their relation to the church.

The work of the elders can be found in several places in the New Testament. In I Peter 5:1-5 they are to "feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof . . ." This duty of the elders is the work of feeding the congregation with the spiritual food necessary for proper growth and development. The Christians of a local congregation are spoken of as "the flock" ("sheep) of God, and the elders are the "shepherds" or "pastors" who tend the local flock "among you." In verse 4 we find this language: "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye (the elders) shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." The elders are then subordinates only to the CHIEF SHEPHERD to whom they must give answer in "that day" or at "his appearing in his kingdom" (II Tim. 4:1). They are to see that the flock is fed, therefore, they act as shepherds to the flock.

It is not necessary for the elder to do all the teaching himself. They are to set the pattern or example for the work to be done, and they are to watch the flock in that which is taught. They may use an evangelist or teachers to help in teaching the word of God, but they are responsible for what is taught, thus they "tend" the flock.

The New Testament does not permit one man to be an elder of two or more congregations. He may advise some of other congregations if requested, but

only as one individual to another and not in the capacity of an elder of another congregation. The "watch-care" of the congregation over which he is an elder or overseer is one of the divine duties of an elder.

The elders are to stand ready at all times to guard the church against false doctrines and teachers. As those who declared themselves to be apostles at Ephesus (Rev. 2) were exposed, so the eldership has the duty to examine the teaching of any who teach the flock privately or publicly and expose them with sound doctrine (Titus 1:9). They, by qualification, experience and sound judgment, are to hold fast the faithful word and expose false teachers. They are to safeguard the church against all enemies within and without. Just as the shepherd stands between the sheep and threatening danger, so the elders stand between the congregation and the forces of evil.

To the eldership also is committed the discipline of their respective congregations. They are to rule as the word of God directs. "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor (I Tim. 5:17). "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Heb. 13:17). "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (I Tim. 3:5). An elder, therefore, is a ruler, but not a lord over God's heritage, but a wise and prudent overseer. If all means fail in correcting those who persist in error, they are to take the lead in carrying out the word in II Thessalonians 3:6 and Romans 16:17.

The qualifications of the elder are clearly set forth in both the letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus (I Tim. 3 and Titus 1). Thus the man to fill the place is already selected in the sense of character and ability. It only follows to find the man who possesses the qualifications and appoint him to the work. Thus the Holy Spirit makes a man an elder just as he makes a man a Christian—by and through the word. The Bible gives the qualifications for a Christian: hear the word, believe the word (Rom. 10:10), repent of sins (Acts 2:38), confess Christ (Rom. 10:9, 10), and be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27). Thus he is made a Christian. Just so, when the qualifications are met with to be an elder, it only remains for this man to be appointed as an elder or overseer and for him to accept the work.

The final consideration in this study is the age-old question of whether or not suitable material for elders can be found in every congregation. It would be impossible for a writer to answer this ques-

tion for each congregation without knowing the local conditions. If there are those in a congregation who do not believe there is suitable material for elders, a program of teaching should be set up to provide qualified men at the earliest possible date. It certainly should be the goal of every congregation to be in compliance with the New Testament pattern of government or organization just as much as the pattern of worship. Of course, if no one is qualified, there can be no eldership, but every effort should be put forth to qualify men as soon as possible. Simply to select men and call them "leaders" and be content with this arrangement is not complying with the doctrine of Christ in the New Testament. By the very nature of their qualifications the elders can provide moral and spiritual oversight and the examples so necessary to the faithfulness of the church. Let us strive to measure up to the divine pattern in all things. While the elders oversee and direct the local work, they are not law makers and should never be considered as such. They hold fast the faithful word in their work and see that the church grows in the truth. Let us respect God's pattern for every local church and provide qualified men to be elders or overseers of the church.

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EDITORS

H. E. PHILLIPS
P. O. Box 17244
Tampa, Florida

JAMES P. MILLER
2523 W. Diana
Tampa, Florida

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Editorial . . . H. E. PHILLIPS

ARE WE LOSING OUR FREEDOM?

Our cherished civil freedoms are slowly being taken away by an ever increasing centralized government. We are gradually being deprived of the freedom of speech, the personal freedom to own and operate business enterprises as we please, the freedom to hear the truth about the conditions of government and its operation, and the freedom to worship without some sort of persecution. I do not mean that these are absolutely gone, but obviously the working of government in this country is slowly taking away these liberties by enactment of new laws and pressure tactics.

There are at least three reasons why this condition exists: the greed and grab for personal power within government, the effort to make all conform to the way of life that suits the rulers under the guise of personal or "civil rights," and the continuing effort to centralize the power of government in the hands of a few. These conditions are made easier by the fact that most citizens of the United States are indifferent to the trend and are willing to place more and more of their personal obligations upon the federal government. The more of our personal responsibilities it takes, the more of our personal liberties it takes.

Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia and said: "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage" (Gal. 2:4). Peter speaks of the working of evil men who would corrupt the children of God, and says of them: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (II Pet. 2:19).

The same three reasons given above are responsible

for the conditions in the church today that would take us back into the bondage of sin and deprive us of the liberty we have in Christ. Liberty in Christ does not mean that we can do anything we want to do any more than civil freedom means we are at liberty to do anything we please. In both cases we are under law, and our freedom is derived from that law. It is when the law is ignored or changed that the freedom under law are taken away. The greed and grab for power in the church by a few preachers, elders and editors is promoted by lying propaganda promising more liberty and greater work. Some have power enough in some areas to now control every congregation in that area, telling them who can and who cannot preach for them, and directing the spending of their funds from the Lord's day contribution. More and more these "great preachers of today" are getting into a position similar to that of the pope of Rome. Some love the "praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43). Little by little congregations are losing their congregational freedom to these power-loving men who would lead them into bondage.

The effort to make all conform to that way of life that has been planned by the present day promoters is a second reason congregational liberties are taken away. By economic pressure, public sentiment, emotional appeals, and outright lying about those who oppose this practice, these "false brethren" continue to "line up" churches and individuals. They preach personal and congregational "rights" and all the while they are taking away these "rights" given under the law of Christ and replacing them with the "rights" of these "great preachers," elders and editors.

The third reason for the loss of our freedom in Christ is the continuing centralizing of power and effort under a few men. This, of course, is possible because the individual does not want to assume his personal responsibility. It is easier to drop a nickel in the contribution plate on Lord's day and let the church send that nickel to some sponsoring church (central control), which in turn sends it to some human organization to do the work which that individual should have done in the first place. It will not be long before we find some new headquarters on earth for "churches of Christ."

The combination of lustful men grabbing for power, the effort of these men to make the standard of life and bring individuals and churches to conform to it, and the centralizing of power and control into the hands of a few takes away the liberties we have in Christ. In civil government it tends toward dictatorship; in the church it tends toward Roman Catholicism. So much freedom has already been taken away from many congregations that they now have no safe ground upon which to fight for what remaining liberties they may have.

Paul's attitude toward these false brethren, as he spoke by the Spirit, was: "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5). Jesus said: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

We cannot tell what the future years will bring for the civil freedoms of this nation. We only know

that history tells us that the course we are now following will lead ultimately to a dictatorship. What other result could follow? As men lust for power some individual will finally achieve it. As they strive to make all men conform to only one idea and way of life contrived by these rulers, they will finally achieve it. As the work to centralize all power and work in one place, it will finally be accomplished and we will have a dictatorship.

History also tells us where the course now being followed by the liberal element in the church will lead. We have the picture of this apostasy in the Roman Catholic Church. Are we losing our freedoms? Yes, we are if we allow any law but the New Testament to govern our lives. I intend to imitate the apostle Paul toward false brethren: "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5).

COMMENTS TO EDITORS

"I enjoy Searching The Scriptures, it sure has been an inspiration to me. Keep up the good work. . . I do not want to miss a single copy."—Bertha Matthews, Cullman, Ala.

"I am receiving Searching The Scriptures presently and am enjoying it very much. Keep up the very good work. May God bless you in the Lord's work."—Ronald A. Glass, Green Bay, Wis.

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"We enjoy Searching The Scriptures very much, and appreciate the firm stand you and your staff are taking in standing up for the Lord against liberalism in His church today. We are praying he will continue to bless you in this work."—Wm. Clyde Sutton, Englewood, Tenn.

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"We enjoy your paper very much. May God bless all of you in this great work. It is the best in the brotherhood." — Mrs. Herman Vaughan, Steens, Miss.

"I enjoy the paper very much and the thoughts presented by you, brother Miller, and the many fine writers for your paper are certainly a help to me."—Calvin D. Allen, Beaumont, Texas.

"I want to compliment you on this fine work in the paper."—T. E. Lindsey, Trenton, Fla.

"Someone has been sending me Searching The Scriptures, for which I am grateful. . . In the summer of 1947, in a discussion with faculty members and officials of Abilene Christian College, I stood alone in my firm opposition to the support of colleges by the churches. I took the position then, and do now, that such is wrong and sinful. As a result of my being 'out of step' and not in harmony with the thinking of A.C.C. on this matter, our connection with the college was terminated shortly thereafter."—M. A. Mansur, Vinita, Okla.

"At the time I read your article 'Condemned By Association' in the July, 1964 issue, I intended to write and tell you I approved of it 100 %, but I kept putting it off. I think it was a very commendable statement and I trust you and brother Miller will continue the policy set forth in the above mentioned article. I enjoy your paper very much and I can hardly wait from one time to another to receive it. Keep up the good work. May the Lord bless both you and brother Miller in this great work. It is very much needed and it is appreciated by a great many people.—James A. Walker, Knoxville, Tenn.

THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

L. E. Sloan, Jasper, Ga.

All men possess the very highest aspirations for being successful. Regardless of the field of endeavor in which he is engaged, man desires above all to be successful. Success is a wonderful thing but it does not come without careful preparation and hard work. Many individuals have striven for success but died broken-hearted failures because of one reason or another. No man has ever been really successful, regardless of the success he has achieved materially, until he has been a spiritual success. Only those who reach that wonderful home of the soul called heaven can really be called successful. When one reaches this goal, he can be said to have reached ultimate success.

In the 34th chapter of Deuteronomy is recorded

the death and burial of Moses, the renowned leader of Israel. Men have been, and are now, taught by God's wisdom that people have to have leaders if they are to function properly and successfully. God spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister and instructed him to assume the reins of leadership in the place of Moses. This was not as simple as some might think. It was not to be an automatic leadership with God doing all the work, i.e., controlling the actions and ways of the people. God would be with them, if they would walk in His ways. He would guide them aright, if they desired to live right. God would govern and rule them by His law that had been given them.

Thus leadership of God's people was given to Joshua. It was up to him (Joshua) to carry out God's instructions to the people and set the right example before them just as it had been the responsibility of Moses along these lines. God was very careful to instruct Joshua as to his responsibility to the people and his needs in carrying out this responsibility. In performing these functions of God toward Israel, Joshua would be blessed of God. "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5).

The success of Joshua, just as it is with any other leader of people, was not an individual matter; but the whole nation of Israel depended upon his success. Thus the responsibility of Joshua is great; he is both responsible to God and to the people. It is the same today in the lives of religious leaders. God, in His instructions to Joshua, made this responsibility very clear, and if Joshua is to be successful, he must adhere to these instructions.

There are a number of things mentioned in the first chapter of Joshua which comprise the formula of success. These principles will work today in the lives of men if they are put into practice.

1. BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE (Joshua 1:6)

Without this trait, Joshua would be a failure as a leader. This strength must be evident in many categories. Strength in character, boldness, humbleness, obedience, faith and love are all necessary to the task of Joshua. It is the same now. How many times have you seen leaders become miserable failures because they were afraid. Joshua could not be guided by the whims and fancies of the people. He must be strong to observe to "do all that is written in the book of the law." There is strength needed to withstand the devil in all of his schemes and devices. There must be strength to withstand those who would lead astray. There must be strength to withstand those who teach false doctrines. The apostle Paul said, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10). When ungodly men inhabit the body of Christ, strength is needed to "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3). Success does not come as a result of the efforts of those who are weak.

2. ONLY BE THOU STRONG AND VERY COURAGEOUS (Verse 7)

Be not afraid—if God be for us, who can be against us? Joshua was told to be VERY courageous. This will not allow for any cowardice at all. Joshua had been entrusted with a great task. He cannot be

afraid and carry out this great work. It is the same today. Those who are fearful are complete failures. Notice Rev. 21:8 for this is the sense in which we are using the word: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." It is abundantly clear from this text that the fearful can serve the cause of Christ to no good whatever. It is not always an easy task to rebuke, reprove and condemn sin in the presence of those who may be guilty, but it must be done out of fear of God and not of man. Jesus said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). Notice how the pronoun changes from "them" to "Him" in this passage. There are many that are able to destroy the body, BUT DON'T FEAR THEM. There is only ONE that is able to destroy BOTH body and soul in hell; so fear HIM. Thus to be successful, one must be filled with courage (be very courageous) in his dealings with men, and possess a reverent fear for God.

3. TURN NOT FROM THE LAW TO THE RIGHT HAND OR THE LEFT

God is outlining a straight road for Joshua. God's law must be respected and obeyed. There is no room for deviation to either side. Yes, this constitutes an extreme. God's law is extreme; it is final, and will allow no other idea or notion to enter in. Thus Joshua's success depended upon his strict adherence to God's law. It is the same today. God's law (New Testament) allows no deviation in any sense. It cannot be changed (Gal. 1:6-10). But man is constantly and zealously trying to change God's law in one way or another, and then he deceives his hearers by telling them that he believes the Bible. Just to believe and accept part of the Bible is not enough, for man doesn't have the truth until he accepts it all (II Tim. 3:16). There will be many lost in judgment because they would not accept ALL THE BIBLE. Success is also deterred in failing to do what God has commanded. The emphasis is on the positive in doing what God said, as well as on the negative in abstaining where God has so instructed. God's law is binding and there is no room for anything else.

4. THOU SHALT MEDITATE THEREIN DAY AND NIGHT

Meditation in God's law would cause Joshua to possess a greater knowledge and respect for it, and make him less apt to forget it. God has always called upon his people to remember. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out. . ." (Deut. 5:15). "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works" (Rev. 2:5); "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth" (II Peter 1:12). The history of man reveals his attitude of forgetting those things which he needed to retain. Israel forgot God days without number (Jeremiah 2:32). And David said, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget

God" (Psa. 9:17). Meditation in God's law will prevent one's forgetting God.

God promised Joshua that if he did these things: "For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). In all of our trials and struggles in this life, we have been miserable failures unless we make our calling and election sure. Let each one of us remember the principles that are laid down in Joshua 1 as the formula for success.

I MARVEL

GAL. 1:6

James P. Miller

How does one sit in a motel room a thousand miles away from home at the end of weeks of preaching and write an accurate report? How can he tell of all of the warm hand clasps and the smiles of encouragement that have been his? Of the crowds that came to hear him preach and of the ones who came down the aisle to obey the gospel? Is it enough to say he spent eight days at such a place and baptized six? Surely there was more to the meeting than this. The crowds that go away after the last service have more to report than this. The young preachers who drive miles to be in the services receive more than this. The old saints who grasp your hand and tell you that that was the kind of preaching they heard when they were young see more in the service than a cold time, place and number report. The preacher above all carries away far more. He remembers the little ten year boy who followed him to the car and cried as if his heart would break. How well he remembers the five and six times the brethren come around to say goodbye over and over and to repeat each time that old gesture of southern hospitality that goes like this, "If you are ever back this way and want a place to stay come right on in whether we are there or not and make your self at home." The elders who have a hurried conference before the last sermon and come around to be assured that the preacher will come back for another meeting, then the announcement at the very end that he will return four years from today. Yes, all of this and more should go into every report, for all of it is so vital a part of every gospel meeting.

So little is said of all of the problems that have to be worked out for such an effort to be successful. The setting of the time and the many adjustments that have to be made. The anxious minute that is always there on arrival to be sure that the time is correct. This is always present regardless of how many letters have flown back and forth. The problem of staying well far from home and among strange surroundings. Different water, food and places to sleep, all far more serious than the average person might think. The adjustment to customs and personalities that is always present. The big, big job of saying the right thing to the hundreds who come to speak and say, "do you remember me?" Above all the matter of keeping the lines of communications open with the loved ones far away. The

needed assurance every day that all is well with them that is absolutely necessary for the preacher to do his best. Who of experience will deny that every meeting is an epic, era, and a small life time spent in a few days.

I preached from July 5-12 with the church in Newbern, Tennessee. This was my first time to preach in Newbern although I have in the years past held many meetings in West Tennessee. I found a strong, sound congregation of God's people. Jesse M. Kelley has been working with the church the last few years and is a preacher who merits the full confidence of the children of God. Parks Thurmon helps with the work in a wonderful way. Thurman is a native of the county and lives in Dyersburg. He is a business man who puts the kingdom first. The brethren have a new building that is a credit to the cause they represent. Good crowds were present every night and four were baptized into Christ. A word should be said about the brethren in Dyersburg. There are two congregations there contending for the faith. One is new and the other a strong congregation. The latter is the Lake Road congregation where Frank Puckett labors with the help of several brethren who are able to preach the gospel. The hearts of these brethren was saddened during the Newbern meeting by the passing of brother C. B. Camp. Brother Camp was a song leader, teacher and preacher of ability. He was connected as an educator with the schools of Dyersburg.

After spending a few days with my people in Calloway County I began a meeting on July 19 with the Eastland congregation in Nashville. Eastland is an oasis for the truth in east Nashville. A strong church of several hundred members, it is blessed with sound elders and a fine preacher in Rufus Clifford. The pulpit is free and the brethren will support the preaching of all the truth. Almost a thousand people were present in the last two services of the meeting. Brethren came from far and near to support the truth. A check of visitors' cards filled in during the week reveal the following preachers who were in attendance:

Joel Plunkett, Hillview Church, Nashville; Bill Hawkins, Ewing Lane, Nashville; Harris J. Dark, Perry Heights, Nashville; Robert Jackson, Riverside Drive, Nashville; David Claypool, Franklin Road, Nashville; Billy Ashworth, New Hope, Franklin; Martin Lemon, West End, Franklin; David Arnold, Almaville, Murfreesboro;

Dave Bradford, Westvue, Murfreesboro; Doris Rader, Campbellville, Ky.; Barney Cargile, Warner Robins, Ga.; Billy Joe Thrasher, Athens, Ala.; Robert Pressnell, Academy St., Dickson; Ralph Autry, Brick Church, Dickson; Edward O. Bragwell, Central, Charlotte; Jack Dugger, Nashville;

Herbert Winkler, Nashville; Nelson Loyd, Nashville; Phillip Speer, Nashville; Ron Weaver, Wilmitt, Ill.; Tom Byers, Houston, Texas; Willard Allen, Cookeville; James A. Allen, Nashville; Sam Youree, Nashville.

Let no man feel that all of the churches in Nashville have been swallowed up in the liberal tendencies of the day. Here are a few of the congregations that are earnestly contending for the faith: East-land, Riverside Drive, Franklin Road, Perry Heights, Hillview, Joseph Avenue, Ewing Lane, Bellshire, Millersville, Duke Street and Glencliff. Six responded

to the invitation during the meeting. Rufus Clifford, like all men who stand for the truth, has had his trials but like gold has emerged from the furnace unscathed. He is a great bearer of the whole armor of God.

Closing the meeting on July 26 I drove on Monday into the gentle rolling hills of southern Kentucky to begin with the Grandview congregation in Tompkinsville that night. This too is a congregation that has had its trials. Less than three years old they have grown to have a new building and a church of upward of two hundred saints. Brother Ross O. Spears is the preacher. Brother Spears, one of the great song leaders of the kingdom, is also a fine preacher and has spent nine years of his life in Tompkinsville. He is loved and respected by all who know him and has had a great influence for good. Many of the churches in the county are sound and working to preserve the old paths. The Grandview congregation has strong leadership and is aggressive. It would be expected that with Spears working with them they would be one of the finest singing churches in the country. It is an inspiration to hear them sing. Charles Kirkpatrick is an able leader and he can sing all of the old songs as well as the new ones. This was my fourth meeting in Tompkinsville over the years and in many ways the best. The future is bright for the brethren in this section. Randal McPherson is doing a good work at Birksville where Raccoon John Smith preached years ago.



**PREMILLENNIALISM
(No. 7)**

Connie W. Adams, Orlando, Florida

No passage in the Bible has been the object of greater abuse than Matthew 24. Prophetic speculators have hastened time and again to the symbolism of this chapter to find justification for their fanciful theories. Millennial teachers have had much to say about the "signs of the times." Invariably they come to this passage to find them. We propose to study the passage in the light of its context.

The Mounting Conflict. Throughout the personal ministry of Jesus the conflict mounted with the leaders of the Jews. Their obstinate rejection of Christ filled the cup of Jewish iniquity to overflowing. John had said "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees" (Mt. 3:10). The parables of Matthew 21 stressed the fact that the Jews would be cast away from God's favor and that others would go into the kingdom. In the parable of the wicked husbandman Jesus said: "Therefore . . . the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Mt. 21: 43). In Matthew 22 a series of debates with the Pharisees and Sadducees resulted in Jesus putting them to silence. They could not answer, yet were too stubborn to accept the truth. This led to stern

sentence pronounced against them in Matthew 23. He summarized their crimes and pronounced a series of woes upon them. In verse 32 he said: "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." God had been longsuffering with the Jews throughout their history, but in their rejection of Jesus as the Christ they were filling up the cup of iniquity. The patience of God was running out. Yet, while justice demanded the destruction of Jerusalem and all that pertained unto official Judaism, Jesus wept in tenderness over the fate which awaited them. This is the touching scene described in Mt. 23-37. Then came the judgment: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Then passing through the temple, Jesus startled his disciples with the statement: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Mt. 24:20). This was the voice of doom as far as Judaism was concerned.

The Question of the Disciples, and the Time Text.

The key to understanding Matthew 24 is the question raised by the disciples in verse 3 and in the time text of verse 34. A recognition of this would prevent the many foolish and hurtful theories which have arisen concerning the so-called "signs of the times." So massive was the temple that the disciples thought surely its destruction would be connected with the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. They said: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Jesus, by his answer, divided their question into two parts. (1) The destruction of Jerusalem in which one stone of the temple would not be left upon another, would take place before that generation passed away (verse 34). (2) As to the sign of his coming and the end of the world, verses 36-51 show that there would be **no** sign of his coming, but that it would be unexpected. To take the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem in the first part of the chapter and apply them to the second coming of Christ is to completely ignore the fact that Jesus taught there would be no sign of his coming. Of that day no man or angel knows (verse 36). It will be as in the days of Noah when the flood came and those of that time "knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (verse 39).

The objection is sometimes made that the word "generation" in verse 34 simply means the nation of Israel and was not limited to that particular generation of the Jews. The word "generation" is not used in the Scriptures with reference to successive generations. A study of the usage of the word in the following passages in Matthew is recommended: 1:17; 11:16; 12:38-45; 16:4. Then Mt. 23:26 states, "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." Thus, from the context, from the use of "generation" in other passages in Matthew and elsewhere in the Scriptures, there is no call for making the term mean anything else but that particular generation to which Jesus addressed these remarks. All of the signs described down to verse 34 were to find their fulfillment within **that** generation. They were associated with the destruction of Jerusalem and not with the second coming of Christ and the end of the world.

The Signs of Impending Destruction of Jerusalem. (Verses 5-8). (1) Jesus said before that time there

would be **false** Christs to arise. As various ones arose among the Jews to lead in revolt, they bolstered their claims by pretending to be the messiah. Simon the Sorcerer of Acts 8 made such pretensions prior to his conversion. The historian Josephus says there were numerous ones to make such claims in that time. (2) "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars." During that time revolts broke¹ out in every part of the Roman Empire. Moreover, there were wars among the Jews themselves agitated by zealots and these intensified as the siege of Jerusalem commenced. (3) Verse 7 pointed to famine and its accompanying pestilence. Acts 11:28 refers to one extensive famine. Fifteen years later there was another one affecting the saints in Jerusalem. Josephus records famines of this period. There were also earthquakes in various places prior to A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed. There are records of them in Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colosse, Campania, Rome and Judea. There is no need to extend these signs beyond that generation, for every one of them came to pass within that period of time.

This would be a time of **persecution** for the church (verses 9-13). Early in Acts we read of apostles being imprisoned and forbidden to preach anymore in the name of Christ. Stephen was stoned. The church in Jerusalem was scattered. James was killed by Herod. Paul was arrested and shamefully treated. It was a time when many were offended, false teachers arose, and the love of many did wax cold. Phygellus and Hermogenes were among those in Asia who turned away. Demas forsook the truth. There are many references in the New Testament epistles to false teachers during this period. All of these things served as a refining fire to test the fiber of every man's soul. Numerous exhortations to faithfulness, and rebukes for lack of it indicate that the love of many did wax cold. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." This was not a reference to final salvation, but to the deliverance of the faithful from the destruction which was to come when Jerusalem fell. By their careful watching of these signs they were to know when to flee.

The **universal spreading of the gospel** would precede this destruction (verse 14). Paul said "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world (Rom. 10:18). In Col. 1:23 Paul referred to the gospel which had been preached to every creature under heaven. These passages were written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. The statement "And then shall the end come" does not refer to the end of the world but to the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus said this preaching of the gospel in all the world would be for a witness among all nations. Everywhere the marching feet of the messengers of the Messiah went, they preached first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles.. This made the rejection of the gospel of Christ on the part of the Jews of universal knowledge. This prepared the way for all to know that the severe judgment which fell upon Jerusalem was according to the justice of God.

Any attempt to project the fulfillment of these signs to a future time ignores the Lord's plain statement that these things would happen before that generation passed away, and the further fact that

all these found their fulfillment in the years preceding the downfall of Jerusalem and the ending of the Jewish nation. The next article will deal with the definite sign upon which they were to flee, that is the abomination of desolation. Attention will also be given to the difficult passage about the sun being darkened, etc. I am indebted to the following two works especially in dealing with this chapter: **God's Prophetic Word** by Foy E. Wallace, Jr. and **Matthew Twenty Four** by J. Marcellus Kik.

Science and Truth

I Tim. 6:20-21

William D. Burgess

In the next few articles we shall attempt to consider some of the questions that are often asked and view some of the evidences that the evolutionists put forth as proof that organic evolution has occurred. He contends that classification is one great proof area of such evolution. It should be called to mind that all classification is the result of man's efforts. All things are classified as they are because man has said this is the way they should be classified. The scientist has set up a number of divisions into which he has grouped all living things, whether plant or animal. These he has grouped according to likeness because man has said that likeness "proves" closeness in relationship of one organism to another. After placing the organisms as he thinks they ought to be he then uses this grouping as "proof" that organisms that are close in classification must necessarily be near relatives due to evolution. Since man has classified animals and plants from the simple to the complex forms he has then shown the so-called phylogenetic tree which is supposed to be another proof as to how the various forms evolved from common ancestors or how they ceased to evolve and became the groups that we have today. The evolutionist believes that the degree of likeness between organisms is a measure of the nearness of a common ancestor.

Several problems are in evidence in this area of "proof." First, there is a great deal of disagreement among the taxonomists themselves. They often disagree as to how an organism should be classified. Some insist on classification by external morphology, some on internal morphology, and some want to use a combination of the two. Depending on the method used, organisms may be placed in very different groupings. Again, likeness does not require a common ancestor. Parallel mutations occur to produce the same results in organisms with different ancestors. Parallel variations accomplish the same thing. These can be and have been demonstrated in both plants and animals. It is really not strange to see the evolutionist go to classification for "proof of evolution" since the basis of classification is really evolution as it is assumed to have occurred. Man classifies an organism, then claims because the organism is so classified that it must belong here. If one is allowed to be judge, jury, prosecutor and defender I suppose no case would be a real problem to settle.

The Menace of Catholicism

II Thessalonians 2:3,4

Luther W. Martin

FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE

The monotoned expression of a somewhat notorious movie actress—"I wan' to be alone," might well also express the island of ostracism with which Roman Catholicism keeps her subjects in line. The Catholic citizen . . . if he devoutly adheres to the laws of his Church . . . must of necessity become an 'isolationist' in many ways, in addition to the isolationism of his religion.

At birth . . . or perhaps we should begin before birth; at the marriage of a man and woman, in the event one of them is not a Roman Catholic, it is required that they be married by a priest; that the non-Catholic sign an agreement (or release) to the effect that any children born of their union WILL be raised in the Roman Catholic faith, and further, that the non-Catholic will in no way interfere with the religious upbringing of the children.

Then, at birth . . . the Code of Canon Law of Catholicism requires that a 'Christian name' be given. In fact, it is a common custom that the name of a 'saint' be given to the child . . . usually the name of the 'saint' upon whose 'day' the baby is born.

If the baby happens to be the offspring of non-Catholic parents, but the infant is near death, then it is the duty of the Roman Catholic physician, nurse, mid-wife, etc., to see that the child is 'baptized' EVEN IF THE PARENTS OBJECT! (A Catholic Dictionary, By Attwater; page 45).

If there is a question as to the child's living after birth, it may then be "baptized while in the mother's womb. . . Should the mother die in labour, the child is to be extracted from the womb and, if certainly living, baptized absolutely; if life is doubtful, conditionally. An aborted fetus must also be baptized, unconditionally or conditionally according to circumstances" (Ibid, page 45).

CATHOLIC CHILDREN TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

"Catholic children should not frequent non-Catholic, neutral, or mixed schools. It is for the local Ordinary (Parish priest, L.W.M.) to decide, according to the instructions of the Apostolic See (Pope of Rome, L.W.M.), in what circumstances and with what precautions, attendance at such schools may be tolerated without danger of perversion to the pupils" (Code of Canon Law, No. 1374).

From the foregoing Canon Law, it is plainly stated that the Catholic parents must send their children to schools that are attended ONLY by Roman Catholic children, etc. The final authority in such matters in this (American way of life), is the Roman Pontiff.

Another publication of the Roman Church, The Liguorian, a monthly magazine published from Liguori, Missouri, states in parts ". . . If, without consulting their pastor, and for subjective reasons of their own, they (Catholic parents, L.W.M.) send

their child to a public school, they are guilty of a mortal sin . . ." (Sept. 1950, page 520).

Thus, during the most formative years -of life (childhood), the ostracism of Roman Catholicism begins. This continues, of course, in expanding spheres of influence during the active portion of life. But possibly the most peculiar and interesting demand of the Catholic Church, is that concerning burial, after death.

The **St. Louis Register**, November 25, 1955, states: "CATHOLIC BURIAL FORBIDDEN IN NON-SECTARIAN GRAVES." It is hard for us to visualize the need for separation of decaying non-Catholic bones and decaying Catholic bones. Of course, this could remind us of the time when John Wycliffe (died 1384), the first man to translate the Bible into the English language, was so despised by the Roman Church, that her Council of Constance (1414-1418 A.D.) decreed that Wycliffe's bones be dug up and burned, some three decades after his death. However, copying again from the newspaper article:

"A warning to Catholics not to be deceived into purchasing lots in non-sectarian cemeteries was issued this week by the Rev. James R. Hartnett, secretary of arch-diocesan cemeteries.

"Well-instructed Catholics know that the faithful are to be interred only in Catholic cemeteries," Father Hartnett said. "Except for converts, ecclesiastical rites in a non-Catholic cemetery are not tolerated. . ."

'Christian burial,' is the interment of a corpse according to the Church's funeral rites in consecrated grounds. If the grave is in a non-Catholic cemetery it is to be 'blessed' at the time of burial.

The Roman Ritual prescribes that the corpse is borne in procession with lights to the church. The parish-priest assists in surplice and black stole; the clerks carry the 'holy water' and the psalm 'De Profundis' is recited; then the corpse is carried into the church building while the 'Miserere' is said. The coffin is placed in the middle of the building, with the feet to the altar if the dead person was a 'layman,' the head to the altar if he was a priest. Candles are lighted around the coffin, and the Office and Mass of the dead, followed by the absolution, accompanied by aspersion and incantation over the corpse, are said. Then another procession, and the corpse is carried to the grave. At the grave the 'Benedictus' is sung, with the antiphon 'I am the resurrection and the life,' and a prayer for the soul of the departed. The body is sprinkled for the last time with 'holy water,' just before the prayer. While returning to the church, 'De Profundis' is again said. (See page 204, Catholic Dictionary, By Attwater; and page 357, By Addis & Arnold).

From the above information, we learn that in addition to chants, recitations, and songs, the followers of the Catholic religion resort to the use of candles or torches, incense-burning, and sprinkling of what they term 'holy water' in the last rites over a corpse. Also, if for some reason the priest cannot accompany the coffin and corpse to a grave in an 'un-consecrated' cemetery, then the priest blesses a small amount of dirt and places it inside the coffin before it gets to the 'un-hallowed' ground.

Obviously, it is not possible to make any refer-

ences to the teaching of inspiration on these subjects. The word of God, contained in the Bible, deals with the thoughts, words and actions of man during THIS LIFE. The Scriptures teach of no 'SECOND CHANCE' that would in any way justify prayers for the dead or the sprinkling of water or burning of incense after death in behalf of the deceased. Therefore, we can only remark, that the person beset with the wildest superstitions, as would resort to carrying a rabbit foot, buckeye, or asafetida (assafidity) bag . . . may well compare to the equally barbaric beliefs and practices, imposed by the Roman Church upon her sincere though deluded adherents.

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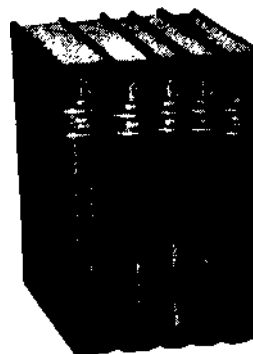
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The News Letter Reports

"... THEY REHEARSED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM ..."—Acts 14:27

ASHWORTH-BALLARD DEBATE

Dorris V. Rader, Campbellsville, Ky.

On July 23rd and 24th, brother Billy Ashworth, Christian, met Mr. P. D. Ballard, Baptist, in a two night discussion on Baptism for Remission of Sins. The discussion was conducted in the building of the West End church of Christ, in Franklin, Tenn. It was conducted on a high level and good order prevailed throughout.

It was real interesting to note how well Mr. Ballard "took care of the charts" presented by brother Ashworth. They were so "well cared for" that they are all still in good shape for future discussion with anyone of Mr. Ballard's belief. In his "taking care" of the chart on Mark 16:16, the dodge was made that it was a spurious passage. This got him into a predicament from which he was not able to recover. In fact, he didn't see fit to make mention of the matter again after it was dealt with by Ashworth.

Regarding Acts 2:38, the argument was made by Mr. Ballard which the Primitives used to make (Mr. Ballard is Missionary). He had "for remission of sins modifying Christ and said Christ means 'anointed.'" Hence, "in the name of Jesus anointed for remission of sins." He thus had Jesus anointed for remission of sins, rather than being crucified for remission of sins as the Bible teaches (Matt. 26:28). He also changed a noun into a verb, in order to come up with this twist.

Concerning Romans 6:17-18, he argued that "obeyed" means believed. And that they were made free when they believed—at the point of faith. When he came to I Peter 3:21, his dodge was on the word "answer." He had the good conscience doing the seeking rather than being the thing sought.

An argument as made concerning the thief on the cross dying after Jesus was dead. By this he intended to prove that the thief was saved under the New Covenant without baptism. Of course, this was no benefit to the Baptist position since he had already argued that one is saved at the point of faith. And according to their own view, the point of faith (?) of the thief's case was when he asked the question and Jesus replied. Neither of them was dead at that time. Thus, granting that the thief was never baptized, and that he was saved, proves nothing as far as you and I are concerned today.

All in all it was a good discussion and I am confident that good was accomplished. It was my pleasure to moderate for brother Ashworth.

„, Leslie E. Sloan, Jasper, Ga., Box 536—During the month of July I preached in three meetings which included twenty-five nights in a row plus the lessons on Lord's day. From July 5 through 11 I assisted the Sunset View Church of Christ in Spring Creek, Tennessee (these are the brethren that were taken to court and robbed of their building), in which 5 were baptized. Brother Larry Davidson is the regu-

lar preacher and is doing a good job.

From July 12 through 19, I assisted the New Haven Church of Christ near Lexington, Tennessee, in a meeting. Five were restored and one baptized during the meeting and two others were restored afterwards as a result of the meeting. We have reason to believe that the cause of Christ was strengthened because of the meeting. Interest was good and there were more visitors than usual that attended the meeting.

Then, from July 20 through 29, I assisted the Church of Christ in Shepherdsville, Kentucky, in a gospel meeting in which one was baptized. Attendance was good and several preachers from the Louisville area were in attendance, some as many as eight times. Among those attending were: Frank Butler, Fred Liggin, James Hahn, James Needham, J. P. Dancer, Frank Jamison, Robert Welch, Ronald Mosby, and Bob Nealy. Brother Amos Davenport is the local preacher at Shepherdsville and it was a pleasure indeed to be associated with him again.

Since we all realize a preacher shortage among those who will hold the line against all isms in the church, I will be glad to assist some church in a meeting next year if you need me. Write me at the above address.

Thomas G. O'Neal, 7004 Eaker Drive, Orlando, Florida, 32807. On August 2 I began work with the Azelea Park church in Orlando. Before moving to Orlando, I labored with the McArthur Heights congregation near Jasper, Ala., for four years. When I moved to Jasper there was only one church, McArthur Heights, that had taken an open stand on the question of institutionalism. Now there are about six churches in the county. This was accomplished by a hard aggressive fight with the exponents of error in that county both over the radio and in the printed page. As a result, some enemies of the truth were made because they could not take the truth when it was preached. These few churches are small and have problems of their own, but they can in time be strong if they will abide by the Word of God. One was baptized on August 2 at Azelea Park. Bulletin editors, please note my change of address.

Donald R. Givens, Coalinga, Calif.—The East Elm Street congregation of Coalinga, California has taken on partial support of two faithful Mexican preachers: Fidel Cisneros and Santos Gomez. One was baptized here on July 6. Worship with us when in central California.

Wallace Whitehorn, Alliance, Ohio—For a while this summer I am working with the Silver Park congregation in Alliance, Ohio. This good congregation has been tried with fire and is standing solid for the truth now. They love the truth and want it taught. It is my purpose to help them all I can.

Tom Wheeler, DeLand, Fla.—I have just moved

to DeLand, Florida to begin full time work with the sound congregation here in this city. My address is: 225 S. High St., DeLand, Fla.

Glenn L. Shaver, Louisville, Ky.—Brother Robert Jackson of Nashville, Tennessee held our gospel meeting in May in which five responded to the invitation : 3 were baptized and 2 restored. It was a good meeting with high interest and good attendance throughout. However, I did not get to attend as I was in the hospital. Two responded to the Lord's invitation last Sunday morning: 1 baptized and 1 restored. It was a good day as 259 were present for the morning worship and the contribution was \$413.

J. R. Halbrook, Jr., Belle Glade, Fla.—We have just completed our first gospel meeting to be held in our new meeting house. Brother Tom Butler brought us seven outstanding, clear lessons from God's word and came to us from the Lake Wire congregation in Lakeland, Fla. Brother Bryon Connally of Bartow did a great deal of personal work with brother Butler and brought us three fine lessons, thus concluding the meeting. The visible results were very encouraging, not to mention the great growth individual members experienced in which the word was sown for the first time. There was one baptism and four restored to service and favor of the Lord.

NEW CHURCH IN TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

H. E. Phillips

A new congregation was recently formed in Tallahassee, Florida. The Gadsden Street and Call Street congregations of that city have continued on the path of apostasy to such a point that faithful brethren could no longer continue with them. It was my pleasure to speak five nights during the last week in July on the institutional and social gospel errors for this new congregation, now meeting in the Labor Temple. Much work was done among both the liberal churches of that city to see that their members did not come to this meeting lest they learn the truth and leave. We believe the stability and determination of these few faithful brethren who have separated themselves from error will guarantee a healthy and rapid growth in the truth. Anyone attending Florida State University is encouraged to worship and work with this congregation. It is known as the Westside church of Christ. Contact W. W. Andrews, 624 Stiles Ave., or Jerrald Hinton, 305 A. Millbranch Rd., Tallahassee, Fla.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

Ward Hogland of Greenville, Texas was with Robert Jackson and the Riverside Drive church in Nashville, Tenn., in August. During this meeting six were baptized and two were restored.

Harold Strange of Dover, Fla., preached in a gospel meeting at Melrose, Fla., August 16-28. . . Bobby K. Thompson of the North Miami Avenue church reports one baptized and one restored in August. . . Roy E. Cogdill was in a gospel meeting at Ensley in Birmingham, Ala., in August. . . Jack Holt was the preacher in a meeting at Fultondale, Ala. . . Robert Jackson of Nashville, Tenn., closed a meeting Aug-

ust 15 at Almadale, Tenn. . . Reavis Petty preached in a meeting at West End in Franklin, Tenn., Aug. 16-23. . . David Claypool of Nashville, Tenn., was the preacher in a meeting in New Hope, Tenn., Aug. 16-26. Billy Ashworth preaches in New Hope. . . Guy Roberson preached in a gospel meeting Aug. 10-19 at Shacklett church of Christ.

Harris J. Dark will be the preacher in a meeting at Franklin Road church in Nashville, Tenn., October 4-11. David Claypool is the preacher at Franklin Road. . . Ed Harrell preached at Wendell Avenue in Louisville, Ky., Aug. 16-23. Frank J. Jamerson is the regular preacher at Wendell Avenue. Ferrell Jenkins closed a meeting in New Albany, Ind., Aug. 16. . . Homer Hailey preached in a meeting at Valley Station, Ky., Aug. 13-23. . . A. C. Grider was in a gospel meeting at Preston Highway in Louisville, Ky., Aug. 19-26.

Jimmy Tuten of St. Louis, Mo., was in a gospel meeting at Greenwood, Ark., Aug. 17-23. . . Hoyt H. Houchen of Abilene, Texas was in a meeting at Haynesville, La., in August. Five were baptized during the meeting. B. J. Thomas is the local preacher.

JENKINS-HOOD DEBATE

On August 24, 25, 27, 28 Ferrell Jenkins and Larry Hood will engage in a four night discussion on church benevolence. Brother Jenkins is now with the West End church in Bowling Green, Ky., and brother Hood is with the Central City, Ky., church. The discussion will be held at Beaver Dam, Ky., in the meeting house of the church.

The propositions to be discussed are:

1. August 24 — The Scriptures teach that Non-Christians may be given benevolent assistance from the church treasury. Hood affirms; Jenkins denies.

2. August 25 — It is in harmony with the scriptures for one church of Christ to make a contribution to a benevolent organization for the care of needy for whom the church is responsible. Hood affirms; Jenkins denies.

3. August 27 — The Scriptures teach that the local church, as directed and overseen by its elders has all the organization necessary to engage in, and perform all duties of benevolence and on the basis of this principle the church is prohibited from making a contribution to a benevolent organization for the care of needy for whom the church is responsible. Jenkins affirms; Hood denies.

4. August 28 — The Scriptures teach that a local church of Christ may in the work of benevolence send funds from its treasury to the elders of another church to be spent within the needs of the receiving church, and may in the work of evangelism send a preacher to another church or send assistance directly to the preacher, and that any departure from this is a violation of the pattern. Jenkins affirms; Hood denies.

John Allen Thurman, Loudon, Tenn.—I concluded my work with the Perry church of Christ in Perry, Florida after about two years labor with that congregation on August 1st. I began work with the Loudon church in Loudon, Tennessee on August 9th. The congregation in Loudon is composed of about 35 members and was begun about eleven years ago. The

building is a converted brick residence on Ward Avenue and is presently being remodeled. We invite anyone passing through East Tennessee to come and worship with us; and we invite others living in this area to come and work with us. The brethren here are determined to fight the current forms of liberalism that plague other parts of the state. Those who would like to send their bulletins, my address is: 129 Highland Ave., Loudon, Tenn.

James A. Walker, Knoxville, Tenn.—Bill Hall of Saraland, Alabama will be in a series of gospel meetings August 24 to September 3 at the church of Christ, 1804 Allen Avenue, Southeast Knoxville, Tenn. Services are at 7:30 each evening.

Richard Weaver, Pinson, Ala.—After two years and six months work in Cullman, Ala., we have moved to Pinson and began work on the first Sunday in August. Our new address is: Box 376, Pinson, Ala. 35126. Those who have been sending bulletins please note this change of address.

Calvin D. Allen, Beaumont, Texas—I am now working with the Southside congregation in Beaumont. This seems to be a fine opportunity. We have several men who can preach and teach and almost everyone is working hard. This momentum is hard to stop and there are many whom we may never get to because we have so many prospects. It is really a pleasure to work with a group of brethren like this.

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA MEETING

H. E. Phillips

It was my pleasure to speak in a meeting with the Northeast church in Gainesville, Florida, Aug. 17-23. This good church has recently moved into their new meeting house, located on 16th Avenue, N.E. and 15th Street. This is one of the finest sections of the city. They have an adequate and beautiful meeting place. Much of the work on the building was done by the brethren themselves.

This is the only faithful church in this University City. It had its beginning less than four years ago as the result of the determined efforts of the elders of the University Avenue church to introduce the Herald Of Truth and Benevolent Societies into its program of work. Some came from 14th Street church for the same reason.

Horace Hartsell and Kenneth Scarboro worked in preaching for this church while they attended the University of Florida. E. L. Flannery became their first full time preacher, supported by several faithful churches. During his stay the church grew and the present building was erected. Only a month ago Hiram Hutto moved from Birmingham, Alabama to begin his work with this fine church. He was a faithful co-worker during the meeting and is loved by all the members at Northeast. They have a radio program each Sunday morning at 7:30 over station WUWU. One was baptized and one restored during this meeting. The Forest Hills church in Tampa, Fla., where I regularly labor, supported me in this meeting. If you plan to attend the University of Florida worship with this good church.

BIBLE WORD STUDIES IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

E. V. Srygley, Jr.

WORDS THAT DIVIDE US

(No. 3)

"Death"

The controversy over the existence of the soul inevitably involves the Bible use of the word "death." Materialists insist that the term "death" means extinction or annihilation. They may not choose to use the term "annihilation" (many strongly object to the use of the term), but their contention logically forces them to this.

The Greek noun *thanatos* (death) is susceptible to varied meanings in different contexts. Properly, the meaning of the term is "the death of the body, i.e. that separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul from the body by which the life on earth is ended," Thayer, *Lexicon*, p. 282. This is clearly the meaning of "dead" in James 2:26.

The second basic meaning of "death" is "the loss of that life which alone is worthy of the name, i.e. the misery of soul arising from sin, which begins on earth but lasts and increases after the death of the body," Thayer, *Lexicon*, p. 283. This sense of the word is found, for example, in James 1:15.

Further, in certain passages "death" denotes "the miserable state of the wicked dead in hell," Thayer, *Lexicon*, p. 283. This sense occurs, for example, in Rev. 2:11. In spite of the fact that all standard Greek-English lexicons attach this sense to the term "death," materialists flatly deny that the word can be used in this way.

"Hell"

In the King James Version, the English word hell is the translation of at least four different words in the original languages of the Bible. In the Old Testament the word "hell" is regularly used to translate the Hebrew word *sheol*. This latter term denotes the realm of departed souls. It is the Hebrew equivalent to the Greek *hades*. In the New Testament the word "hell" sometimes refers to *hades*; not to the place of everlasting punishment. *Li. hades* in the Revised Version of Acts 2:31. Once, "hell" denotes "tartarus," which is supposedly a compartment of *hades*, II Pet. 2:4. Actually the noun "tartarus" does not occur in the Greek text of II Pet. 2:4. The form that occurs is the aorist participle of *tartaroo*, "having tartarized." In many passages, "hell" denotes "gehenna," the place of eternal punishment of the wicked, Matt. 10:28; 25:46, etc.

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WHY THE HOME?

Lanning C. Courtney, Sterrett, Ala.

In the past few years I have heard many sermons and read many more articles which have dealt with the "issues" presently besetting the Lord's family, but I do not believe I have yet heard or read anything as eye-opening to the real intent of my institutional minded brethren as the tract recently published from the pen of brother Batsell Baxter of Nashville. I do not intend in this writing to review the tract in its entirety, but I do wish to make an observation or two of the conclusions we could logically draw from brother Baxter's arguments on these matters. I pray that we keep in mind the thought of the day we shall stand before the God of all and give an account for the things done in the flesh (Rom. 14:10-12).

Brother Baxter went to great lengths to try to prove the scripturality of church support of centralized organizations, or institutions, for the care of children. If you will notice pg. 14, please, the end of the first paragraph . . . he says, "The 'fatherless' children mentioned here (Jas. 1:27) is simply one bereft (the lexicon's word) of parents, whether through death, illness, abandonment, or some other means" (emphasis mine, LCC). Those who stand with brother Baxter on these things are not now confining their appeals for support to the churches across the land, but are, in some instances, calling out to all people to lend a hand, as evidenced in Cullman, Alabama a few weeks ago, and no doubt will accept any child "bereft" of parents, whether through death, illness, ABANDONMENT, OR SOME OTHER MEANS. These institutions might well be advertised thusly,

"Tired? Frustrated? Sick of your children? Why let little things like that get you down? No expense! Complete freedom guaranteed! Come, let our experienced counselors advise you and then take your "problems" into the Church Home."

This may seem far-fetched to many, but these are their words, "bereft" of parents whether through death, illness, ABANDONMENT, OR SOME OTHER MEANS," for any reason! Our opposition does not stem from our ill-will or lack of sympathy for the children, on the contrary! It is our desire that these children receive those things which are most needful to them and to strive to the best of our ability to do this in a way that is right in the sight of God.

As we progress through his arguments we find he throws in the building and supporting of hospitals for good measure. By this time one would hardly be surprised at anything to come, but it seems he had just gotten up steam by the time we reach page 25.

"WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH CONTRIBUTING TO CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?"

First paragraph under the above heading—the obligation for the training of the young. "This obligation falls partially upon the home and partially upon the church. Eph. 6:4 says, 'And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.'" This places the responsibility upon the home,

the parents, as he stated, then: "The fact that the church must provide preachers, elders, teachers, and wives of such leaders places the responsibility for training and nurturing the young upon the church." Further: "families can have Bible-study periods in the home. This has been a very meaningful experience for thousands of Christian families, though UNFORTUNATELY THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY HAVE LARGELY CROWDED IT OUT OF CHRISTIAN PRACTICE (emphasis mine, LCC). What, may I ask, is so BUSTLE it can HUSTLE the study of the Bible out of our homes? It is my opinion that most people do as little Bible study in the homes as it is, and our brother is not helping to encourage an increase in study by saying, "unfortunately" it has been crowded out of practice!! We can sit for hours at a football or baseball game. We can sit immobile for hours in front of the T.V. set and watch any filth that might appear on the screen, but we cannot find the time to study the word of God which is our only guide to an eternal glory with the Father!! (John 6:63; Acts 20:32).

In further support (?) of the "Christian Schools" he states that one of the "methods" by which the church is able to discharge its responsibility in teaching the young and training them to be preachers, elders, etc. is to "start such schools and cause them to be available when young people have need for them." Do not get the impression that I do not believe a child should receive instruction in the scriptures. I do believe this is necessary, and I believe it is good for schools to offer sound Bible instruction, but is it the responsibility of the church to build and maintain these institutions? Let us notice the reasons (?) he gives for the church support of such.

- (1) This is the time honored position held by our brethren.
- (2) Affords opportunities for rest and recreation with Christian associates (Bible Chairs).
- (3) The church has depended upon these schools for many years.
- (4) The schools need to be dependent upon the churches for their financial life blood in order for the schools to remain permanently loyal to the goals and principles which the Bible teaches.

The Catholic Church and many denominational bodies use the same argument, as, No. 1, above, to try to substantiate their practices, that is, traditions ! They also use the second argument to try to substantiate their support of soft ball, football, and basketball teams, the building of gymnasiums, skating parties and such like! In the third statement, brother Baxter leaves the impression that the church would have perished had it not been for the Christian schools! Combining the third and fourth statements we find that the church is dependent on the schools for existence and the schools are in like manner dependent upon the churches to give them money that they might teach the Bible in truth! Otherwise these schools might teach just anything that pleases the world!

In closing his work, brother Baxter asks, "First, on the basis of what command, what apostolic example, or what necessary inference is this position wrong?" I ask, on the basis of which of these is

this position right? His second question is, "in view of the God-given requirements to nurture our children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord and to provide trained elders, deacons, preachers, teachers, and the like, for leadership in the church, what feasible, workable, effective method can today take the place of Christian schools?" I ask that we look to these passages from the Word of God. Deut. 11:18,19; II Tim. 3:15-17; Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6. I now pose these questions: What has happened to the home? What has happened to the responsibility of the parent to the child? Is this responsibility being bred out of us by such as brother Baxter proposes? Are we on this earth just to have a "good time"? Do we no longer realize these as God-given responsibilities to parents, and that we must accept this responsibility?

The logical conclusion to his argument would force the following inferences "Have your children, but have them in our HOSPITALS. We have the HOME, you are not needed as parents. Don't worry, we'll bring them up in the best possible environment, and then we'll give them an education in our SCHOOLS.

Our brethren have given us everything we need, so, why the **home**?

I pray that we think about these things and study the scriptures that we might better be able to defend the truth when any such doctrine as this comes our way.

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE CHURCH

J. T. Smith, Wauchula, Fla.

The title of this article tells the story of God's establishment of the church. The church was in the mind of God and was established by God through the efforts of His son Jesus Christ. Paul told the Ephesian elders that they were to feed the church of God which He (Christ) purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Paul said again in I Cor. 15:24 that when Christ comes again, "He will deliver the kingdom back to God, even the father .

The church that Christ told Peter he was going to build in Matt. 16:18 is able to do everything God planned that it should do. It is not a kingdom that is to be extended or defended with carnal weapons. In fact, Christ told Pilate in John 18:36, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." The word "world" as used here comes from the Greek word kosmos which means "order or arrangement" (W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words). In other words, Christ said, my kingdom is not of this order of things. If it were, then would my servants fight to establish it.

Christ's kingdom and his kingship has been misunderstood from the day he was born. When Herod heard of Him, he ordered all the children two years old and under killed in an effort to do away with Christ, for he had heard that he was to be a king and believed that Christ might replace him (Matt. 2:16). Thus, from the beginning Herod thought it was going to be a literal, physical kingdom. James and John wanted the Lord's promise that they would

have the first and second place in the when Christ became king (Mark 10:36-37), and even after his resurrection, Christ's disciples believed He was going to have an earthly kingdom. They asked Him if he would restore the kingdom of Israel which was an earthly kingdom.

So, Christ's Kingdom was not established for any of the things for which a kingdom might be set up today. Christ's kingdom was established to meet the Spiritual needs of man, and not the physical needs of man, except when some of the members of the kingdom reach a state of emergency as in Acts 11:27-30. This, however, would be a temporary arrangement for a specific need (Acts 6:1-6).

The primary purpose for this kingdom's establishment was to save men's souls. Christ commanded his apostles to preach the "good news" of his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to the people (Mark 16:15; I Cor. 15:1-6).

As we read the word of God, we learn that three things are mentioned as being done by the early church. They are:

1. Upholding the gospel—Eph. 4:12, I Tim. 3:15.
2. Benevolence to its members—I Tim. 5:16, Acts 11:27-30.
3. Edifying itself—Eph. 4:12, Acts 20:28.

We have an example for every one of these works being done by the LOCAL CONGREGATION recorded in the word of God.

We find the church supporting a preacher to preach the gospel when Philippi and other churches supported Paul in Thessalonica and Corinth (Phil. 4:15-16; II Cor. 11:8).

We find the church in Jerusalem "looking out from among them seven men" and appointing them to see after the benevolent work of some of its members (Acts 6:1-6).

We also find that Paul said when all the members are functioning as they should, that this "maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16). Peter said in I Pet. 5:2 that the elders were to "feed the flock" or nourish or build up the flock or church.

Hence, every one of the things that Christ's church was established to do was done by the LOCAL CONGREGATION **WITHOUT** building and maintaining any HUMAN INSTITUTIONS. In other words, the CHURCH was ALL-SUFFICIENT or able to do what God told it to do, and we have a record in God's word where it accomplished what it as supposed to accomplish when the local congregation took care of its own affairs and did what God instructed it to do. If it was ALL-SUFFICIENT then without all of the HUMAN INSTITUTIONS through which to work, why is it not ALL-SUFFICIENT today to do its work without HUMAN INSTITUTIONS???

"GOD'S ALL-SEEING EYE"

J. Frank Ingram, Cincinnati, Ohio

"For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And

there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do (Heb. 4:12,13).

Through the years man has been prone to hide things from others and this with little success. Some even think that being able to hide things from others is success and hence he finds himself trying to hide things from God. BUT beloved, the Lord knows and sees all. It is written in Prov. 15:3: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Again it is written, "For His eyes are upon the ways of man and he seeth his goings" (Job 34:21). Thus he not only sees all but His providence is everywhere. Knowledge of this will have a tendency to turn the hearts of those who would be upright and all who are in perilous and distressing circumstances from iniquity.

Some of the many things which man desires to hide are his weaknesses of the eye, flesh, vainglory of life which are forbidden of one who walks with the Lord (I John 2:15-17). He would like to hide the fact that he has stolen, lied, or even killed. That he is selfish, inconsiderate, a poor husband, father, mother or wife, son or daughter. Such characteristics as these are not to be held in high esteem, yet they are by those who have been deceived by Satan.

The scope and power of the Lord's vision is so great, he is able to gaze upon the whole world (mankind) at the same time. The Bible reveals the Omnipresence (Acts 17:24; Jer. 23) and the Omniscience (Ex. 3:7; Job 37 :6) of God, i.e., His ability to be everywhere at all times and His wisdom of all things. Our primary weakness is that we are unconscious and unaware of the fact that God IS watching and appraising every action of ours.

As to His omnipresence, there is no limit to His seeing even the smallest of all creatures. Solomon speaks of little things in Prov. 30:24-28, such as the ants, conies, locusts, and spiders from which we learn many things. Christ spoke of the birds in Matthew 6 and made an application. It is therefore imperative that we realize that we are seen in all realms and activities. For example: Though we may hide what takes place in our homes from others, God sees and knows. The business man may be successful in cheating his customers but God knows every move. Young people away from home in school, college, etc., may keep things secret from Mom and Dad but God sees and knows what is in the heart and what takes place. A couple may be parked in a car among the darkest of places but God sees. Looking into a man's heart, He knows whether you are really searching for pleasures rather than His kingdom. Man will give an account for these things in judgment for there is no escape (Rom: .14:12).

The Lord our God sees both the good and the bad in man. If He looks upon the small creatures of the earth, and He does, then we should know He looks upon those created in His image (Gen. 1:27). He

recognized the good in Noah and his family (Gen. 6:9) ; Abraham (Jas. 2:17-26) ; Moses (Ex. 19-20); Daniel (Dan. 2-1) ; the Apostles (Matt. 10; Mark 16; Acts 2) and many others. He was able to discern the evil in Adam and Eve, Cain, the wicked before the flood, evil in the Israelites, the bad in Jonah, Peter's denial, that in Annanias and Sapphira and He is able to do the same with us.

We CANNOT hide from God. He knows every thought (Heb. 4:12) and deed. When we fully comprehend the truth of this and we feel its great impact, then such things as bickering, backbiting, wrangling, gossip, mongering, departures from the word will stop and we'll have sweet fellowship as we feel God's presence among us. Remember His eye can and does penetrate the darkest dungeon and will pierce through the thickest of metals. Realization of this will make us uncomfortable where ever we are when we consider indulging in sin.

The Lord knows, beloved, if you are a sinner. He sees your erring ways. He knows whether you are a Christian or not. When we fully realize His presence, our manner of life and behaviour will undergo a drastic change. Remember, the all-seeing eye of God is: ALL-PIERCING ALL-SEARCHING; ALL REVEAING. As it is written, you cannot run away from God and hide.

"And the kings of the earth, and the princes and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong and every bondman and freeman; hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6:15-17).

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