

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.

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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BACK to the SCRIPTURES



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WHO RESPECTS AUTHORITY?

The authority of God would be universally respected and admired if the only conditions necessary were the qualifications of the lawgiver. After all, God possesses all of the needed attributes to the superlative degree. As creator, sustainer, and the absolute owner of the earth and all the universe (Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:16-17; Psalm 50:10-12) he has an undeniable and unchallengeable right to rule. He epitomizes excellence of wisdom and competence, purity of character and integrity, and justice of enforcement and punishment. As the power and position of God declare his right to rule, so his wisdom, goodness and fairness declare that all men ought to love and respect his authority.

But God is not universally respected, and certainly many of the earthly authorities he has delegated are despised. Therefore something besides his rights and qualifications are involved. Indeed, we who are subject to law must possess certain qualifications in order to properly evaluate and appreciate legitimate authority, whether it be exercised by men (as delegated by God in the home or nation etc.) or directly by God through specific statutes in the New Testament. Respect for authority is as dependent upon the subject being what he ought to be as it is upon the lawgiver.

Two fundamentals the subject must have are (1) recognition of the rights and position of the lawgiver, and (2) humility to accept his place as one under the rule of another. Recognition involves the right intellectual understanding. Humility describes

the proper emotional response, the right attitude. Unless one knows what is right, and has the right attitude toward what he knows, he cannot be right or have a correct relationship with authority. Thus the word of God has much to say about hearing and knowing the truth, and voluntarily humbling one's self to it.

Recognition of authority is not an inborn quality of infants. They are utterly unacquainted with the idea of authority, much less with an idea of who possesses it. Respect must be learned. And since respect is ultimately based upon the rights and legitimacy of the lawgiver, that must be learned too. Parental control is their introduction to authority, and the knowledge of God is an early need for it is the cornerstone to a perpetuated respect for parental (and all other) authority in the heart of the developing juvenile who begins to question the values and standards applied to his life. This knowledge of God's role as creator and owner of the universe, and of his righteous laws and certain judgment, not only generates greater respect for authority but also supplies meaning and hope to life. There is no substitute for knowledge, that is, for Bible knowledge. God's nature and person is not revealed in the study of any physical science, but only by divine revelation in the word of God (Rom. 10:17; Jer. 10:23; I Cor. 2:10-11). If a man does not recognize God's position and rights it is impossible for him to appreciate God's authority, and it will be difficult for him to genuinely or long appreciate any human authority. He will likely rebel against authority at the point of law with which he disagrees.

Humility is a voluntary surrendering and submission of one's will to what it recognizes as the rights of another. Man needs a full view of the majestic rights and prerogatives of the Almighty in order to completely humble himself in respectful obedience. But many they are who know enough yet who will not humble themselves, rather challenging and defying some laws of both God and man. (And these often boast of their humility.) True humility is an uncommon quality, and its test and proof is seen on points of law where it is unpleasant to submit, where the law contradicts one's own sense of pleasure or propriety, or where one's own understanding per-

ceives a way it esteems wiser and better. In such cases it is hard to submit. But humility does. It does not insist on its own wisdom or way.

Who respects authority? He who recognizes the fact of God's superiority and right to rule, thereby understands the legitimacy of authority in men as delegated by God, and empties himself of stubborn pride so as to humbly submit. If we have knowledge and character we cannot but respect authority.

"THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT"

L. A. Mott, Jr.

Unthinking and uncritical brethren in great numbers have swallowed the notion that it is merely the job of the sheep to give money; that what is done with that money is the responsibility of the shepherds (elders); that the sheep cannot be held responsible for unscriptural uses to which the money is put.

That view is a hollow delusion, and the comfort derived therefrom is baseless. Nowhere is its groundlessness made more apparent than in connection with the story of Abimelech's usurpation in Judges, chapter 9.

When the people of Shechem agreed to accept Abimelech as king they gave him 70 nieces of silver from the temple treasury of their idol. Abimelech used the money to hire an army of rascals and exterminated his imagined competitors for the rule in Israel, the sons of Gideon, except Jotham (vv. 4f.). When Jotham made his speech to the men of Shechem he charged them with the act of murdering his brothers (v. 18). "Jotham imputes the slaying of his brothers to the citizens of Shechem, as a crime which they themselves had committed (ver. 18), because they had given Abimelech money out of their temple of Baal to carry out his designs against the sons of Jerubbaal (ver. 4)" (Keil).

In the judgment of God the blood of Gideon's sons was laid not only upon Abimelech "who slew them," but also "upon the men of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to slay his brethren" (v. 24).

One could hardly fail to recognize the general principle underlying this case, but let me make it impossible by stating it plainly: When you supply the means of doing wrong you yourself are responsible for the wrongdoing.

No one will be able to excuse himself at the judgment of God by shifting the responsibility to the devil, a false teacher, or the elders. Not Eve. Not Flip Wilson. And not you!

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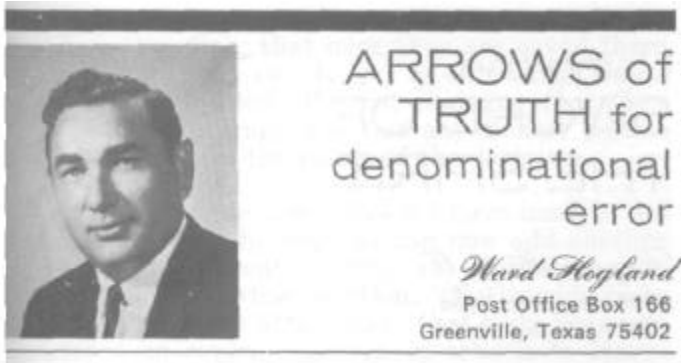
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"THE CHURCH TREASURY AGAIN"

Several weeks ago I wrote an article called "The Church Treasury." As usual, I have received some comment on this subject. I insisted in my first article that the New Testament teaches congregations to have one church treasury and out of that one treasury all the work enjoined upon a congregation of God's people is to be accomplished.

I received a letter from a Christian lady, who raised some questions about a church treasury. Since her position is espoused by a number of brethren I thought it appropriate to publish her letter with a reply. May I say that I enjoy receiving mail from brethren. This stimulates our thinking and causes all of us to keep on our toes. The letter is nice and self explanatory. I received permission to publish her letter but agreed not to use her name. Here is the letter:

Dear Brother Hogland:

Have enjoyed your articles in Searching the Scriptures. Am writing concerning February's article, "The Church Treasury." I have no disagreement with you as to what church money is used for. But can you prove to me there should be a church treasury when there is no need? In I Cor. 16, there was a need — supporting needy saints. Paul said "Let everyone of you lay by him in store" — sounding as though they hadn't done it before, and were doing it now for this special purpose. The same would be true with all the other churches he had given order to.

As to Paul's support, can you prove that a collection was not made just for Paul's support? I don't mean a separate treasury as you pointed out some believe. But knowing Paul needed support, why couldn't they have done the same as they did in I Cor. 16? What I am getting at is this: What makes you so sure they laid by in store on the first day of the week when there was no need? It looks to me like they laid by in store when it was needed whether for needy saints, supporting a preacher, or a widow indeed. I see nothing wrong with giving every Lord's day when we come together, but can we make it a binding law of the Lord? If I give to the church when there is a need (we have no preacher to support, needy saints, widows indeed, or building to rent or maintain), and if I individually help my friends, neighbors, widows, brethren, etc., as the need arises,

I believe I am in accordance with God's word. But I would be very happy to hear any further comments you have on the subject.

In Christ,

This is the type of letter I enjoy answering. It is plain, written with a fine attitude and the person seems to be desiring the truth on the subject. First, if you are interested you might review my first article on this subject. By doing this it will not be necessary for me to repeat some arguments made at that time. Since this lady requested that I not use her name I will refer to her as sister X. You will note in her letter she did not believe in a dual treasury. That is, she did not believe that a congregation was to have one treasury for benevolence and another one for evangelism. So this point will not have to be established.

Now to her first question. She said, "But can you prove to me there should be a church treasury when there is no need?" This question assumes the point to be discussed. Notice the word "NEED." I believe that I can prove a church treasury at all time because I have never known a time when a church did not have a NEED! For example, sister X says she believes preaching and benevolence are to come out of the same treasury. Has there ever been a time since the inception of the church on Pentecost that we have not NEEDED to preach the gospel? If so, at what time? Jesus said, "The harvest is truly plenteous but the laborers are few" (Matt. 9:37). Would anyone argue that gospel preaching is NEEDED more at one time than another? If so, by what authority? The need of preaching the old Jerusalem gospel is constantly with us. It doesn't make any difference whether the congregation has four members or four hundred. The need is there. If the congregation is large enough to support a local preacher in its midst, then let it help to preach the gospel in hard places. This is what churches did in apostolic times (II Cor. 11:8). Sometimes people in small congregations do not feel the need to contribute into the treasury to preach the gospel. Why should this be? Do people in large congregations have a greater responsibility than people in small ones?

Sister X says she feels that she is in accordance with God's will if she helps her friends and neighbors as the need arises. May I say such is fine and the Bible teaches us to do this in Gal. 6:10. However, this is not all the Bible teaches us as individuals to do. It teaches us to support the local congregation so it (the church) can do its work of preaching the gospel, benevolence among the saints and edification. The key which unlocks the door is in the word NEED. Notice the number of times it was used in the letter. The word NEED is a relative term and depends on how a person might look at it. For example, one person might look at a congregation and feel it had no NEED and another might look at the same congregation and feel it has a DIRE NEED. So who is right? Does God leave our giving to OUR judgment of a congregation? Certainly not. If he left such matters to our judgment, one congregation might have an abundance of money and another could not pay its light bill! The truth of the

matter is God settled it when he said we are to give "as we have been prospered." This includes every Christian on the face of the earth whether he is a member of a small congregation or a large one. God is no respecter of persons but he would be if we could decide personally whether a congregation has a need. Some might think a very large congregation had no need because it was large and another might think a small one had no need because it was small. I say this to show you that one could rationalize and come up with the fantastic idea that NO congregation has NEED. **Remember, God has not regulated my giving to his church by my opinion with respect to the need of that congregation!**

Another thing, elders are to rule over the flock (I Pet. 5:1-4), but suppose in the opinion of all the members, the church had no NEED. If they all felt this way there would be no contribution, no work could be done by the congregation. There is a difference in what an individual does and what a congregation does (I Tim. 5).

Sister X said she felt like the contribution of I Cor. 16 was just started by Paul and they were not doing it before. This could be so, but remember everything commanded for us had to get started sometime! The faith (Jude 3-5) had not been completed at this time. However, I know this contribution had been going on for a year at Achaia. Paul said, "For which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago" (II Cor. 9:2). Thus, after he had given the command they continued to do this for a year. It is true that a congregation might not have as much benevolence at one time as they do at another. But remember as Sister X says, both benevolence and evangelism come out of the same treasury and there is ALWAYS a need for preaching the word of the Lord. The NEED is always with us and therefore our giving into the treasury should not be erratic but constant as the Bible says "On the first day of the week." And there is a first day in EVERY week!

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Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Eugene Britnell
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SHORT SWORD SWIPES

I have just finished reading Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Of course I had read these gospels many times, but this time I read them with a different goal — to see how many times Christ quoted from the Old Testament. I found that he quoted directly from the Old Testament at least thirty times, and from the following books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, I Samuel, I Kings, Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel and Jonah. In addition to these specific references, we have such statements as these: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44). This proves that Jesus believed in rightly dividing the Scriptures; that we can make application of them to our time; that they were written by holy men of God who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

According to a recent article by the Associated Press, we have these statistics concerning a social "disease" which results from using the "choicest product of the brewer's art":

"There are 9 million people in the United States with a serious drinking problem, or about one of every 22 persons, whose annual costs to the nation include \$10 billion, half of all arrests, and 25,000 highway deaths ... An estimated 200,000 new cases develop each year."

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1).

Speaking of drinking, a recent survey during the evening hours in Little Rock revealed that "one in every 25 cars on the road in Pulaski County is driven by a drunk person, and one in every eight cars is driven by someone whose driving ability has been impaired by alcohol." And yet they tell those of us who have to drive the streets that it's none of our business if they drink. When a drunk aims an automobile at me, I figure it is some of my business!

Another interesting result of the survey was that 50.6 per cent of those who were driving under the influence of alcohol were Baptists. Do you suppose they were just practicing what they preach? Their

preachers tell them that it doesn't make any difference how they live; that once they are saved there isn't anything they can do, say or think that would cause them to be lost. I'm not charging that they deliberately encourage sin, but any honest person knows that such is the result of the doctrine.

Of all the appropriate words we have used to describe these hairy hippies, we can now add another one — lousy! A recent headline out of Washington, D.C. was the following question: "Nationwide body lice epidemic?" The article says that body lice were discovered on several children in schools in Maryland, and warns that there may be a nationwide epidemic. They attribute the problem to "the birth of the hippie and the death of DDT." Come to think of it, I don't see how lice could live on some of them.

In commenting on the recent Methodist conference in Atlanta, Dr. Alfred Knox, editor of Arkansas Methodist and Louisiana Methodist magazines, said, "Starting within the framework of belief in Jesus Christ, the new statement (one adopted in the conference, EB) sets up fourfold guides for judging doctrinal matters: 1. Considering what the Scriptures say. 2. Looking to our Christian tradition. 3. Considering one's personal experience. 4. The use of reason and logic."

The last three have not one thing to do with ascertaining the will of God! Jesus condemned any appeal to tradition (Mark 7:7-9), and Paul took care of experience and human reasoning (I Cor. 1; Acts 17). If they want to please God, why not stop with number one? If they did, there would be no Methodist Church!

James D. Bales' book, "MODERNISM Trojan Horse In The Church" is worth reading. In the introduction, there is an interesting quote from Carl F. H. Henry:

"Jesus Christ alone is Head of the church. He has no favored puppets, any more than he has a first-lieutenant in Rome. And Jesus Christ assesses the Christian community with scrupulous honesty. He still walks among the churches, threatening to remove lamps from their candlesticks. If he can endure the compromises of modern American Christianity no more than those of ancient Asia Minor, all these lights that we consider so indispensable soon could be blown out."

There is much difference between the attitude and conduct of the faithful Israelites and the modern Christians. One of the real problems and spiritual dangers to many in the church today is hedonism. With the shorter work weeks and the longer week ends, all some people can think about is pleasure. Instead of working for the Lord, or doing something else of a constructive nature, they take off to the mountains, lakes, or other places of pleasure and relaxation to have a good time. Absenteeism is a serious problem in the Bible classes and worship services.

But what about the Israelites? An interesting statement is made concerning them in connection

with the increased burdens placed upon them by Pharaoh:

"And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God" (Exodus 5:8).

So when the faithful Israelite got off from work he wanted to go worship God, but when many Christians get off a few hours or days they want to go play. The difference is in attitude toward life, this world, and duty to God. And remember, when the unfaithful Israelites could consider nothing but eating, drinking and playing, Paul called it idolatry (I Cor. 10:7). Is it any less so today?

According to a recent news report, some high schools in California are offering courses or classes in pre-natal and maternal care. This became necessary due to the percentage of the students who were pregnant. Isn't that ridiculous? That's the fruit of the permissiveness and "new morality" of our time. And according to the liberals in all walks of life, we must not correct or condemn these young people, for they must be left free to "do their own thing."

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EXAMINE
YOURSELVES,
WHETHER YE
BE IN THE FAITH

Ken Green

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PRAYING IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH

Communion with God is a two-way street. God communicates to us through His revealed Word. We are privileged to speak to Him in prayer.

What does the word of faith teach on this important subject of prayer? What does it mean to pray in spirit and in truth?

I. In Truth: This implies that there may be some false doctrines believed and practiced in regard to prayer, and in fact this is the case.

A) We need to know and believe the truth on WHO can pray acceptably. The popular notion is that everyone enjoys the privilege of prayer . . . that regardless of how wicked and unrighteous a person may be, he needs only to get into a bind and he may call on the Lord to aid him.

The Bible teaches that God is pleased to hear prayers only from those who are pleased to hear His words. In the model prayer of Luke 11, Jesus instructed His disciples to address God as their Father in Heaven. Quite obviously, a child of the Devil could not properly do this (John 8:44; Rom. 8:14).

Cornelius was not a child of God and there is no indication that he prayed as such. But he was desirous of Divine instruction and his prayers served as a memorial before Jehovah (Acts 10:4,31).

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Pet. 3:12).

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18).

B) We need to be cognizant of WHEN we should pray. The children's song says "It isn't any trouble just to P-R-A-Y, pray. So whenever you're in trouble, it will vanish like a bubble, if you'll only take the trouble just to P-R-A-Y, pray."

There isn't anything wrong with the song, but that's not all of it. We are not to pray just when we're in trouble.

I Thess. 5:17 says "Pray without ceasing." That doesn't mean to pray all the time. I don't believe that it means to always have a prayerful attitude, though such is certainly a worthy objective. It means to pray regularly. Pray when it is easy and when it is difficult. We need to have regular intervals of prayer. We should pray when we need something and know it, and when we feel no urgent needs. Sometimes our prayer will be in the form of petitions — and at other

times they will consist mostly of thanksgiving. We need to keep on praying.

It should be noted that the Christian may have an audience with the Father for as long as he desires. God is never too busy. It would probably be impossible for me to get an audience with the President. It would not be easy to get one with the Governor of my state. But the God of the universe has literally all the time in the world!

I read of Daniel who bowed three times daily before the God of Heaven. When the going got rough, the rough got going and he kept on praying! He prayed without ceasing.

David prayed in the morning when he arose, in midday and at nightfall.

The Christian can pray anywhere he happens to be whether in a church building, a factory, a car, bus, or airplane, or anywhere else.

C) Why should we pray?

1) God tells us to. That's enough for the faithful child of God. If it were no more than a command and if no blessings were connected with it, this would be sufficient reason.

2) It is a glorious privilege. In prayer we commune with God. With the saints of ages past and present and with the Heavenly host we are privileged to praise His matchless name.

3) Prayer provides the opportunity to give thanks. If we feel gratitude for the gracious, bountiful hand of God, we should be anxious to say, "I thank thee, Father." We should desire to thank God for our physical sustenance, His providential care and for fellow Christians who encourage us.

II. Praying In Spirit:

This is an area in which we fall short. Especially is this true in our public prayers. Not often do we hear real fervency expressed in our assemblies. You and I can take steps to remedy this poor situation. The first step is to recognize the need, the second is to become more fervent in our prayers. Here are three suggestions:

a) **Pray to God.** When leading in prayer, we should strive to do just that. There are matters about which one might pray in the privacy of his closet that would not be appropriate in the assembly. We should speak loudly and clearly enough for others to hear and say "amen." But we should not forget that God is the object of our prayer, not man.

b) **Avoid Cliches.** We should strive for more freshness and originality of expression. It's not that there is anything unscriptural about such phrases as, "Guide, guard and direct us;" "If we have been found faithful —"; "Go with us to our respective places of abode"; "Bless those for whom it's our duty to pray"; etc. but these phrases have become so repetitious that they tend to attract attention to themselves rather than the concepts they represent. They tend to make our prayers empty and boring instead of fresh, edifying and uplifting.

A good rule to follow is to just be sincere and natural when praying.

c) **Live a godly life.** This is the secret of true fervency. The reason some cannot offer public prayers is because they don't pray in private. They can't pray fervently that the work of the church go for-

ward, because they're not concerned enough about it to help it go forward.

If we're really involved in the work, it will be easy to pray in spirit as well as in truth. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there is your heart also."

WALKING BECOMINGLY

Larry Ray Hafley

There is a great need for circumspect, godly living. Obviously, one must live "soberly, righteously, and godly" for the sake of his own soul, (Titus 2:11; Heb. 12:14), but Scripture abounds with indirect inferences and immediate statements which clearly show that our behavior may lead to the salvation of others, or at least it will influence their regard for the gospel. Perhaps the best known verse is Mt. 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

THE WIFE

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear" (I Peter 3:1,2). A wife will not win her husband by faithful attendance to church services alone. She must reverently live in pure behavior, subject to her husband. Impatience, bitterness, vengeance, and anger are sins which the wife may be led into by a worldly minded mate, but she must restrain her impulses and refrain from "returning evil for evil. Women with husbands who are not Christians should, above all people, plead before the throne of grace for wisdom, patience, and discretion in word and deed.

PAUL'S EXHORTATIONS

Paul's writings are lined and laced with demands for purity before unbelievers. "But we exhort you, brethren,...that ye may walk becomingly toward them that are without" (I Thess. 4:10,12). "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Col. 4:5). "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15,16). These words ought to cause Christians to consider their degree of conformity to this world. Our behavior reflects the gospel. If there was a greater awareness of this fact, our words and deeds would be kinder, our dress more modest. The jokes I tell or laugh at, the places I frequent, and the clothes I wear (or do not wear) affect someone's view of the gospel. Take heed to thyself. Consider your habits, personality, and general behavior before the lost with whom you associate. Strive to live a life that will "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:10). "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27).



SOWING THE SEED of the KINGDOM

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HEARTFELT RELIGION #2

In our last article on this subject we pointed out that the Bible Heart that we are writing about is the affections of the mind (Matt. 6:20-21). Also that the character of the heart is exhibited in one's conduct. Our heart is either good or bad. The words of our mouth tells what is in our heart (Matt. 12:34). In this lesson we want to examine the:

FUNCTION OF THE HEART

The Bible heart described above undergoes quite a number of functions or exercises in obeying the gospel of Christ. Some of the things that are said of the heart in the New Testament are: (1) we think with the heart (Matt. 9:4); (2) we reason with our heart (Mark 2:8); (3) we meditate in our heart (Ps. 19:14); (4) we imagine in the heart (Gen. 8:21); (5) we purpose in our hearts (II Cor. 9:7). All of these things are attributes of the heart, and in accepting the religion of Jesus, which is preeminently a religion of the heart, we must exercise the heart.

UNDERSTAND. BELIEVE. OBEY. LOVE

All of the above expressions are carried out by the Bible heart. Jesus said in Matt. 13:15 that men "should see with their eyes, hear with their ears and understand with their hearts, and should be converted and I should heal them." According to this passage one must understand what he is doing (with a heart which thinks and reasons) before he can be converted. Jesus said, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught from God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45). So, we hear, we learn, we understand — the Bible heart being involved in all of these. For a person to say he is converted but doesn't know why or how, is a violation of heartfelt religion.

We believe with the heart. Paul said in Rom. 10:10, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." In Acts 8:37 we see this very point exemplified in the conversion of the man from Ethiopia. Philip told him (after he had reasoned with him about Jesus, and the man said he wanted to be baptized) "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." Even though we are accused of not believ-

ing in heartfelt religion (because we don't get down on the floor and roll or show an uncontrollable amount of emotions in shouting, etc.) the person who understands, who believes, is the person who DOES HAVE heartfelt religion.


We also **obey** with the heart. Paul told the Romans in Rom. 6:17-18, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have **obeyed from the heart** that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Obedience came about as a result of the Bible heart believing and obeying. In fact, Christ became the author of eternal salvation to all them that **obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9).**

We are **to love** with our hearts. Jesus said in Mark 12:30, "And thou shalt **love** the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." The word "heart" and "mind" are both -used in this passage. However, Mr. Henry Thayer in his Greek-English Lexicon says of this passage that the word "heart" is here used of things done "from the heart, i.e., cordially or sincerely, truly (without simulation or pretense)" (Page 325).

True Love always expresses itself in an action. John 3:16, with which we are all familiar, expresses this. God's love expressed itself in giving His Son. We also are to make our love known as it expresses itself in an action. Remembering that **love** is an action of the Bible heart, we see an excellent illustration of this in Luke 6:27-28. Jesus said, "Love your enemies." How is this to be done? Do we simply say we love them? Jesus explains how this is done. (1) **"Do good** to those who hate you; (2) **Bless** those who curse you; (3) **Pray for** those who mistreat you." Christ's love is exemplified in Eph. 5:25 . . . "Christ loved the church, and **gave himself for it**". A way is also expressed in the Bible as to how we may show our love for Him. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Christians, in the practice of Christianity, enjoy much with the heart. They enjoy its pleasures, its comforts, and its rewards. Next, The Change of Heart.

CHANGING STYLES

Irvan Lee
P.O. Box 866
Hartselle, Ala. 35640



Clothing today is different in color, material, and styles to those worn in ancient times. In fact, styles change for both men and women each decade, or shall we say, each year. Men make more gradual changes, probably, but they do make changes in their clothing. Men of today would be unusual and striking in appearance on our streets even in this period of confusion, in the high stiff collar, shoe string tie, and the coat with long forked tail.

Changes in dress are not necessarily sinful. The Lord has not bound any certain customs of dress upon His people. It is amazing how little is told in the New Testament about how the men were dressed or how the women were dressed. By a study of secular history of Roman life we might come to have a sort of educated guess as to how people dressed in the day of the apostles. We would not be more righteous if we used the materials, color (or lack of color), and styles of garments of that day. Preachers of today would be less effective as gospel preachers if they stood in the pulpits in the dress of the 1870s or in the styles of days of the early church. It seems that conformity in some things is a matter of becoming all things to all men rather than sinful conformity.

Many things can be shown by the way we dress. Those who are in rebellion can demonstrate their rebellion by killing, burning, looting, but they can also show rebellion by non-conformity in dress. Men may wear beads, make-up, wild mismatched colors, and clothes that do not fit them. They may decide not to wear shoes. They do the opposite to the expected from head to foot. They are in rebellion and it is written all over them. The man at the bank, the personnel officer at the factory, or the decent young lady can, in one look, see that one who is thus dressed is out of tune with, and in rebellion against, society. He likely would show little respect for the law, the foreman, the property of others, or for the highest officials of government. Young man, if you do not want to be treated as a rebel who respects neither man nor God, then do not dress so as to look like one.

The Bible does not bind the styles of one generation upon another, but this good book does make it clear that immoral people may advertise their lack of character by their dress. Tamar knew how to dress so as to leave the impression that she was immoral. Judah, when he saw her, had no doubt that she was a harlot (See Genesis 38). It does not describe her appearance in detail, but it seems she was covered


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beyond recognition. That would be different in our day, but ungodly women can still indicate that they are harlots by the way they dress. Would any deny this?

The ungodly woman of Proverbs 7 was dressed in the "attire of a harlot" when she met the foolish young man who came to her door. How was she dressed? We do not know, except that those who saw her in that generation knew her character by her dress. The New Testament indicates that modesty or immodesty, discretion or indiscretion can be shown by attire (See I Tim. 2:9, 10; I Peter 3:1-5). Young lady, do you want to be considered to be a harlot by those you meet on the street? Then do not dress like one.

The indecent often set styles. Christians should not be slaves to the suggestions of these immoral people. Television commercials, and ungodly entertainers, have brought indecent attire and conduct into the living rooms in America. The style makers admit that certain garments are designed to have sex appeal. Many seem to forget that this means they must dress so as to provoke lust (See Matthew 5:28). This is sin. It is lascivious attire. Wise, discreet children of God are taught to flee fornication rather than invite it (See I Cor. 6:18).

Things are now in a state of radical change. It would be hard for a woman to dress as none else dresses. There are those who are dressed with dignity, neatness, and decency, and there are those whose dress is most lascivious. Those properly dressed are not all by the same styles. Those improperly dressed are not all by the same styles. There are many ways to be decent, and there are many ways to be indecent. Then, why, oh, why, do not all good women dress so as to leave the impression that they are good women? Why should any good woman object to dressing modestly?

Good people do not always fully agree as to the appropriateness of certain garments. The more we study the Bible, pray, and meditate on what the Bible says and what it does not say, the closer we can get to perfect agreement. This unity is based upon a desire to do His will and an understanding of His will. All people, young or old, men or women, should hunger and thirst after righteousness. The difference in judgment *as* to what is appropriate in clothing is not so much a difference in age as it is a difference in concern for God's will. Television-trained people know little or nothing of chastity and discretion which older women should be teaching younger women (Titus 2:3-5). The so-called generation gap is a gap in training. Older women have not given the young the principles by which they are to measure styles. This failure is doing much to destroy homes and morals, which means the loss of souls in hell. The failure is conspicuous and alarming.

Women receive more instruction in the Bible concerning dress than do men. God knows that her dress or lack of dress has more influence for good or evil than man's attire. The high standard suggested for women are for the good of the human race. Fathers and husbands, as heads of the homes, should demand decency and forbid lasciviousness. Men should, of course, be wise and decent in dress,

also.

Hair styles may be signboards to advertise one's emphasis or character, just as clothing may indicate one's quality of character. The proud, ungodly women of ancient times were given to the elaborate and extravagant hair styles. This extravagance and gaudiness are forbidden (See I Tim. 2:9; I Peter 3:3). It seems evident that men and women are to have different hair styles. Think of these words: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? but if a woman have long hair, it is glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" (Read I Cor. 11:1-16). Why is there not more consideration of and respect for this passage? Should not woman at least allow her hair to grow until it is definitely long as compared with man's short hair? Should not man have his hair cut until his is definitely short when compared with her long hair? It is unfortunate that the so-called pictures of Christ have long hair. There is no picture of Christ. The paintings of Christ that have been given wide circulation were painted during another "long haired" generation. Women with long hair may sin in their extravagant arrangements and ornamentation as suggested in I Timothy 2 and I Peter 3.

Neatness and cleanliness are nowhere forbidden. The slovenly, uncouth appearance is nowhere commended. One may be out of place by conspicuous dress regardless of why it is conspicuous. The modest woman who is beautiful is as God made her, and has no reason to be ashamed. Immodesty has no excuse, but beauty is its own excuse for being.

Long ago, in the law of Moses, God said: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 22:5). We do not live under the law of Moses, so this is not binding on Christians because it is the Jewish law. It is true that it is an unrighteous thing for a man to be effeminate or womanish (I Cor. 6:9, 10). The difference in hair length was mentioned in I Cor. 11. Why would man desire to be a sissy? Why would woman desire to be mannish? It is sometimes next to impossible to identify one on the street. Is IT a boy? Is IT a girl? The unisex movement is for infidels and atheists. It is certainly not for Christians.

May women ever be dressed decently other than in a skirt? Have good women always dressed as good women did a few years ago? Have those patterns been bound forever? Get your concordance and look up the references to the word skirt or skirts. Be impressed that in Old Testament times men's skirts are mentioned more often than women's skirts. They evidently were different, according to the law (Deut. 22:5), but both he and she wore skirts. Do you want to hunt in the Bible with the help of your concordance for men's trousers, britches, or pants as outer garments? Let us not make laws where God has not. If men and women had skirts in Old Testament times and were not at all dressed alike, is it not evident that men and women might have pants suits and be very different? Could she find feminine suits while her husband finds remarkably

different masculine suits? Styles are not bound, but modesty, decency, and sobriety are bound.

Some good people suggest that if women wear pant suits they will soon be in the stretch pants or tights. Some do not wear them. Women who would wear vulgar pant suits would wear the very indecent mini-skirts if they were in dresses. People who are interested in unholy and sinful lasciviousness (called sex appeal) will find a way, whatever the styles. Many, even among the careless better women, appear in public in dresses that look like tops for decent pants suits. It looks as if they just failed to put on one of the main garments. Can any one honestly say that mini-skirts are better? Obviously not.

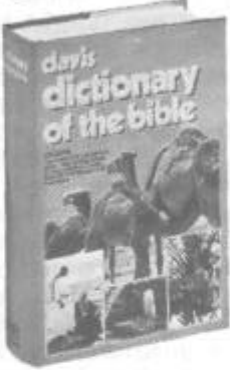
This is not written to say that all good women should go to pants suits. Let good women who are in the habit of wearing modest dresses continue to do so if they desire. We all will respect them highly. Let us face the fact however that coming generations may make radical changes in the styles. The Bible does not forbid. But good women will always be able to dress neatly and discreetly, and ungodly women will always be able to show their brash inability to blush (Jer. 6:15) by appearing in the attire of a harlot.

Entertainment centers may be found where players appear in the nude with no more shame than the brute beast. This is sinful with condemnation from God as for adultery and fornication (Read I Cor. 6:9, 10, 18; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:5; Rev. 21:8). Please notice that the sex sins are almost always listed first in any Bible list of soul destroying sins. How much better is the bikini bathing suit than nudity? Modern bathing suits are indecent for any to use in public. Is it not amazing how many people, even church members, appear almost nude in public? What has happened to discretion? Morals will not rise, and homes will not be more stable until people begin putting on more clothing in public. When mothers put on their very small halters and shorts and go to the public pool with the children, who will teach modesty?

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (I Tim. 2:9, 10). Mr. W. E. Vines, in his **Dictionary of New Testament Words** tells us that the word translated "modest" in this passage means "orderly, well-arranged, decent, modest." The word is sometimes used to refer to the idea of being orderly or of good behavior in other particulars than clothing. Many have pointed out that pearls and costly array are referred to by this word, and they certainly are not the decent, well arranged, and orderly attire for the Christian according to this passage. Extravagance and gaudiness are condemned. Do lasciviousness and indecent exposure go uncondemned? Any indecent attire is immodest. That which tends toward lewdness is condemned. Is there no lust provoked by modern customs of dress? Let none soothe your conscience by tuning your minds only to the costly array of I Tim. 2:9. What about the shamefaced-

ness and sobriety? Does the expression "modest apparel" have no meaning until we come to the last things listed? Modesty refers to that which is proper in behavior or manner. The "attire of a harlot" is not proper. It is not wrong to comb the hair, wear neat clothing, and maintain the ornament of a meek and quite spirit with proper humility. There can be the lack of modesty in the loud, subtle, stubborn, gad-about spirit as well as in indecent clothes (See Proverbs 7). Meekness, chastity, shamefacedness, sobriety, discretion, and purity should never go out of style among Christians. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. Boaz said that the whole city knew that Ruth was a virtuous woman (Ruth 3:11). That good name was worth much to that good woman.

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AM I A MATURE CHRISTIAN?

Don Martin

Even though the word "mature" is not found in the New Testament, many synonyms are. The writer of the Hebrew epistle employed a word which is tantamount to the English word "mature", "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of FULL AGE . . ." (Heb. 5:14, all emphasis throughout mine, D.M.). The word which is herein translated "of full age" is the Greek word "teleiou" which, according to Mr. Vine, means maturity (W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary, page 174). The same word that is rendered "of full age" in Hebrews five, verse fourteen is also found in a host of other passages. "Brethren, be not children in understanding", Paul exhorts the Corinthians, "howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." (I Cor. 14:20). In this passage the word "teleiou" is translated "men". Thus, in both of the foregoing passages, adulthood or maturity is enjoined. Yet, in view of this simple teaching; that is, that Christians are to be mature and adult, we have not a few who have been members for years and years who seemingly never grow! In fact, I would suggest that infantilism is one of the greatest hindrances and impediments the church is presently encountering. Thus it behooves every child of God who has had time to develop (Heb. 5:12) to ask himself, am I a mature Christian? Dear ones in Christ, the following will help us to determine whether or not we are mature Christians:

PUTS KINGDOM FIRST

"But seek ye first his kingdom," Christ commands, "and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33, A.S.V.). Beloved, there are many ways in which the adult Christian puts the kingdom or church first. Seeking the church first necessitates putting it first in our attendance, giving, and affection. The mature Christian will not stay home to entertain visitors or relatives when it is time to assemble (Heb. 10:25). Neither will he make up all kind of frivolous excuses for not attending. He will be there every time the doors open, if you please, because he is putting the church first. Certainly when it comes to giving we see many who are immature. There are churches that can not support a full-time preacher simply because the members are not mature when it comes to giving. Many of these members when they decide they want a new car or house will cut down on their contribution when they are giving the Lord their left overs to start with! Also when it comes to the church occupying a lofty position in our affection, we see those who are immature. If Christ is teaching anything in the two parables of Matthew thirteen, verses forty-four through forty-six he is teaching that the church is to be highly esteemed in our affection. Notwithstanding, there are those who could care less about the local church of which they are a member. (I submit that if the paramount reference of Matthew six, thirty-three

is not to the local church it certainly would include it.) Dear one, are you a mature Christian? Are you putting the church first in your attendance, giving, and in your affection?

STEADFAST AND UNMOVABLE

Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth thus, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye STEADFAST, UNMOVEABLE, ALWAYS abounding in the work of the Lord . . ." (I Cor. 15:58). I have seen instances in which the local preacher was so preoccupied in trying to keep members attending who had been members for years that he did not have time to teach aliens Christ's gospel! Beloved, the mature adult Christian is not irresolute and fickle but rather firm and unmovable. He is the type who is out encouraging others rather than having to be constantly encouraged himself.

TEACHES OTHERS

The New Testament is replete with teaching concerning the necessity of the Christian teaching others the gospel. Luke in his letter to Theophilus said thus relative to the Christians in Jerusalem, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word (Acts 8:4). Christians are not only commanded to teach aliens but also one another. In the language of Paul we are to, ". . . Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (I Thes. 5:14). The weak, immature member, instead of being able to teach others, is still in need of being taught himself! (Heb. 5:12). Conversely, the mature Christian teaches aliens and erring members the way of rectitude and right.

EXAMINES SELF

It is your writer's belief that one of the greatest needs in the church today is self-examination. Many good, rich lessons delivered from the pulpit are often ineffective simply because the hearers do not make personal application. We need to heed the teaching of Paul to the Corinthians, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves . . ." (II Cor. 13:5). The adult Christian is not bored when he attends services, as the infantile member frequently is, because he is involved in the lesson — he is making application to himself.

CONCLUSION

It is the writer's prayer that the foregoing will enable us to determine whether or not we are mature Christians. If, in view of the above description, you find that you are not an adult Christian, why not resolve now to be.

WANTED

Any authentic material on the "Jesus People" movement or other related movements. Please send it to me with invoice.

H. E. Phillips
P. O. Box 17244
Tampa, Fla. 33612

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

"... They rehearsed all that God had done with them..." — Acts 14:27

SOUTH CAROLINA

by Owen H. Thomas

The state of South Carolina is virtually a mission field so far as the conservative element of the Lord's church is concerned. To my knowledge there are only two congregations in the state that are self-supporting. Both of these have fewer than sixty members. Only five churches have full time preachers. I do not know of but about twenty congregation in the entire state that could be considered conservative and most of these have less than twenty-five members. There are several towns of moderate size that have no churches of Christ in them.

The liberal churches are not as strong here as in many other places but they outnumber the conservatives by a wide margin. Some of the liberal churches in Nashville, Tennessee have been surveying the state and are making plans to send liberal preachers into South Carolina for the purpose of starting more liberal churches.

Columbia, which is the state capitol, has four liberal churches but until about a year ago there were no conservative churches. However, there are two small conservative groups meeting there now. One of these began over a year ago and they now have about fifteen members. They are known as the North Columbia Church of Christ and meet at 928 Columbia College Drive. Brother Bill Brittenham, who was recently discharged from the army, is working with them. He is trying to raise support so that he may continue to work with this small group. They are trying to support him until he can find support but they will not be able to continue this for very long. Bro. Brittenham needs help and he needs it NOW. The other group started in January of this year when about five or six families were kicked out of the liberal Eastside church. They have about fifty in attendance and are known as the Brandon Avenue Church of Christ. They have made arrangements for brother Gary White to begin working with them about August. I understand he will also be needing support.

The church here in Camden is small. We have about fifty-six members. At the present time we are sending \$335.00 per month to help support four other preachers besides canying on our local work. Thus, we are not able to answer these other calls for help. We would, if we could. But I know there are other churches who can help these men. Will you do it? I believe these men deserve help. South Carolina needs these men. Columbia being the capitol offers the best opportunities for the spreading of the gospel in the state. If you can help or are interested in more information I suggest you contact Bill Brittenham at 3028 Exmoor, Columbia, S.C. 29203 or Harold Taylor, 1021 Heaven Drive, Columbia, S.C. 29203.

NEW CHURCH IN BRISTOW, OKLAHOMA

Olen Holderby

The church in San Pablo, Calif, sent me, during the month of April, to Bristow, Okla., in an effort to get a sound church started. I arrived in Bristow on April 10. After about two weeks of intensive home Bible studies, we began meeting April 23. Twenty-three people were present for the morning service and twenty-two for the evening service. At present the new group is meeting in the American Legion Bldg., which has very nice quarters. The brethren at the East Central church in Tulsa are much interested in this new work and have promised to pursue the effort further, with needed assistance and effort. Bro. James Watts, the East Central preacher, was with me almost all the time and proved to be a real source of encouragement and help. The East Central elders are kind enough to permit Bro. Watts to speak for the new group for a while. Along with the East Central brethren we are doing considerable follow-up on additional contacts. We ask your prayers on behalf of this new work.

DEBATE IN HOUSTON AREA

The subject of this discussion is "The Kingdom (Its Establishment and Destiny)." It will be conducted in the Deer Park High School Auditorium. Each session will begin at 7:30 each evening.

The disputants are **Glenn R. Burt** who is working with the College Park church of Christ in Deer Park, Texas, and **Don Newcomer**, who is a member of the Berean Christadelphians in Houston, Texas.

Propositions:

June 12 & 13 — The Kingdom was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus and its destiny is Eternity in Heaven with Jesus.

Affirming: Glenn R. Burt

Denying: Don Newcomer

June 15 & 16 — The Kingdom of God will be re-established at the second coming of Jesus and its destiny is Eternity on Earth with Jesus.

Affirming: Don Newcomer

Denying: Glenn R. Burt

PREACHER NEEDED

Preacher needed to work with small group of Christians in Selma, Ala. Adequate support available. Send inquiry to Nile E. Casstleberry, 216 Koppecky Rd., Selma, Ala. 36701. Phone 205-872-1839.

The church of Christ in Thomaston, Maine assembled for the first time on April 16, 1972 in the Weymouth Grange Hall on Beechwood Street off U.S. 1. The attendance is now in the teens. The membership at present is 12. There are over 40,000 people in a 15-mile radius to draw from and the nearest church

is 40 miles. We will be moving into that area when schools are out in June. Our present need is support! Any church or Christian who wants to have fellowship with us in this great work may contact me at this address. John W. Pitman, P.O. Box 186, Milbridge, Maine 04658. The need is great! Who will help?

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Tom Swilley, 1713 South 6th, Monroe, Louisiana 71201 — This is to advise that the Southside Church in Monroe has now moved into a new and permanent meeting house. We met for three weeks in the home of one of the Christians and then moved to a rented warehouse where we had been until buying property and building at 506 S. 6th Street. We moved into our building and began our spring gospel meeting on March 26 with Bro. Bob Buchanon of Pekin, Ind. Our new meeting house has a very comfortable auditorium and four classrooms. Our attendance continues to grow. We averaged 54 for each service during the gospel meeting. On Tuesday and Wednesday nights, a couple of the students from White's Ferry Road School of Preaching were in attendance and stayed around after services to discuss the institutional question. Bro. Buchanon and I tried to answer every question and feel much good was accomplished as a result. Monroe holds much bitterness so we hope this is a step in the direction of removing some of the animosity that exists. If ever in the Monroe area, be sure to look us up. If you know of any contact in this area, please call me at (318) 323-2278 or 322-3541.

"AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP"

Donald R. Givens

Many congregations of God's people, though far from dead, are doing much less effective gospel work than they should be doing with their talent and resources. Why is this? What is the reason for so little spiritual and numerical growth? Among other answers this must be one: Because the very reason for which the church exists — *the proclamation of the saving gospel* — is being done so feebly by too many. There are exceptions to this of course (thank the Lord), but generally speaking, in our modern materialistic society, too few of God's people are diligently and constantly proclaiming the gospel to too few of the devil's people.

There needs to be a much closer connection between "study" and "evangelism" between preaching and practice; between knowledge and conduct; be-

tween "personal faith," and "personal work." We are saved—to save others. We are loved—to love others. We are taught—to teach others. Remember: it is not just "the preacher's job." It is "the *faithful man's* job (2 Tim. 2:2).

The *gospel* and the *communication of the gospel* are two different things. We must study, learn, and know the blessed gospel; but we must also *tell* it to others. Yet, in many local churches (individually and collectively) the communication of the Good News is so inadequate that the greater part of our neighbors fail to get any real awareness of the Christ's power in our lives. Life goes on, for the most part, in our secular age, as if the Lord had never died on the cross and as if His church did not exist.

Not all people will hear and heed the Good News when you tell them; not all heard and heeded Jesus. But if Christians will be busy sowing the seed with untiring devotion—it has with it such compelling force (power—Romans 1:16) that some will listen... some hearts will heed...some lives will be touched... some souls will be saved!

What ails the church of the Lord? Inadequate numbers? Too little finances? Not enough church buildings? Too few big congregations? No. Not really. That is not the root of the problem. But rather the answer lies in: inadequate personal devotion; too little self-denial; not enough love for the lost; and too much lethargic leadership.

The proclamation of the gospel is being in our time so feebly done. May we never be content to "drag along" just doing things "fairly well" and "holding our own." God forbid.

"...already it is time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." (Rom. 13:11,12)

"Awake to soberness righteously, and sin not; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to move you to shame." (I Cor. 15:34)

"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee." (Eph. 5:14) Time is flying fast. Death is nearer. Christ's coming is nearer. Judgment is nearer. Eternity is getting nearer with every beat of your heart. *****

SMITH-LAGUATA DEBATE NOW READY FOR SHIPMENT

This is the debate that was held in 1971 in the Philippine Islands between brethren J. T. Smith and Eusebio M. Lacuata on the questions of Benevolence and Evangelism. The price of the book is \$2.00. For every one you buy, one will be sent to the brethren in the Philippines free. Order several copies today. Keep one — give several to friends. Paper Bound



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