

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 Thessaionica 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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THINK ON THESE THINGS

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CONGREGATIONAL COMPETITION

No informed person would deny our responsibility of teaching the gospel to every creature and baptizing those who believe and repent (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16). No one would deny that the church should make increase unto the edifying of itself in love (Eph. 4:16). Every honest Christian desires scriptural growth of both himself as an individual and the body of Christ.

Growth may refer to different things. Growth may be in number, in knowledge, in respect from others, or growth in financial power. The usual measurements by which brethren today tell of their growth is in the number in attendance and in the contribution. This is a false measurement of true growth because it does not take into account all or the most important factors. Some congregations may have many members who are wealthy and give more than others but sacrifice far less. The number of dollars per week does not tell of strength or growth. They may be like the Laodiceans who thought themselves rich, but the Lord said they were poor (Rev. 3:14-19). Others may gauge their success or failure on the number they can get to attend the various public assemblies for worship. Great meetings are planned with well-known speakers with a view of drawing members from neighboring congregations, and little thought is given to those of the world. Gimmicks are used by some to draw the crowds and then that congregation is on the march.

The great harm done by the congregational competition growing out of these false measurements of

true growth is the internal decay in spiritual **things**, and the friction created between brethren. We forget that we are marching under one Leader against a common enemy: the Devil. Brethren become competitors for large numbers on the congregational level and forget the lost world. An example or two of the competition between congregations that hinders the true growth of the kingdom will serve to illustrate the dangers.

An eager, zealous, young preacher wants to demonstrate his ability to make a congregation grow, so he begins to canvass the community to get all the "strays" (wayward members) back to the assemblies. This is commendable and he receives encouragement from the brethren. Soon he must turn to other fields for numerical growth, so he begins to campaign in other congregations with various appeals to individuals to "transfer membership" to the church where he preaches. He has no difficulty in persuading the zealous "personal workers" of his congregation to assist him in moving in as many from other churches as possible. This proves his ability to make a church grow and convinces most in that congregation that this is the way to enlarge the kingdom of Christ.

Now when several churches in the same city begin this campaign you can imagine what the results will be. Brethren will become alienated because of pressures put upon them by some to move their membership from one place to another. Congregations in the same city develop the feeling of being competitors instead of working toward the same goal of saving souls.

Another example is to build as many churches (buildings) as possible in a community. The prize goes to the church that is responsible for the most churches being started in the community. Usually the pattern followed is to quietly divide over personalities or issues in doctrine and establish another church in a nearby community and declare it to be an effort to spread the borders of the kingdom. In reality the second group started with full intention of all to draw members from other churches nearby and then boast of their efforts for growth. If not, why will they usually select a site in the very heart of a section in which are a half dozen congregations? Why will they not go to some area where there is no

congregation within miles and begin the work? It is impossible for scriptural discipline to be exercised because the competing congregations will eagerly take the wicked brethren in, since number is the important goal. Those who tend to be rebellious or indifferent will not repent because they know they will be welcomed without condition by some competing congregations.

We must destroy this attitude of being in competition with others and begin to look at the fields white unto harvest. The world is full of unconverted sinners and every congregation in the world can develop a healthy growth if each will labor to preach the word to the lost and exhort the unfaithful and weak. We do not need to use every trick and lure devised by man to entice Christians from one congregation to another under any pretense.

In some cases false reports have been invented about elders or some members of one congregation in order to make it easier to proselyte members from it. I know of three cities in which this has been and is being done. Others use the beauty of buildings, distinguished persons who are members and all forms of entertainment to draw from the membership of neighboring congregations.

The elders or bishops are to "feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof ..." (II Pet. 5:2). Whether this be one congregation in the midst of two or three small cities or a small congregation in the midst of several congregations in a large city. Wherever the flock and whatever its size, the bishops are to exercise oversight and feed that flock.

We have a real work in trying to convert the lost to Christ from the world and those who are caught in the jaws of denominational chaos. This would also include those who have turned away from the faith to the false doctrine of institutionalism and related false positions, whose philosophy is liberal and digressive with regard to the authority of Christ.

At the close of the letter to the Colossians Paul instructed that the epistle be read in the church of the Laodiceans and that the epistle to the Laodiceans be read by the church at Colosse (Col. 4:16). This shows recognition of one congregation by another in respect to common divine instruction, yet they are recognized as distinct groups which function autonomously. Why should we work as competitors when we have the same work to do? We have the same standard of authority. When elders, preachers and Christians in general learn the difference between spiritual growth of congregations and the moving of people from one group to another, we will stop this nonsense of competing for the attention of the crowds and the shifting of brethren from one congregation to another and start converting the lost to Christ.

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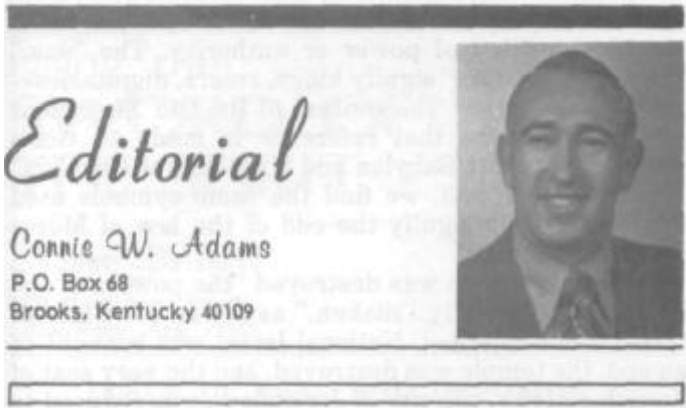
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ATTITUDES

It is entirely possible to do the wrong thing with the right attitude and to do the right thing with the wrong attitude. Multitudes have sincerely offered as worship that which God did not authorize. Many have honestly preached error while thinking it was the truth. Paul's actions were wrong when he persecuted the church, but his motives were pure. He did this while living in "good conscience before God" (Acts 23:1) and said of that period of his life "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). The Corinthians provide example of those who used God-given gifts without proper regard for those possessing either a different gift or none at all (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

Amid the religious currents which swirl about us, it is urgent that we regularly review our attitudes toward a number of things related to the kingdom of God.

TOWARD SIN

There is only one proper attitude toward sin. The Christian is to "eschew (turn away from) evil" (1 Pet. 3:11). Sin separates men from God (Isa. 59:1-2). "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). We must not call evil, good, as some did in Malachi's day (Mal. 2:17). Sin is not to be flirted with, condoned or excused. When we lose our abhorrence for it we stand in grave danger of succumbing to it. Every sin in the book has been excused as a sickness or social maladjustment. It matters not whether we are talking about sin in the realm of morals or doctrine - the effect is all the same.

TOWARD THE WORD OF GOD

A changed attitude toward the word of God and its authority has been at the bottom of apostasy. That was true of ancient Israel. It has been true in the fortunes of the church since it began. Men have often disputed specific issues or practices which have arisen between them while underneath all of them has been the larger issue of respect for divine authority. Any system of thought which robs the word of God of its rightful place among the saints will eventuate in more and more departures from truth. The modernist has changed his attitude toward scripture. The denominationalist who prefers his tradition or his

feeling to the stated word of God in the scriptures must change his attitude to be saved. The brother who is so wedded to his own enterprises that he yields to the temptation to pervert the word of God to defend them, needs to restore his reverence for God and his word. Whence springs the slurs against a "pattern" in the word to guide the church in its affairs, if not from a loss of respect for the binding nature of scripture? If there is no pattern, then surely there is no such thing as a violation of it, and every man becomes a law unto himself.

The word of God should be "sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" to our taste (Psa. 19:10). We need the attitude of the Thessalonians who received the word preached by Paul, not as man's word, "but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Thes. 2:13).

TOWARD THE CHURCH

Whatever was the object of God's eternal purpose, required the incarnation of Christ, and demanded the blood of the son of God should occupy a place of highest respect in our hearts. Jesus gave himself up for it (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28). It is his body and he is head over all things to it (Eph. 1:22-23). We are simply members acting under direction of the head (1 Cor. 12:12). We ought to love it so much that we are willing to sacrifice personal opinions and preferences when they get in the way of God's expressed will for the church and its operation and / or the spiritual well-being of our brethren in this relationship. Whether I have my way in the church is not important but whether the Lord has his way is of grave importance. Jesus longs to present the church at last as a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27). It should be the ambition of all of us not to blemish it either by life or teaching.

TOWARD ERROR

Too much is said in scripture about going onward, or perverting the gospel, or wresting the scriptures (2 Jno. 9; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 3:16), for us to think that God will shelter and excuse departures from his way. The very fact that such warnings are sounded presupposes our ability to know the truth and to distinguish it from error. I see signs of some who are at least leaning to the notion that truth is so relative or nebulous, that we really cannot know it absolutely. The truth, or pattern, of God on any subject is the sum total of all he has said on that subject. Whatever ignores, minimizes or rearranges it is error, pure and simple.

We are now in an era when a spirit of ecumenism has swept in upon us. It does not cry for the real unity of the faith provided in the message of the Spirit, but for concession, compromise and tolerance or error. While every possible effort must be made to save the souls of those involved, we cannot be blind to the devastating influences of certain men, papers and movements. At the risk of "turning off" some bright men, whether young or old, and upsetting the timetable of some illusive "peace offensive" let it be understood that there are a host of us who are set for

the defense of the truth. We love the church enough that we do not intend to see it destroyed by subversives. Certainly, any attitude of hatred, bitterness or arrogance is to be decried. But wherever error raises its head then in that specific direction will aim be taken and the attack launched.

We hope the content and tone of this article is such that friends of truth will take courage about our future course in this paper, and that those of contrary persuasions will be informed and under no false impressions.


ANSWERS

for our hope

Send Bible questions to:

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QUESTION: The following excerpts are from a letter, which, for the sake of brevity, I have condensed, which excerpts pinpoint the real issue and question submitted by our querist: "... I have a question that has been of particular concern to me for some time and have failed to get any satisfaction from noted authorities such as ... In Matt. 24:14-31, Mark 13:14-27, and Luke 21:20-28 all make specific reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, the ensuing tribulation and the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory ... If "the end" does refer to Jerusalem and "the tribulation of these days" in Matt. 24:29 refers to Jerusalem, what is meant in Matt. 24:30-31? ... It would appear that our Lord's second coming was to be immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem. What specifically, therefore, does Matt. 24:30-31 refer to?"-R.B.

ANSWER: Matt. 24:30, 31 does not refer to the second coming of Christ, but rather to the time immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem. This conclusion necessarily follows because of what is said in verse 34: "Verily I say, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." I see no reason for lifting some of these verses out of context and arbitrarily changing the order of events as they appear in this chapter. Whatever may be the meaning of verses 30 and 31, it must refer to events that come to pass within the time of the generation then living. I am aware of efforts to make "generation" mean the Jewish race, but such efforts fail of their objective.

It should be remembered that Jesus is using prophetic language, and, therefore, employs symbols. Parallel symbols may be found many times over in the prophecies of the Old Testament. Verses 30 and 31 present a contrast in events to those of verse 29. The symbols of verse 29 parallel the following Old

Testament prophecies: Isa. 13:10; 14:4,12. "Heaven" signifies position of power or authority. The "sun," "moon," and "stars" signify kings, rulers, dignitaries—those in authority. The context of the Old Testament prophecies shows that reference is made to God's judgment against Babylon and "the king of Babylon." Again, in Joel 2:28, we find the same symbols used which obviously signify the end of the law of Moses and its authority.

When Jerusalem was destroyed "the powers of the heavens" were truly "shaken," as far as the State of Israel was concerned. National Israel was brought to an end, the temple was destroyed, and the very seat of Jewish activity, the city of Jerusalem, was reduced to ruin. The nation itself was scattered to the four winds of the earth. Jewish authorities, rulers, the council, etc., all were overthrown—terminated as a functioning power.

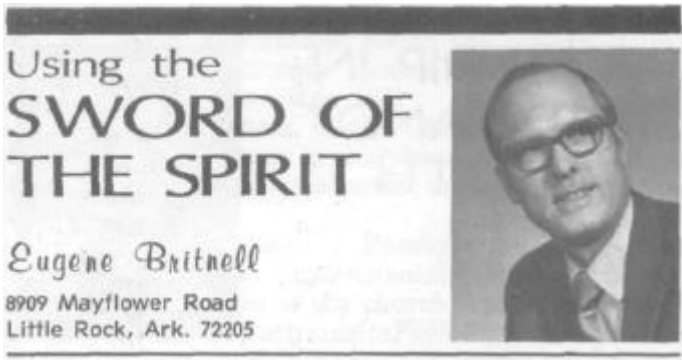
In contrast to this there appears "the sign of the Son of Man in heaven" (v. 30). Again, the word "heaven" signifies position of power and influence. Hence, there is symbolized in this expression the release of the Cause of truth from the former pressure of National Judaism and the wide spread influence of Christianity throughout the world. While the "tribes" mourn over the loss of the State of Israel, the Son of Man triumphs. The Cause of truth gains in position of power and influence in the world.

The expression "and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (v. 30), does not refer to a literal coming of the Lord, but is a continuation of symbolic language signifying something else. It is similar to the prophecy of God's judgment against Egypt: "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it" (Isa. 19:1). The Lord did not literally come into Egypt, nor did he literally ride upon a swift cloud. He did, however, come in judgment against Egypt. So, in our text, His "coming in the clouds with power and great glory" signifies the triumph of the gospel immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem.

The word translated "angels" is often translated "messengers." The sending forth of the "angels" to gather the "elect" signifies the evangelistic efforts which resulted in thousands obeying the gospel, by which men are "elected" or "called" (2 Thess. 2:14). Furthermore, this is exactly what happened immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem—history confirms it.

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LACK OF ZEAL AND DEVOTION

"Even in apostolic times the churches felt no need of an organization, devised by human planning, through which the church could cooperate to evangelize the world. They had a fervency and zeal, and the history of the church has well shown that the less zeal and devotion there is in the church, the more institutionalism and human organizations are needed." (Earl West, **SEARCH FOR THE ANCIENT ORDER**, pages 169, 170)

If the above statement is true, and it is, that explains why we have so many human institutions, sponsoring churches, etc., in the brotherhood today. It is much easier to shift responsibilities to human organizations or other elders and churches than it is to do the work. And when there is a lack of zeal and devotion among Christians, that is what we can expect to see.

If individual Christians would do their duty (1 Tim. 5:8, 16; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Peter 3:15), and each church would work according to ability and opportunity, there would be no need for the expensive, inexpedient and divisive institutions and arrangements.

THE POPE AND UNITY

"Pope Says Christian Unity Hard To Attain" says an Associated Press report from Vatican City. "The Pontiff added, however, that Christian unity was 'extremely difficult' to attain in that it meant 'overcoming the formidable and atavistic anti-Roman objections' and 'obstacles which the genius of division has labored for centuries to render insuperable.'

"The Pope added that only through prayer could Christian unity be achieved."

That is not true. Every Christian and religious leader on earth could pray for unity from now on and still be divided. The Lord has already prayed for unity (John 17:20-23). Unity can be achieved only "through their word"—that is, everyone following the teaching of the inspired apostles. If the pope and other religious leaders had not taught people to do so many things in direct conflict with the teaching of the apostles, the religious world would not be divided.

One of the most divisive doctrines known among men concerns the papacy. So if the pope is really interested in unity, he might begin by trying to find authority in the words of the apostles for the office which he occupies! If he can, and we will all accept it,

we can be united. If he cannot, and will step down from his throne, we can still have unity—at least on that point.

In order to achieve the unity for which the Lord prayed, we don't need to pray, we need to obey!

VENEREAL DISEASES

The U.S. Public Health Service has reported that venereal diseases in the nation increased 15% last year over the previous year. Atlanta, Georgia and Washington, D.C. had the highest rate. Of 60 cities with 200,000 or over population, Minneapolis showed a 118 per cent increase.

With the permissiveness, the pill, abortion, public nudity and sex emphasis, what else can we expect?

The sword of the Spirit can prevent this disease with one simple operation: "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18).

BILLY PERVERTS AGAIN

Someone asked Billy Graham what he thought about the T-shirts with "Jesus" on the back. After commenting about how Jesus might or might not have looked, Billy said:

"The Bible says, 'In the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall prophesy. Many young people shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.' Acts 2:17. I believe that the new Jesus Movement, at least in part, could be a fulfillment of this prophecy. Many young people have become disillusioned with affluence, drugs, and free sex, and are turning to Christ for fulfillment."

Does Billy not know that the prophecy which Peter used had reference to the events of Pentecost and not something two thousand years in the future? In verse 16 of the chapter, Peter said, "But THIS (emphasis mine, EB) is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." That prophecy was fulfilled in the first century, and does not have reference to the Jesus Movement or anything else in our time. Does Billy believe that the Jesus people see visions and are able to prophesy?

I have known for a good while that Billy is not too familiar with the second chapter of Acts, especially verse thirty-eight.

TOO MANY IN PRISON?

Mr. Charles H. Ashcraft, executive secretary of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, wrote an article in opposition to capital punishment—or just about any other kind. He said, "We Americans should not be able to sleep well at night as we remember there are people behind prison bars by the million."

Mr. Ashcraft's feeling about that is just the opposite of mine. I find that I can sleep better by knowing that thousands are in prison, and I could sleep even better if some more in our society were behind bars. Sure, it is bad for people to be in prison, but by their conduct they asked for it. Some people forfeit their right to be free, and I believe that some even forfeit their right to live. This nation needs to administer prompt and

appropriate punishment for those who commit crimes. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Eccles. 8:11)

THE EVIDENCE MOUNTS

In a recent speech in Nogales, Arizona, Dr. Arthur G. James, president of the American Cancer Society, said: "The number of teen-age smokers continues to rise, even though cancer caused by smoking takes 70,000 to 80,000 lives a year... Lung cancer kills more people than any other cancer. An estimated 72,000 of the 350,000 who will die of cancer in 1973 will succumb to lung cancer, and almost all of these deaths are preventable."

Dr. James said that even though the facts about the dangers of cigarette smoking have been widely disseminated, "there has been a counter wave of inducement and almost of seduction to keep the cigarette smoker shackled to his addiction and to entrap new converts among the young."

Sign on a bumper sticker: "What this country needs is more clean minds and dirty hands."

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SCHOLARS ON INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

When one considers the New Testament teaching on music in the worship of God, one learns that early Christians "sang" but did not "play" upon mechanical instruments. The New Testament teaching is "singing."

The scholarship of the world is pretty much in agreement that the New Testament teaches this and that New Testament churches practiced such. However, many of the churches in which some of the world's scholars held membership have used instrumental music. However, the scholarship of the world shows that man can come to an understanding of what the New Testament teaches and what first century churches practiced. Consider some statements:

(1) **Thomas Aquinas**, a Catholic said, "Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize." (Bingham's Antiquities, Vol. 3, page 137)

(2) **Erasmus**, a Catholic said, "We have brought into our churches certain operatic and theatrical music; such a confused, disorderly chattering of some words as I hardly think was ever in any of the Grecian or Roman theatres. The church rings with the noise of trumpets, pipes, and dulcimers; and human voices strive to bear their part with them. Men run to church as to a theatre, to have their ears tickled. And for this end organ makers are hired with great salaries, and a company of boys, who waste all their time learning these whining tones." (Commentary on I Cor. 14:19)

(3) **John Calvin**, a Presbyterian, said, "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists therefore, have foolishly borrowed, this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints, only in a known tongue (I Cor. 14:16) ***What shall we then say of chanting, which fills the ears with nothing but an empty sound?" (Commentary on Psalms 33)

(4) Theodore Beza, a scholar of Geneva, said, "If the apostle justly prohibits the use of unknown tongues in the church, much less would he have tolerated these

artificial musical performances which are addressed to the ear alone, and seldom strike the understanding even of the performers themselves." (Girardeau's **Instrumental Music**, page 166)

(5) **Joseph Bingham**, of the **Church of England** or **Episcopal**, said, "Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music not so." (Works, vol. 3, page 137)

(6) **Lyman Coleman**, a **Presbyterian** said, "The tendency of this (instrumental music) was to secularize the music of the church, and to encourage singing by a choir. Such musical accompaniments were gradually introduced; but they can hardly be assigned to a period earlier than the fifth and sixth centuries. Organs were unknown in church until the eighth or ninth centuries. Previous to this, they had their place in the theater, rather than in the church. They were never regarded with favor in the Eastern church, and were vehemently opposed in many places in the West." (**Primitive Church**, pages 376-377)

(7) **John Girardeau**, a **Presbyterian**, said, "The church, although lapsing more and more into defection from the truth and into a corruption of apostolic practice, had no instrumental music for 1,200 years (that is it was not in general use before this time); *** the Calvinistic Reformed Church ejected it from its services as an element of popery, even the Church of England having come very nigh to its extrusion from her worship ***It is heresy in the sphere of worship." (**Instrumental Music**, page 179)

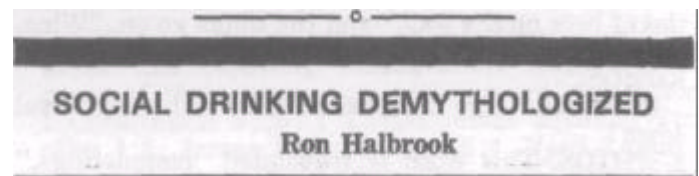
(8) **John Wesley**, founder of Methodism, said, "I have no objection to the instruments being in our chapels, provided they are neither seen nor heard."

(9) **Adam Clark**, a **Methodist** commentator, said, "I am an old man, and I here declare that I never knew them to be productive of any good in the worship of God, and have reason to believe that they are productive of much evil. Music as a science I esteem and admire, but instrumental music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music, and I here register my protest against all such corruption of the worship of the author of Christianity."

(10) **Charles H. Spurgeon**, a **Baptist**, said, "Praise the Lord with the harp. Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days when Jesus gives us spiritual food, one can make melody without strings and pipes *** We do not need them. They would hinder rather than help our praise. Sing unto him. This is the sweetest and best music. No instrument like the human voice." (Commentary on Psalms 42:4) "David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of the singing of the pilgrims, and assuredly it is the most delightful part of worship and that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettiness of a quartet, bellows, and pipes! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it."

(11) **Benedict**, a Baptist historian, said, "In my earliest intercourse among this people, congregational

singing generally prevailed among them. . . . THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ORGAN AMONG THE BAPTIST. This instrument, which from time immemorial has been associated with cathedral pomp and prelatical power, and has always been the peculiar favorite of great national churches, at length found its way into Baptist sanctuaries, and the first one ever employed by the denomination in this country, and probably in any other, might have been standing in the singing gallery of the Old Baptist meeting house in Pawtucket, about forty years ago, where I then officiated as pastor (1840) . . . Staunch old Baptists in former times would as soon tolerated the Pope of Rome in their pulpits as an organ in their galleries, and yet the instrument has gradually found its way among them ___ How far this modern organ fever will extend among our people, and whether it will on the whole work a RE-formation or DE-formation in their singing service, time will more fully develop." (Fifty Years **Among Baptist**, page 204-207)



There **was** an irreverent movement to take all the "myths" out of the gospel, called the demythologizing movement. It regarded the miracles as tall tales and set about expunging them from the record. There are no myths in the gospel. The testimony for the miracles is sound, unimpeachable.

What is really needed is the removal of myths from the thinking of people. The myth that there are myths in the gospel needs to go. Also, some pernicious myths about social drinking need to go!

Before we take up the individual myths as they are stated by the defenders of social drinking, let's study I Peter 4:3. This teaching from God undermines all the myths, excuses, and justifications men can ever make for social drinking. Peter's teaching reveals that every rod the moderate drinking devotees lean on is a broken staff — "whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it." Man's teaching is betrayed by the plain statements of God. Or, really, it's the other way around!

Three words are used in I Peter 4:3 which have a bearing on modern drinking practices. All three words describe the life style of the old man, dead in sin — living "in the flesh to the lusts of men." Peter pleads with those who are alive "to the will of God" to leave buried in the shameful past such practices as the OINOPHUGIA, KOMOS, and POTOS. 1. OINOPHUGIA. The KJV translates this "excess of wine." The word METHE (drunkenness, Gal. 5:21) refers to habitual intoxication, deep drinking, drunken bouts. "Excess of wine" indicates habitual intoxication, but it is more. "It marks a step in advance of METHE."

No one respects the down-and-out drunk, the sickening wino. Such extreme indulgence and debauchery is universally a shame. The gutter drunk "may induce permanent mischiefs on the body" by his

habitual, senseless excesses. The body, mind, and soul are deadened and finally destroyed. The fatal debauch of Alexander the Great is signified by OINOPHLUGIA in ancient records.

2. KOMOS. This word appears as "revelings" in KJ. There is a descent or digression in the strength of our three words. There is a level of drinking in KOMOS which is distinguishable from "excess of wine."

The one who practices OINOPHLUGIA staggers, stumbles, or even sleeps in his stupor. If he swings his fist, he is the one likely to get hurt. If he drives, he is more danger to himself than to others; he is likely to drive right up a tree, but other drivers can see him a mile away and get out of the way.

But the one who practices KOMOS is a "live wire." He is intoxicated, but not so debauched as to miss all the fun. "He's flying high." KOMOS combines intoxication with merrymaking. It suggests shouting, singing, dancing, and generally stiring wanton desires with merry companions — all with the help of intoxicants. "Take one down, pass it around, 49 bottles of beer on the wall," and the songs go on. "Wine, women, and song" is the modern way of saying KOMOS.

Where do we go from here? What's the next level down?

3. POTOS. This word is translated "banquetings," which is obscure to the modern reader. Or, worse, he may confuse this word with our practice of a social meal with speakers, awards, or entertainment.

Today's English Version and the New Am. Std. translate "drinking parties"; be careful not to read that "drunken parties," which would be KOMOS. Rotherham has "drinking bouts" — not necessarily drunken bouts. New Eng. Bible says "tippling" — drinking, especially continuously in small amounts.

Literally, POTOS is "a drinking," without reference to amount. The verb form is POTTZO, "to give to drink," without regard to amount (as Matt. 10:42 — "give to drink... a cup of cold water"). R. C. Trench says concerning POTOS, "not of necessity excessive" (Synonyms of the N. T., p. 211). He further explains that POTOS is related to words of excess in that it gives "opportunity for excess." This, then, is the cocktail party drinking, sipping the wine, "having a few drinks with the boys," social drinking.

MYTH 1. "These fanatical preachers don't know the difference between the excess of drunkenness and simply drinking."

The Bible does recognize the difference between different levels of drinking. It distinguishes drinking parties "not of necessity excessive" from revelings, and both from debauchery. And, it condemns all three as part of the old life of sin! Those who truly love Christ realize he died in the flesh to destroy sin's rule over us. This love causes us to have the same spirit of sacrifice that he had and to cease from sin (I Pet. 4:1).

MYTH 2. "Didn't Paul tell Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach's sake? Well, that proves I have a right to my social drinking."

It's odd how that regardless of what level of drinking the drinker does, he quotes what Paul told

Timothy (I Tim. 5:23) as a justification. Paul's, advice is correctly quoted, then conveniently coated (or mythologized). Paul's suggestion on **the medicinal use of wine** has nothing to do with the practice of social drinking. If such an argument proves anything, it proves that (1) since we can take drugs in times of sickness, (2) therefore we can practice the social consumption of drugs — have a "pot" (marijuana) party or "shoot H" (take heroin)! **MYTH 3.** "Jesus turned water to wine. That's undeniable proof that he approves of our drinking it, as long as we don't get drunk."

Yes, in John 2 the creator of all things converted water into grape juice. The original word translated wine in the New Testament simply meant grape juice. One must determine from the context whether the grape juice was fermented and intoxicating or not.

In John 2, the wedding feast had been going on for some time when the wine (grape juice) gave out. If Jesus performed the function of a distillery, he did not provide sober people with a few social drinks. They had already consumed the intoxicants on hand; Jesus provided for revelry if not debauchery! Believe it who can. On the other hand, if the creator of all good things miraculously provided a batch of fresh grape juice, **we know it** was some of the best **ever tasted by mortal lips** — even if the tasters' thirsts had been somewhat assuaged by previous consumption. The life and teaching of Christ necessarily imply the latter.

MYTH 4. "Social drinking isn't so bad if one has a few friends in the home and avoids the ribald taverns. Also, if one is at a relaxing vacation spot or visits a quaint restaurant, a few social drinks may be in order."

This writer has been shocked to see Christians hiding behind such thin veils recently. Sin is sin ("I speak as unto children"). Would adultery be right if practiced only at home, at vacation spots, and at quaint motels? Since when did a certain degree of privacy transform sin into innocence? Would it be alright to steal, just so we didn't do it out in the open? Or, murder? A "chimney corner scripture" says, "The legs of the lame are unequal." A higher authority, our Master, said, "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

MYTH 5. "There are many foreign places where a traveler can't drink the water; intoxicants are the only safe things to drink. Therefore, why can't I have my social drinking?"

This reminds us of the tear jerker about the soldier who had been reading his Bible on the desert. His Bible was in his pocket, over his heart, when it stopped an enemy bullet. (Time out for a few sobs right here.) So, he decided to be baptized, but he couldn't find any water. (Need another kleenex?) And, then, a tree fell on him and killed him! (Please continue reading when you can compose yourself again.) What will happen to him? (More violent sobbing here.) All of which proves: when Jesus said "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," he meant that we don't need baptism for salvation.

People who haven't been reading their Bibles, have

no Bible in their pocket, have no bullets in their Bible, aren't hunting water, and aren't within 50 miles of a tree offer such arguments because they don't want to obey the Lord. Generally, people who sob about drinking in foreign places are in the same boat. If one is going to such places, and really wants to do what's right, he can take things with him to purify water. Also, other things can be found to drink in most places. Men will offer the "foreign places" argument standing in a supermarket, literally surrounded by dozens of good things to drink other than intoxicants!

MYTH 6. "There was no way to keep grape juice unfermented in Bible times. Thus, all people who drank grape juice drank intoxicants and we can, too."

No doubt many people have been made bold by this myth, and many others, baffled. Actually, this point is predicated on our 20th century conceit. We seem to think wisdom was born with our generation. We forget that the largest, solid structures to this day were built by the ancient Egyptians — and we're still not sure how they managed it. Further, successful brain surgery was performed by the Egyptians! Ancient peoples weren't nearly as ignorant as we may think they were.

Archaeologists have found that ancient people did have means of preserving fresh juices. Special rock-cut cisterns and cellars were provided which kept juices cool at a constant temperature year round. "The making of an air-tight seal for the wine can be done by the use of a small amount of olive oil floated on the top of the surface of the wine in the jar" (Winery, Defenses, and Soundings at Gibeon, p. 26). Clay stoppers were put firmly in place to further seal the jars.

Rather than excusing our sins, let us cease from them (I Pet. 4). Let us put off the old man and put on the new man (Col. 3). "Ye are the salt of the earth. ... Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 6). Let us live so as to bring men to Christ and glory to God.

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PREACHER WANTED

The church of Christ meeting in Fremont, Ohio is looking for a full-time preacher to work this nine year old congregation. They have constructed a new meeting house which is two years old and about two-thirds paid for. The average attendance is about sixty on Sunday morning. We are able to furnish full support. We will only consider someone who is opposed to the liberal trends in the church today. If interested, a fruitful field is waiting. Please write or call: Leo Bowen, 679 Pemberville Road, Woodville, Ohio 43469. Phone (419) 849-3686. For references on this congregation, contact Connie W. Adams, Jimmy Tuten or James W. Ward.

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I MARVEL

Galatians 1:6

James P. Miller

213 E. 12th St.

Bowling Green, Ky. 42101



WHAT ABOUT BUS RIDER PROMOTION?

Bill Goodpasture

(In the first part brother Goodpasture stated that on giving cokes they increased the riders from 21 to 31, in giving cupcakes from 31 to 41 and on giving a Halloween party they went to 74. JPM)

"First we need to approach this from a scriptural basis. The following passages are important because of their connection with reward motivation: I Corinthians 9:25; I Thessalonians 2:19; II Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; I Peter 5:4. Need I remind you of Matthew 10:42 when Jesus said, 'And whosoever shall give to drink one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' In fact, the whole process of salvation is concerned with reward motivation. One receives as a reward for doing good, heaven. If one is inclined to do evil he likewise receives a reward, a just reward, hell! Secondly, reward motivations are not new to our brotherhood. Have we not for years given stars to children for their faithfulness in attendance? Further, have we not given out refreshments at V.B.S. for many years to attract the children? May I suggest that reward motivations to children in SS or to bus riders is a striking parallel to something we adults often do. Nearly everyone at some time has cooked a meal for new neighbors or invited them for a meal with the idea that we can make friends and get them to come to church with us. Thirdly, most churches advertise at least occasionally and many on a regular basis to encourage church attendance. Reward motivations as suggested in this article simply serve as an advertisement to children who cannot read the paper.

"I would suggest gifts, Bibles, balloons, and rulers with scripture verses imprinted and promotions that could be used to teach such as a free fishing trip for the child who brings the most on the bus. This could be in conjunction with a sermon from the preacher entitled 'Fishers of Men.'

"The following companies provide Bible-centered bus promotions: Gospel Promotions, 140 South Main St., Randleman, N. C. 27317; Beebe Publications, P. O. Box 1201, Marietta, Ga. 30061; Wright Industries, 139 Loretta Drive, Dayton, Ohio 45415. Write for their catalogs and you will find things that you can use to increase your Sunday bus attendance." Box 702, Bowling Green, Ky. 42101

THE LOAVES AND THE FISHES

James P. Miller

The proof texts given by brother Goodpasture prove just the opposite to any material rewards. It is amazing that he would use them.

I Corinthians 9:25, "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we have an incorruptible crown." Check where cokes, cupcakes and Halloween parties belong.

I Thessalonians 2:19, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming." Brother Goodpasture would have us rejoice in material rewards. No verse could be further from cokes and cupcakes.

II Timothy 4:8, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing." Here the crown of righteousness is the prize and who could compare it with cokes and cupcakes?

James 1:12, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." In this passage we have the crown of life given to the Christian who endureth temptation. How does this prove material reward? It proves just the opposite.

I Peter 5:4, "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, he shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." This is written to the elders and ought to read, blessed is the elder who hands out the most cokes for he shall receive a crown of glory.

Matthew 10:42, "And whosoever shall give to drink one of these little ones a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward." This admonition is to quench thirst and given to a little one because he is thirsty, not to get him to ride the bus.

As further proof the question has been raised in regard to refreshments at V.B.S. This is to prove the bus promotion. These refreshments are given to attract the children. No scripture is given for none exists and many of us have learned better years ago.

In the second paragraph Bibles, balloons and rulers are suggested but cokes and cupcakes and Halloween parties are practiced. A free fishing trip is suggested only for the child who can get the most children to ride the bus.

Brethren, we are not writing this because there is any hard feeling between brother Goodpasture and the writer but to warn of the social gospel that is sweeping the land. The idea that the end justifies the means is everywhere. The thing missed is that BOTH have to be scriptural. Unless something is done to move the churches back to a chapter and verse basis all is lost.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

PAUL FOUTZ PASSES

We are saddened to learn of the death of Paul Foutz, faithful preacher of the gospel for many years. He was living in Houston, Texas at the time of his death. His illness was lengthy and his hospital bills were in excess of \$7,000. It is my understanding that hospitalization insurance will not cover this amount. Some congregations and individuals have undertaken to relieve his wife of this burden. If any of you would like to help, address such to Mrs. Paul Foutz, 7300 Clarewood, Apt. 60, Houston, Texas 77036.

HENRY SMITH DIES OF INJURIES

Henry Smith, gospel preacher for 21 years, was injured in an auto accident on March 16 and passed away April 9. He was preaching for the church at West Lafayette, Indiana at the time of the accident. He leaves his wife and five children ranging from ages 8 - 19. After insurance settlements there will still be expenses of over \$12,000 to meet. A letter is being circulated making an appeal for help. The letter is signed by Raymond E. Harris of Plainfield, Indiana, Bob G. Nealy of Kokomo, Indiana and Cecil Willis of Marion, Indiana. Any assistance should be sent to Mrs. Carol Smith, 1820 Summit Drive, West Lafayette, Indiana 47906.

NORTHERN PANHANDLE OF WEST VIRGINIA

The editor has just completed a good meeting at Wellsburg, W. Va. where Thomas Icard is the local preacher. The congregation there is making good progress. A number have been baptized and restored there recently. The brethren are in a very nice building which is paid for and have recently constructed a very nice house for the preacher. Attendance ranges in the 140's with contributions of over \$450 a week. There are a number of sound churches in that general area which are making progress. There are good congregations at Paden City, Elk Fork, Moundsville, New Cumberland Heights in W. Va., Toronto in Ohio and Tomlinson's Run in Pa.

PLEASE SEND your news reports to the editor at P.O. BOX 68, BROOKS, KY. 40109. Put them in brief paragraphs with your name and address at the beginning. Others are interested in what is happening where you work.

MIRACLES???

Jerry F. Bassett

There probably has never been a time since the church of Christ was established in the 1st Century that the Holy Spirit, and the subject of miracles, has held such strong interest for so many people as it does now. Traditionally, the various Holiness groups have always claimed the direct, miraculous operation of the Spirit. But more recently these claims have also been heard from many other sources including members of very formal denominations, and even some brethren. Reports are heard constantly of Holy Spirit baptism, speaking in tongues, miraculous healings, and direct guidance by the Holy Spirit.

While God's limitless power, and the miracles of the Bible, are to be acknowledged as true, the same cannot be said, however, of current claims for modern miracles. They seem rather to be based on at least two factors. First, they are the result of strong emotional reaction to the cold formalism and meaningless ritual of traditional religion, as well as to the logical conclusions of modern atheistic materialism. And second, but most significant, these claims are based on misinformation and ignorance of what a miracle actually is. In other words, people are claiming things to be miraculous that do not even come close to the miracles of the Bible. One of the most tragic things about the religious fervor of today is that it is based almost totally upon emotionalism rather than facts. Consequently, many people are unconcerned about what the word of God says on the subject of miracles just as long as what they want to claim makes them feel warm and good inside. But realizing there are some who want to serve God in the truth of His word, let us compare these modern claims with what the word of God actually teaches.

A miracle is well defined as an instantaneous effect produced by the power of God in the suspension or alteration of natural law. The accuracy of this definition can be seen by examining any miracle in the Bible. For example, Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:1-44) leaves no doubt that Lazarus was dead and buried. Lazarus' walking out of the tomb was therefore unnatural, and contrary to the rule of death. But Jesus, calling upon the Father, raised Lazarus in an instant as proof of His claim 'to be the resurrection and the life by Whom all men can live and die in hope of eternal life.

When compared to the miracles of the Bible the hokum practiced by the modern faith (fake) healers looks very much like a carnival side show designed to exploit the gullible. And even the claims of sincere, non-mercenary persons pale into insignificance like so much trivia. What these people claim as miracles are not miraculous at all, but simply circumstantial, or even imaginary. The man whose tragic financial affairs unexpectedly turn out well has not enjoyed a miracle, but simply improved circumstances. The person who has internal difficulties which suddenly improve may well be a psy-

chomatic whose confidence in a supposed miracle may relieve the emotional stress which caused the malady to begin with. Let cease the claims that such things are proof of miracles, and let the claimants demonstrate instead works such as those recorded in the Bible. Let them restore the withered limb, make the congenitally lame and blind to walk and see. Let them walk upon the water, or still the tempest with a word, or feed the world's starving masses with such provisions as they have, even as Jesus fed the five thousand with but five loaves and two fish. **LET THEM RAISE THE DEAD!**

"But," one may ask, "if miracles were worked when the Bible was being written, then why not now?" Because these miracles were used to produce the Bible, and to verify it as being God's word. Once the Bible was completed the written testimony of those who saw those miracles (the writers of the Bible) stands as evidence of its divine authorship.

When Jesus sent the apostles to preach the gospel they went forth as His ambassadors to reconcile men to God. They did not, however, have a written record of the gospel by which to prove their teaching because it was only then being revealed through them. Thus, they were given miraculous power by which to know and preach the gospel (the gifts of revelation and inspiration), and signs and wonders by which to confirm that what they preached was God's revealed truth (Mark 16:15-20). The miracles they worked, then, were their ambassadorial credentials by which they proved that they were sent by divine authority.

Further, when these miracles had served to reveal and confirm the gospel they passed from existence. I Corinthians 12:7-11 Paul enumerates nine different miraculous gifts, and then in the same context, but in chapter 13:8-10, says these gifts were to pass when "that which is perfect is come." That which is perfect cannot grammatically refer to Christ, as some have argued. It refers instead to the perfection, or the complete revelation, of the gospel of Christ. That gospel is now complete, and has been since the apostles and prophets of the New Testament finished their work (James 1:25, II Peter 1:3, I John 1:1-4, 2:20-27, Jude 3, Galatians 1:6-9). That which is perfect has therefore come, and the miracles which produced it have served their purpose and ceased to exist.

Consequently, you do not need a miracle to make you believe in Christ, or to bring you close to God. You may, and must, build your faith on the revealed truth found in the Bible; it comes in no other way (Romans 10:17). In the words of John, "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31).

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KNOWLEDGE, THE ABUSED VIRTUE

Don Martin

Knowledge is a grossly misunderstood subject! It cannot be successfully denied that some equate knowledge with arrogance, insincerity and coldness. I have known of knowledgeable, faithful gospel preachers being considered cold and insensitive simply because they appealed to knowledge. Denominationalists often call Christians "legalists" and claim that they lack heart-felt religion because they stress knowledge over emotionalism. Your writer once had a conversation with a "sound" gospel preacher who said that the problem with Christians and the church today was that they needed more love and less knowledge. In an effort to produce authority for the foregoing statement he quoted at (he was not able to correctly quote the passage or tell where it was found because of lack of study) Paul's statement in First Corinthians, chapter eight, verse one. In this passage Paul wrote, "... knowledge puffeth up but charity edifieth." It was his contention that Paul was arraying love and knowledge and showing that the two were antagonistic. What a classic misuse of a passage! Now your writer is not at all shocked when a denominational preacher perverts I Corinthians 8:1 in the foregoing fashion or even some of our liberal "brethren" who quote the passage and then sit back and call us anties and legalists; but when a man who claims to be a sound gospel preacher made such a statement, brethren, I was shocked! In fact, the above attitude is not uncommon when it comes to some members of the church! Of course, what Paul is teaching and condemning in I Corinthians, chapter eight, is the absence of love. When one has knowledge but does not possess love to govern and properly actuate knowledge he will be apt to be puffed up or arrogant.

Beloved, knowledge has always been required of God's people. Moreover, the absence of knowledge has not infrequently been the cause of God's people apostatizing and losing their identity, Hosea 4:6. It is our intent in this article to examine the importance of knowledge as concisely as we can from the relationship it sustains with other necessary virtues.

LOVE

Concerned reader, I submit that a person cannot properly love without knowledge. He cannot love God, his fellow man, wife or others with whom he enjoys any kind of relationship or tie. Concerning the relationship that love and knowledge sustain, Paul wrote thus, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (Phi. 1:9). Notice that Paul desired their love to abound more and more **IN KNOWLEDGE**. (All emphasis throughout mine, D.M.) Love as a result of knowledge and in proportion to knowledge is the difference between love and infatuation! We must know (appreciate their disposition and ways) a person in order to truly love them. Beloved, we must, according to the scriptures, obey God to show our love for Him, John 14:15, - I John 5:3. Now how in the name of common sense

can we show our love to God by obeying Him if we do not know His will? Hence, the need of knowledge!

FAITH

Certainly all who agree that love is essential, I Cor. 13:1-3, will also concede that faith is necessary to please God (John 8:24). But what does knowledge have to do with faith? "So then faith cometh by hearing," Paul writes to the Romans, "and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). As we have seen concerning love, so it is relative to faith — we must know (have knowledge of) the person in whom we are to have faith. For this reason John wrote, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: But **THESE ARE WRITTEN, THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John, 20:30, 31). Thus we cannot have faith without knowledge.

ZEAL

The New Testament is replete with teaching concerning the must of zeal. Paul writes regarding the performance of our secular duties thus, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23). "Who gave himself for us," Paul writes to Titus concerning God's people being zealous, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Concerning zeal, however, with some God was displeased. Many of the Jews were enthusiastic and zealous but they lacked something, "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, **BUT NOT ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE**" (Rom. 10:2). Somebody has well said, "Enthusiasm is a good engine, but it needs intelligence for a driver."

PRODUCTIVITY

Beloved, not only is knowledge necessary to the acquisition and proper use of love, faith, and zeal but also knowledge is necessary to being a productive, fruitful Christian. For this reason Paul wrote thus to the Colossians, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10). From Christ's depiction of the judgment day we learn that there will be many present who will have engaged in many, wonderful works but they will be lost because they will be without law or authority for what they practice (Matt. 7:21-23). Hence we need knowledge to guide us in the performance of authorized works.

Beloved, not only is knowledge necessary to the aforementioned virtues but also for perseverance (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10, 11), acceptance with God (Acts 10:34, 35), and worship that is pleasing to God (John 4:24).

CONCLUSION

"Teach me good judgment and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments" (Ps. 119:66). Let us develop more love, zeal, faith and productivity, but let us also develop knowledge so that our spirituality will be entire and sound. Yes, we need more love but not less knowledge!

Pineland, Texas