

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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LEARNING from the PARABLES

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THE UNJUST STEWARD

The parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-8) has been traditionally looked upon as the most difficult of the parables of Jesus. Despite this, once a couple of problems are resolved, the parable is really not too hard to understand and the principles therein are such that every Christian needs to understand them.

The characters of this drama are: 1) **THE STEWARD.** He's the main figure, the star of the story. A steward could be either a trusted slave or a hired servant chosen to oversee the finances of the master. Joseph occupied such a position (Gen. 39:1-6).

2) **THE DEBTORS.** These were persons who had either borrowed or purchased on time from the master.

3) **THE LORD.** The master of this parable is called "the lord" (v.4,5,11). Though this term is used now almost exclusively of Jesus, He being Lord of lords, it is purely a secular term in the Bible. When Sarah called Abraham "lord" (I Peter 3:9) she didn't attribute deity to him but simply acknowledged him as her master in the relationship they sustained.

It was the lord of the parable who commended the unjust steward (v.8). But Jesus was commending him too. This is the whole point of the parable and the most perplexing problem that expositors have had to deal with.

After all that is said concerning those who are worldly being fools (Psalm 14:1; Matt. 7:26; Matt. 25:2) Jesus said, "Now here was a man of the world who was a shrewd fellow and you ought to try to be like him."!

Why was this unjust steward set forth as an example? In what particulars should we follow him?

I. HE FACED THE FACTS: "Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship..."

Here was a man who was able to look at the situation objectively and say, "I've been living high on the hog, but now the jig's up and I've got to do something and do it quick!"

Christians must follow this example if we please God. We must face the evidence of Christ's Deity and Lordship. We must face the fact of death and judgment to come.

II. HE MADE A DECISION: "I am resolved what to do..."

This man realized that indecision would never get the job done. He decided upon a course of action. While the authority was yet in his hands, he deducted a portion of the debts of certain ones, thus putting them under obligation to him. Then later, he need not hesitate to look to them when he lost his job.

I once heard James P. Miller suggest that the reason he subtracted 50 % of the debt of one and only 20 % of the other's debt was because the first one had an extra bedroom and a wife who was a good cook! That may well have been the case.

Christians have already made the big decision. That's to follow Jesus. Other decisions should be made in view of the big one. Other decisions should be programmed to a great extent. Just as we don't decide whether we're going to brush our teeth or shave each morning, so we should not have to decide whether to attend the services on Wednesday night or whether to read the Bible.

Such decisions should have been made in principle when we were baptized into Christ and arose to walk in newness of life.

III. HE ACTED UPON HIS DECISION: "So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him..."

History is replete with catastrophes that occurred because men did not make decisions and put their plans to work. The Captain of the great Titanic was warned by radio of icebergs in his course but he procrastinated and 1,517 people, including himself, lost their lives in the greatest maritime disaster of all time.

On December 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor, unidentified aircraft were observed on radar and the information was passed on to commanding officers. But no immediate plan of action was initiated and almost 3,000 of America's sons were slaughtered like sheep on that fateful day.

When we look about us and see a world lost in sin and hell-bound we should realize that this is no time to linger in inactivity or to shuffle our feet in indecision, "...let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season (Kairo) we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity (KAIRON-season), let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:9,10). This is the sowing season. Let us be busy.

IV. HE USED HIS TALENTS: "What shall I do?...I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed."

The steward recognized there were some talents he didn't have but he didn't let that stop him. He had a good head on his shoulders and he used that to achieve his purpose.

The church would be in better condition if Christians would concentrate as deeply upon what they can do as upon what they cannot do.

There are many who have talents for speaking, meeting people, organizing, etc. who could be using these talents for the glory of God but are not. **CONCLUSION:** The unjust steward was commended because his actions were more consistent with his aims than ours often are. He strived for an earthly reward and he put himself wholeheartedly into the venture. We strive for a heavenly reward. Is our effort as great as his?

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Editorial

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THE GOLDEN RULE

One area where the Golden Rule needs to be applied, and sometimes is not, is in the relationship between preachers and congregations. Preachers ought to be fair, honest and industrious. They are charged to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2), "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:13) and to be an "example of the believer" (1 Tim. 4:12). They ought to teach "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). There is no excuse for a preacher not having plenty to do.

But there is another side to the story. With the serious shortage of preachers we have, it is saddening to learn of congregations that are demoralizing some of the young men who have started out to give their lives to preaching the gospel. They expect a man in his early twenties to have the wisdom of Solomon and the knowledge of Paul. They get him caught in the crossfire of disputes which he did not create and make life miserable for him when he does not please all concerned. Some are ready to string him up when he does his duty to "reprove, rebuke and exhort" rather than holding up his hands. Some think they own the preacher, lock, stock and barrel and are fretful if he does any of his teaching anywhere else. He is their preacher. Yet when they are through with him and want him gone fast, they can't understand why he can't instantly find a place to go, when they locked him up so he could never preach anywhere else. One place even forbade their preacher to cross a state line to attend gospel meetings in an area only a few miles away. The Bible already sets forth the work of preachers, and faithful men, whether young or old, are not going to let ignorant brethren create the doctrine they are to preach. Unless brethren stop such childish antics, the shortage of preachers will get worse and worse.

The Golden Rule also needs to be applied in the matter of support. Everyone who is trying to pay his debts and keep his family fed and housed is painfully aware of the rise in the cost of living over the past year. The business and industrial world have long taken this into account and provide periodic "cost-of-living" raises. If your preacher has not received such a raise within the last year, then this actually amounts to a cut in pay for what he was making a year ago certainly buys much less at the grocery store and service station than it did then. It is humiliating to most preachers to ask the brethren for a raise. Some would rather move than do this. Yet the cost to all concerned is much

greater if he does. Think about it brethren, are you practicing the Golden Rule?

PREACHING TO BE UNDERSTOOD

There is a place for scholarship and for preaching that probes far beneath the surface to bring out the meat of the word. But some of what passes for that leaves this editor cold. When a man goes out of his way to insinuate that the "run of the mill" preachers are mental sluggards who do nothing but "parrot" what they have heard somebody else say without using their God-given brains, then I wish to take exception on behalf of the "run of the mill" preachers.

Preachers who raise more questions than they settle, who go to great lengths to meander to the same conclusion on doctrinal points which faithful men all reach, but who in the process treat us to the idea that it is a good thing they came along so all the careless thinkers can be put in their place, have an ego problem. And if they are not coming out at the same place on basic doctrinal matters, then somebody needs to sign some debate propositions and find out who is teaching the truth and who is not. When members sit through a meeting and then comment that they did not know what the preacher was talking about half the time, then not much good has been done, at least for those people. Certainly preachers are different and each one approaches his task his own way. This is refreshing and benefits us all. But unless people understand the preaching and can make practical use of it, then we have wasted our time and theirs. It has always been interesting to me that some who wish to be known for their scholarship and regard themselves mentally as a notch or two above the rest, are always being misunderstood. God expects us all to understand his will (Eph. 5:17). Paul said "we use great plainness of speech" (2 Cor. 3:12). All of us would do well to remember that.

OFFICE NOTES

NEWS ITEMS should be sent five or six weeks in advance. We are on a one-month-in-advance basis with the printer. Several debate announcements have reached us too late to appear until after the debate was over. Again, we must plead with those who send news reports to be brief. We are receiving an increasing number of news items and want to carry every one. State the facts in the fewest words possible. **ADS FOR PREACHERS** are carried as news items. We do not make a charge for this service, for we regard it as news. But we do not carry a news item but once. We receive many such notices requesting that we carry the information several times. If this were done on a paid-ad basis, then we would do that. But just once around as a news item.

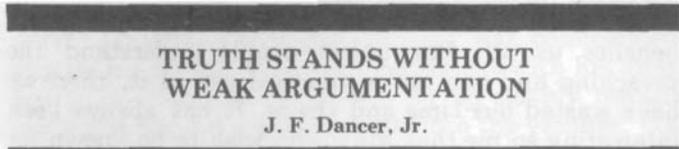
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to Religious Supply Center and sometimes even to one of the writers, but that only slows things down.

WANT TO HELP KEEP THIS PAPER GOING?

We have over 7,000 on the mailing list. With the exception of a few bundles and some lists which are paid by friends who want to help teach others, we have to send bills each year to subscribers in the month when their subscription falls due. This is the only businesslike way we know to handle this. Each bill mailed out costs 10c in postage, not counting the cost of stationary and labor. We are finding that many do not pay their bill until they receive a final notice, mailed usually two or three months after the first one. Each of these costs 10c more to mail. When you multiply 10c by several hundred a month, then you get some idea as to the expense involved. We believe \$5.00 a year is a reasonable price for this paper and urge all subscribers to help us stay in business by paying promptly after receiving the first notice.

Also, we could use the help of friends sympathetic with what we are trying to do who are willing to pay for a list of subscriptions. For \$60 a year you can send it to 20 people. We need to replace some who paid for a list and then dropped out. Could you help with this? When you renew, why not subscribe for a friend or relative?



In the March issue of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES brother Larry R. DeVore had an article entitled, "The 'Bus Ministry' Craze". I suggest you read it again. It is an excellent article in some ways but argumentation in two paragraphs is invalid. I am opposed to the unscriptural use of church funds in the purchasing of buses to be used for trips to amusement parks, roller rinks, etc. I also agree with brother DeVore that "the 'Bus Ministry' appears to be sweeping the brotherhood like an outbreak of chicken pox." But in our condemnation of a practice let us be specific in our opposition and be sure we oppose something on scriptural grounds.

In paragraph two under the caption of "WHAT IS A BUS MINISTRY?" the statement is made "The use of the word 'ministry' in connection with bus routes seems to be used in a denominational sense." Bro. DeVore then implies that the Bible use of the word "ministry" is limited to the preaching of the word. This is not stated, but is implied in his use of Paul's exhortation to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5b). He concludes, "It would be far better to go back to calling 'Bible things by Bible names'." Now, in the New Testament we have the word "ministry" (Greek word "diakonia") used with reference to Martha serving (Lk. 10:40), the feeding of widows (Acts 6:1), preaching of the Word (Acts 6:4), the taking of relief to needy saints (Acts 11:29; 12:25), the work of service in God's kingdom (Eph. 4:12), and many other instances. In 1 Cor. 12:5 Paul says that

there "are varieties of ministries" (New American Standard Version). His point is that there are different "services" that brethren perform in exercise of their abilities before God. "Ministry" in the Bible means more than preaching.

Granted, that brethren borrowed the term "Bus Ministry" from the denominational world. However, in paragraph four brother DeVore admits the scripturalness of buying a bus to use in transporting people to hear a preacher — here we have a "bus service" or, if one prefers, a "bus ministry." Calling "Bible things by Bible names" is fine but the Bible does not identify by name most expedencies in obeying the Lord.

Also in paragraph four, under the caption, "ARE BUSES SCRIPTURAL?" bro. DeVore rightly shows that it might be expedient for a church to use its funds to purchase a bus to bring people to hear a preacher. I agree that the circumstances that would make this expedient "would indeed be rare." Well and good! But then note his reasoning that follows in the end of the paragraph:

"a bus is purchased because of a scriptural necessity, then the bus is also (emphasis mine, JFD) used for other purposes thereby destroying its scripturally." (right to purchase bus)

This reasoning does not follow! If the bus is purchased because of a scriptural necessity, the purchase of the bus is scriptural. If the bus is then also used for other (unauthorized) purposes, the unauthorized use is unscriptural, not the purchase of the bus! Following bro. DeVore's reasoning we have this parallel: A meeting house is purchased because of scriptural necessity, then the building is also used for other (unauthorized) purposes, thereby destroying the right to purchase a building! I can't buy that! Let us all take a firm stand against the practice of offering (and giving) gifts to entice people to come to Bible study and/or worship. But in so doing let us not become so determined to "stand up straight that we fall over backwards!" Let's show it is sinful to give gifts to entice people to come to services. Let's show the dangers involved in having "children's worship services." Let's show that if a church owns a bus this does not give it the right to use it to take trips to amusement parks, roller rinks, etc. But let us be specific in our charges and not just avow that the "Bus Ministry" is wrong! What is called a "bus ministry" in some places may be the expedient purchase and use of a bus to bring people to services because of a scriptural necessity, and that alone. Think about it, brethren.

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SOCIAL DRINKING: FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF PASSAGES

Ron Halbrook

Luke 21:34

Notice the New American Standard, "Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap." For "weighted down," the King James says "OVER-charged," which may leave the impression that a little dissipation, drunkenness, and over-anxiety is allowable. The actual thought is that we should not carry about such burdens at all. The word translated "over-charged" is a word meaning burdened or carrying a weight.

The word translated "surfeiting" or "dissipation" seems to mean gluttony, continued carousing, and excesses of any kind. W. E. Vine's **Dictionary of New Testament Words** says, "the giddiness and headache resulting from excess . . ." Thus, he thinks the word emphasizes the sluggishness, discomfort, and distraction resulting from excesses. Another scholar, Robinson, thinks the word is closely related to drunkenness: "properly, **seizure of the head**: hence intoxication."

At any rate, this passage is like many others in the New Testament which impress the need of guarding against gluttony, intoxication, passions, over-anxiety, or anything else that tends to becloud the senses. There is no hint of allowing just a little intoxication in such passages, any more than a little gluttony. All such weights with a keen sense of watchfulness. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always . . ." (vs. 36). "Be on guard."

Rom. 14:17-21

In this chapter, Paul discusses principles of liberty and expediency. Some are willing to eat all things, including meats. Others eat herbs only, being vegetarians. Such private opinions and choices do not make one particle of difference; they are private and individual. Some esteem one day above another; others esteem every day alike. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." The authority of God has neither forbidden nor required — not by express statement, apostolic example, or necessary implication. Here is the realm of liberty and expediency. Whatever opinions men may privately hold in this realm are perfectly lawful in the sight of God.

But, Paul says these principles are not fully understood until another principle is understood. That is, God does not allow us to use our liberty to the hurt of another saint. Such use of liberty is an abuse. "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." If a brother is so deeply convinced that it would violate his conscience to eat meat, don't dangle temptation and confusion in his face by purposely eating meat in front of him. Do not despise the brother for his weakness; do not "put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall" in his way. "Follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Teach him, but don't destroy him.

To what extent should we be willing to yield our liberty for the sake of saving a brother? Paul says he

Wine (grape juice) may refer to an intoxicating drink or a non-intoxicating one, just like our word "cider." To know the nature of the wine in any passage, we must be guided by the context of the passage and the context of what other passages teach on the subject. The overall context must include passages like **Prov. 20:1**, which identifies wine as a "mocker" and the drink of fools, and **I Pet. 4:3**, which forbids (1) extreme indulgence and debauchery with intoxicants, (2) the intoxication of revelings, and (3) sipping the intoxicant or social drinking. Let's consider some passages which have troubled some brethren.

Luke 7:33-34

Jesus condemned the Pharisees because they were like children — "nothing pleased them" (**Barnes'** commentary). On the one hand, John came "neither eating nor drinking," "abstaining as a Nazarite," and they rejected him (**Ibid.**). The expression "neither eating nor drinking," referred to "his austere life spent in the desert, apart from the ordinary joys and pleasures of men, not even sharing in what are usually termed the necessities of life" (**Pulpit Commentary**). On the other hand, Christ came "eating and drinking," "not practising any austerity, but living like other men" — and they rejected him, too! (**Barnes**) Christ joined in such affairs as the marriage feast of Cana, ate and conversed among the common people, and participated in feasts to which he was invited.

Luke 1:15 shows John was a Nazarite. He took no "wine" — which is representative of all products of the grape vine. All the fruit of the vine, in whatever form, was forbidden **as part of the special Nazarite vow** (Num. 6). No such general prohibition was given to all the people. It was peculiar to this special vow of service to, and sacrifice for, God. Isa. 5:11 shows that the use of intoxicants brought a pronouncement of woe upon God's people in general; thus, it was certainly out of place for one devoting himself in a vow of dedicated service to God! This is part of the vow, but not **peculiar** to the vow. General warning, prohibitions, and woes are announced elsewhere (as **Prov. 20:1; 23:29-35**).

Luke doesn't compare John and Jesus as to their supposedly different attitudes toward intoxicants. He compares them as to their different patterns in regard to austerity and social intercourse, and shows that the Pharisees put the worst possible construction on both men. The Pharisees obviously were not the children of wisdom and truth, but of lies, prejudice, and Satan. Though this passage does not explicitly state whether the juice Christ drank was intoxicating or not, we should not have any trouble determining the matter in the light of the nature of the life he lived, the example he set, and the teaching he delivered in **I Pet. 4:3**.

will not eat meat (a common food of the time), nor drink wine or grape juice (a common drink of the time), nor do **anything else** that will cause one to stumble. This is stated in verse 21, which is sometimes used to justify drinking.

We've looked at the text in context. Now, if we will not read into the text the restricted meaning of the English word "wine" we should have no trouble understanding Paul's statement. Remember, Paul is discussing things indifferent in themselves, things concerning which God has not legislated. Some try to bring instrumental music in as our liberty so long as we don't make someone stumble; but, God has legislated in the matter of worship and forbidden addition to it. Paul obviously isn't contradicting other clear passages by allowing freedom to use instruments in worship. Likewise, God has legislated on the matter of intoxicants (as in I Pet. 4:3). Paul doesn't contradict other clear passages by allowing freedom to use intoxicants.

When the context of Romans 14 and the context of what other passages teach are considered, we have no trouble realizing what kind of grape juice is referred to in Romans 14. Even so, we have no trouble determining what kind is referred to in Gen. 9:21; according to the context, that grape juice was an intoxicant. It is surely not this mocker, this drink of fools, that Paul places under liberty and expediency! (Prov. 20:1)

Eph. 5:18

Drunkenness was and is a very common sin. The Lord forbids it in this passage. That is all! He does not mention the first or early drinking of intoxicants in this verse. "Social drinking" isn't mentioned — nor stealing, adultery, murder, etc. Other verses do mention those things and forbid them.

Some confuse themselves by reasoning, "Now, the Lord could forbid the drunkenness by forbidding the drinking in the first place; since he doesn't do it that way, he must mean to allow drinking, but not drunkenness." Let's try it on some other passages. "Eph. 4:28 forbids stealing. Now the Lord could forbid the stealing by forbidding the covetous attitude in the first place; since he doesn't do it that way, he must mean to allow covetousness, but not stealing." "In verses forbidding murder as a vent of hatred, the Lord doesn't forbid using harmful force. So while I can't murder the man I hate, I can indulge in more moderate use of force — such as maiming him."

We must guard against (1) unwarranted inferences, (2) neglect of immediate context, and (3) neglect of other passages.

I Tim. 3:3,8 (Tit. 1:7; 2:3)

I Tim. 3:3 says, "Not given to wine." In keeping with this translation, some scholars think the expression emphasizes the drinking. J. W. McGarvey thinks the "use of wine," in whatever amount, is emphasized and forbidden (**The Eldership** p. 61). Barnes says this indicates the practice of joining with those who sit around the cup of intoxication; drinking or being seen

in company with those who are drinking are involved. Similarly, James Bales summarizes from his survey of scholars: "not beside wine" or not "sitting at wine" (**The Deacon and His Work**, p. 25). Others see an emphasis in keeping with the marginal translation, which says, "Not ready to quarrel, and offer wrong, as one in wine." "Not a brawler" or "one in his cups," says Alford (**Greek Testament**). "A man rendered petulant" by intoxication, he adds. Vincent says, "to treat with drunken violence" (**Word Studies**). We see, then, a man qualified for elder is not a user of intoxicating wine, and thus not evidencing the moods, dispositions, and actions characteristic of intoxication.

"Not given to much wine," says verse 8. W. E. Vine points out on Tit. 1:12 that the Cretans were notorious for their sinful ways: liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons. "The phrase 'idle gluttons' stands for the grossest self-indulgence" (**The Epistles to Tim. and Tit.**, p. 157). In Tit. 2:3, Vine explains on "nor enslaved to much wine" that Paul is referring to "the general conditions of the Cretians" and telling Christians not to be like them (**Ibid.**, p. 162). Thus, Paul is saying, "Don't be drunkards like they are!" Neither Christian women nor deacons should be such (I Tim. 3:8). As suggested on Eph. 5, Paul can focus his attention on one sinful practice, without implying that another one is allowed.

Notice, too, "vigilant" (temperate, sober) in I Tim. 3:2. It indicates clear head and self-control, so as to be very watchful on a constant basis. Barnes says, "It means, properly, **sober, temperate, abstinent**, especially in respect to wine; then **sober-minded, watchful, circumspect** (Robinson)." W. E. Vine says, "the word **nephalios** primarily has to do with abstinence from strong drink; it acquired, however, the more general sense of soberness in disposition" (**The Epistles to Tim. and Tit.**, p. 51). The Christian must be utterly watchful — on the guard against every device of Satan, every wayward thought, and every subtle temptation. Even non-Christians, dealing with the need of vigilance in non-spiritual matters, have learned the propriety of avoiding all use of intoxicants. "The higher faculties of the brain are impaired by alcohol, as Dr. Ivy pointed out, 'before a person feels the effects and occurs after the consumption of 1 or 2 beers or 1 or 2 cocktails.'" (James Bales, **The Deacon and His Work**, p. 33). That is why driver education authorities warn,

"One drink may impair judgment, create a false sense of well being, and a constant tendency to produce over-confidence. All this without being apparent to anyone including the drinker himself. The drinker quickly comes 'under the influence' of alcohol whether it is beer, or wine, or whiskey, or vodka, or any other beverage he may drink which contains alcohol." Truly, the children of this world can seem wiser than the children of God at times.

There is not one particle of help to the social drink position in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus. There is plenty to warn us all of the sin of intoxication. [*Look for an exchange next month between O. E. Watts and Ron Halbrook on this issue — Editor*]

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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FAN MAIL

The editor and all who work and write for this paper enjoy and appreciate the correspondence which we receive. This is true whether it be commendable, or in the form of constructive criticism. We try to profit by all that we read.

Although very little criticism has come to my attention, I fear that my work may be misunderstood by some who may not understand the general nature and purpose of my column. You see, to use the "sword of the Spirit" is to engage in negative and destructive work. What is a sword for? When I expose or condemn some unscriptural doctrine or practice, I always try to show what is right and what the Spirit has revealed.

Anyway, I appreciate the following letter from a reader in Maryland:

"I have followed your writing in the SOWER and SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES for some time. I wanted to drop you a letter and tell you how favorably impressed I have been lately with the content, spirit, and style that has lately characterized your efforts. I know that there must have been a conscious effort put forth on your part to be more effective in your writing, because the result is so strikingly evident.

"As a preacher I have gotten volumes of criticism for my efforts to teach truth, as I am sure you have. Some of it was justified and some of it was not. Because I have seen how brethren can reject the truth under the guise of being offended 'with the way you do it,' I have hesitated ever disagreeing with a brother if the disagreement was merely in 'the way you do it.' There have been times when I have sat down to write you, and have taken the paper out of my typewriter, and prayed instead that you might be always strong in proclaiming the truth. I feel like God has answered those prayers.

"A man may be criticized for teaching truth, but a loving man is known even by those he slices with the sword of the Spirit. Keep on the path reflected in your words: 'Teaching the truth in love'."

I print this letter, not because of the personal praise, but because it contains a lesson for us all — especially all who teach and defend the truth. Thanks, brother, I needed that!

FAITH vs. INTELLECTUALISM

The battle between intellectualism and the faith that comes by hearing God is an old one. The apostle Paul

engaged in such conflict in Athens. Tertullian of the third century asked, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" Do you understand his point?

May I pass along an interesting and truthful observation from Reuel Lemmons in a recent issue of the FIRM FOUNDATION:

"Man is a creature of two worlds: the world of the flesh and the world of the Spirit. He should not grow up ignorant in either. Much of the education in the secular world is subjective; it grows out of our experiences. It is subject to our mistakes and miscalculations. It can be, and always is, imperfect and inferior. Faith is objective. It comes from Revelation. It is imperfect to the extent that the knowledge of God's will is imperfect, but it has every advantage over secular knowledge. When a choice is forced between faith and intellectualism we must always be ready to choose faith. What we can believe is always far better than what we can know. We must live by faith."

Those who smite their breast for their authority would do well to remember these important principles.

HONEST BEER?

I heard a man advertising a certain brand of beer on radio the other day, and among other things he described it as being "an honest beer." I have no idea what honest beer is, but if there is such a thing that is more than can be said for the man who advertises it and the manufacturer who paid him to say what he did. They present only one side of the picture — the selfish and deceptive side. They never mention the ten million confirmed alcoholics, the millions of problem drinkers, the crime, death, misery, broken homes and lost souls as the "finished product of the brewer's art."

Let the wise man tell it like it is: "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." (Prov. 23:32.)

PRAYING TO MARY

The Italians voted recently on whether to keep their controversial divorce law. It seems that the Pope didn't want to get too deeply involved, but he did make a statement which seemed to indicate his position. If he is infallible and Catholics believe it, we wonder why he didn't just lay down the law and avoid the nation-wide vote on the issue.

The newspaper report said:

"Pope Paul VI, who had voiced 'deep grief when a divorce statute was introduced in Italy in November 1970, Sunday said he wouldn't break his silence on the issue.

"However, the pope exhorted a crowd gathered in St. Peter's Square at noon to pray to the Virgin Mary 'for the well-being of the family.' This was understood as a veiled plea, especially to women who have traditionally been devotees of the Madonna, to vote against divorce."

We agree with the pope's position on divorce (not because he said so, but because of what the Bible teaches) and we state our position plainly, not in a

"veiled plea." But we disagree with his remedy. Why pray to the Virgin Mary? Did the Lord, the apostles, or anyone else mentioned in the New Testament ever ask anyone to pray to Mary? NO! I agree with the soldier who had been critically wounded in battle, who, when advised by a buddy to pray to Mary replied, "A sick man needs the doctor, not the doctor's mother."

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GRAHAM ON SILENCE

An elderly couple wrote to Billy Graham concerning the possibility of meeting their pet dog again in heaven. He questioned the possibility. Another person wrote and asked, "Now while the Bible says nothing about dogs in heaven, where does it say there are not?"

Billy replied: "When you reason from the Bible's silence, as it is called, you can get into some theological trouble. The safe position is to hold only to what is expressly stated in Scripture."

Amen! That means that Billy and others cannot play a mechanical instrument in worship, sprinkle for baptism, etc., because the Bible doesn't say not to. If they follow the "safe position" of appealing to that which is "expressly stated," they will sing, immerse, and otherwise follow that which is authorized in the Bible.

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GRACE AND THE GOSPEL

The "New Unity Faction" promoted by W. Carl Ketcherside and others seek to make some kind of an effort in teaching that the grace of God will overlook doctrinal differences and as long as one has been immersed upon faith in Christ, in some way God's grace will work out differences of doctrine. Therefore, there is little need to be very much concerned with worshipping with those that use instrumental music and teach other false doctrines. What saith the Scriptures?

Grace Saves

Paul says the grace that saves has appeared unto all men (Titus 2:11-12); but this grace teaches. In the gospel men are taught how to be saved from sin, for the gospel is God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16-17).
 Law and Grace

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). This passage does not teach that men are under grace and under no law. Grace and truth are used in this verse in contrast with the law of Moses. There were both grace and truth under the law of Moses. It was by God's grace that Israel marched into the promised land. What God told Moses to tell Israel was the truth, not a lie. But Christ was the *fullness* of grace and truth (John 1:14). Jesus Christ was given to die because of God's grace (Heb. 2:9). Jesus was the fullness of truth (John 14:6). Paul showed that men were no longer "under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). Under grace they had obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine that was delivered unto them (Rom. 6:14-17). Grace does not mean men do not need to obey, and obedience does not nullify grace.

Acts 14

Paul spake boldly the "word of his grace" (Acts 14:3). He "preached the gospel" (Acts 14:7, 21). He called upon the saints to "continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22). Paul preached the gospel, the faith, which was the word of grace.

Acts 20

When Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders he said he had preached "the gospel of the grace of God" (v. 24). He said this was "preaching the kingdom of God" (v. 25). This was at the same time he declared "unto you all the counsel of God" (v. 27). At this time he commended them not only to God, but also to "the word of his

grace" (v. 32). He urged them "to remember the words of the Lord Jesus." The gospel of grace, the kingdom of God, the counsel of God, the word of his grace and the words of Jesus were all preached by Paul at Ephesus showing that they are all the same.

Gospel Connected to Grace

Paul said in Rom. 5:2 "we have access by faith into this grace" but faith comes from hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). We can only know what the grace of God provides as we hear from the word of his grace. If the revelation of the gospel which comes by the grace of God does not provide us with knowledge that a thing is true, then we can not know it is a part of God's grace.

God's grace is revealed through the gospel of his grace.

Word	Action	Grace
2 Th. 2:14	Called	Gal. 1:15; 2 Tim. 1:9
I Cor. 15:1; I Th. 2:14	Receive	2 Cor. 6:1
James 1:21	Saved	Eph. 2:8
I Cor. 15:1	Stand	Rom. 5:2
I Thess. 2:13	Believe	Acts 18:27
Col. 1:23	Continue	Acts 13:43

Observe that Paul says man is called by grace (Gal. 1:15; 2 Tim. 1:9) but it is by the gospel that man is called (2 Th. 2:14). The call of God's grace is through the gospel. We are informed that the grace of God can be received (2 Cor. 6:1) but the gospel is received (I Cor. 15:1) and the word of God is received (I Th. 2:13). Men receive God's grace when they receive the revelation of his grace. Paul affirms men are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8); the word of God is able to save our souls (Jas. 1:21). Our souls are saved by grace when we are saved by the word of God. Men could stand in the grace of God, (Rom. 5:2); yet Paul said we stood in the gospel (I Cor. 15:1). Men believe through grace (Acts 18:27); yet the word of God worked in those that believe (I Th. 2:13). Paul persuaded men to "continue in the grace of God" (Acts 13:43) and to "continue in the faith" and not to be "moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23). In these passages the action men take toward the grace of God is seen in the action taken toward the word of God, which is the word of his grace. God has always made known his grace to mankind through his word. Unless God reveals his grace through his word, man does not know what the grace of God provides.

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ETYMOLOGY AND COGNATES

"Salvation" Words: "Reconcile"

The root of the various "reconcile" words is allasso. This term basically meant "to make otherwise." Its kinship to allos, "other," may be readily seen. Outside the New Testament one can find allasso in the sense of "to alter," "to give in exchange," or "to take in exchange." (See Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 1, pp. 251ff.)

The root allasso is prefixed with several different prepositions, making cognates that vary slightly in meaning, such as "to alter by removal," "to alter or exchange," "to distinguish oneself," "to surpass." One of the cognates, katallasso, is the common term for "reconcile."

Katallasso in Greek Literature

It seems that katallasso has no significant use in Greek pagan religion, inasmuch as the pagan religions do not stress a personal nearness between God and man as does Christianity.

The term in question is found commonly in Greek literature to denote the coming back together of a husband and wife who have been separated. It is interesting to note that the term denotes something that is done by, and not simply something that happens to, the husband and wife.

Katallasso in the New Testament

The root **allasso**, "change," may be seen in Acts 6:14, where it is charged by the Jews that Jesus would "change" the customs of Moses.

In Gal. 4:20 we find Paul saying, "I desire to be present with you now, and to change (allasso) my voice..." Another occurrence of the term in the sense "change" may be seen in I Cor. 15:51, where Paul speaks of our "change" at the second coming of Christ.

The root **allasso** in the sense of "to exchange" may be seen in Rom. 1:23.

The term **katallasso** is used in the New Testament only in the epistles of Paul. It is to be noted especially that the passive sense of the term is used only of man; that is, it is man and not God who is reconciled (II Cor. 5:20; Eph. 2:16), etc. This use of the term clearly indicates that God and man do not stand on equal terms in the matter of reconciliation; that is to say, it is man and not God who went astray.

It should be noted again that reconciliation is something that involves the activity of man; it is not simply something that happens to man.

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STRANGE DOCTRINES NO. 2

This is the second in a series of strange doctrines perpetrated upon the public. In this series I am discussing the strange doctrines of Mr. Jack Langford of Ft. Worth, Texas. These doctrines were taught in a discussion with brother Bob LaCoste earlier this year. As was stated in a preceding article, Mr. Langford was smooth in his delivery and crafty in his platform manner.

As in the case of most debates the discussion of Jno. 3 came in for its share of attention. For any who might not be familiar with the text it reads, "Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." It seemed that Mr. Langford had as much trouble with the new birth as Nicodemus. He kept getting back to a physical birth. The context shows the only reason Jesus ever mentioned a physical birth was because Nicodemus got "hung up" on it. Mr. Langford made the usual false charge on my colleague. He asserted that brother LaCoste taught that "born of water" was water baptism. I immediately called a point of order and insisted on a correction. I pointed out to Mr. Langford and the audience that my colleague taught that being born of "water and the spirit;" included water baptism but other factors were also involved! This correction has to be made with most sectarian preachers.

Mr. Langford then made the following argument on John three. He said that "Born of water" could not mean water baptism because the word "born" means a delivery or coming out of; whereas baptism means a going down into or being submerged. He then, as most false teachers, made a fatal mistake. He went to verse six and said that "Born of Spirit" meant Holy Ghost baptism. It was called to his attention that if "born of water" could not mean water baptism how could "born of Spirit" mean Holy Ghost Baptism? He immediately saw his dilemma and took back water. He tried to deny saying "bom of Spirit" meant baptized with the Holy

Ghost but the tapes showed otherwise. The next night he was trying to patch up his mess on John three and still refused to tell what "Born of the Spirit" meant in verse six. I had brother LaCoste to call a point of order and ask him what "Born of the spirit" meant if it didn't mean Holy Ghost baptism. He replied in anger, "You are disturbing me and are out of order, I will discuss that later." Well, as might be expected he found it convenient to forget this, until the debate was over. This shows how debaters can meet themselves coming back.

The next argument Mr. Langford made on John three was a typical sectarian argument. He said "Born of water" was a physical birth and that "Of the spirit" was spiritual birth. He went on to say that all doctors used the expression "water birth" referring to physical birth. After he made this assertion the debate sounded more like a medical convention in the field of obstetrics than a religious debate. Brother LaCoste immediately pointed out that doctors do use this expression at time because most laymen would not understand the medical terms. He pointed out that actually the so called water in the mother was not water but embryonic fluid. He also emphasized that embryonic fluid, sometime called water comes before the birth of the child. That actually the child is born "dry" after the fluid has passed. Well, there was a bit of humor connected with this and finally someone asked if there was a doctor in the house! It is sad that matters of this nature have to be discussed but when sectarian preachers keep insisting on a physical birth, there is no other alternative.

Brother LaCoste then pointed out that verse five does not mention two births but ONE birth and two factors. It was also observed that when the Lord said "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth" simply means that one cannot see or observe the new birth! I shall continue with other arguments later.

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HOUSTON, TEXAS. For over two years the church has been meeting in Rodeway Inn, 1-45 north of Houston near the International Airport where there is a burgeoning population in an area 10 miles from the nearest congregation. We have edified ourselves in order to build a sum to purchase property. This we have done, but we have not been able to adequately follow up contacts or hold those who have visited. We feel that we need someone who can devote full time to the work in helping us reach the thousands of this area. Full support is ready. Write Church of Christ in Northgate, P.O. Box 16113, Houston, Texas 77022 or call Lee Hines 448-2897 or David Reel 447-7152 after 6 P.M.

MARVIN YOUNG, P.O. Box 906, St. Cloud, FL 32769. I began work June 1 with the church in St. Cloud. The church is small but conditions for growth seem good. St. Cloud is in central Florida near Orlando and about 20 miles from Disney World. Worship with us when in this area and put us in contact with people you know living here.

WILLIAM C. SEXTON, 2219 S. Glenn, Wichita, Kansas 67213. In our first year's work with Southwest meeting at 1614 Calvert in Wichita, 12 were restored and identified. Attendance and contribution have risen. Cecil Willis, Derrell Shaw and Billy Moore have been with us this year in meetings. Robert Turner comes this fall. A new work began in Inman, Kansas, 60 miles northwest of Wichita on highway 61. Raleigh Cook, Maurice King and I did the preaching in a meeting there in May. These brethren are zealous and determined to hold forth the Lord's will in this central Kansas community. Dale Jones, Richard Holloway, David Lawrence and I shared the preaching in a meeting at Pleasant Valley in Wichita where David Lawrence works. If you are coming to Wichita, come and worship with us.

TERRY D. JOHNSON, 10813 T. Circle, Omaha, Nebraska 68137. The church now meeting in Parkview Heights Elementary School has been doing some door knocking in this area resulting in 4 classes started and one baptized. Personal evangelism works! We have a special class for new converts each Thursday morning with tests covering the previous session. Interest is good along with attendance. We hope to build a small building soon. One to adequately meet our present needs will cost about \$24,000. If any interested

individual would like to contribute to this end, you may contact us at the above address.

A. C. GRIDER, R.R. 1, Connersville, Indiana 47331. Our work at Connersville has started off well with three responses already. It looks like we will have a good and pleasant association with the people here. The small but nearly new building is located at 3327 Waterloo Road. We are averaging about 70 on Sunday with contribution a little less than \$300 per week. We do not have a radio program or bulletin yet but hope to have both later. In the meantime I want to write some for various papers and intend to prepare a manuscript for a book I want to write. We invite all our friends to visit us in Connersville. You will find a very friendly group of God's people here.

KEITH D. MAJOR, 1505-C Sealion Ct., Key West, Florida 33040. A group of military people has established a sound congregation known as Lower Keys Church of Christ and meeting in our home at the above address. We began with 7 adults and 3 children. Notify us of relatives or friends coming to the area. Call 294-9429 for information.

JOE F. NELSON, P.O. Box 744, Clarksville, Tennessee 37040. I concluded my work with the Expressway church just off 1-40 at highway 22 the last of June. They have a nice, comfortable building and are now completing a house for a preacher. A full time man is coming in July. This is a good place to stop and worship when traveling between Nashville and Memphis. I plan to preach by appointment until invited for full time work elsewhere. You may write the Expressway Church of Christ, Wildersville, Tenn. for reference on me.

WILLIAM E. FAIN, 11775 S.W. Fifth St., Beaverton, Oregon 97005. We note with much joy that Ben Shropshire is returning to the Northwest to establish a congregation in Pendleton, Oregon. We wish to give his proposed work our wholehearted endorsement. No man is better qualified for such a work, nor does anyone deserve more credit for the strength and soundness of the church in Oregon, than he. Nobody has worked harder nor made more sacrifices for the work. He is going to need outside support and may be contacted for the present at 2685 20th St., San Pablo, California 94806.

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