

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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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

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THE SCRIPTURAL ACTION OF BAPTISM

Baptism is a controversial subject that is not likely to be resolved for all before the Lord comes again. The controversy is not due to the lack of information in the word of God, nor to the lack of plain language to describe the action. The controversy stems from efforts to defend false doctrines that men have developed regarding the conditions of forgiveness of sins.

What must be done to obey the command of God to be baptized? How is it done? Some tell us that baptism is the sprinkling of water on the person for some religious purpose. Others say that pouring water on the person is an accepted "mode" of baptism. But while many will argue that these two actions constitute baptism, all will admit that immersion in water is scriptural baptism. Sprinkling and pouring water on a person and immersion in water are different actions and all three cannot be right in the single action required in the word "baptize." If the action is not given in the Bible, then we are at liberty to do as we please to obey that command. But if the action is specific, at least two of the above actions are wrong.

Jesus commanded his apostles to go "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matt. 28:19,20).

Baptism is as much a command as "teach" in this passage. It precedes baptism and also follows it. Baptism is a specific action, and consequently, can

never have but one meaning. The word that the Holy Spirit selected to describe this action is from a Greek term which has a definite meaning. Whether literal or figurative it has this definite meaning always. Whatever that word meant in the Greek at the time the Holy Spirit used it, it means now. A living language changes from generation to generation. Some words become obsolete and are dropped from use; some words are added to the language by reputable use in expressing new things and ideas. Some words evolve into new meanings. That is one reason why revision of English translations of the Bible serve a good purpose, provided the revision is literally true to the original language. But such changes of word meanings is not true of a dead language. When a dialect or language dies with a generation of people, any translation of that language into another must respect the meaning of words as they were used by the people at the time that language was living.

The "koine" or "common" Greek was the language used in the days of the apostles. This was the Greek language commonly spoken from about 300 B.C. to about 500 A.D. The Greek language used now is not the same as that used in the days of the apostles any more than the English language now is the same as that used 500 years ago in England.

Whatever Jesus wanted those who had been taught to do in obedience to him, he used the Greek word "baptizo" to describe the action. Every standard Greek lexicon defines this word as "dip, plunge, immerse, submerge" and similar terms. It is never necessary to understand just what the Greek word "baptizo" means in order to understand exactly what action is required by the Lord. We cannot take an English word that has changed to conform to current usage to define a word used in another language many generations ago. We must find the current English word that expresses exactly what the original word meant at the time it was used.

It is not necessary to be a Greek scholar to know what action is required in the command, because in other places the action is described in other terms that cannot allow other actions. The original word translated "baptize" is never translated by the English words "sprinkle" or "pour." When these

words are found in the English New Testament they are always from other Greek terms with other meanings.

Suppose we consider here the baptism of Jesus by John in the river Jordan in order to determine the action required in the word. In Mark 1:8,10 we read: "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit like a dove descended upon him."

We learn here that Jesus was baptized by John IN the Jordan. We are sometimes told that Jesus was IN the Jordan by standing at the edge of the water; just about ankle deep. But others tell us that the Greek preposition "eis" sometimes means "at" instead of "in." Therefore, Jesus was AT the Jordan rather than IN the Jordan. If Jesus was baptized AT the Jordan instead of IN the Jordan, by the same language the Spirit led Jesus AT the wilderness to be tempted, and not IN the wilderness, for both words are the same in the original. It is also said that John baptized the people WITH water. The implication is that the water was used to pour or sprinkle on the people rather than to immerse them in the water. But it is not the water that is baptized; it is the people. The element is not handled, but the subject to be baptized. John baptized the people, not the water. The water was the element used by John to baptize the people. He said, "I indeed baptize YOU with water" (Matt. 3:11).

The divisions among religious people today over the ACTION of baptism leads to divisions over the proper subjects for baptism and the purpose for which one is baptized. It is important, therefore, to understand exactly what the Lord requires of one when he is commanded to be baptized. This subject will be further discussed in another article next month.

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Editorial

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RESPONSIBLE MILITANCY

The price of peace with God and within ourselves is constant warfare with the Devil and all his forces. Over and over the New Testament presents the Christian as a soldier. We are charged to "put on the whole armor of God" in order to "stand against the wiles of the Devil." We need to be properly girded, have a breastplate, battle shoes, wearing a helmet, protected by a shield, as we wield the sword of the Spirit. Our struggle is "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (See Eph. 6:10-17).

Paul admonished Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). He further instructed him to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" and said, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:3-4). In reviewing his life as a servant of Christ, among other things Paul said, "I have fought a good fight" (2 Tim. 4:7). There is no doubt about it. Every Christian is a soldier. There are real enemies to face. Either we must conquer them or they will cause us to lose our souls. The victory belongs to the strong, not the timid.

Enemies Without and Within

Ultimately, our enemy is the Devil himself. He is the arch enemy of God and man. He is the tempter, the adversary. His devices are numerous and he has many ministers. He is the Prince of this world. His desire is the damnation of every soul and the complete thwarting of God's eternal purpose to save man through Christ and the church. Evil governments have arrayed themselves against the truth down through the ages. False religions have arisen to oppose the pure gospel. Many of these have become deeply entrenched and some have joined hands with evil political powers to fight against the will of God. Secularism spits out Goliath-like challenges to the soldiers of the Lord. Deceitful philosophies appear in stark contrast to the simplicity that is in Christ. At times the blood of martyrs has stained the ground. The persecuted saints in Smyrna were called upon to be "faithful unto death" to receive their crown of life (Rev. 2:10). That expression means they were to hold out for the truth even to the point of martyrdom if necessary.

Outside enemies have never been able to stop the progress of the church. Someone wrote that the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church. Per-

secution has both a purifying and a unifying effect. It brings to light the mere pretenders whose consciences are for sale. It also draws together those of like precious faith as they face common adversaries.

But there are enemies within. Departures from the truth have led to seditions which have crystallized into parties with their peculiar points of emphasis, "Strife, seditions and heresies" are works of the flesh which war against the Spirit (Gal. 5:17-21). These arise from within. The time comes when they ultimately go out from among us to join the ranks of our outside enemies. The circle of truth is too tight for them. But while they are trying to get outside of it the carnage they cause is often devastating.

There are struggles within the body over preeminence. All need to remember that Christ is the head of the church (Col. 1:18) and that all orders must come from him. Petty jealousies and envyings ravage local churches and disrupt brotherly relations while Satan rejoices. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit" (Gal. 5:17). There are many signs that the flesh is prevailing with all too many who wear the name of Christ. Gambling, social drinking, mixed swimming with its indecent exposure, and general softness toward things of the world are seen on every hand. The frightening destruction of marriages, increasingly found among elders, preachers and others who have led in the fight against sin in days gone by, bears shameful evidence to the reality of the problem. Loose living is more and more the order of the day. Elders and preachers have often closed their eyes to existing conditions and some have become open apologists for sin.

Building While Fighting

When Nehemiah led the Jews in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, the Samaritans did their best to stop the work. It became necessary to fight. But it was also necessary to continue building. Sentries were posted. When the enemy launched an attack upon any one section of the wall, the trumpeters sounded and extra help rushed to defend that place. "For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded" (Neh. 4:18). That is what we have to do now. Error must be opposed from without and within. But we must keep on building.

Some have tried to build strong churches just by fighting error. Some have expended great energy in protecting the walls of spiritual Zion at one place while the ministers of Satan breached the walls at an unnoticed or unguarded place. Some have come to enjoy the excitement of battle to such an extent that they have lost their taste for building. And, if they cannot find an enemy to fight anywhere else, will turn on their, fellow soldiers and square off for the fray. That is militancy all right, but it is not responsible militancy. Yes, we are pictured as soldiers, but we are also vineyard laborers, temple builders, joints and bands to supply nourishment for the rest of the body. We must fight to survive. But let us fight to build. While all must take heed HOW we build (1 Cor. 3:10), let us be sure THAT we build. When fighting has to be done, let it not be done with carnal weapons to satisfy carnal objectives.

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IT SAYS MORE THAN IT SAYS

The following advertisement appeared in *Contending For The Faith*, a paper edited by Ira Y. Rice and published in Birmingham, Alabama:

"MEMPHIS MEETING (With the Representatives of Herald of Truth). Hundreds — possibly thousands — of elders, preachers and other concerned Christians have been in a quandary as to how to establish who is telling the truth regarding the brotherhood-wide controversy that developed in 1973 over alleged doctrinal offences at Highland Church of Christ, Abilene, Texas (sponsors of the Herald of Truth). Great numbers wonder whom to believe—Highland or her critics. Our answer: Neither. In fact, there is only one way this question ever is likely to be settled — by a careful study of the word-for-word transcript of the confrontation between two of Highland's elders (and several of their Herald of Truth representatives) and some 150 to 200 gospel preachers and elders from several states which took place over this matter September 10 and 11, 1973, at Memphis, Tennessee. The confrontation lasted approximately 13 hours, with time out only for meals. When it was over, we had established, among other things, that if you do not know WHAT questions to ask and exactly HOW to ask them, you cannot wring the truth out of either Highland's representatives or its elders! For the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth on this matter, enclose \$2 with your order and ask for the transcript of the Memphis Meeting."

This looks like an innocent and simple advertisement, but there is more in it than first meets the eye.

There was no reason on earth for such a meeting to have been held, and if brethren had respected the New Testament pattern of congregational cooperation, it would not have been. They violated a scriptural principle and created their own problem. The New Testament teaches clearly, by precept and example, that a church or churches sent to a church or churches only when the receiving church was in need — and always in the realm or work of benevolence. The reason this was not practiced in evangelism is simple. There are no circumstances under which a congregation becomes obligated in evangelism beyond its ability.

No apostolic church ever sent to another church in evangelism. There was no permanent arrangement of cooperation among churches. Each church was

autonomous, therefore the actions of one — good or bad — did not involve others. Look, for example, at the Lord's letters to the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 2 and 3). Some of the churches were righteous, some dead, and some had a mixture of truth and error, faithful and unfaithful members, but the Lord never said one word to any one of them about any of the others. They were not instructed to call a thirteen hour meeting of the elders and preachers to be held in Smyrna because the church in Pergamos was tolerating the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. The autonomous nature and government of the church was provided by God as a built-in protection against wholesale departure from truth like that suggested by the domino theory.

The Highland church and all contributing churches have ignored God's plan, tied churches together through the Herald of Truth, and the problems were inevitable. It was only a matter of time. Had they respected God's plan, and the Highland church had become unsound, it would not have affected churches, elders and preachers in Memphis or anywhere else. Other than the mutual interest of all true Christians in truth, what happened to Highland was nobody's business in Memphis! But with many churches working through Highland, when that church began to teach error they were all implicated and guilty of supporting false doctrine. No wonder they called the conference!

If elders and churches will learn to do their own work and attend to their own business, meetings like the one in Memphis will not be necessary. Do you suppose they have learned that yet?

The problem of involving many churches in error and compromise was caused by violating the principle of congregational autonomy.

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HOW "FAITH" IS USED

QUESTION: I know that it is an old problem, but can you give some verses that show that the word faith is sometimes used to mean faith only and sometimes to mean obedient faith? Isn't it true that only obedient faith saves? — M.O.

ANSWER: Modern English uses the word "faith" in the above mentioned twofold sense ("Belief" is a synonym and "believe" is the verb form of the noun "faith"): "Belief in God, revelation, or the like . . . Complete confidence, esp. in someone or something. 2. Fidelity to one's promises, allegiance to duty, or to a person; loyalty" (Webster). Obviously, in the latter sense, the idea of obedience is inherent.

The word "faith" is used in this twofold sense in the Scriptures. Thayer says of the verb "believe" (Greek "pisteuo"): "to think to be true; to be persuaded of; to credit, place confidence in; . . . used especially of the faith by which a man embraces Jesus, i.e., a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah — the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, conjoined with obedience to Christ" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, p. 511). Notice that the last phrase emphasizes the idea of obedience being inherent in the verb "believe" whenever and wherever salvation is involved.

Consider the following examples, of this twofold use of the word "believe": 1) Faith only: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (Jno. 8:30-32). Obviously, the faith of these Jews did not and could not save unless and until it was "conjoined with obedience." Their failure to "continue" or to render such obedience accounts for Jesus saying, "Ye are of your father the devil. . ." (v. 44). Theirs was faith only, and such will not save (Cf. Jno. 12:42, 43; Jas. 2:19, 20). 2) Obedient faith: The eleventh chapter of Hebrews well illustrates the fact that only obedient faith saves. Read it carefully. Notice that the expression "by faith" is followed by a verb of action in every instance which shows that obedience is inherent in the word "faith — it is "conjoined with obedience."

Furthermore, the interchangeable use of the words "believe" and "obey" in their variations show that obedience inheres in acceptable faith. Two examples will suffice: 1) "He that believeth on the Son hath

eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36 — A.S.V.). If the negative of "believeth" (36a) equals "obeyeth not" (36b), then it follows that the positive "believeth" involves obedience. 2) "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (Rom. 10:16). Obviously, the words "obeyed" (16a) and "believed" (16b) are used interchangeably, since the former is the fulfillment of the latter.

"The Perfect Law of Liberty"

QUESTION: Is there any conclusive proof that 1 Cor. 13:10 refers to "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25) and not to Christ as I have heard preached for years? — H.H.

ANSWER: While other matters concerning the context are involved by our querist, the above question goes to the heart of the issue. The verse in question reads: "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." The erroneous view that the spiritual gifts under consideration in the context will continue until Jesus comes is based upon the idea that Jesus is referred to in the Scriptures in verses ten and twelve.

While the absence of any personal pronoun (identifying the object under consideration) in the expressions "that which is perfect," "but then face to face," and "but then shall I know even as also I am known," does not of itself afford conclusive proof that reference is to the Scriptures and not to Christ, it does make it very presumptuous to refer it to Christ — and especially so in the light of the context. I believe there is conclusive proof in verse thirteen: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Both "faith" and "hope" involve that which is unseen (Heb. 11:1; Rom. 8:24). When Jesus comes again the object of our faith and hope will be seen. Thus, faith and hope will end and shall become knowledge and reality. But verse thirteen affirms that after spiritual gifts have ceased "faith" and "hope" will abide. If spiritual gifts continue till Jesus comes, then there will be no time for "faith" and "hope" to abide, since they will end at the same time. Thus, we are forced to the conclusion that there must be time after the cessation of spiritual gifts during which "faith" and "hope" abide. Thus, spiritual gifts cannot continue till Jesus comes, and the expression "that which is perfect" must refer to "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25) and not to Christ.

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THE HERALD OF TRUTH— THRIFTY OR THRIFTLESS?

Wilson Adams

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In a time of rising prices and stretching budgets it is important for all of us to be as thrifty as possible. Such should be the policy for the Lord's church and the Lord's money as well. However, some are still advocating (possibly through economical ignorance) that it would be proper for the church to support the Herald of Truth. Such use of the Lord's money would not only be unscriptural (because of the sponsoring church arrangement where one church overuses the funds of over 2,000 other churches) but unwise economically as well.

I have before me a financial report dated February 1, 1978, and issued by a Certified Public Accounting firm (Condley & Co.) from Abilene, Texas where the Highland church of Christ is located, the sponsoring church for the Herald of Truth. This report gives a financial breakdown of the Herald of Truth for the years 1976 and 1977. Throughout this report we find some most interesting FACTS indeed!

Under the heading, Analysis of Program Operational Dollar (pg. 18), we find that for every dollar contributed to the Herald of Truth in 1977 almost 17c or .1681 went for "Fund Raising." In 1976 it was near 18c (.1793). To put this into everyday terms it simply means that in 1977, \$572,643 was spent for "Fund Raising" (\$548,672 in '76). And if you're still not sure what "Fund Raising" involves, it simply means — "begging for more money." Just the amount spent in begging for more money in 1977 would have supported 33 FULL-TIME gospel preachers a total of \$16,800 a year to work in needy places!

Then we see that out of every dollar contributed, 24 c is used for the Heartbeat radio program. Next to television cost this is the largest expenditure. And if you aren't aware of what the Heartbeat program teaches (rather, WHAT IT DOES NOT TEACH) you should be. This program doesn't mention the Bible, God, or the church! So you have 25% of the money contributed going for a program which doesn't mention the Bible, God, of the church! What it does teach is the Social Gospel — pure and simple. And such we are told is being done out of the concern for lost souls. Such blasphemy! Breaking it down even further we find that in 1977, \$872,154 was spent on Heartbeat (\$648,453 in '76). This amount alone could have supported 52 FULL-TIME gospel preachers to work in needy places. Men who would mention God, the Bible, and the church.

Next, we notice that only 6c (or 6%) out of every dollar goes for "Administration." However, if each

church would spend its own money 0.0% would be spent on "Administration." That 6% sounds better than to say that in 1977, \$212,300 was spent for "Administration" (\$145,251 in '76). This amount alone would support 17 FULL-TIME gospel preachers to work in needy places.

From what has been cited here you have a total of \$1,607,097 spent in 1977 on "Fund Raising" (begging for more money), "Heartbeat" (a program which doesn't mention the Bible, God, or the church), and for "Administration." This amount alone could support 102 gospel preachers FULL-TIME. The total amount of \$2,258,083 contributed to the Herald of Truth in 1977, could fully support 141 gospel preachers to work in needy areas. And yet we are told that the Herald of Truth is the most efficient way to do the work of evangelism. Who would believe it?

The question is: When churches give to the Herald of Truth, are they being thrifty or thriftless? *Truly* the answer is obvious. Let's get back to engaging ourselves in God's plan for evangelism, realizing that such man-made schemes as the Herald of Truth do not even make good economic nonsense.

MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

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THE DOUBTING PROPHET-HABAKKUK

Part I

The human mind is an endless questioning apparatus. The ability of the mind of man to question and to doubt staggers the growth of the church. The whimsical nagging doubts cause many to put off what should be done today. So great is the danger and effect of doubting upon individuals, it has rendered helpless many who have the ability to be giants for the faith. These doubts creep into the hidden corners of man's reasoning and are often never known by others, yet they leave us insidiously cold, indifferent and useless to the Lord. How do we deal with doubts? The answer resides in God's word if we are interested enough to meet our own challenges.

Habakkuk is the book for the doubter. The major thought of the book of Habakkuk is that God loves the doubter! Not only does God love the doubter, this book demonstrates the value of honest doubt. Of course, God wants the doubt solved, and He places a great responsibility on the doubter, but at the same time we will learn that to doubt doesn't make one so unworthy as to be thrust forever from God's sight. Now, let's unfold the great gospel truths of this little book.

The first chapter is **THE BURDEN**: faith as it grapples with problems of doubt. We find here that Habakkuk has two great questions or doubts concerning God and His work. The first is in 1:1-4 where he cries to the Lord, "Why don't you do something about the evil in Judah?" This is the first problem of doubt that stirs his soul. He is much like David as he cries in Verses 4-6s "The law is ignored and justice is never upheld. . . The wicked surround the righteous." David saw the prosperity of the wicked in Ps. 73, and the fact that God did nothing almost cost David his faith. Certainly this cry has touched the hearts and has been expressed by the lips of many of God's children even unto today. So God then reveals to Habakkuk that, "Yes, I am going to destroy the wicked in Judah, but (1:5) you would not believe it if you were told."

The answer of his first doubt then comes as God promises to destroy the wicked by the use of the Chaldeans or Babylonians. Now, this is the second doubt! How could God punish His people by using an even more wicked people like the Babylonians (1:13)? This is the burden of the prophet as he cries to God "Why art thou silent when the wicked swallowed up those more righteous than they?"

The Second Chapter is **THE VISION**: faith grasping God's divine solution. Just as there were two problems in the first chapter, now in the second chapter there are two promises made to the prophet. The first promise made to Habakkuk, which is not only the key to the book but to the entire New Testament, is found in 2:4: "the righteous man will live by his faith." The second promise, in 2:14 "the knowledge of the Glory of the Lord will fill the earth and cover it as the waters." These two great promises made to Habakkuk of old represent the heart of New Testament Christianity. Of course, with two such far reaching statements we can scratch only the surface of God's Truth. First of Habakkuk, a man godly in heart, yet struggling with doubts and misunderstanding so characteristic of human frailty and finite wisdom, God says that a righteous man will live by a principle, a principle called FAITH. Even if you don't understand why the wicked prosper in Judah, even though you don't understand how I can use a far more wicked nation, Babylonia, to punish my people, even though you don't understand what will happen to the righteous in such an evil judgment, **YOU WILL OPERATE ON A PRINCIPLE OF FAITH**. The fuel to feed your fire is FAITH. The daily bread which nourishes your body is FAITH. The source of your LIFE support system in the outer space of doubt is FAITH! "THE FORCE" that would sustain Habakkuk is faith. The Hebrew writer in Heb. 10:38 made the same point concerning the coming judgment upon Jerusalem by Rome, and the conditions of the Christians caught in it, says **THE RIGHTEOUS WOULD LIVE BY FAITH**. Paul in Romans 1:17 makes the same point as to HOW the righteous man would live, and again in Gal. 3:11 that a righteous man lives not by law but by faith. To Habakkuk, He says take my word for my deed in using the Chaldeans, because look what is going to

happen to them (2:6-20). So first, He instructs Habakkuk to grasp the principle of faith, and now He is going to make that faith sight, as He reveals the end of the Babylonian nation.

The second great promise is not the character of the gospel as was the first, but it is the universality of the gospel, which is to fill the earth and cover it as the waters of the sea. This restates what was prophesied to Daniel when he saw the stone cut without hands fill the earth (Dan. 2:35), and what was spoken to Isaiah in 11:9 in the same words as used by Habakkuk. This filling of the earth with the gospel was fulfilled by 70 A.D. as the Lord commissioned it (Matt. 28:18-20). The apostle confirmed it in Col. 1:23. . . "The hope of the gospel. . . which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven. . ."

Now, concerning the vision of God's dealing with the Babylonian nation, God pronounced 5 woes that would seal their destiny — utter destruction:

1. 2:6 — **The Lust of Ambition**, "increase of that which is not His." It is this covetous greed of ambition that drives a nation's people onward to take even that which does not belong to them. It is the desire for material and financial gain that causes them to loot, plunder and cheat. The lust to be the world's greatest power is to satisfy this ugly urge. So it was with the Chaldeans, so it was with Hitler, and so it will be with any ungodly nation that seeks to take that which only satisfies its lustful urges.

2. 2:9 — **The Lust For Security**, "to put his nest on high, to be delivered from the hand of calamity." Edom was a nation that sought to build her nest on the cliff of the rock because of its lust for security. Our society is just as security conscious as any Babylonian culture could ever have been, yet we, like they, need to learn that apart from God there is no security. No military force is powerful enough to protect any nation from the judgment of God.

3. 2:12 — **The Lust For Human Glory**, "to him who builds a city with bloodshed." Of course violence is here cursed, but the reasoning that lies behind violence is that of building for human glory. Man has always sought to build as evidence of his glory and achievements. The pyramids are the most obvious example, and empires are another. All are built as monuments to human glory. The point here is that the building of cities was to cost violence and bloodshed, but even at that cost, it is still all futility before God. It will not last, and the glory of man lasts no longer than the flower of the grass. So it was for Babylon and will continue to be for any people who set their hearts toward human glory.

4. 2:15—**The Lust Of Enticement**, "to you who make your neighbors to drink." The drinking here is not centered on the alcoholic beverages of their day. No, it was the drinking of the cup of lust as discussed prior to this. Others were enticed to drink of Babylonian lust for ambition, security and violence. She sought to bring all down to her level of the gutter. Every nation will be called on to drink the drink which the Lord will serve if they follow this evil.

5. 2:19—**The Lust Of Idolatry**, "What profit is the

idol." The worshipper first must carve or fashion the idol and then he can fall down and worship it. Stupidity is the only word for such action. Babylon made her gods and then she prayed to them for help. Today too many have made their gods, — materialism, pleasure or intellectual achievement, but when they need help there will be none to come. God will judge!

These five woes are written to any nation as well as Babylon, and they spell doom to all who fit the application. Thus Habakkuk has been told to believe regardless of agreement or understanding, but now God has gone one more step and demonstrated the fall of Babylon, and he can SEE it. He now DOES UNDERSTAND IT! Notice then Verse 20, "The Lord is in His Holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him." Job said "though I knew God, but I didn't" (Job 42:5). Now Habakkuk sees God in Chapter 3. He concluded Chapter 2, and says out of total reverence "BE SILENT BEFORE GOD. . ."; I will stop my faithless whimpers and child-like chatter; HE RULES FROM HIS TEMPLE and MY PLACE IS AT HIS FEET.

In the next issue we will see faith singing and the process by which faith overcomes doubt.

Things Most
Certainly
Believed

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DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

This article is sequel to the previous where emphasis was given to marriage, as a relationship to be viewed within the divine perspective, so profound, fulfilling, and time spanning that God selected it to illustrate Christ and the church (Eph. 5:22-23). Only when thus viewed is its value, beauty and fullness cherished and realized, and the sanctity embracing it brought within grasp of appreciation. Conversely, divorce is the scourge of modern society, the plague of our day, a monument to sin.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day likely sought to put Him in contradiction to Moses when they posed the questions of Matthew 19. This they never succeeded in doing on this subject or any other, but that did not deter their continuing efforts. "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a

bill of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matt. 19:3-9). Jesus showed that Moses "suffered" the putting away. Remember, we suffer the exception, never the rule. Because of hardness of heart, Moses suffered, that is the Law suffered, the putting away for every cause. Such was and is not the design of the rule.

Here, in complement to Matthew 5:32 which is a part of the Sermon on the Mount wherein Jesus gives a preview of the nature and character of the citizens in the Kingdom of God, Jesus stresses the New Covenant. With respect to marriage the original purpose of God would be restored. The law of the kingdom would impress the one man and one woman ideal of the "beginning", prior to the hardness of heart which had come to characterize the Jew under the law. This verse is the main defense against some of the major problems on the question of divorce and remarriage. The importance of study can hardly be over emphasized.

Within the last few years problems have become more and more acute in this area of study and practice. Various ideas are espoused and views take varied directions. One direction is toward the idea that men out of the church are not amenable to the law of Christ. Such being the case, one can marry, divorce, re-marry any number of times so long as civil law is obeyed. Then, when such one, caught up in the web of multiple marriages, is baptized, he has but to continue with the partner he is caught with and the relation at the point of baptism is sanctified and made acceptable to the Lord. Why the growth in this direction of thought? Why is such being accepted? While I cannot say with certainty, there are some possibilities, yes, then probabilities, which may help to explain. This is an area of tender feelings, emotions are inclined to run high and most tend to see what they want to see. Nearness of the problem to most, even to the majority of members of the church, produces a reluctance to accept self indictment or indictment of our own, even those closest to us. Thus, the manufacture of an alternative which offers but a false hope which is actually no hope at all. We need to take care to "examine ourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5), lest we be guided by our hearts and not by what the Lord has said.

The issue of divorce and re-marriage can be reduced to a simple affirmation. "Those who do not sin when they marry." or "Who can marry without sin in so doing?" To marry without sin necessitates marrying one belonging to one of three classes: (1) Those who have never been married previously. To the unmarried and widows who have "not continency" Paul says, "let them marry" (1 Cor. 7:9). In the same general context he says of the virgin, those having never been married, "if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned" (v. 28). (2) Those who have been previously married but whose former mate is dead,

(Rom. 7:1-4). (3) Those who have been previously married but whose former companion was guilty of fornication (Matt. 19:9). When these three basics are recognized much of the difficulty, real and imagined, in the divorce and remarriage issue is resolved.

The argument is sometimes made that the exception of Matthew 19:9 is not stated in the other references in the gospels. Such is presumed to weaken any argument in favor of the exception as justification today for divorce and remarriage. Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18 indeed fail to mention the exception. Why? In these references the basic thrust is the rule, whereas in Matthew 19 the exception is the prominent consideration. That this is the case cannot be denied when one considers the question there posed by the Pharisees. Still further argument entertains the same question on Romans 7. Why is the exception not included in this passage if it indeed is to be considered? This is like asking why Jesus did not include "faith" in Luke 13:3 when he said "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Truth being cumulative is inclusive of all taught on a given subject. The absence or failure to mention something in a given reference does not destroy the value of mention in previous or other references. Even if Paul were stating the marriage law, which he is not, failure to note the exception would not nullify it. The exception, "fornication", had no place in the illustration of Romans 7 because it was not germane to the issue then in discussion. The discussion respects the relation to Christ after the fulfillment of the law by Christ's death. It is the same as a wife to her husband after he is dead, she is not under the law of her husband any longer. None are under the law any longer by the death of Christ, we now are free to marry another, even Christ. What place would the exception of Matthew 19:9 have had in this discussion? Absolutely none!

Some continue to argue in the face of the Lord's plain statement that death only frees to marry another. Such, ignoring Matthew 19:9, binds where God has not. We have noted the context has to do with the exception primarily. To this Jesus addresses himself and impresses that there is but one exception, "fornication", which God will recognize. The "death only" position rejects this passage and the above reasoning on the basis of application. While arguing the application is to the Jew only, fornication is made the only cause for divorce under the law and since the law is fulfilled there is no exception under the gospel.

Others tell us that every man is entitled to his own wife (1 Cor. 7:2). In my judgment, the influence of those propagating this position is being felt rather widely. Geographically, the Northwest, has been the point of origin and continues to be the focal point of this position. Such an idea is built upon a false premise, "everyone has a right to a wife." Such is just not so, only certain ones may marry without sin and we have taken note of the three categories previously.

From time to time one hears of the "Pauline privilege". This is a frame of reference based on 1 Corinthians 7:15, 12-16, wherein it is alleged that one may divorce his mate where faith is in jeopardy and

remarry. This is a misnomer as well as a misstatement. It is neither of Paul nor is it a privilege granted by scripture. The text contemplates the action of a heathen and states the alternative of the Christian. If the heathen departs because of a mate's faith in Christ, the Christian has no alternative but to let him go. Divorce and remarriage is not in consideration here. Paul is rather dealing with matters general in nature affected by a specific circumstance (v. 26).

We have touched only the hem of the garment as to false notions and doctrines constantly appearing upon the scene of study and discussion of this Bible subject. Space forbids a more detailed consideration. We simply seek to provoke thought and generate an awareness by the mere mention. The Bible says there is but one exception to sinful divorce, that is fornication. The Bible says there is but one cause for divorce, but one grounds, whereby the innocent may remarry. The exception is God given, Christ stated and Spirit revealed, "saving (except) for fornication." This is the one ground for divorce, the one exception to the general law of marriage. Upon this ground a man (or woman) can put away his wife (or her husband) and marry another. This exception established as a part of God's will must stand, apply, and be properly considered in every other passage on the subject. Here I am willing to let the case stand. My faith and conviction will allow no less. Will yours?

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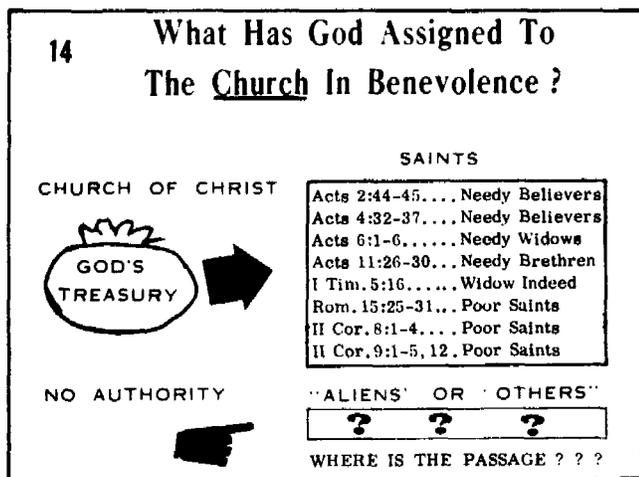
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**GOD'S PATTERN IN CONVERSION,
ORGANIZATION, WORK & WORSHIP # 4**

BENEVOLENCE

Just as God has a pattern for conversion, organization and worship, so He has a pattern for work. And, as we have already shown God's pattern in evangelism, we now want to search the Scriptures to see if God has a pattern in benevolence.



Acts 2:44-45 — "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

Acts 4:34-35 — "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

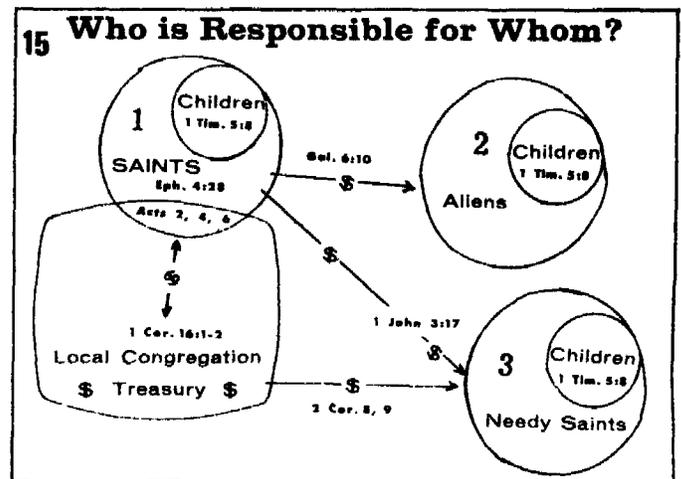
Acts 6:1,3 — "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." Acts 11:29-30 — "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." I Timothy 5:16 — "If any man or woman that

believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."

Romans 15:25-26 — "But how I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." II Corinthians 8:4 — Praying us with much entreaty that we should receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints." II Corinthians 9:1, 12 — "For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God."

In the above, we have all the passages that can be found on the subject of benevolence in the New Testament. None of them show the church (remember we are discussing what the church, not the individual) from its treasury helping anyone except saints.

God does show that individuals have a responsibility in helping others. And if both the individual and congregation do that which is required of them, there will be none that lack.



I Timothy 5:8 — "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Galatians 6:10 — "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

I John 4:17 — "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

(All other passages on the above chart have already been quoted).

In circle # 1 of the above chart we note that saints give into the treasury of the local church. They also have the responsibility of providing for their own. But, according to circle # 2, God also commands that every Christian provide for "all men" or aliens. This too is a part of God's pattern for benevolence. Then they, in turn, must provide for their own families. And if there are those among the saints who are in

of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). To go beyond what God has authorized will be fatal in the day of judgment. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17). For if we go beyond the doctrine of Christ, we have not God (II John 9).

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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EIGHT CHURCHES PLAN HIGH-RISE

FOR DOWNTOWN

The above words headlined an article in the Nashville Banner, December 2, 1977. I have no idea how the plans have progressed, but would it surprise any of us to learn that one of those churches claims that it is "of Christ"?

Yes, the progressive eight are comprised of a Presbyterian Church, a United Methodist Church, an Episcopal Church, a Lutheran Church, two Baptist Churches, a Catholic Church, and the Central Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee.

These have formed a non-profit corporation to build an 800-unit apartment complex in downtown Nashville if such plans met the approval of the Metro Development and Housing Agency.

Shall we even ask for Bible authorization for such? The account of another "high-rise" venture keeps darting into my thoughts:

"And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. . . And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language. . ." (Gen. 11:3-6a).

STUMP THE PREACHER

Some of us have had a good measure of response and success the past few years in the use of call-in radio broadcasts. One of the local D. J.'s at station WVJS, here in Owensboro, handed me a brochure he had picked up in Lexington, Ky. It advertises a new slant on this medium that would likely catch on in our materialistic society.

A "pastor" by the name of Carl King is (or WAS?) conducting a program entitled "Stump the Preacher." In bold letters, folks are invited to "Win the Money!" The program is declared to be "Radio's most interesting game show."

The rules for "Stump the Preacher" are as follows: "A cash jackpot is offered to the person who calls with a question, answerable from the King James Version of the Bible, that the preacher cannot answer. When the jackpot exceeds \$100, one half of the jackpot is won if a caller stumps the Preacher. If a caller wins the first half of the jackpot, they then have the right to try for the rest of the jackpot under the same rules.

1. State if the question is from the Old or New Testament.

2. No genealogy or trick questions and use Bible language.

3. Single answer questions only, based on one verse.

4. Only questions with clear Bible facts for answers, opinions or interpretations do not count.

5. For a reference, a complete verse must be given.

6. A question must be clear to the judge before the clock begins, with difficult words spelled if requested.

7. The preacher has only 60 seconds to begin giving the right answer after the judges start the musical clock.

8. The proof of the right answer is the responsibility of caller and must be given to judges within 2 minutes.

9. The decision of the judges is final."

The advantage of such a format is obvious. The preacher's investment need only be a good concordance. On the back of the brochure is a quotation from 2 Chronicles 26:5: "As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper." Somehow, I find it hard to believe that this is what the inspired penman had in mind!

REPORT QUESTIONS GRAHAM CONVERSIONS

Julian Snell, one of the staff writers for this journal, published an article in the local church bulletin of the Manslick Road Church in Louisville which deserves all the circulation we can give it. The article first appeared in the Memphis Press-Scimitar while Billy Graham was engaged there in a Crusade. It reports:

"The crowds of people who throng to Billy Graham's podium after a stirring sermon are more than just converts. Many are 'ringers' planted to bolster the impact, Human Behavior magazine said today.

"An article in the magazine's July issue (1978) reports the findings of a four-member team from Arizona State University that infiltrated the Graham organization during its 1974 visit to Phoenix.

"Advance men show up in the community four to six weeks before the crusade starts to counsel and advise the locals,' the magazine said.

"By the time Graham arrives in town and makes his altar call, an army of 6,000 await with instructions on when to come forth at varying intervals to create the impression of a spontaneous mass outpouring,' the article said.

"The report noted that 'the acceptance of Christ,' once regarded as a deeply personal experience, has

been bureaucratized and routinized like the rest of today's mass culture."

One brother remarked that he had wondered why Graham always seemed to receive the same outpouring of response, regardless of the subject of his message. It matters not whether he preaches on conversion, the end-times, morality, or anything else, the results are the same. The suspicions and rumors have now been documented.

How different was brother Paul's approach: "For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile . . . But (we) have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully. . ." (I Thess. 2:3; 2 Cor. 4:2).

Bro. Snell well observed: "Has it ever occurred to those who hang on his every word and move that some of what he teaches might be just as counterfeit as some of the responses? No. I suppose not. Many will go down the road to eternity without examining the religious doctrine he represents in the light of the Bible."

SET FOR THE
DEFENSE OF
THE GOSPEL

T. G. O'Neal

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IF DEPRAVED, REGENERATION IMPOSSIBLE

Once I denied in debate with a Baptist preacher "The Scriptures teach that the total man is depraved by nature and that the Holy Spirit must do an additional work to that of the written or spoken word for him to be saved." He believed that one was born in sin, thus, depraved, and that he could not respond to the "spoken or written word" of God so as to be saved. It took a miracle — the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, in addition to, and separate from, the word of God to save him. As Calvinism is accepted by members of the church on the point of depravity, it will only be a matter of time until they begin to advocate the need for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in order for man to be converted.

(1) Regeneration. The New Testament in several passages speaks of the need of man being regenerated or born again. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, 5). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:23). "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). To be born again, to be born of water and the Spirit, being born again, and having the washing of regeneration (rebirth) all refer to the same thing.

One of the New Testament words to describe the salvation of man is regeneration. Re means again, and generate means born, so regeneration means to be reborn or born again. If depravity were true, when one was reborn or was regenerated, he would be back in sin, since depravity says one is born in sin. Of course, depravity is not true; one sins and needs to be regenerated in order to be saved.

If depravity were so, all the New Testament teaches about regeneration would make no sense.

(2) Redemption. The New Testament teaches we need to be redeemed. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18-19). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14). "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5).

Redeem means to "buy back or purchase again. A redeemer is the one who buys back, he is the original owner. When Christ redeems us, we would be back in depravity, in sin, if we were born depraved.

(3) Reconciliation. The New Testament teaches man is in need of reconciliation. Reconciliation means to speak again. We know what it means, where two parties have not been on speaking terms, to say they have been reconciled. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). "And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" (Col. 1:21). "That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:17). "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

If man was born away from God, how could he be reconciled unto God? If born depraved, to be reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, back in sin.

Regeneration, redemption and reconciliation are impossible if man is born in sin. Men separate themselves from God when they choose to sin, thus, they stand in need of regeneration, redemption and reconciliation.

Overseas Preaching Report

Wallace H. Little

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THE WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

Due to a recent request from brother Wallace Little to comment on some aspects of my work in South Africa, I submit the following for your careful consideration. His request consists of two parts: (1). An evaluation of the impact of the present unrest and agitation on the work there, and (2). My assessment of the need for American preachers as contrasted with the training of native preachers and supporting these. Please bear in mind as you continue to read the following comments that truly they are "my assessment" and that others who are also closely associated with the work there might disagree. Opinions often differ in regards to a variety of such subjects and the work in South Africa is no exception.

I can, and often do, engage in lengthy political discussions regarding the current South African situation. However, my main concern in such is always limited to its effect upon our gospel efforts throughout that country. Although numerous reports coming from the American mass media are often exaggerated and that to date I personally know of no Christian who has suffered any loss to himself or to his property, regardless of his race, still there is a drastic escalation of prejudice throughout the country among the various race groups there and towards many foreigners.

For instance, due to the current policies of the U.S. government, there is an ever-increasing feeling of resentment toward America and Americans in general in many areas of the country. The white man in South Africa in times past admired the American and the country from which he came due to its uncompromising stand against Communism. But in recent years this has changed and unfortunately often proves to be a hindrance to our work. We can and do overcome such prejudice though, by endeavoring to show more than just a passing interest in the people of South Africa and their future.

In spite of the "apartheid system" which currently exists in South Africa, the black and white Christians work together for the Lord remarkably well and we trust that such will continue to be true in the years that lie ahead. For example, in 1974 shortly after our arrival in South Africa 4 1/2 years ago, I made my first preaching trip into Vendaland (the native homeland of the Venda tribe). Gene Tope, his father Harold Tope, my father-in-law Ray Votaw and I spent all day Saturday teaching, preaching and answering questions at the Mauluma School-house, after which 7 or 8 people were baptized into Christ.

Here then is a situation where white brethren go into a black homeland area and through the preaching of the gospel precious souls are saved. And yet the opposite also occurs as well. Philip Smith, a white man, age 27, married and residing in Brakpan (the town in which I am currently laboring) was baptized into Christ just a few months ago and yet was initially taught the truth by John Mahlala, a black Christian who worships in Kwa Thema (the native location of Springs). We trust that such will continue to be the case in the future and realize that much Bible teaching is required in order to maintain proper attitudes there between brethren of all races.

In regards to the second aspect of the South African work, I have never viewed the support of American evangelistic efforts in South Africa as being opposed to or contrasted with that of the local evangelists of the various race groups. If it had not been for the past efforts of American preachers throughout South Africa, there would never be as many native evangelists as are preaching there right now, not even to mention all Christians in general.

The numerous experiences of others coupled with my own observations have taught me that caution should always be exercised in choosing an evangelist to support, especially in regards to native residents of other countries. Basil Cass, a white preacher in South Africa, Samuel Chimuse, a black preacher and Hendrik Morris, a coloured evangelist are all receiving at least partial support from American churches and are doing very well in their evangelistic labors. However, there are literally dozens of good men who have been ruined by such support. Due to the drastic differences which often exist between the standards of living in America as opposed to foreign fields, I firmly believe that the best arrangement is for American churches to support American preachers and for South African churches to support South African preachers. Anyway, this is the ideal to which many of us strive. In addition to this, it has become quite obvious that holding financial support (South African or American) too close to the baptistery has likewise ruined many a good man who otherwise might have been a great asset to the Lord's cause after having been tried and proven worthy of such support.

In closing, let me emphasize that there is a definite need for American evangelists in South Africa. However, all of us look upon our work there as being temporary. In view of this, we constantly strive to prepare the people there to stand in the truth of God's Word even in our absence. Therefore, we concentrate on preaching the gospel (not support) and then let them handle the decisions regarding who is worthy of their support, how much, and when it should be given.

ERIC REED

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NOTE: — It is interesting to read from one who has the experience. It is also interesting to see how much at variance this often is with the "expert" opinions and judgments offered by those who operate out of their "ivory towers." Our government is a classic example of how commitment to a position manages to warp both judgment and information. Bro. Reed's article helps show this difference concerning South Africa. Conversation and letters with preaching brethren in Rhodesia have emphasized the same thing relative to that nation. It is a shame that our government is so bent on supporting its prejudice concerning both of these countries that it is so difficult to obtain accurate information concerning the work and the need in them. It is fortunate, however, that the spread of God's Word does not depend on such nonsense. Pray for the work overseas, and the faithful men doing it.

Wallace H. Little
8 February 1978

**Perfecting Holiness
in the Fear of God**

Gary P. Henry
603 Rosemary Dr.
Gulfport, MS 39501



WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE NEED

Modern adults are often heard to say, "These kids today KNOW so much more than we knew at their age!" Perhaps so. But lurking behind that observation is usually the assumption that today's youngsters are more MATURE mentally and emotionally than their counterparts of years gone by. And I am not sure I agree.

Maturity is more than knowledge. And even if the mass media and our improved (?) educational systems have helped our young accumulate more information than ever before, it still remains to be seen whether they have imparted to them as much wisdom, discretion, and prudence as their parents had gained at their age.

What young people need more than anything else, of course, is wisdom. Solomon urged his son, "Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding!" (Prov. 4:5). Nothing in this life can match the practical and spiritual usefulness of it, but "these kids today", storehouses of information that they are, frankly are not getting wisdom in very large doses.

One of the significant reasons for this deficiency, it seems to me, is the drastically reduced amount of time today's youth spend in the presence of older, wiser people. Wisdom comes from the wise and, generally, the mature discernment which youths possess is in proportion to the time they have spent being exposed to older persons. It is fairly clear that in our present society circumstances deprive the typical youngster of much chance to be exposed to the maturity of his seniors and, more seriously, he is

led to believe by the going philosophy that he does not need and should not want the association of older people.

We are all too familiar with the fact that our families are more scattered geographically than ever before, and that our children have less and less chance to be under the influence of their grandparents and other older kin. That is only the tip of the iceberg. The frantic lives that our immediate families lead spin each of us off into his own orbit, so that children spend frighteningly few hours in the presence of even their own parents. Their school, social, and recreational activities often do not bring them into any real contact with the wisdom of anyone over thirty or forty years old. The fact is that our children see very little of anyone outside their peer group. Increasingly, they resent having to spend ANY time outside that group. How different from bygone days when many of us as children actually enjoyed sitting on the floor and listening to the "grown-ups" talk at family reunions and other gatherings!

These circumstances are unfortunate. But it is even worse that they are REINFORCED by the prevailing philosophy which encourages youth to be obsessed with itself, to the neglect of the wisdom of the old, and to resist the intrusion of anything into the world of the young which the young themselves did not originate. There surely can be little doubt that we are living in a "youth-oriented culture" where youth and its interests are all but worshiped as supreme. Being young is thought to be a virtue itself, and being old is written off as a regrettable misfortune. Those who happen to be young enjoy being catered to as the center of society's attention, and those who happen to be older either drown themselves in self-pity or make themselves ridiculous trying to think, act, and look like they are still adolescents.

Formerly, the young grew up knowing they were living in an adult world where it was to their advantage to learn adult ways. Now, they assume that adults are obliged to accommodate as best they can to a world which rightfully belongs to the young. Far be it from the young to attempt to raise themselves to the level of their seniors. If anyone wishes to teach the young, let it be, if not one of their peers, at least someone who can come down to THEIR level and "relate" (what an abused word) to them! Somewhere along the line it has been forgotten that it is more to everybody's practical advantage for the young to grow UP than for adults to be asked to grow DOWN. What does all of this have to do with the church? At least two things, I believe. One is that in our often misdirected efforts to "work with the young people" we need realistically to acknowledge the NEED of young people for wisdom and, in spite of what they may think they WANT, provide them with the means for getting it. Too often people are thought to be ideal for working with the young when they are young themselves and probably know little more than those who are to be their students. Provided he has an intelligent sympathy for the particular needs of youth and has retained the ability to communicate effectively, what better person could there be to "work with the young people" than an

elderly man of wisdom whose head is gray with years of experience? Our responsibility to bring our young UP in the Lord's nurture (Eph. 6:4) means that we, not they, are best suited to decide what studies are "relevant" and which teachers are suitable for them.

Second, Christians who are older, and, yes, even "elderly", need to stop being intimidated by the young and believe what Solomon said: "A gray head is a crown of glory" (Prov. 16:31)! We need to be really thankful for the wisdom our years have brought us. Job knew that "wisdom is with aged men, with long life is understanding" (Job 12:12). What young people need is wisdom. And they shall only get it when their seniors in the faith courageously, unashamedly, and humbly spend time imparting it to them.

THE LORD'S DAY

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The apostle John said, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day . . ." Revelation 1:10. The word translated "Lord's" occurs only one other time in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 11:20, where it describes the supper of the Lord. Evidently it refers to something about Jesus.

The New Testament religion has no holy days as did that of the Old Testament. However the Lord arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Mark 16:9). The church was started on the first day of the week (Acts 2nd chapter). The disciples met on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7), and the congregational collection of money was made on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2).

These facts give the first day of the week some distinction that is said of no other day. The Lord's day, the first day of the week is a special day, different from others, but not holy. The conclusion is clear that the Lord's day is the first day of the week. In Hebrews 10:24, 25 the command is "and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." The best way for Christians to learn how to provoke (stimulate) each other to love and good works is by meeting together and studying God's word. How can Christians exhort each other to do this if they seldom see each other?

Verse 25 commands us, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together!" and that is as often as the church assembles. Certainly the need for assembling is pointed out in the previous verses and in this verse namely, to worship God and to exhort to holiness and faithfulness. The early Christians assembled frequently, even daily, because under the stress of persecutions, temptations, and trials, there was ever the possibility of denying their faith and falling into sin. Verse 26 says, "For if we sin willfully

after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins."

Christians still face this possibility today, and so we still need to exhort one another, "and so much more as ye see the day approaching." The day, means the judgment day when all opportunities for Christians to assemble will be forever ended on earth. We can see the day approaching by faith, for each day brings us one day closer to that day.

Children of God are to "grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Growth is dependent upon two basic requirements, proper food and exercise. These two basic needs when applied to our spiritual life will provoke the desire and will to attend all the services.

Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). In Colossians 3:1, 2 we are told to, "seek the things that are above," and "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on things that are upon the earth." If we do these things we will attend all the services of the church.

How can a Christian be faithful without attending all the services? How can love for God be shown without attending all the services? 1 John 5:3 says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous." God commands us to attend all the services (Hebrews 10:25). If we love God we will attend all the services to worship him. We should not just attend the services because we are commanded, but because we love God, His Son, the church and the brethren.

You have obligations toward the Lord. This is the primary idea of being a Christian, belonging to the Lord (Acts 11:26). We are charged to present our bodies a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). If you cannot even take time to worship the Lord who died for you, how can you expect to do anything else he teaches?

Many are making all kinds of excuses for not attending as the ones did in Luke 14:18-20. Many put their parents, friends, work, recreation, and a host of other things first and not the Lord. People are making the Lord's day their day, not the Lord's. All of the first day of the week belongs to the Lord. The Lord's day should be used as a day to assemble to worship, to read and meditate, to visit the sick, to visit with the brethren or just spend a quiet day with the family after we have attended the services of the church.

We should attend every service of the church because Jesus is there. "Where two or more are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Jesus has never forsaken an assembly and I want to be like him. We should attend every service of the church to set a good example (Matthew 5:16).

We should attend every service of the church to put first things first. "Seek ye first" his kingdom (Matthew 6:33). Jesus said the church must be first to the Christian, even before seeking food, clothing and drink. Nothing could be so important as being a faithful member of the Lord's church.

We should attend every service of the church

because we are made stronger. Power is given in worship to live a nobler life. There one is fortified against falling away. There is the sweetest fellowship on earth. There souls are made fit for heaven. There strength is given to bear the burdens of life. Why should I want to miss any service?

We should attend every service of the church because God wants the church to grow. The church always grows when members put God first by loyal attendance. Since the church is the saved, the growth of the church means salvation of the lost. Here is a way all can help in the finest work on earth.

We must show our love for God by attending all the services of the church. If we do not attend all the services of the church we are sinning. All sinners are cast into hell unless they repent.

CONSIDERING THE SOURCES

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I have received information within the past two years that certain "facts" brethren have used and are reproducing in bulletins, articles and sermons are erroneous. It is a sad thing when we are shown to be using false statements and quotes. It is certainly not in keeping with "speaking the truth" (Eph. 4:15). So that this refutation of these errors can be of widest use, I will reproduce them here.

For years I have seen a quote used by preachers and editors that is most damaging to the Catholic church. It was even mentioned in classes I had at Florida College, in books designed to refute Catholicism and in tracts and papers. Here is the quote as I copied it:

"Of all the advice that we can offer your Holiness, we must open your eyes well and use all possible force in the matter, namely, to permit the reading of the gospel as little as possible in all countries under your jurisdiction. Let the very little part of the gospel suffice, which is usually read in the mass, and let no one be permitted to read more. So long as the people will be content with the small amount, your interest will prosper; but as soon as the people want to read more, your interest will fail. The Bible is the book, which more than any other, has raised against us the tumults and tempests by which we have almost perished. In fact, if one compares the teaching of the Bible with what takes place in our churches he will soon find discord, and will realize that our teachings are often different from the Bible, and oftener still, contrary to it."

(Excerpt from an address by cardinals in the Roman Catholic Church, to Pope Pius III, preserved in the National Library of Paris, folio #1068, Vol. 2, p. 650-51).

Though impressively documented, the quotation is false. I first thought of researching this upon reading

Conway's *Question Box*, the primer on Catholicism. On pages 338-340 the question is asked how the Catholics answer the quotation found in a "church of Christ" publication? Conway forthrightly denied the existence of such a statement, or document. He claimed that this was an example of anti-catholic literature and that the National Library of Paris knew of no such document.

Willing to concede that Conway might be telling the truth, I asked brother Griffin Copeland, librarian at Florida College, to secure the truth from the Nat'l Library, and if possible, to obtain a copy of this document, if it existed.

Brother Copeland did his job well. He happened to be in Paris in 1977 and stopped in at the Library. With some assistance he concluded that the document did not exist, that the quotation was a falsification (either of documentation, or essence).

I realize most preachers do not have the time, nor inclination to seek proof of every quote, figure and fact they use. But I do feel that this was a "golden egg" that needed checking. It is a bit wild even for Catholic literature.

I leave it to each brother to do with this as he sees fit. As for me, I will never use the quote again, always try to correct others who do, and remain more skeptical of such gift horses in the future.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

TO SOUTH AFRICA

R.T. PIKE, JR., 4205 Bacon, Memphis, TN 38128 — In May, 1979 I am planning to go to South Africa to preach the gospel. I am having some trouble raising adequate support. If any individuals or congregations have an interest in that work, I would be glad to supply information concerning plans and needs and would be ever grateful for any help offered. The following brethren know me and can be contacted as references: Jack L. Holt, 531 McElroy Rd., Memphis, TN 38018; S.E. Edwards, 2919 Main St., Dickinson, TX 77539; and J.F. Dancer, 1611 Lagonda, Lexington, KY 40505.

NEW WORK IN NORTH DAKOTA

STEVEN L. LEWIS, 828 4th Ave. S.W., Valley City, North Dakota 58072 — A new work has started in Valley City, North Dakota. The work began in February of this year when my family and I moved from Grand Forks, N.D. During our stay in Grand Forks, I labored with Gary Hargis and the brethren meeting in Emerado. With the new year came the opportunity to establish a congregation in the southeastern section of the state. Our desire is to inform the brethren of the work here and invite you to worship with us if you are traveling in the area. My phone number is (701) 845-2657.

NEW CONGREGATION IN FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

OLEN HOLDERBY, Fresno, California — After several years of planning and labor, a new congregation was begun in Fresno, California. The first service was December 24, 1978, with 104 present. Most of the members for this new work came from the Clovis, California church, where Norton Dye preaches. The new building was constructed between June 1 and December 1, with considerable labor donated by various members of the Clovis church. We did extensive visitations in the community previous to the opening service, and this brought us visitors in almost every service since. We are doing our best to get a constructive program under way. One or more classes are presently being conducted almost every night of the week and we look forward to a good work together. The new location is: 2010 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno, California 93703.

PREACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

JOHNIE EDWARDS, 168 Lawndale Dr., Plainfield, Indiana 46168 — The Plainfield, Indiana church began a preacher training program in January of this year. The elders have invited Carl Lungstrum from Poteau, Oklahoma to work in the first program. Brother Lungstrum is a graduate of Florida College and is twenty one years old. He will work with the writer and the elders of the Plainfield church for about a year learning all the aspects of the work of a gospel preacher. Perhaps there will be a good church looking for a qualified young gospel preacher in the spring of 1980. We are urging interested churches to contact us.

FAITHFUL MAN AVAILABLE

RAY CORNS, 123 Sunset, Gibsonburg, Ohio 43431 — I have retired from the railroad as Telegraph Operator, Agent, Chief Dispatcher and finally as Field Terminal Supervisor. I have over twenty-five years experience in the public proclamation of the gospel and would like to be of service as long as health permits and the brethren can profitably use my services. I have also conducted the usual adult classes, personal workers classes and classes for those who would participate in the public worship. My phone number is (419) 637-2347.

(Editor's note: We have known this brother for many years and worked with him on a number of occasions. He is well informed, sound in the faith and dedicated to the Lord).

NEW BUILDING IN WAVERLY, TENNESSEE

NATHAN HAGOOD, P.O. Box 207, Waverly, TN 37185 — The Court Square church began in June, 1974, when a group of Christians from the Oak Avenue church in Dickson decided to establish a sound church in Humphreys County. The church remains the only conservative church in a county with about a dozen liberal churches. We have been meeting in an old funeral home while planning a more permanent facility. We are now

constructing a small (2800 sq. ft.) building on the eastern side of town. The church is using a \$60,000 bond sale to finance the building. We still have about 925,000 worth of bonds available. Anyone who might desire further information about these bonds should write to us at the above address, or call (615) 296-4667, or (615) 296-7193.

INMATES BAPTIZED AT MIDDLE GEORGIA PRISON

DAVID FRASER, P.O. Box 409, Gordon, Georgia 31031 — On January 28, 1979, it was the happy privilege of Ray Coates (of Macon) and myself to baptize eleven inmates of the Georgia Women's Correctional Institution. This penitentiary is located in Milledgeville, Georgia in the heart of the state. The only woman currently on death row in the state of Georgia is imprisoned here.

Moreover, these were not the first baptisms in this prison. Last May three women were baptized at the Hardies Chapel building in Gordon. A fourth woman was released to the half-way house in Atlanta before we could baptize her; however, David Tant was able to make contact and eventually baptize this woman into Christ. Another girl, we pray, will also be baptized by brother Tant in the near future.

The readers I am sure, would like to know a little history of these efforts. Early in 1978 Hollis Creel, who was then preaching in Macon at the Forest Hill congregation, was contacted by James Yopp of Gainesville, Florida relative to visiting the daughter of one of the Christians in that city. Brother Creel contacted me and both of us went to G.W.C.I. to visit this girl. Since neither of us had ever been to this institution before, we, of course, had to go through channels to gain permission for the visit. Out of this initial visit, a class was started which still meets every Tuesday afternoon. Although the girl we went to see does not now attend the class, the sessions have as many as fifteen inmates who can attend.

When brother Creel moved the middle of last year, I conducted the classes alone until Ray Coates moved to Macon. Since then both of us have been engaged in teaching the class. To date there have been 15 baptisms: 3 in May of last year, 1 shortly after that in Atlanta, and 11 on January 28 of this year. The work has not been without problems in having things work out smoothly, but if proper attitudes are manifested to the authorities of the prison, success can be achieved for which we praise God.

Present plans are under way to obtain permission for services on the Lord's Day of those inmates who have been added to the body of Christ and for others who may wish to attend. This is written with the hope that it will stimulate brethren to get involved in prison work in their area.

PREACHERS NEEDED

WARNE, NORTH CAROLINA The congregation meeting in Warne is approximately six years old. There are usually 20-25 in attendance. The church owns its own building which is adequate for present needs, and also has a house for a preacher. We will be able to provide some support, but outside support will be needed. This should present no problem for there are several congregations interested in the work here. Anyone interested should contact either: David Castleberry, Rt. 1 Box 17A, Brasstown, NC 28902, phone (704) 837-7916; or Mike Prestinzi, P.O. Box 82, Warne, NC 28909, phone (704) 389-6469.

FORT MYERS, FLORIDA — The North Fort Myers church is looking for a full-time preacher. Our present preacher will be leaving sometime during the summer. Those interested may write to the church at P.O. Box 276, Fort Myers, FL 33901. You may also call either: Tom Malmberg at (813)694-1826; or, Ron Wilkins at (813) 334-8561.

SEND YOUR NEWS ITEMS

It is edifying to all readers to know of the numerical and spiritual growth of the work in various places. Any number of readers have told us that they always turn to read the NEWSLETTER REPORTS first when their paper arrives. We have many readers in isolated areas where congregations are few. It lifts their spirits to hear of the success of the work elsewhere and renews their determination to work a little harder.