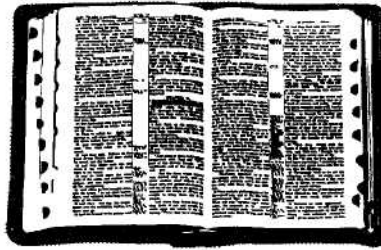


# SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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"

VOLUME XXVII

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Number 4

WAKE THE WORLD  
AND TELL THE  
PEOPLE

*Wilson Adams*  
891 Autumn Valley Lane  
Gambrills, MD 21054



## OUR CHALLENGE

What is the New Testament Church and New Testament Christianity? When we look at the church of our Lord portrayed upon the pages of the New Testament we see a growing, living, moving, and vibrant body of believers who went out and turned the world upside down (Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20). In Acts 8:4 Luke gives his capsule comment on first century discipleship with these words—"Therefore those who had been scattered went about preaching the word."

When will we learn that restoring New Testament Christianity involves much more than having a plurality of elders in every church, eating the Lord's Supper each first day and singing without an instrument? We can do all those things and never touch the heart of New Testament Christianity, for the heart of New Testament Christianity is the human heart! (2 Cor. 3:3). Yes, if we fail to restore the faith and zeal of the early disciples (faith and zeal which sprang from the heart) then what we have restored is only a hollow shell of what ought to be.

What will it take to get us to see that our Lord's religion is more than five acts of worship and mere externalities? *Christianity is a lifestyles.* It is a way of living. It is a daily walk with God—and it is also a sharing experience wherein we attempt to reach out to others and share with them what the Lord has done for us. Truly the church that is not evangelistic, that is not reaching out; a church whose members make no attempt to share the "good news" of Jesus to others—

that church has no right to lay claim to being a New Testament church of Christ.

We must be caught up in the spirit of New Testament evangelism and enthusiasm. Here were people who preached amid persecution, who taught in the face of threats. Here were people who really appreciated the forgiveness of sins and the fact that Jesus died for them. Here were people who were so unselfish with their time that they were willing to TAKE THE TIME to lead others to the Lord. And here were people whose religion was not better felt than told, but better felt BECAUSE it was told!

"So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily" (Acts 16:5)

Why? What was their secret? Simple. Here were folks who just appreciated what they had and were willing to share it with others. They knew the "Old, Old Story," but to them it was the "*Story That Never Grows Old*"—and they never tired of telling it. That's New Testament Christianity and first century discipleship.

Yes, but. . . "*Times have changed. . . Things are different. . . It's just not that way anymore. . .*" May I propose a simplistic question? WHO SAID SO? (The ancient idiom is certainly true that if you say a thing long and loud enough, people will believe it.) We have heard that line of argumentation ("excuse" would be more accurate terminology) for so long that we have become conditioned to accepting it as true, thus excusing our lack of spiritual activity and providing salve for our seared consciences.

People, Times have NOT changed... Things are NOT different. . . It CAN be that way again! Now it is true that we have faster transportation, greater capabilities in technology and sharper skills in the sciences—but all of that is irrelevant to the point at hand. Consider:

1) Romans 3:23—"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." HAS THAT CHANGED? Man's problem today is exactly the same as it has always been—SIN!

2) Acts 4:12—"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." HAS THAT

CHANGED? The answer to man's sin-problem is the same today as it has always been—JESUS! 3) Matthew 9:37— *"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."* HAS THAT CHANGED? The solution is this generation is the same in every generation—ME! Yes, the need of the hour is to get people who love their friend, co-worker and neighbor enough and, because they care, to share the good news about Jesus. The problem is the same—sin. The answer is the same—Jesus. The solution is the same—me. The only thing that has changed is our pessimistic attitude that says: *"It can't be done!"*



**Many are searching.** If there was ever a time when people needed a Savior, it is now. We live in a world of uncertainty, fear, crisis and confusion and, as a result, people are searching—searching for purpose, direction, peace, tranquillity, answers, and hope. And many who have been searching have been looking the WRONG way. They have pursued materialistic gain and found it lacking. They have pursued humanistic reasoning and found it deluding. And they have pursued sin into the depths of degradation and are now looking for a way out.

Folks, there is only **one** way out! 1 Cor. 6:9-11 is the message we must deliver to the world. We must understand that God loves the sinner just like He loved us when we were in sin. God is willing to forgive them and transform their lives as He did for you and me. The gospel is the solution and the gospel has been committed to us. The question is: Are we committed to it?

**We must see the urgency.** I am afraid that far too many have allowed their thinking to be unduly influenced by denominational ecumenical theology which says: *"Most all will be saved and only few will be lost..."* *"It doesn't matter what you are as long as you hold to some form of religious conviction..."*

Have you read Matthew 7:13-14 lately? Jesus said that "few" will be saved. Jesus said that the majority will be lost. Jesus said that those in sin stand apart from God and will NOT be saved. Jesus said that every man who refuses to be baptized for the remission of his sins will be condemned.

**GET THE PICTURE, PEOPLE!** There are thousands who are utterly confused about life, perplexed about religion and, most of all, LOST IN SIN! And. . . we are the hope of those people! Thus we need Christians who, more than ever, will see the urgency, meet the need and accept the challenge. **WILL YOU?**

# Searching The Scriptures

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# Editorial

*Connie W. Adams*

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## QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIVES

The recent turmoil in the Philippines has been of much interest to me. My concerns have not been entirely political. Having seen first-hand some of the poverty which grips a large part of that nation and having maintained contact with brethren in several parts of the nation for sixteen years now, I have a feeling of sympathy for those caught in the throes of economic woes when they are powerless to do much about it, and that feeling is magnified when it involves my own brethren in the Lord. It is magnified even more when it concerns brethren with whom I have studied the Bible, whose voices have blended with my own in praise to the Almighty and who have opened their hearts and homes to me to share whatever they had and who offered me the best of whatever that was.

Last Monday morning (Feb. 24) I was reading the news at breakfast and devouring every line about the Philippine situation, when suddenly a name stood out from the page: FERNANDO PASTOR. First, the name of his wife, Cristeta, appeared as she was quoted by a reporter. She identified her husband "as a preacher for the Church of Christ." Surely it could not be the man I knew. But I read on, and there was his name. The town and province were identified, Cabarroguis in the province of Quirino. There could be no mistake. According to the press report, he and his 22 year old son, Fernando, Jr., along with another man disappeared on the eve of the national election and were found a few days later shot to death beside a road.

So now, the election turmoil was not just another international crisis involving some far away place. It was real. My brother in the Lord, a fellow preacher of the gospel and his son, were victims of political unrest. They were supporters of Mrs. Aquino and attended a rally that night in which they disappeared.

I met Fernando T. Pastor, Sr. in Manila in 1975 when he came to attend the gospel meeting in which I was one of the speakers. He begged us to come to his province, if not on that trip, at a later time. He was a handsome man, well educated and articulate. At one time he taught in the Philippine Bible College at Baguio City, operated by liberal brethren. They spoke highly of him until he left them because of his conviction that their practices were unscriptural. He then became the victim of attempts to discredit his character. But he persevered. Since 1975, several American brethren have

visited the area where he lived and preached. These include Hiram Hutto, Leo Plyler, Paul Casebolt and perhaps other. Paul was there just last year. Over the past eleven years I have corresponded a great deal with him. Last year the church at Manslick Road in Louisville, Kentucky printed 5,000 copies of a tract he wrote in Tagalog in which he reviewed the errors of the militant sect Iglesia Ni Cristo, 1914.

Letters from other areas of the country before the election told me of fears of civil chaos, vote-rigging, threats and intimidations. All of this has caused me to reflect a great deal lately on the great blessings we have enjoyed in the United States in the peaceful transfer of power from one party to another and the simple blessing of being able to express a choice without fear or murder or mayhem. Other nations besides the Philippines have experienced similar circumstances in which the lives of innocent citizens have been in jeopardy, including the lives of our own brethren. What can Christians do?

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Human governments do not always function as they should. Some are oppressive and care little for injustices perpetrated upon the citizenry. Political power, long extended in single hands, tends to corruption. The rulers of Rome, in which time Paul penned these words, were not exactly paragons of virtue. The roads and show places of the empire were largely built with slave labor. What, then, could Christians do? They could do two things: (1) they could conduct themselves according to the gospel and thus be a blessing to society around them; and (2) they could pray, as this passage enjoins.

Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray for him "that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you" (2 Thes. 3:1). The greatest blessing in a nation is not that "our party" won an election, or Congress passed a bill we wanted, or that the whales are saved from extinction, or forests are preserved, or that industry must clean up the air we breathe. The greatest blessing to all mankind is that the gospel "run and be glorified." In describing the mistreatment of the prophets and apostles by unbelieving Jews, Paul said "they please not God, and are contrary to all men" (1 Thes. 2:15). Those who impede the progress of the gospel render a disservice to all men. It is in the best interests of any government to allow Christians the free exercise of the gospel in preaching and in personal life. The gospel changes the hearts of people. It makes better husbands and fathers, better wives and mothers, better parents and children. It makes better employers and employees, better neighbors and better citizens. It sparks benevolence toward the poor and deprived. Any nation which hinders the spread of the gospel is its own worst enemy. It is sad to know that in several places in the world now the Lord's people cannot lead quiet and peaceable lives. Many are fearful, hungry, distressed and apprehensive for the fate of their

own children.

Let us join with the prayers of our brethren in the Philippines for the government of Mrs. Corazon Aquino. She is now without question the ruler of that nation. Her task is not easy. The woes of the people are not over. There will be years of struggle and crisis. It is a time for brethren there to remember who they are and to live as becomes the gospel. Dear brethren, pray fervently, live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. Be honest. Put away strife and bitterness. Let your light shine. Let your salt work. Spread the leaven of righteousness. Worship the Lord faithfully. Teach your children to love the Lord and his church. Instill in them the principles of godliness by which they can bless another generation after you are gone. Please don't forget that you are strangers and pilgrims in the earth and that here we have no continuing city. We seek one to come in a land that is fairer than day; a place where injustices, intimidations, intrigues, murder and mayhem will be unknown. We have a number of readers of this paper in the Philippines. Brethren there are sweet singers. So, then, in the language of a familiar hymn "When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory."

Should any wish to express sympathy to Cristeta Pastor, her address is:

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**VEILS AND BLINDFOLDS**

It has been said that the fossilized language of Latin had only one true standard and that was Cicero. Any locution without his approbation could not be considered correct. The English language seemed to have a standard, at least for a short time in Henry the VIII, who ruled from 1509 to 1547. The phrase "the king's English" obviously came into use during his tenure. However, Henry has been dead a number of years and since that time the king's English has groped for a standard. Perhaps, Noah Webster came as close as anyone but even he did not become the linguistic king. Webster was astonishingly liberal in his acceptance of popular usage of words. He once said, "It is better to be vulgarly right than politely wrong." He gave his approval to such expressions as, "them horses are mine" and "who is she married to?" Well, this may be a deviation from the expected course but it will serve to enhance the fact that we must have a standard in all things. This is especially true with reference to our spiritual welfare.

Years ago God said through the sweet singer of Israel, "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever" (Psa. 119:160). Our standard in service to God is not Cicero, Webster, the church or even the restoration movement. Our standard is the inerrant scriptures, a book without contradictions or inconsistencies. Without question this book contains the mind of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Kind friend, I am as gregarious as any man on earth. I love to get along with my brethren. However one does not have to be astute to understand that truth is not compatible with error! I say this kindly but any man who has the propensity to harmonize truth with error might as well try to fit a round peg in a square hole. But someone is ready to say, "How can the Bible be our standard when it is subject to so many interpretations?" The answer to that question is in the grand old book itself. The peerless apostle Paul tells us that multiple interpretations are caused by spiritual blindfolds. In 2 Cor. 2, Paul calls to our attention the illuminated face of Moses as he came down from the mount and talked with the people of God. As a matter of fact, he put a veil on his face so the children of Israel could steadfastly look on him. Now, Paul took that veil and converted it into a blindfold and placed it on the children of Israel.

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Please note verse 15, which says, "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts." Kind friend, with that blindfold on their hearts the children of Israel could never understand the word of God, but would interpret it any way they desired. This is what the Lord told these same Jews in Jno. 5:46, 47. The Lord in talking to these people who were at this time wearing the blindfold, "Ye do search the scriptures" (verse 39), but they could not find the true Christ. He went on to say, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" The Lord talked about some folks who "hearing cannot hear" and "seeing cannot see." This means their minds are blinded from the truth. Not because of a lack of intelligence but because of a lack of integrity. One of the most difficult tasks of this life is to cast aside the blindfolds of dishonesty and prejudice and be completely objective in a study of the word of God. Very few people do this and that is why the Lord said only a few will enter the portals of heaven (Matt. 7:13,14).

The Bible is replete with examples of men and women, who under this blindfold interpreted the Bible to suit their fancy and suffered accordingly. A case in point would be Eve who heard God say, "Ye shall not eat lest ye die" but Eve interpreted the text to say, "ye shall not surely die." It is true she had some help from the devil but after all he is always around to furnish us with the blindfold if we will wear it. We do not have to be reminded of the tragic consequence of this sin. Then, there was old Saul, who heard God say, "Go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have" (1 Sam. 15). But when Saul pulled his blindfold out of his bag and put it on, the text read like this: "You may spare Amalek and the best of the flocks." Saul's duplicity was laid bare by Samuel who charged the king with stubbornness. Another example of the "blindfold" interpretation syndrome is found in Acts 5, when Ananias and Sapphira heard God say, "Lie not to one another" (Col. 3:9) but when they slipped into their blindfolds the text read, "You may lie under certain circumstances." Needless to say both were killed by the Lord in the presence of both God and man (Acts 5). Then there was that fellow who came to the preacher and said, "I don't believe baptism is essential to my salvation, would you mind giving me a scripture which says I must be baptized in order to be saved." The preacher handed him a Bible open to Mk. 16:15,16 and told him to go home and read those verses six times and meet him the next week. They met the following week and the preacher inquired, "Did you read the verses?" He replied, "I read them six times but I don't see it that way." A blindfold indeed! Then there was the man who read Col. 3:16 "Singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord" and Eph. 5:19, "Singing and making melody in your hearts unto the Lord." But after putting on the blindfold it read, "Singing and playing unto the Lord." Others will read, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." but after the veil is put on this text reads, "Upon any day of the week you may come together to break bread."

Kind friend, the story goes on like a broken record. The Bible does indeed tell us why people interpret the scriptures in so many different ways. Like Israel of old they are wearing the veil unto this present time. How about the brethren back in 1849 who read where Paul said, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you service" (2 Cor. 11:18). But when they all got together and put on their veils this text seemed to read, "I robbed the American Christian Missionary Society taking my salary from it to do you service." But our own brethren in this age have not escaped the blindfold. In the fifties the hue and cry was for more organization. We were introduced to a new concept called the sponsoring church. This innovation was found on the same page of your Bible as the missionary society, the blank page. They read, Phil. 4:15,16 which says, "Ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again to my necessity." After the blindfolds were placed on this text read, "Ye Phillippians know, that in the beginning of the gospel you collected money from many churches, keeping debits and receipts from them so you could supply my need." Then there was the fellow who thought all the Bible was written in literal language. He read Matt. 26:27 where the Lord "Took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to them saying: Drink ye all of it." When he put on his blindfold it read, "And he took the container and gave thanks, and gave to them saying: Drink ye all of it." When the Lord used metonymy he expected us to accept it. When he used his parabolic teaching he expected us to accept it exactly that way. The Bible is filled with metaphors, similes and apocalyptic language. Especially in books like Revelation and Ezekiel. We can't afford to wear a veil when we study these great texts. Last but not least there is the fellow who sees more in the text than appears. In Acts 15, the false teachers who had a confrontation with Paul knew the teaching of the apostles who said, "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, ye must be circumcised and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment." However, after these false teachers put on the blindfold the text read, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved."

Much to the chagrin of people both in and out of the body of Christ we have people who wear the veil. This may be done by adding to the word or subtracting from it. It may be done by mutilation or failing to differentiate between the literal and figurative. May the Lord help all of us to be as pragmatic as possible in studying the sacred scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation.

**READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY**

# ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

*Donnie V. Raden*

4724 E. Manslick Rd.  
Louisville, KY 40219



## ACCEPTED OF HIM

With this issue I accept the responsibility of writing a regular column. I am grateful to the editor for the opportunity to teach through this medium. In this article I want to introduce the above column heading which is taken from 2 Cor. 5:9.

### The Context

First of all let's view our text in its context. Paul begins the chapter by writing of his confidence of a heavenly home (vs. 1-8). He is assured that "if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (v. 1). His second major point in the chapter is that his whole aim is to be accepted of God (vs. 9-10). The apostle writes in view of his hope, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him" (v. 9). His next point is that he endeavors to reach others with the gospel of Christ (vs. 11-15). This section begins, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (v. 11). Paul then concludes the chapter by showing that reconciliation is accomplished through Jesus Christ (vs. 16-21). God "hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." (v. 18).

### The Text

Our text begins with the word "wherefore" which tells us that the following statement is based upon the thought of the previous verses (i.e. confidence of a heavenly home). Because of that hope, "we labour" or strive. By this Paul indicates what his ambition, sole aim or only desire is. Bengel comments that "we labour" "denotes the striving, in which the end aimed at is regarded as a matter of honour" (Meyer's Commentary On the New Testament, Vol. VI, p. 520).

Paul's goal is the same "whether present or absent". Whether at home or far from that home (Macknight). So, whether at home in the body (v. 8) or away from the body in heaven (v. 6) his purpose is still the same. It made no difference to him whether he lived or died; either way he didn't want to be separated from Christ. The point is not that Paul thinks he will soon die, rather this is a fixed principle of the soul.

What was his goal? What was his sole aim? For what did he labour and strive? It was to be "accepted of him." The ASV and NKJV use the expression "well pleasing". The only thing that really interested the apostle Paul was to please God and stand right before him. That's all

that mattered! "What the Lord thinks of him is the main thing" (Lutheran Commentary, p. 216).

The reason given for his purpose is "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (v. 10).

### Basic Principle Taught Elsewhere

The same principle that Paul states in our text is found in numerous places in the Bible. Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). Here Jesus pictures one who is craving to be in a right relationship with God. That was Paul's desire. Solomon summed up man's purpose in life as being to fear God and keep his commandments (Ecc. 12:13). The Christian is to grow "in grace" (ever strive to be more and more pleasing to God) (2 Pet. 3:18). Passage after passage could be cited which demonstrates that if we do the will of God, we thus please him and stand approved in his sight (cf. Rom. 12:1; 14:18, Eph. 5:10; Phil. 4:18).

### Sums Up Our Whole Aim and Purpose

If we have the same purpose that the apostle expressed in our text, it doesn't matter how much money we have or how nice our house is or if we drive a late model car or if our clothes are in style or whether we went to college or not or how good looking or ugly we may be. After all, these pertain to this life which is not permanent. This same writer said, "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13:14).

If our aim is "that we may be accepted of him", it will not be important whether or not we are popular. So what if no one likes us? That's not our goal. Our only concern is whether or not God likes what we do. It will not make any difference about how well our teaching will be received. It doesn't really matter what men may think about us or that for which we stand. It won't even be all that important what our brethren may think. All that really matters is whether or not God is pleased. Are we "accepted of him"? And if we are, who cares about anything else? We serve no one else but our God!

When we accomplish our goal, then my friend we are a success. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:8).

### Reason I Write This Column

I accept the task of writing this column in order to teach the truth that men and women might be accepted of God. Many will appreciate what is written. Yet, there will be some who will not like what we say. Some will disagree. A few may even get upset. However, all of that really won't matter. The only thing that will concern me will be, is it pleasing to God.

Whether we deal with evidence of the existence of God, baptism, instrumental music, faith, zeal, personal evangelism, divorce and remarriage, sin or the plan of salvation, all will be said in an effort "that we may be accepted of him".

## WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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Kenia, OH 45385



### HELPING WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

**QUESTION:** *Why is it wrong to help widows and orphans by taking money from the church treasury'?*

**ANSWER'** To my knowledge there is nobody who opposes helping widows and orphans from the church treasury, providing they come within the scope of the church's responsibility. The church is not obligated to help, financially, all widows and orphans, but just certain ones.

The Word of God teaches to "Honor widows that are widows indeed" (1 Tim. 5:3). W. E. Vine states that "honor" means "the respect and material assistance to be given to widows." Concerning the word, "indeed" (*ontos*), Vine says it "denotes really, actually." Hence, the meaning of the passage is "to care for those women who are really, actually, widows." (The principle also applies to widowers). Williams' translation is clear: "Always care for the widows who are really dependent."

In 1 Tim. 5:16 Paul states the limitations of church assistance to widows very succinctly. He says, "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." Children should take care of their own mother or grandmother, that the church be not burdened in order that the church may be able to relieve those saintly widows who are dependent and destitute. This dependency may be as a result of not having any family or the children are so sorry that they will not help. Albert Barnes wrote, "To require or expect the church, therefore, to support those women *we* ought ourselves to support, is, in fact, to rob the poor and friendless."

The Jerusalem church supplied the needs for its widows by selecting seven men to expedite the church's responsibility toward those worthy saints. We must not be any less concerned for our widows, and widowers, today.

As to orphans, I have never seen a single orphan who became the responsibility of the church. This does not mean there has not been any. It simply means I have not seen one. Someone says, "There are orphans, or homeless children, all over the world." This is true! But are they the obligation of the church? Certainly not! God never gave the church the chore of taking care of all the orphans any more than He gave the church the job of relieving all the widows, or caring for all the sick, or

all the hungry and naked. The governments of the world have not been able to alleviate the benevolent needs of all the people, and it is certain the church cannot.

The Bible teaches that the church is to provide for its own—the needy saints (Acts 2:44, 45; 4:32; 6:1-3; 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25, 26; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:4; 2 Cor. 9:1, 12,13). A good example of this practice was at Jerusalem. None of the saints lacked as stated in Acts 2:44 and Acts 4:32. However, in Acts 3, the beggar at the gate Beautiful, asked alms of Peter and John. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none \_\_\_ " The church had funds, but Peter did not refer him to the church. Wonder why? Because the church had no responsibility. Brethren, the church's obligation to the world is to try to save souls through preaching the gospel.

Now then, if there are orphans who are Christians, then the church may relieve their needs. But as I said before, I have never known of a situation where a child was orphaned or left homeless with no one to care for it, other than the church. Either grandparents or an aunt or an uncle would take such a child, and this is the way it ought to be.

Our hypothetical cases about children being abandoned on the doorstep of the church building overlook the civil laws that regulate such incidents, if they ever happened. The first thing the church would do, and must do, is call the police and they would handle the matter from there.

However, the crux of this issue is not so much whether the church may care for widows and orphans, but whether the church may make contributions from its treasury to human benevolent institutions in order for them to care for widows and orphans. This, the Bible does not authorize. The church may not, scripturally, subsidize any human organization. If so, where is the passage that authorizes it, either generically or specifically? The reasoning that allows the church to include in its budget allocations for widowages and orphanages, also allows the church to allocate money for hospitals, publishing houses, sanctorums, Bible colleges, etc. If not, why not?

Although the church is limited in its benevolent work, there is a need in the world for general benevolence toward orphans and homeless children, the elderly, the infirm and the sick. Institutional homes for children and nursing homes for the elderly and infirm serve a useful purpose for the indigent. All of us, individually, may contribute to any deserving benevolent organization to help provide food, shelter and clothing for homeless children, the elderly and the infirm. If circumstances permit, we could adopt one or more of these children or act as foster parents. Pure religion is "To visit the fatherless and the widows" (Jas. 1:27).

Brother Foy E. Wallace jotted down the following diagram for me several years ago as to what the church may and may not do with its money. It shows the difference of the church doing its work and subsidizing human organizations.

# • CHURCH

MAY		MAY NOT	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> HUNGRY YES FEED	<input type="checkbox"/> GROCERY STORE NO BUDGET	
2	<input type="checkbox"/> NAKED YES CLOTHE	<input type="checkbox"/> MERCANTILE CO. NO	
3	<input type="checkbox"/> SICK YES HELP	<input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITAL-CLINIC NO DRUG STORE	
4	<input type="checkbox"/> INFIRM YES PROVIDE	<input type="checkbox"/> SANITORIUM NO	
5	<input type="checkbox"/> WAYFARER YES SHELTER	<input type="checkbox"/> HOTEL-INN NO	
6	<input type="checkbox"/> MEETING HOUSE YES MATERIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> LUMBER CO. NO	
7	<input type="checkbox"/> PREACHER YES TRAIN	<input type="checkbox"/> COLLEGE NO	
8	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE YES BIBLES/SONG BOOKS	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLISHING HOUSE NO	
9	<input type="checkbox"/> ORPHAN YES	<input type="checkbox"/> INSTITUTIONAL ORPHANAGE NO	

## BREAD OF LIFE

"I am the bread of life... so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Jno. 6:35, 57.



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### WORSHIP—SERVICE

There is confusion in the minds of many regarding what is worship and what is not worship, and the distinction, if any, between worship and service. Both terms express something important in the life of a Christian. Two separate functions are involved. By a careful study, we can see that all worship is service, but not all service is worship. An individual who serves God (is a true servant of God) will be found offering specified items in worship of God, in addition to numerous services performed in daily walking before God. Performing services in submission to one's Master, while neglecting to offer specified acts of worship, will not suffice, nor will offering specified acts of worship, while neglecting to serve in other matters. Both are necessary to being a true servant (worshiper) of God. They are very closely related. They go hand in hand, but are different.

To help us see and understand this matter, I want to quote from EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS, by W. E. Vine, the meaning he gives to the words worship and service.

### WORSHIP (verb) WORSHIPPING

"1. PROSKUNEO, to make obeisance, do reverence to (from pros, towards, and kuneo, to kiss), is the most frequent word rendered to worship. It is used of an act of homage or reverence (a) to God, e.g., Matt. 4:10; John 4:21-24; 1 Cor. 14:25; Rev. 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:10 (2nd part) and 22:9; (b) to Christ, e.g., Matt. 2:2, 8, 11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9, 17; Jno. 9:38; Heb. 1:6, in a quotation from the Sept. of Deut. 32:43, referring to Christ's Second Advent; (c) to a man, Matt. 18:26; (d) to the Dragon, by men Rev. 13:4; (e) to the Beast, his human instrument, Rev. 13:4,8,12; 14:9,11; (f) the image of the Beast, 13:15; 14:11; 16:2; (g) to demons, Rev. 9:20; (h) to idols, Acts 7:43. —p. 235.

"4. LATREUO, to serve, to render religious service or homage, is translated to worship in Phil. 3:3, "(who) worship (by the Spirit of God)," R.V., A.V., "(which) worship (God in the spirit)"; the R.V. renders it to serve (for A.V., to worship) in Acts 7:42; 24:14; A.V. and R.V., "(the) worshippers" in Heb. 10:2, present participle, lit., '(the ones) worshipping.' See SERVE, —p. 236.

SERVE. "3. LATREUO, primarily to work for hire (akin to latris, a hired servant), signifies (1) to worship, (2) to serve; in the latter sense it is used of service (a) to God, Matt. 4:10; Luke 1:74 ("without fear"); 4:8; Acts

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7:7; 24:14, R.V., "serve" (A.V., "worship"); 26:7; 27:23; Rom. 1:9 ("with my spirit"); 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 9:14; 12:28, A.V., "we may serve," R.V., "we may offer service;" Rev. 7:15; (b) to God and Christ ("the Lamb"), Rev. 22:3; (c) to "the creature," instead of the Creator, Rom. 1:25, of idolatry: see WORSHIP.

Note: In Luke 2:37 the R.V. has "worshipping," for A.V., "served;" in Heb. 9:9, "the worshipper," for A.V., "that did the service." —p. 349."

From these definitions and usages of words, it seems that worship involves particular things done in paying homage or reverence to an object. Worship unto God would involve particular things done in paying homage, praise, and adoration unto Him. Service unto God involves the activities of one in obeying and submitting himself to His will in the whole of his walk before God, including certain specified acts of worship.

There are things that may be done by a God-serving person that may not be done in worship ("proskuneo") unto God. Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10) were servants (worshippers) of God who, evidently, used "strange" fire (not from the altar) in preparation for cooking in their daily lives without impunity, but they could not use it in the matter of burning incense, for God had specified a certain fire for that item of worship. It was something they could use in their homes in serving or worshipping (latreuo) God, but they could not use it in worship (proskuneo) in burning incense.

It is right and good for Christians to eat and drink in social meals in their homes, but this must not be done in connection with observing the Lord's Supper—a specified item of worship (1 Cor. 11:17-22,34). This is another example of something servers (worshippers) of God may and should do in their daily lives, but must not combine with the specified worship of observing the Lord's Supper. The first was a matter of serving God; the latter, worship.

But, someone asks, when you have a social meal in your home, which is sanctioned and commanded by the God we serve, is this not worship? It is something we do in serving our God and fellowman and because of our relationship with God, but it is not the same as some specified thing we are instructed to do in paying homage and reverence to God. The former is service (latreuo); the latter is worship (proskuneo).

Abraham was a worshipful, God-serving man who was called upon to do a very difficult thing—offer his son as a burnt offering to God. He immediately got together the necessary equipment and set out for the designated place. When he arrived at the Mount, he said to the young men with them "abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (Gen. 22:5). The gathering of the wood, fire, servants to go with them, the three day journey to the designated place were actions of a God-serving, worshipping man, but all this was not worship in the sense that what Abraham and the lad, leaving the young men with the ass, were "to go yonder and do (worship)." Abraham was serving-obeying God in all he did pertaining to this incident, but what he actually did in offering Isaac is called "worship" and the other

things are not. This shows how closely related service and worship really are, but there is a difference.

Some consider everything the Christian does as a servant of God to be "worship", even to diapering babies or cutting one's toe-nails. This thinking has led some to conclude that if God accepts banqueting in the home as worship, he would also accept it as such when provided by the church in a "fellowship hall," and if playing upon an instrument of music in the home is "worship", then it surely would not be rejected by God when combined with "singing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" with "one another" as specified in Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19. In the Crowder-Puckett debate, conducted a number of years ago in Atlanta, Ga., Crowder, of the Christian Church, argued for the instrument in singing praise to God on the basis that everything a Christian (God-serving, worshipping person) does is "worship", even to cutting one's toe-nails.

I readily admit that a Christian may serve a master, rear children, minister to babies, cut toe-nails, etc. "as unto the Lord" (as a God-serving, worshipping individual), but this is different from rendering a specified homage (worship) unto God.

Sometimes, Rom. 12:1 is cited to support the idea that everything a Christian does is "worship". "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (worship-NASB, R.V.). The word is "latría", akin to "latreua", defined elsewhere in this article, and simply refers to the intelligent service of believers in presenting their bodies in service to God. The passage teaches that such is our "reasonable" KJV) or "spiritual service" (A.S.V.). It is "reasonable" because it involves that part of man with which he reasons (his mind or the inner man). It is "spiritual" because it involves his spirit, which is the same as his Bible heart. No other service would be acceptable unto God. The passage is far from suggesting everything a Christian does is "worship".

In being a worshipper of God (servant of God), many detailed things are involved; some have to do with the way we treat our neighbor, wife, children, conduct our business, relate to government, etc., often referred to as service, conduct, or action, and some have to do with spiritual endeavors that give praise and homage to God, edifying and strengthening the spiritual man, referred to as "worship or spiritual endeavors".

This difference in service and worship is somewhat like the difference the Lord makes with money. The Bible teaches that "all" is the Lord's and we are responsible for all that comes under our control, yet some is specially the Lord's (tenth under the law—"as prospered" under N.C.). Thus, we often speak of "our" money and "The Lord's money". Yet, the servant of God (worshipper) is responsible and accountable for both.

In the New Testament, we learn that there are some things the Lord wants His servants (worshippers) to do together, as a body or jointly, established by the fact that the local congregation exists by divine authority,

and by the specific things the saints are told to do together and exemplified in New Testament churches. We have such specific authority for assembling, on the first day of the week, observing the Lord's Supper, praying, singing, teaching-preaching, and "laying by in store". These are spiritual endeavors and constitute "worship". Some of these items may be done privately—apart from the specified assembling (e.g. Prayer) and it would still be "worship": Others (e.g., observing the Lord's Supper-laying by in store) are directly connected with the assembly.

Regardless of what a true Christian may do in his home in feeding, entertaining, and providing recreation for his family and others, all in harmony with God's instructions, he may not add these things to the actions specified for worship, any more than Nadab and Abihu could bring fire from home with which to burn incense before God, when God had specified "from the altar" at that time and place. Their action constituted "vain worship" then and the same kind of thing will now.

When the word "latreuo" (Gk.) service is translated "worshipping"—"worshippers", the reference is to the general actions of devotees of God, but when "proskuneo" (Gk.) worship is used, it refers to some specified thing offered or done in paying homage in God.

When a (God-serving, worshipping) family is preparing to assemble with saints on the Lord's day, their actions (preparing a lesson, dressing themselves and children, polishing shoes, driving to the place of assembly, etc.) reveal them to be servers (worshippers) of God (latreuo), but when they offer up the spiritual sacrifices of praise, Lord's Supper observance, laying by in store, (specified things), it is "worship" (proskuneo).

True, all SERVERS of God will WORSHIP Him in every designated thing, and those who worship Him will in all that they do, be faithful servants, but "worship" and "service" are not the same so that the terms can be used interchangeably. Understanding the distinction the Scriptures make in these will guard against trying to justify something in "worship" that is not specified for worship.

### BOB CRAWLEY AT REST

On March 10, my good friend and brother, Bob Crawley, changed worlds. He had suffered declining health for about 10 years as he battled leukemia. He preached for the last 23 years in Lexington, KY where he was instrumental in establishing a number of congregations in the heart of bluegrass country. He was possessed of a brilliant mind and was an able expositor of the scriptures.

A more extended notice will appear later. For now, we offer our kindest wishes to his wife, Leta and children, Bruce, Brian and Laura.

## MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

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### I. ISAIAH SAW IN THE TEMPLE LESSONS FROM CIRCUMSTANCES

In Chapter 6 Isaiah saw God sitting on the throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of his robe filling the temple. He saw and heard the Seraphim, not praying, but rather PROCLAIMING: "Holy, Holy, Holy!" All of the earth trembled, the temple was filled with smoke, and the whole earth was filled with His glory. When Daniel saw the heavenly being in Daniel 10:6-9, he passed out and fell "with his face to the ground." Consider what Isaiah must have felt to see and hear the glory of God! Verse 5 says: "Woe is me, for I am ruined." Our words are helpless to describe the emotions, and our thoughts are futile to grasp the understanding of seeing this vision of God.

As we considered in our last study, Isaiah learned whom to trust. It was not the King of Jerusalem, Uzziah, but rather it was Jehovah whose throne is never empty. Now we need to see that this trust in Jehovah is not bounded by the condition of the circumstances existing around about us, but that God's rule is to be trusted no matter how dismal the situation looks or how distressing the circumstances.

### II. ISAIAH LEARNED THAT CIRCUMSTANCES OFTEN TEACH SUPERIOR LESSONS FROM GOD.

Circumstances got Isaiah's attention. Notice the first words of Verse 1: "In the year of King Uzziah's death." When did God get the door open to Isaiah's mind and heart? In the year of his good friend and trusted leader's death and when God broke through. It was in the year that the "roof fell in" that God got my attention. While we all understand that God speaks only through His inspired Book, we also need to see, as did Isaiah, that circumstances become powerful teachers each day in our lives. Oftentimes it is the presence of circumstances, mostly unpleasant ones, that awaken us to the need for the presence of God in our lives. One book entitled: "Crowded To Christ" bespeaks the thought in its title alone. In the day the king died. In the day my world fell in, I saw the Lord **SITTING** on His throne. Notice what God was doing. He was not pacing to and fro with anxiety. He was not wringing His hands or saying, "What am I going to do for a King?" He was simply sitting! He was in **TOTAL** control!

We need to see in our own circumstances the vision of

the Lord sitting in total control when everything in our lives is out of control. In the day that my mate dies HE is in control. In the day when I lose my job and my wife is expecting another child HE is in control. In the day when I'm having financial problems, He is in control. In the day when our precious child runs away from home or is caught in the trap of drug addiction, He is in control. Isaiah is being told that it doesn't matter what the circumstances seem to be, because God is in control.

As human beings we want to fight back with rebellion and bitterness, by shaking our fists in the face of God and blaming Him for our failures, hurts, disappointments and disasters. By what right do we question, "does this have to be happening to me?" Even Job wanted to know where God was during his terrible affliction, Job 23:1-4: "Even today my complaint is rebellion, his hand is heavy despite my groaning, O THAT I KNOW WHERE I MIGHT FIND HIM, THAT I MIGHT COME TO HIS SEAT!" Job wanted to question God. Job wanted to find out why he was having to suffer. The desire to know why is so strong in each one of us! As we read the book of Job and we turn page after page, we discover that God never tells Job at all. Job is just made aware of the greatness of God's power in the whirlwind and wisdom by the questions; and when Job sees how great God is, he forgets about the questions. Why? Because the circumstances no longer matter when we see our magnificent God! We realize that He is in control no matter what our present situation might be. Adverse circumstances do not mean the Lord has lost the handle on the situation. In Luke 21:10, the Lord begins to describe all manner of terrible things, wars of nation with nation, plagues, famines, terrors, persecutions and prisons, but Verse 28 says when you see these things, realize redemption is near. God is in control and we must have the faith to endure and not throw in the towel. It is not ours to question; it is ours to trust.

The real question, however, still remains. Are we willing to trust Him when our world is falling apart? Can we still see God sitting on the throne when the men of the business meeting will have just fired you? Can we see God in control when our own business is falling apart? Can we see God in control when our loved one is taken to the silent city of the dead? Can we see God in control when the church splits right down the middle and everything you have worked for appears lost?

God is saying to Isaiah, "It doesn't matter who lives or who dies, I AM LORD ..., it doesn't matter how it looks or how it appears to look, I AM LORD." We who stumble here below need that message so much, even today.



## Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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### WHERE'S THE ANSWER?

A basic issue currently receiving a lot of coverage is the question of assurance for a child of God who is doing the best he knows how to do. He is walking in the light, or doing his best to. He is walking after the spirit, not the flesh. At least he's giving it his best shot. He is striving to serve and obey the Lord. And that includes a regular study of God's will, as well as regular prayer and confession of sins. Still he realizes that he is weak and deficient in knowledge.

With Paul he can say, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12).

What about this fellow? Does he sing in vain, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine?" And if he has no real basis for confidence short of perfection in knowledge and deeds, what about you and me? We all, who are interested in doing God's will, are either the publican or the Pharisee of our Lord's parable (Luke 18:9-14). If we are the publican, what basis for assurance do we have?

At least five distinct approaches to this question have been submitted by brethren who reject the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's personal righteousness, along with the logical implications of that doctrine. It's my feeling that each is worthy of further study and discussion.

1. **God will judge.** "We are exercising ourselves into a heated frenzy, and possibly even further splintering, over a question that's none of our business. Let's get to work with the task God has given us and 'quit whittling on His end of the stick.' "

Indeed, it seems that some brethren would relieve the Lord of a tremendous responsibility. They would like to have all the judging done and everything neatly sorted out when Jesus comes again.

While I believe this response is all truth, it doesn't appear to me to be all the truth. That the Lord will do the judging, no one would challenge. But if there is a strong basis for hope and assurance for the striving, but weak and faltering child, fellows like me would like to know it.

I heard one brother remark that if the Lord would not let him into heaven because he had ignorantly run a stop sign several years ago, or had even run it intentionally and forgotten about it, he would just go on to hell and not argue about it.

What kind of assurance is that?

Paul indicated that God is for us (Rom. 8:31-34; 5:6-10). If I accepted what this brother was saying, I would have to wonder about that.

2. **Constant cleansing.** This concept is based primarily upon the present tense of the Greek verbs, "walketh" and "cleanseth" in 1 John 1:7-9. By common consent, the present tense denotes continuous or linear action.

Differences of interpretation center primarily around the questions of what conditions are antecedent to this continual cleansing and whether said cleansing is continuous or merely continual. The first would denote constant forgiveness, even as one in the very process of transgressing God's law. The latter would refer to repeated cleansing as one meets whatever conditions are required.

Some say the conditions are specific repentance and confession of every sin. How specific one must be is also a matter of disagreement. Others aver that walking in the light is itself the condition and that this includes specific repentance and confession of every known sin and a general cry for forgiveness for those sins one may be unaware of. Whatever else this walking in the light may embrace, it seems to be a consensus among those who hold the "constant cleansing" view that a "penitent attitude" is a prerequisite.

David's plea in Psalms 139:23, 24 has been offered as an example of such an attitude: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23, 24).

It certainly seems that David's words would reflect an attitude of humility and it is said that "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5).

For my part, I have serious problems with the concept of Christ's blood cleansing one even as he is in the very act of sin. I don't believe this is what 1 John 1:7-9 is teaching. Yet, the statement is obviously one that should build our confidence rather than lending to our defeat.

3. **Mercy in the Judgment.** "This is the day of grace. The day of Judgment will be a day of justice." I've heard that statement many times and I've made it many times. After all, the Bible teaches that today is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7,15).

Still, Paul entertained the hope that his friend and brother, Onesiphorus, might find something more than justice at the bar. He said, "The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. . ." (2 Tim. 1:18).

When I received the Son of God (John 1:2) and obeyed His gospel, I found mercy. If I never again sinned, I would not again need His mercy so far as my salvation would be concerned. The fact that Paul would desire for Onesiphorus the mercy of the Lord "in that day" would imply that he might well stand in need of such mercy in that day. And the fact that Paul felt his friend could receive mercy in that day should give confidence to all servants of God like Onesiphorus.

It has been countered that "mercy" is used here as a metonymical expression wherein the basis of the

eternal reward stands for the reward itself. Such is possible but by no means certain.

4. **Absolute vs Relative.** Some requirements of God's are absolute. One either does them or he does not. One is either scripturally baptized or he is not. One either tells a lie or he tells the truth. The church is either organized after the scriptural order or it is not.

Then, some things are relative. The Hebrew letter states, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers. . ." (Heb. 5:12). No one is born full-grown. God expects us to mature and to increase. He knows where we should be "for the time." Opportunity increases responsibility. Conduct that would be sinful for one might not be sinful for another. Some things are contingent upon other circumstances and therefore are not absolutely right or wrong for every person.

Perhaps some would challenge the reasonableness and scripturalness of this view, but I do not. I'm persuaded there's just a whole lot of truth here. It does not answer all the problems and questions for me. But at least, the proponents of this view recognize the problem and are trying to grapple with it in a reasonable and scriptural way.

5. **God's providence.** It has been said by several that God's providence would overrule in these areas. God will see that one of honest of good heart who is seeking after God and hungering and thirsting for righteousness will not be removed from this world unprepared to face judgment. A sincere and dedicated Christian who sins ignorantly or rashly will not be permitted to die in that state of sin.

Again, I would not question the working of God's providence. But to make such a blanket rule carries implications at which most of us would shudder.

The logical end of this proposal is that everyone who is honest in religion will finally be saved. God will see that he hears the truth and, being honest, he will believe and obey the truth and will continue faithful unto death. This covers the "pious unimmersed", as well as every sincere Christian. If one dies unsaved, it simply means he was dishonest and did not truly desire salvation.

One is made to wonder why some nations are populated with so many millions of insincere and dishonest people!

The same line of rebuttal we have brought against the doctrine of Calvinistic predestination can just as effectively be directed against this proposal. Why should we bother to go to our neighbors across the street or across the sea if this be true. If they are predestined to salvation (as possessed of an honest heart), God will see that they are saved or come to a knowledge of the truth.

Perhaps more of us are accepting such a conclusion than others of us would like to think. Otherwise, we would be doing more going. One brother said publicly he did not believe there were honest souls, unsaved, in Nigeria. If there were, they would be saved.

**CONCLUSION:** I'm persuaded there are elements of truth in all those proposals. One encouraging thing to me is that the great majority of brethren are dismayed and disgusted over efforts to vilify and castigate those

who disagree on this issue.

I haven't talked with anybody who thinks walking in the light necessitates either perfect knowledge or perfect obedience.

One thing of which we may be confident: The question of how the Lord will take care of His affairs is a sphere of knowledge in which we are all deficient. This being true, tolerance of one another's convictions on such questions as these would surely be in order.

It would appear that truth on this matter may be acknowledged through striving for balance amidst such revealed truths as these:

**"For if, 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).**

**"For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Cor. 4:4).**

## Restoration Footnotes

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### A MAN WHO DIED WITH CHRIST

Many people witnessed the crucifixion of Christ, some as spectators and others as participants. His disciples watched the scene with sorrow, the rulers in empty triumph, the mob as mockers, the soldiers as cruel executioners, and his mother in deep maternal grief. Two other witnesses shared the agony of the cross. They were the robbers who were crucified with him. One is better known than the other because he repented.

**What Kind of Man Was He?** He was a robber (Matt. 27:38). Luke calls him a criminal (Luke 23:32). A robber is "one who plunders openly by violence." A criminal is literally "an evil doer." Both robbers had done deeds worthy of death (Luke 23:41). The violence by which they plundered may have included murder (cf. John 18:40; Luke 23:19). But these men had not always been criminals. At one time they were innocent children. Yet somewhere along the way they turned to crime. What went wrong? Mental disorder sometimes leads to criminality and environment contributes to it. Responsible individuals choose the way they live and must account for it (Ezek. 18:20). The robber chose the way of transgression.

Even though the man lived in sin, he believed God (Luke 23:40). He was evidently a Jew, a child of God under the Mosaic law (Luke 19:9). He may have learned of God in the home or synagogue. But in becoming a criminal he turned away from God and the law (John 8:39). The Pharisees classed him with the outcasts of Israel, the "publicans and sinners" whom Christ came to save (Matt. 9:10-13). Men tend to grade sinners by human standards, arbitrarily placing some beyond redemption (Luke 13:2-5). They forget that all sin and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), and that none are beyond the pale of redemption (Acts 10:34-35). The robber's belief in God was a spark of truth that could renew righteousness in his life.

**What Did the Man See that Day?** He saw events leading up to the cross (Luke 23:32). He may have watched the soldiers in the Praetorium when they mockingly hailed Jesus "King of the Jews" (Mark 15:16-20). He very likely saw Simon bearing the Lord's cross (Luke 23:26; John 19:17). He could have heard Jesus' words to the weeping women of Jerusalem (Luke 23:27-31). He certainly witnessed Jesus going willingly "as a sheep to the slaughter" and refusing the stupefying drink perhaps intended to lessen his suffering (Matt. 27:33-34). He was dying with Christ, but he for his own sins and Christ for the sins of others. He surely read the inscription: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Luke 23:38).

The words of Jesus on the cross unfolded in the robber's hearing. Did the conversation with John regarding Mary (John 19:25-27) touch a chord of his own happier days of childhood? Did he think of an old mother somewhere whose cheeks were often wet with tears for his waywardness? Did he remember a mother's prayers to God for his sinful soul? Surely the Lord's prayer for the forgiveness of his murderers touched his heart (Luke 23:34). "What manner of man is this" must have crossed his mind. A darkness fell over the land about the sixth hour (noon) and it was about this time that the robber began with godly sorrow to change his mind about the way he had lived (Luke 23:44).

He also heard the unintentional testimony of Christ's enemies. The jeering of the rulers and mob rang in his ears: "He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is the Christ, the chosen of God" (John 19:36-37; Matt. 27:39-44). These unwittingly told the truth about Christ, that he is the Son of God, the King of Israel, and the Savior of the world. This must have made an impression on the robber. Had he been taught as a child about the coming Messiah? Had he heard the stories that filled Jerusalem and Judea about the deeds and claims of the Nazarene?

**What Were His Reactions to the Events?** Both robbers at first joined in the mockery of Jesus (Matt. 27:44). But at some point during the first three hours on the cross, one repented (Luke 23:39-44). The testimony of the Lord's enemies, the words and manner of Jesus, his own belief in God, his conviction that Jesus had done nothing worthy of death, and perhaps Bible lessons as a boy all may have contributed to his repent-

ance. Never underestimate the power of truth taught to a child. The penitent robber now rebuked his fellow criminal who continued to revile the Lord. The fear of God arose in his heart. Death was at hand and the judgment ahead. He began to think beyond his own time. A sinner might be defiant in the face of death, but even an evil man who believes in God, immortality, heaven, and hell must have second thoughts when death approaches.

The sorrowful robber said, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). His confession implies that he believed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of his people. He believed Christ was King and about to enter into his kingdom. He may have seen the kingdom more clearly than the apostles at the time. The materialism that blinded them did not block his vision. The nearness of death often brings truth into sharper focus. However weak his understanding of the kingdom, he could not have viewed it as earthly for he was even then dying, but he knew enough to see the kingdom as spiritual and eternal. He believed in a future life and longed to be with Christ when he entered into it.

The Lord's answer to the man is one of the most comforting promises in the Bible: "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). It is true that we today are not saved like this man (cf. Heb. 9:15-16; Mark 16:15-16). But in stressing how he was not saved, we sometimes lose sight of how he was saved, and fail to see some important lessons. We see in his salvation the compassion of Christ for one sinner who repents (cf. Luke 15:4-7). We see that salvation is conditional. The man believed, repented, and confessed Christ as Lord. He was not saved by works of merit (cf. Titus 3:5; Matt. 20:8-10), nor did the Lord demand perfect knowledge. But he had to meet the demands of Christ's will under the law, even as sinners this side of the cross must obey the gospel to be saved (Rom. 1:16-17; 6:4-6). We see that peace with the Lord immediately awaits the righteous after death (cf. Phil. 1:23). And we see that circumstances may affect one's salvation. The robber may not have repented had the tragedy of his crucifixion not brought him into contact with the Savior.

We do not doubt that the penitent robber found salvation from sin and everlasting rest with God through the death of Christ. We fully expect to see him among the redeemed of all ages when we cross over the Great Divide. The same Christ who saved that sinful man will also save all today who will believe and obey his word (Mark 16:15-16; Rev. 2:10).

**WHEN YOU MOVE**—Please allow two months for change of address notices. We have a cut-off date for changes each month. *Thanks for your help.*

## PARTIES AND FACTIONS

**Dorris V. Rader**  
**729 Westside Dr.**  
**Tullahoma, TN 37388**

Parties and factions have plagued the church from Apostolic times (1 Cor. 3:3-5). A number of years ago a prominent promoter of Institutionalism warned conservative brethren that they would divide and subdivide and splinter into one faction after another. He thought this would be due to their opposition to Institutionalism. His prediction has in part come to pass. However, it has not happened because brethren were asking for Bible authority for all we do and teach (Col. 3:17). He and those aligned with him are neck-deep in a sea of confusion and parties also. I take no comfort in either case. However, I am sure the answer is not in abandoning the plea for Bible authority. I am also sure the type of "unity in diversity" some brethren are advocating does not hold the answer.

### Powerful Instrument of Satan

Factions and parties are condemned as works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). It is a sad situation when so many churches have been paralyzed by parties and factions. Souls are lost, and those who might otherwise be won to Christ, are made to turn away in disgust as they witness jealousies and childish capers among "Christians". As you take a look at churches where members are unable to get along with each other, and business meetings that have become a tug-of-war between two or more sides, ask yourself what has produced this? Was it really anything doctrinal? Has the "parting of ways" become necessary because someone would have to violate honest convictions concerning the faith? Or, has it not more often been plain self-will and stubbornness? Has it not many times been someone who simply would not give in on some personal opinion, or a pet project. So many times doctrinal matters are not involved at all, at least on the surface. Sometimes a factious person pays lip service to the faith, while not being fully committed to it. In fact, if it were the case that one is fully committed to the Lord and His teaching he could not become and be a factious person. This leads to the question of identifying a factious individual.

### How The Factious Act

These are the type who seek through every means to intimidate and to bully their way through every situation. They will threaten to "walk out" if things are not done their way. They have been considering going elsewhere, and furthermore have "heard" some others who feel the way they do. Usually, they have been making a

poll, especially among the unstable souls. They either never read, or disregard the admonition: "Let nothing be done through strife and vainglory; \_\_\_" (Phil. 1:2-3) Inadvertently, the cat is out of the bag when one talks so much about how long it has been since I have been able "to get my way" about things. This observation is not meant to countenance any lack of due consideration for everyone in the body (1 Cor. 12:25). But a factious spirit is manifest when one threatens and sometimes carries out such threats to walk out, in the hope of forcing his personal preferences.

### **Does It Favor My Party**

The party person looks at every situation, sermon, and action in light of whether it will aid his side. A factious person is not a truth lover since he is willing to let truth suffer and be sacrificed in a stubborn and arrogant determination to have his own way. He will cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine... and serves his own belly rather than the Lord (See Rom. 16:17-8).

In the midst of the factious spirit there is nearly always a nest of hissing half-truths. This means that factious brethren will not always tell the truth. James said, "But if ye have bitter jealousies and factions in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth \_\_\_ for where jealousies and factions are, there is confusion and every vile deed" (Jas. 3:14). When church problems arise, especially where doctrinal issues are not involved, conflicting reports come from those involved. When emotions and personal feelings get involved, it seems hard for brethren not to let this slant and warp the report so that it puts one in the very best light. Men who may be careful to tell the truth at other times get careless with facts, when it involves their party.

The factious may be most indifferent regarding church work, but suddenly become quite zealous for a party. One who would not turn the proverbial tap before will be quite willing to operate the whole machine, if it is done "my way". Men who have been known as tight-wads with the Lord's money in supporting gospel meetings and other evangelistic efforts are ready to spend lavishly on their own pet projects and personal comforts, if they can direct it.

The party spirit makes people sour, and sullen toward those who seem to not cater to their side. They dislike having to speak and will avoid such if at all possible. They are sometimes less considerate of politeness and kindness than people of the world. I have always felt that I should be considerate and polite because I am a Christian and not because I approve all to whom I speak. But the factious seem to have a different view.

### **How To Deal With The Factious**

In Titus 3:10 Paul urged that a "factious" (ASV) man be rejected after the first and second admonition. I believe this term does not necessarily mean that one has to advocate false doctrine to be factious. As brother Ferrell Jenkins points out this seems to be an applied meaning. (See GUARDIAN OF TRUTH, Sept. 2, 1982. Pg. 13). Churches have often made serious mistakes in

not dealing more forth rightly and sternly with the factious spirit in their midst. After admonishing such a second time, they should be rejected and labeled in no uncertain terms even when threatened with a lawsuit if you do.

## **NO SECRET DISCIPLES**

**Don Givens**  
**411 Hobron Lane**  
**Apt. 3511**  
**Honolulu, Hawaii 96815**

Nicodemus went out to Jesus "by night" (John 3:2). The fact that he went to the Lord by nighttime may have been a mere circumstance, but two later references are made to this fact (John 7:50 and 19:39). Nicodemus was convinced as to who Jesus was ("Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God" 3:2) but did he lack the courage to declare himself openly in behalf of Jesus? John 7:48 says that his colleagues claimed that none of the rulers nor Pharisees had believed on Jesus.

After the day of Pentecost did Nicodemus publicly declare himself a disciple of Jesus and take an open stand with the church? He may have, for even among the leaders of the Jews there were many who became obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7). One thing is for certain: if he did become a Christian, he had to come out into the open, for Jesus has no secret disciples.

The plan of salvation includes confession in our initial obedience, and it also commands us to let our light shine before men after becoming Christians, and this eliminates any possibility of "secret discipleship." Whoever would be ashamed of Christ and refuse to confess Him boldly before men is bound to be excluded from the realm of the faithful saints (Mark 8:38; Matt. 10:32,33).

There are many spiritual benefits that come to a person from making the good confession before men in addition to the fact that it is one of those requirements that lead to our salvation (Romans 10:9, 10). It is a serious, solemn and public committal to the will of God before witnesses (1 Tim. 6:12) to which a person may always look thereafter as indication of his having pledged allegiance to the Divine will. As a result, one can thereafter claim for sure: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20).

Having named the name of Christ, one is called on to depart from and abhor all iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19). Therefore, in our continual confession of Him, we are publicly pledging ourselves to lives of holiness. No room, here, for any secret discipleship.

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## THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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*Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P.O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109*

### BLACKFORD-EPLEY DEBATE

There will be a three night debate on Holy Spirit baptism and miracles, June 9,10 and 12 in Owensboro, Kentucky. Speeches will be shortened the third night to allow for a one hour question-answer session. The entire discussion will be conducted at the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, 5691 W. 5th St. Rd. Steve Epley preaches for this church and Dick Blackford preaches for the Westside Church of Christ in that city.

### NEW CONGREGATION

**REY O. UGALE**, Roadside Church of Christ, Lingu, Selana, Cagayan 1116, Philippines—It is my joy to tell you of a newly established congregation in this area. The work was begun here in 1985 with Rody Gumpad and Meises Arquero. This place is full of denominational groups, such as: Charismatics, Roman Catholic Church, Jehovah's Witnesses and others. I encountered one of the well known Charismatics with many people attending our discussion. From August-November I held home studies which resulted in nine baptisms. In November we began regular services on Sundays with nine members with attendance 15 and above. As of February membership is 24 with 28 attending. The church is in spiritual babyhood. Remember us in your prayers. I am working full-time in preaching the gospel and thankful to a sister in Georgia who is helping to make that possible. Could you add me to your bulletin mailing list?

**MIKE HUGHES**, P.O. Box 75, Joaquin, Texas 75954—Recently a 21 year old brother here preached his first sermon. Soon his brother will make his first attempt at preaching. In June, J. T. Smith of Lake Jackson, Texas will be here to preach in a gospel meeting.

### A LETTER OF INTEREST FROM TURKEY

**MARY WARD**, PSC 3096, APO NY 09224—"Dear brother Adams, Thank you for printing my name in the January issue of Searching the Scriptures. I'd like to update you on the situation here in Izmir. We have been here for approximately two months. Unfortunately I have not been able to locate other faithful Christians. I have posted several signs in different places to let others know there is a faithful Christian in Izmir, Turkey.

I have received a great amount of tapes from several preachers and I thank them for their time and care in sending them. The preaching is excellent. I especially enjoy the singing tapes. I find singing so beautiful and uplifting. I use these tapes every day, several times a day. I am learning much and growing from them.

I especially miss contact with other Christians, their friendship and fellowship. I cannot tell you enough how much I appreciate and enjoy the letters. They are special and important to me. I feel that I am a part of your congregation by hearing tapes of your worship and singing along with you. Please pray for me that I might contact others here with the gospel. The people here are 99% Muslim. But there are Protestants (including Mormons, Lutherans), Catholics and Jews here. I have planted the seed in teaching one girl. I am trying to teach my children. .... I thank you again for the encouragement and prayers."—Mary Ward.

### PREACHER NEEDED

**NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA**—The church here is seeking a full time preacher. Only partial support is available. Those interested may write: Church of Christ, 315 Harpersville Rd., Newport News, Virginia 23601. It would be helpful if a sermon cassette could be included. This is possibly ideal for a retired military man.



**PREACHER AVAILABLE**

**JACK E. TURNER**, 1015 S. Silver, Deming, New Mexico 88030— After two and a half years with the church here we are anticipating a move this summer. We are leaving under amicable circumstances, having thoroughly enjoyed our work and having a great love for the brethren here who treated us well. While I do the necessary amount of study, I am not an office bound preacher. I prefer to be out making contacts, conducting home studies and visiting a good part of the time. I am looking for a work which needs an evangelist and will work with him. I am 39 years old, married with a son living at home and have been preaching for ten years. Dee Bowman knows me. Those interested may write me at the above address or call (505) 546-2001.

\* \* \* \* \*

**EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS**

My friend, Cecil Belcher of Kokomo, Indiana sent me the following item from the liberal Lindberg Road church in Anderson, Indiana.

"We are contacting you early to enable your congregation to attend our gospel singing concert and youth rally scheduled for the middle of June, 1986. Perhaps you would like to plan your vacation Bible school or other events so they will not be in conflict. Full details will be sent to you early in 1986. By 'singing' we do not mean that it will be participatory in nature. There will be professional singing groups here as well as speakers for the youth rally."

That is interesting, is it not? That is one of the ways the high flying independent churches of our day are gaining large audiences. It is entertainment, pure and simple.

\* \* \* \* \*

**HARD TO PLEASE**

There have been times when some congregations have used very poor judgment in allowing about anyone to preach regardless of ability, soundness in the faith or uprightness in life. I think it was James W. Adams who related to me an incident involving C. R. Nichol. He went to a place for a meeting where one of the brethren was insistent on filling the pulpit most of the time to the disappointment of brethren who did not quite know how to handle the matter. Attendance continued to drop off. Some of the brethren explained the situation to brother Nichol and asked him if he would talk to the man and let him down easy. Brother Nichol diplomatically explained to him that we do

not all have the same talent and some can serve God in one way while others are better suited for other things. When the brother caught the drift of what Nichol was saying, he drew himself up indignantly and said "Charlie Nichol, the trouble with you is that you are just jealous of me!"

But, as James P. Needham observed a few months ago, we have come from a time when everybody could preach to a time when almost nobody seems to suit some of the brethren. If a preacher is too studious, he will be over the heads of the people. If he spends too much time visiting and conducting home studies, he is a gadfly. So, I guess what the brethren need is a man who can spell-bind the people with brilliant oratory, while being as logical as Paul, as impassioned as Peter, as tender as John, unfettered by a family, like Paul, but having his wife and children in subjection; one who is not too short and not too tall; handsome but in a plain sort of way so the brethren won't be jealous. He must have the right amount of education but should not be a college-trained man lest the common folk turn away from him. Really, brethren, is it not time to stop such foolishness. Every preacher can't be young, middle-aged and "mature" in years all at the same time. Some of the brethren have such arbitrary requirements for a gospel preacher that neither the Lord nor any of the apostles would suit them. The books of 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, much of 1 Thessalonians and 2 Corinthians shed abundant light on the matter, as inspiration views it. That ought to be good enough for all of us.

\* \* \* \* \*

**SOUTHSIDE LECTURES**

The editor looks forward to being at Southside in Pasadena, Texas June 2-5 for a lectureship along with Harry Pickup, Jr., Paul Earnhart and a young preacher named Homer Hailey. R. J. Stevens will again lead the singing. This will make the fourth time to work with this church on this type program and it is always an edifying week. Theme for the week is: "The Fight Is On."

**IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH**

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