

# 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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Lutz, FL 33549



### WALKING IN LOVE

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Ephesians 5: 1, 2).

It is quite obvious from both language and attitude of the masses today that they have no true understanding about the scriptural teaching of the word of God concerning the love of God and the love of one's fellowman. The Bible contains much teaching on the subject of love and the object of man's love. The denominational world and many unlearned brethren are trying to disguise sin under a perverted definition of love.

The American Standard Version makes the thought in this passage even plainer: "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell."

I should like to briefly call attention to three points in these verses. First, we are instructed to be followers or imitators of God as dear or beloved children. In the verses going before this passage we are instructed in the proper relationship that should exist between brethren. All forms of evil and immoral conduct are forbidden. Instead, we are to imitate God as His children and deal with each other as God deals with us. The last verse of chapter 4 states that God also in Christ forgave you, hence, to imitate or follow God we must have that ready mind to forgive each other. While we are certainly to

follow God in every thing required of us, I understand this verse to particularly relate to our dealings with each other, because of the context. Both before and after these two verses in Ephesians 5, the subject matter deals with human relationship.

God does not tolerate such sins in the lives of His children as are mentioned here. He does not ignore such conduct and allow it to continue without a just condemnation of it. If I follow God as a beloved child, I will have the same attitude toward such sins. If this is not what is meant, what does the language mean?

Second, we are to **walk** in love. "Walk" signifies the manner of life one lives. His manner of life is governed by love. This brings two questions to mind: (1) **What** is one to love? and (2) what does love do?

The New Testament clearly teaches that we are to love God (Matthew 22: 37), Christ (John 14: 21), the truth (2 Thessalonians 2: 10), enemies (Matthew 5: 44), neighbors (James 2: 8), and the brotherhood (1 Peter 2: 17; 3: 8). We are also taught not to love the world (1 John 2: 15), iniquity (1 Corinthians 13: 6) and evil (Romans 12: 9).

Since we are to walk in love, following God as beloved children; and since God loves even sinners (Rom. 5: 8), but hates every evil way, it follows that we must love the truth and the souls of men, but we must hate every evil way. Walking in love would mean that we follow or imitate God in all that we do. We must learn to separate the person from the sin of which he may be guilty. This does not mean that we must deal with him as if he had not sinned. When one is guilty of sin he must bear the consequences of his sin. However, love for the guilty person will lead us to try to persuade him to forsake his sin and obey the truth that he may be made free. We cannot condone the person in sin and follow God because He does not do so.

But what does love do? Most people today have the mistaken idea that love forbids any attempt to expose one's sins or to take any action to correct him. If God's love is our pattern the very opposite is true. The Old Testament is full of God's dealing with men in sin and it established beyond doubt that "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward"

(Hebrews 2: 2). God punished those who sinned. He does so now; and He does so without partiality or respect of persons. Is this love?

If a young girl fell into a deep hole filled with water and you could only reach the hair on her head, would you hesitate for a second to think not to grab her hair because it might not be an act of love, inasmuch as it would hurt and you would be abusive? If an old man stepped in front of an automobile and your only chance to save him would be to grab him by the collar and pull him backward to the ground, would you hesitate to question this as an act of love? You know it would not be love to allow a little girl to drown because you might hurt her by pulling her hair, or allow an old man to be killed because you did not want to jerk him backward to the ground to save his life. This is not love in any Bible sense of the word.

When one is lost in sin and we do not expose his error and try to get him to repent, we do not love that person as God loves him.

Third, our love is to be the kind that Christ had. We must be willing to die if necessary to uphold the truth that frees men from sin. We cannot expect to be appreciated by all when we stand firmly against sin in any form. But if you love as Christ loved, you will be willing to suffer for the truth.

True scriptural love is described by the Holy Spirit as: "...takeath not account of evil: rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth" (1 Corinthians 13: 5, 6).

### The Rader-Polk Debate on "Limited Benevolence"

This is a written debate between Donnie Rader of Louisville, Kentucky and John T. Polk, II of Cornersville, Tennessee. There are 12 articles contained in the debate with extensive use of charts. This is a book which you will want to study in your home and keep as a reference book. The book is well bound in plastic comb binding, so that all the material may be easily referenced.

Proposition 1: "Resolved the Scriptures teach that in benevolence, Churches of Christ may relieve only saints from their treasuries. "

Affirm: Donnie Rader Deny: John T. Polk

Proposition 2: "Resolved the Scriptures teach that the local congregation as directed and overseen by its elders (Phil. 1: 1), is obligated in benevolence to saints and non-saints. "

Affirm: John T. Polk II Deny: Donnie V. Rader

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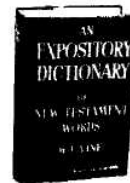
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# Editorial

*Connie W. Adams*

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## MEETINGS—LONG OR SHORT?

Churches continue to have gospel meetings. They must think that some good is being done or else they would stop having them. Most congregations in my acquaintance have at least two such efforts a year and some have three or four. Some of these meetings appear to do great good while others leave questions as to the value of what is accomplished. Since 1950, I have preached in 412 such efforts covering 40 states and a few other countries. Since 1975, I have spent nine months each year (March-November) in such work about every other week. Records have been kept as to places, dates, subjects presented, the number of baptisms, restorations and any occurrence which seemed out of the ordinary. I have also noted what the brethren paid me for the work so I might honestly "render to Caesar" what is his. These meetings have been with congregations of varying sizes and circumstances. I have preached under tents, in yards, in courthouses, in renovated dwelling houses, in store-front buildings, in Grange and Legion Halls, Libraries and in meeting houses owned by the brethren ranging from frame structures in rural areas to beautifully furnished houses in major cities. The brethren who have made up these churches have spanned the economic and educational spectrum, though the greater bulk have been brethren of only modest attainments educationally and among the laboring folk economically.

There have been meetings which were poorly attended. Others have seen the houses packed and with extra chairs to seat the overflow. Many meetings close with no "responses" down the aisle. Others have seen from one to 40 respond in a single week or ten days. Unusually encouraging meetings have taken place at the most unexpected locations. A good many times, even in meetings where there are "no responses" that come down the aisle, there is a gathering of strength and a developing enthusiasm which seems to reach a crescendo the last two or three days. There have been times when it appeared that the brethren had a meeting because it was scheduled and there seemed to be an attitude of enduring it until it could end.

Some churches go to great lengths to prepare for such an endeavor. The physical premises are made to sparkle. Members have made plans to minimize other activities and give as much attention to the meeting as possible. The Southside lectures in Pasadena, Texas in

June found over half the members there taking vacation time that week so they could attend all of the meeting—morning and night. They heard 16 sermons and participated in over 3 hours of hymn singing in four days. Some brethren seem to know how to get the most out of advertising. Then there are places where it appears they would rather keep it a secret that a meeting is going on. When grass is knee deep around the building, the place needs painting, cleaning, and when nobody is even there to open the door until five minutes before starting time, then you know the work is not very important to the people there and, should visitors come, they will get that same impression and may never come again.

## How Long Should a Meeting Last?

Meetings are sometimes designed to meet different needs. Some churches have had good success with weekend meetings in which a theme was chosen and developed to meet a special need of the congregation. Sometimes a longer meeting might serve the same purpose. When I first began to preach in meetings, we still had two weeks meetings now and then. Then the average dropped to ten days. Then to eight days. For a long time most of the meetings started on Monday night and ended on the following Sunday night. In the last few years more and more churches have opted for a Sunday through Friday effort. A variety of reasons have been given for this change. Some of the preachers much prefer it. Some of the congregations like it better. It avoids having to get people out on Saturday night. It is one day shorter than the former seven day meeting. The most frequent explanation I have heard is that by starting on Sunday, if the preacher can do a pretty good job, the appetites of members may be sufficiently whetted to keep them coming through Friday night. May I suggest that if that is what it is all about, then something is wrong, badly wrong. Do the members lack such spirituality that they have to be manipulated into attendance? Or is the preacher to be viewed as a performer who opens with rave reviews from his audience? If so, we are in trouble.

All brethren do not view the matter from the same vantage point, but after talking with a number of brethren over the last few years, several have suggested that I write something of my view for whatever good it will do. It has been my opinion for sometime now that brethren would be well advised to consider longer meetings again and not shorter ones. I have never preached in a two weeks meeting that some did not obey the gospel. When they got even shorter, I have never preached in a ten day meeting that some did not obey the gospel. A seven day meeting (Monday through Sunday) seldom closes without someone obeying the Lord. But I seldom see anyone respond in a weekend or Sunday through Friday meeting. Other preachers who do a great deal of meeting work have told me the same thing.

I hold my share of Sunday through Friday meetings, but I always prefer to start Monday night and close Sunday night, if we cannot go longer. When you start on Sunday morning, most of the time you speak to

combined youth and adult classes at a Bible study period. You nearly always start with some sort of motivational type material which would have common interest. The sermon at the morning worship usually follows the same plan. Then Sunday night, or possibly Monday night, you have to get back to basic material to lay groundwork for leading people to the Lord. By then, you are pushed for time to lay groundwork upon which faith rests, develop conviction and then you are short-changed in time for motivational type material at the end of the meeting to move people to do what they have learned to be right and necessary. It takes time to establish that. Usually, on Monday nights we can begin with an overview of scripture, or something about the proper division of the word of God, followed by some approach to the issue of authority, Christ, the church, conversion, refuting of local denominational error and related subjects. These are basic. By Friday night we can move into trying to motivate people to act while building on the foundation already laid. You have Friday night, Saturday night, and three times on Sunday—five sermons in just a few hours. The effect is often cumulative. People of religious background are going to be somewhere else on Sunday. You won't have them to reach, usually, until Monday night. But if their interest is gained and they continue to come, it is very hard for an honest person to attend a whole gospel meeting without learning the will of God and feeling the pressure of truth to do something about it. Don't tell me it does not work that way. I have seen it work that way for 36 years in gospel meetings. I repeat, I seldom ever see a Monday through Sunday meeting end without someone obeying the gospel, but I seldom ever see anyone obey the gospel in a Sunday through Friday meeting. Could it be that we have inverted the order of what it takes to reach people? We have to teach first and then motivate them to come. Jesus said "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (Jno. 6: 44-45).

Brethren, there must be enough time for foundational truth to be taught and then it must soak in. Perhaps we would do well to take another look at the content of meeting sermons. While each lesson should stand on its own, should there not be some sense of motion from the lesser to the greater in terms of building strength of faith and conviction?

I shall continue to try to fit my schedule to meet the requirements of the brethren who are good enough to invite me to come. I believe that gospel preaching does good. If I did not, I would never preach again. I have lived long enough to see lives completely turned around by the influence of truth in those lives. As long as brethren call for me to preach, or will support me to go to a place to preach just because someone ought to go and try, or, even if I must go at my own charges, then just that long I intend to preach the gospel until my race is run and the victory is won. If gospel meetings are worth having, and they are, then we ought to keep

working to make them better. I would be glad to hear from others about this. "Preach the word."

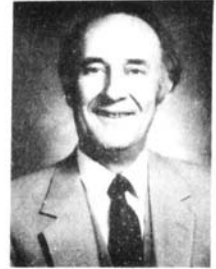
## WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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### BIBLE CLASSES AND THE ASSEMBLY

**QUESTION:** *Several passages in the New Testament state the church came TOGETHER In the assembly for worship and edification (Acts 10: 7; 1 Cor. 11: 17, 18, 20, 33; 1 Cor. 14: 23, 26). Hebrews 10: 25 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...." My question is: Since these verses show the church coming together into one place, do they prohibit Bible classes or dividing into groups for Bible study?*

**ANSWER:** No, they do not prohibit dividing into groups for Bible study. Because the church came together into one place for certain activities does not mean it must come together into one place or an assembly for all activities. Older women are given the responsibility of teaching the younger women (Tit. 2: 3-5), but they cannot do this in the assembly of the church wherein men are present (1 Tim. 2: 11-12). There would have to be a separate arrangement for the ladies.

Paul called the elders of the church at Ephesus together at Miletus and instructed them (Acts 20: 17-38). If the elders can have a special study, so may the children, teenagers, young married people and the older adults. To follow the reasoning of some brethren, Paul would have had to have called the whole Ephesian church together and taught the elders in the presence of the church. Such convoluted logic would necessitate the whole church assembling into one place for teachers' training studies, new converts' class, prospective preachers' training, elders' meetings, song leaders' training and any other needed program of study and training in the church. The entire concept is on the very surface a *reductio ad absurdum*, a Latin phrase meaning, "disproof of a proposition by showing an absurdity to which it leads when carried to its logical conclusion."

How would a congregation conduct a radio program unless it broadcasted the service when the church was assembled? How could a church have home Bible studies? These are classes! If a church may have such studies in the home, it can have such studies in the meeting-house on Sunday morning and Wednesday night. These organized (systematically arranged) studies do not take the place of the whole church assembling together for worship. Certainly, the church must come together in an assembly, but this does not disallow or prohibit private and limited meetings at other times.

Bible classes, like on Sunday morning, and public assemblies of the church into one place for worship are two different things. To impose on Bible classes what God says about the public assemblies is a miss-fire, completely. Such brethren are not comparing apples with apples. This is like saying that Noah had to have tools of gopher wood because God told him to build the ark out of gopher wood.

The Bible states the church is to teach (1 Tim. 3: 15; Mt. 28: 19; Eph. 4: 11-12). It is at liberty to choose any lawful expediency or arrangement it desires that edifies and builds up. Obviously, separating the classes of people into homogeneous groups has proven advantageous over the years. To try to teach children and adults all in one group is an impossibility. (Maybe I should say, "Trying to teach is not an impossibility; doing it is.") If you teach the adults on their level, the children learn nothing because they cannot understand. If you teach the children, the adults learn nothing because they already know it, and have for years.

Actually,, God has already made the class division for us and we ought to recognize it. We read in the Bible of the babes and the full-grown (Heb. 5: 13-14), the weak and the strong (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8), the men and women, fathers, mothers and children, and the young and the old. These different classes at times have different needs and the teaching should be adapted to their special needs, this can be expeditiously done through various group studies.

Our secular school system has recognized the advantage of segregating classes of people and has grouped them together by age and levels of learning. What a mess our educators would make of things if they would lump them together in one big assembly-hall and try to teach them all at once. We parents would yell and scream in opposition until changes came about. People have more sense toward that sort of thing than they do religion.

I go into homes during gospel meetings for dinner where there are 3 or 4 children of different ages. One little toddler nurses a bottle, but I have noticed the others do not get a bottle. They get meat and vegetables. Wonder why all the children were not put around the table and given a bottle? For that matter, why did not all of us just have a bottle? The answer is obvious! Yet, the "no-separate-class" brethren have everybody to line up together in the assembly for the "spiritual bottle," or else they try to feed everybody "meat." It will not work at home and it will not work in the church.

These brethren who oppose group arrangements to teach the Bible are reactionaries and factionalists who have never built great churches for the Lord, but have met in minuscule buildings through the years because their approach is counter-productive. Extremism destroys the joy of Christian living and paralyzes the church of the vibrancy and vitality that must characterize the New Testament church. The Lord says to "go, teach, baptize and teach." Let's use, therefore, every scriptural means at our disposal to execute this Great Commission.

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## **THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.... ARE RESERVED FOR FIRE!**

**Luther W. Martin  
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Rolla, MO 65401**

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The Apostle Peter's last Epistle, reminds mankind of the world that once was, and then foretells the destiny of the world that is! Notice please:

"\_\_\_ by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which now exist are kept in store by the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3: 5-7).

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3: 10-13). By inspiration, the Apostle Peter informs us that the heavens and the earth we now know, will be burned up; intense heat will be the cause; the heavens will pass away with a great noise. Some scientists have arrived at a "big bang" theory for the creation of God's universe. But, here, the Bible tells us of a "big bang" that will destroy the heavens that are at least in proximity to the earth. Peter further admonished his readers that in view of this ultimate end of the heavens and the earth, what kind of people should we be in thought, disposition and conduct?

### **The Jews' First, Second and Third Heavens!**

The ancient Jews, in their thinking, divided the 'heavens' into three parts: (1) The 'upper' heaven, which was the abode of God and His angels. (2) The 'firmament' wherein the sun, moon and stars are stationed. And (3) The atmosphere immediately surrounding the earth, where the clouds form and where the birds fly.

The writer of the Psalms, referred several times to the birds or fowls of heaven (Psalms 79: 2; 104: 12). This obviously refers to the atmosphere adjacent to the earth's surface.

The Psalmist also refers to the 'firmament' which displays the sun, moon and stars. Such as Psalms 19: 1-"... the firmament shows His handiwork... " Daniel writes of the "... brightness of the firmament... "

(12: 3). This deals with the 'heaven' above the birds and clouds, but below the abode of God.

Finally, the 'third heaven' is referred to by the Apostle Paul:

"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12: 2-4).

Paul indicates that a revelation was given him in this instance. This could only have emanated from the heaven, which is God's dwelling place.

The heaven(s) that will pass away with a great noise, would not include the abode of God Himself, but the atmosphere near the earth, and possibly the heavenly bodies in the firmament.

**Paul Writes of Christ's Coming In Flaming Fire!**

"... you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ....." (2 Thess. 1: 7-8).

Here, the Apostle Paul provides additional evidence of the termination of the earth as we know it, at Christ's coming.

**The Apostle John Writes of A New Heaven and New Earth!**

"... And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21: 1-2). The foregoing passages of Scripture, list Peter, Paul and John, all testifying to the termination, the ending of the earth... this first earth.

**Summary**

If you are a person who thinks the present earth will continue to exist after Christ's coming, just notice how many plain Scripture statements you are ignoring:

1. Heavens and earth reserved for fire! (Peter).
2. This holocaust will come unexpectedly, as a thief. (Peter).
3. Heaven will pass away with a great noise. (Peter).
4. The elements will melt with fervent (intense) heat. (Peter).
5. The earth and the works in it will be burned. (Peter).
6. All these things will be dissolved. (Peter).
7. Heavens will be dissolved, being on fire. (Peter).
8. Elements will melt with fervent heat. (Peter).
9. We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and new earth. (Peter).
10. The Lord Jesus from heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon those who do not obey the gospel. (Does your religious persuasion teach you to obey the gospel?) (Paul).
11. John prophesies about seeing a new heaven and

new earth.

12. The first heaven and the first earth had passed away. (John).

13. There was no more sea. (John).

14. The new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down from God out of heaven. (John).

**Conclusion**

The Jehovah's Witness doctrine that the present earth shall continue forever, is just plain false.... it's wrong! You must either accept the truth of God's Word, and therefore reject the J-W falsehood, OR, reject the Bible in order to believe the J-W doctrine.

**Restoration Footnotes**

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**GOOD RELIGIOUS LITERATURE**

Not many people outside of Franklin County, Alabama, ever heard of L. N. Sparks. There are probably few there now, other than descendants, who remember that he once served the Lord in that region. We recall him only because he wrote to F. B. Srygley when both men, friends for half a century, were nearing the end of life. His letter was not intended for publication, but Srygley thought it said some things that should be made public.

Sparks lived in a day of large families and his clan was no exception. Srygley said, "Brother Sparks reared a family—not one child and a poodle dog, but a real family in size. " He had eleven children, all of whom had obeyed the gospel. Four of his five sons-in-law were not Christians when they entered the family, but they also obeyed the gospel. He said he had "forty-five or fifty grandchildren, " all but two of whom had become Christians. Srygley was "a little amused that the brother has lost count of the exact number of grandchildren, but he knows exactly how many have not obeyed the gospel. " His emphasis was in the right place.

Red Bay was Sparks' home at the time, but earlier in life he lived near Rock Creek, where Srygley held gospel meetings in the latter part of the nineteenth century. "It used to be a great pleasure to me, " Srygley wrote, "to go back to old Rock Creek Church, the church of my childhood, and see Brother and Sister Sparks with six or eight children come trooping into church. The preacher would know that father and mother with every child that was old enough would give good attention to the sermon, and the little ones would behave themselves, because they were taught to do so. "

In his letter, Sparks said, "If I have ever done any

good, it was by scattering good books and tracts, and the Gospel Advocate was a lot of help to me and my family." (That was back when the Advocate was a citadel for strength for the old paths.) He attributed the conversion of his sons-in-law to his furnishing them with good literature. He knew that papers, tracts, and books cannot replace the Scriptures, but he also knew that God wants the gospel preached and that the printed page can do it effectively, even reaching places where the spoken word may not go. It did then and it does now.

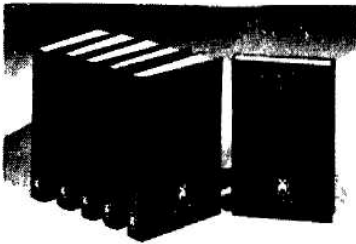
The fact that you are reading Searching the Scriptures testifies to somebody's continued interest in good literature. I know the fear some have of religious papers, and I share it to some extent. Too many have abused the freedom to edit and publish. But this paper has been proved by the critical times through which it has passed. It stands today as a voice of soundness without radicalism, moderation without compromise, and conviction without rancor. It rides no hobby, seeks no financial gain, and glorifies no man.

I have never edited a religious journal, have no desire to, and sometimes wonder why anyone else does. But I appreciate men like the editor of this paper who are willing to make the personal sacrifices and shoulder the primary burdens necessary to keep publishing through the years. I have profited immeasurably by reading its pages and many others have. That's why I try to make sure my children have it in their homes and to encourage others to take and read it. I can share this good work by sending it to a son-in-law, or some other relative or friend.

You can do this, too, and years from now you may be able to look back from the twilight time of life and, like L. N. Sparks, rejoice to see blessings that have come to others because you cared enough to "scatter" some good religious literature along the way.

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## SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

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### SIXTEEN QUESTIONS FOR THE PREMILLENNIALIST

It takes six syllables and sixteen letters to spell or pronounce the term "Premillennialism." That is a general characteristic of most "isms" which are produced by the doctrines of men—completely contrary to "the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 3). By contrast, the seven-point plan for unity given by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4: 4-6), contains thirty-three words of one syllable, and eight words of two syllables, for a total of forty-one words.

When the Israelites rebelled against God, they were penalized a year for every day that it took them to spy out the land, for a total of forty years (Num. 14: 34). At the least, the premillennialist should have to answer a question for each letter it takes to spell the term. If the burden is too great, renounce the error of that system and embrace the truth as it is in Christ.

1. What did Philip preach "concerning the kingdom of God," and into what were the Samaritans baptized (Acts 8: 12)?
2. Can we be "born again" (Jno. 3: 5; 1 Pet. 1: 23)?
3. Can we be translated "into the kingdom" (Col. 1: 13)?
4. Can we serve God acceptably (Heb. 12: 28)?
5. Can we be brothers with John (Rev. 1: 9)?
6. Did Jesus break his promise to the disciples (Mt. 16: 19; Mk. 9: 1)?
7. Can we have righteousness, peace, etc. (Rom. 14: 17)?
8. If political events forced God to change his plans once concerning the kingdom, could it happen twice? Three times?
9. Are the clouds and the kingdom of Dan. 7: 13, 14 the same as those of Acts 1: 9; 2: 30-36?
10. Are the parables of the kingdom worthless, and will we need a new set of parables for Christ's second coming? (Actually two questions in one; consider it a "bonus" question)
11. Should we observe the Lord's supper (Mt. 26: 29)?
12. Could Paul demonstrate the "power" of the kingdom (1 Cor. 4: 20; 1 Thes. 1: 5)?
13. Is it possible to have "regeneration" now (Mt. 19: 28; Lk. 22: 29, 30; Titus 3: 5)?
14. Did Christ "cast out devils by the Spirit of God" (Mt. 12: 28, 29)?

15. If Christ is going to reign a literal 1000 years when he returns, from whence cometh the third, sixth, and eleventh-hour laborers? (By my calculations, an "hour" would be about eighty-three and one-third years, the length of time spent in the kingdom by the eleventh-hour workers)

16. If the premillennialist is not "shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men" (Mt. 23: 13), then who is doing it today?

Instead of allowing the premillennialist to act like an expert at interpreting the symbolic language of Rev. 20, we need to keep him busy answering these simple questions, based on plain, non-figurative language. And, there are many other questions besides these which need to be answered before the Lord comes to deliver up the kingdom (1 Cor. 15: 24).

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### MICAHIAH'S GOOD ATTITUDE

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When we study Bible characters, we notice various attitudes—some good and some bad. The prophet Micaiah is an example of a good attitude displayed by a servant of God. He lived and prophesied during the time of the weak and wicked king Ahab.

On one occasion when Ahab was trying to persuade Jehoshaphat to go with him into battle against the Syrians to take Ramoth in Gilead, Jehoshaphat asked Ahab to first inquire of the Lord, Ahab then gathered about 400 of his prophets together and inquired of them concerning the matter. All of the prophets said, "Go up, for the Lord will give it unto the hand of the king" (1 Kings 22: 6). It seems that the leader of these false prophets was one by the name of Zedekiah, and the rest were "yes-men", who went along in order to please the king, knowing Ahab's inclination to engage in the battle anyway (vs. 11, 12). But Jehoshaphat didn't buy what he saw and heard and asked if there was not a prophet of the Lord there. Ahab responded: "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil" (v. 8).

When people do not want to hear unpleasant truth, they dislike the man who might give them such. This is not an isolated case nor a minority principle. Isaiah spoke of those who did not want to hear God's truth. "That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy

deceits" (Isa. 30: 9-10). Jeremiah also spoke of false prophets and greed and then added, "and my people love to have it so" (Jer. 5: 31). And remember Amos? "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly" (Amos 5: 10). This very attitude is seen when Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, told king Jeroboam that Amos "hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words" (Amos 7: 10). Then the wicked Amaziah said to the prophet Amos: "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again anymore at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court" (Amos 7: 12-13). (I suppose the cry today would be "don't mix religion with politics"). And in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit, through Paul, said: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4: 3-4).

Although he hated Micaiah, Ahab finally sent a messenger to bring him before the two kings. When the messenger arrived, he said to Micaiah: "Behold now, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably" (1 Kings 5: 13). In other words, "Now Micaiah, don't make waves by rocking the boat. Just go along and everything will be okay." Micaiah's response was: "As the Lord lives, what the Lord says to me, that I will speak" (verse 14). Those who aspire to preach the Word of God should let these words sink deeply into their hearts and make it their clarion call.

Dear reader, it would have been much easier to have gone along with the four-hundred lying, deceiving prophets in order to receive the approbation and good pleasure of the king, but, in spite of the pressure brought upon him, Micaiah spoke what the Lord said to him. He disagreed with those four-hundred men and exposed their lie. For his plainness of speech and faith-fullness to God Ahab commanded him to be thrown in prison and fed with the bread and water of affliction (verse 27). He certainly was not the last to be persecuted for speaking the truth. (Consider the Lord and his apostles, and many faithful Christians since).

Today, those who are faithful to God will have this same attitude and will stand firmly for the truth and will proclaim it regardless of the opposition and persecution. When one speaks the truth there is no room for compromise with error. The faithful man of God will expose the lies of the teachers of errors whether they be denominational preachers or erring brethren. He will not be a seeker of the popularity of the masses nor of those who are in high places among men. He will not "just go along" with error, and he will "rock the boat" and "make waves" if such is necessary. His desire will be to please the Lord by speaking His truth. His sentiments are voiced by the apostle Paul when he said: "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please



men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ" (Gal. 1: 10). So, with this in mind, my preacher friend: "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4: 2).

Faithful Christians will appreciate such a servant of the Lord and will encourage and support him. They will also have the same attitude of great love and respect for the Word of the Lord. To such people the Bible is indeed the Word of God and they seek to conduct themselves "worthy of the gospel of Christ'.... "standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1: 27).

What is your attitude toward the truth and those who will faithfully proclaim it?

## INDIVIDUALISM VS. THE LOCAL CHURCH Part Two

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### What the Bible Teaches

In Matthew 18: 15-17, Jesus instructs, "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer."

This passage teaches very clearly that there are things God wants individuals to do alone; things He wants Christians to do together, each acting in his/her own capacity; and things which He wants Christians to do together, acting as a collective. When I notice a Christian living in sin and make an attempt to restore him, this is individual action. If he refuses to repent, Jesus instructs me to take two or more with me. Together, we will try to restore our fallen brother. This is concurrent action. The word "concurrent" means, "occurring at the same time."<sup>1</sup> Concurrent action takes place when two or more work together toward the same end, each acting in his/her own capacity. If my brother still continues in sin, Jesus instructs me to "tell it to the church." Here is something that is more than an individual acting alone, or several individuals acting concurrently; it is church, or collective action. The word "collective" means, "formed by collecting; gathered into a whole." Collective action takes place when two or more work toward the same end by acting as one.

In speaking of collective action, Jesus used the word "church." This word comes from the Greek word "ekklesia," which means "a calling out."<sup>1</sup> The Bible uses the

term in two primary ways: (1) to designate all of God's people (Ephesians 2: 12-23—we sometimes call this the "universal church"); and, (2) to designate God's people in a given area who have pooled their resources under a common oversight for the purpose of doing the things God has commanded them to do together (1 Corinthians 1: 1, 2—we sometimes call this the "local church"). The local church is the only organization God has authorized Christians to form for the purpose of doing things which He has commanded Christians to do together.

There are three ways in which a local church may act as a collective.

1. A local church acts as a collective when it expends funds which are under the oversight of the church in order to accomplish duties of the church (1 Timothy 5: 16 establishes that churches have duties; Acts 4: 33:4).

2. A local church acts as a collective when it acts through appointed representatives (Acts 6: 1-6).

3. A local church acts as a collective when the entire group makes a decision (hence, the church chooses its servants, Acts 6: 1-6; its elders, 1 Timothy 3: 1-7; and decides whom it will discipline, 1 Corinthians 5: 1-5).

The following chart illustrates some activities in which local churches engage, and draws a distinction between the actions which are the responsibility of each saint to do with other saints, and which therefore constitute individual and/or concurrent action; and those which are the church's as a unit, and which therefore constitute collective action.

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Saint with Saint Assemble | Saints Acting as One Provide Place, Time |
| Take Lord's Supper        | Provide Elements                         |
| Receive Apostles Teaching | Provide Teacher, Place, Time             |
| Pray                      | Provide Place, Time                      |
| Sing                      | Provide Place, Time, Book, Leader, etc.  |

### What the Individualist Teaches

(1) In his debate with brother Smith, brother Holt affirmed the following proposition:

The scriptures teach that the local ecclesia of Christ has reference to nothing more than disciples or saints in a given area or context, who may act individually and/or together with others in carrying out the Lord's will; and there is no requirement (pattern) from God that they form or constitute themselves into an organic institutional body corporate (functional unit) for doing any work ordained by God.

There are two problems with this proposition. First, it teaches that the church is nothing more than disciples or saints who may act individually and/or together (concurrently). Its author denies that a church may act as a body corporate. But in Matthew 18 we saw (1) individ-

ual action, (2) concurrent action, and (3) collective action. The third type of action, collective action, involves the church acting as a body corporate. The term "body corporate" simply means, "a society having the capacity of transacting business as an individual." 1 Timothy 5: 16 proves conclusively that a church may act as a body corporate: "If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, let her assist them, and let not the church be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed." When this passage speaks of the church it is not speaking of an individual, nor is it speaking of several Christians acting concurrently, for then Paul would have had to say, "and let not the church be burdened so that they may assist those who are widows indeed"; it is speaking of the church acting as a unit to fulfill a responsibility which it has.

The second problem with brother Holt's proposition is that it makes the local church an optional arrangement. Note that it says there is "no requirement from God" for any unit action on the part of saints. In light of passages like Acts 4: 33-37; 6: 1-6; 14: 23; 1 Corinthians 16: 1, 2; 2 Corinthians 8, 9; and many others, such a position is shown to be absurd.

(2) The basic argument used by the Individualist to establish that a church is not a body corporate, states:

1. Without judgment day accountability, there is no responsibility.
2. Churches will not be judged as corporate bodies.
3. Therefore, churches have not been assigned any responsibility.

The argument is shown to be preposterous by simply inserting the word "government" where it uses the word "church." It is true that governments will not be judged as corporate bodies, but is it true that they have not been assigned any responsibilities? Romans 13 teaches that they have, and 1 Timothy 5: 16 (along with many other passages) establishes that churches have been assigned responsibilities as well.

We will be judged as individuals. In that judgment we will have to give account for our activities as members of society (Luke 10: 25-37), members of the government (Romans 13: 1-5), members in the family (Ephesians 6: 1-6), and yes, as members of a local church (1 Corinthians 3: 16, 17).

(3) During the debate, brother Holt affirmed several times, "the terms 'local church' and 'universal church' do not appear in the Bible." This is true, but do these ideas appear there? Words represent ideas. If an idea is in the Bible, and by the use of a term we mean nothing more than the Bible idea it represents, then we are at perfect liberty to use it.

(4) Brother Holt also argued that we never read of a plurality of churches in a single city. He is simply mistaken about this. In Romans 16: 3-5, the church at Rome is told to greet the church in Priscilla's and Aquila's house. Here is one church in Rome (the one Paul was writing to), being instructed to greet another (the one which met in Priscilla's and Aquila's house). We know Priscilla and Aquila lived in Rome, because Acts 18: 2 tells us that at one point they had to leave "because

Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome." (5) Finally, the Individualist affirms that if a body corporate exists (a local church), individual duty is done away with. Here is where they spend most of their time. It is an argument drawn from abuses, and, in light of Matthew 18: 15-17, it is evidently not so. Here is an example of how brother Holt uses this argument to advance the Individualist's position:

In the debate I presented a chart designed to show what happens when an individual "joins" "the local church" institution. It covers the following points.

1. He/she loses—gives up—personal/individual responsibility as far as anything that "the local church" does. Remember, you are "to serve under the control of the formal organization." Your will, voice, or vote mean nothing. It is the will of The Eldership that rules. They are the official rulers with "divine authority" to make all the final decisions for the corporate body. You decide nothing! Your role is to attend the corporate meetings at the appointed times, at the appointed place, to engage in the appointed activities arranged for you. You have no voice—no vote—in anything.<sup>5</sup>

Beside the fact that several of the statements made here are untrue, this charge is a slap in the face of most Christians. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11: 3, 20, "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ... For you bear with anyone if he enslaves you, if he devours you, if he takes advantage of you, if he exalts himself, if he hits you in the face" (emphasis mine, jhj). Chapter 2

<sup>1</sup> New World Dictionary, Simon and Schuster, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

<sup>2</sup> Holman's Exhaustive Concordance of the New American Standard Version, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN.

<sup>3</sup> The Examiner, page 27.

<sup>4</sup> The Examiner, page 25.

<sup>5</sup> The Examiner, page 29.

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## MINISTERING TO THE TERMINALLY ILL

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How do you talk to someone who has an irreversible illness? What do you say to them, what do you say to their family? These were the questions that I had to face in 1976 when we learned that my wife's father had cancer. Up until that time I had been acquainted with numerous people who were terminally ill and had attempted to speak words of comfort to others who had lost their loved ones, but now it was different. It was my family that was being touched by this cruel twist of fate and I felt so helpless and ill prepared. In a few short months my father-in-law was gone and we moved our family south to Alabama to be with my wife's mother. In the months that were to follow I would leave located work and enter nursing school where I was destined to learn some of the most important lessons of my life about dealing with people with irreversible illnesses as well as dealing with the families of those with terminal illnesses. Over the past few years I have thought a great deal about sharing my insights with others and would like to do so at this time.

Elizabeth Kubler Ross in her poignant book "On Death and Dying" points out that the terminally ill patient and in some cases their families as well, will go through 6 stages; denial and isolation, bargaining, depression, acceptance and peace, and decathesis. Each of these stages play a significant role in the final days of the terminally ill and their families. It is important, if we are to provide the support and comfort to them, that we familiarize ourselves with these terms and how to react to the patient and their family as they progress through these stages.

It is not uncommon for patients, who have been told that they have a terminal illness, to deny that the disorder even exists. Nor is it uncommon for them to want to visit several physicians, hoping against hope that they will tell them that the other physician was wrong. Eventually, after numerous visits to various physicians the truth begins to settle in and the individual may display anger and rage. "Why me?" seems to be one of the most common questions that they ask. Their best interest, however, is not served by such statements as "It's the Lord's will..." or "Things will get better...". The fact of the matter is that things usually don't get better, but rather worse and building up false hopes is not in their best interest. It has been my observation that the best comments that one can make in such circumstances would be simply to sit with them, without raising any false hopes and to provide them with comfort from God's word, prayer and your ever present concern.

Sometimes the denial process will take the form of fantasizing of some "miracle cure" that will be available any day. I have observed that often the realization of the inevitable causes some to attempt to bargain with God, "If you'll just let me see my son marry..." or "If I can only live to see my grandchild...", of course we cannot encourage such behavior, but we must nonetheless be aware that this is a natural consequence of the reality that one's time is limited.

It is my personal belief that if individuals are willing to talk about their condition that we should be open and not attempt to hide the truth from them. After all it is their body and their life and they have a right to know what is going on. It is important for the patients that they be able, if they choose to do so, to talk openly about their fears, their apprehensions, their hopes, etc. regarding death. You would be surprised how many people steer away from any conversations with their loved ones about death, for fear of upsetting the terminally ill patient. If only they had taken the time to talk with their loved one they might have discovered that the terminally ill patient could have provided them with a sense of comfort they might not otherwise know.

It is not uncommon for the irreversibly ill to fall victim to periods of depression. By this time they have come to the full realization that they are going to die and yet there is still the uncertainty as to when. The outgrowth of this uncertainty is depression. During these periods sitting with the patient and their family means a great deal, even if you say nothing.

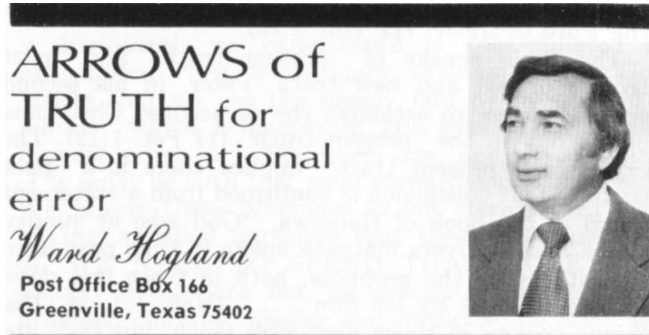
Eventually patients will come to accept the inevitable and if they are Christians will be enveloped with a sense of peace and acceptance. It is then that we can provide the much needed moral and spiritual support that they need. Again, if they want to talk about dying, don't shrink away, it's important to them to talk about it as they search for peace of mind, as they prepare for the journey beyond.

Death, for the Christians, is a bittersweet experience. While we know that God has prepared a most beautiful place for us beyond this veil of tears, we are nonetheless saddened by the thought of leaving behind those who are dearest and most precious to us. I have observed that the eminent death of a loved one often causes greater pain for the family. By this time the patient has come to accept the fact that he or she will soon die, but the family on the other hand has not yet learned to accept the inevitable. Here again, it is important for us to assist them through prayer and reading of God's message and through quiet meditation.

Toward the end it is not uncommon for the terminally ill patient to become totally withdrawn. They will spend much time alone, meditating, at this point communication becomes difficult as they attempt to mentally prepare themselves for the journey beyond. It is important that we simply are there to let them know that they are important to us. If the patient is comatose we must not equate comatose with dead. While their senses may be failing and the end appears near we need to understand that the last sense to go is hearing. Even though they cannot communicate with us they are aware of every-

thing we say. So as we talk with family while visiting in the room of a comatose patient be aware and speak words of love and encouragement and comfort both to the patient and to the family.

I hope that I have helped someone with this information, to be a better servant in ministering to the needs of the terminally ill.



### "THE LORD REWARD HIM"

When Paul wrote his final letter to Timothy, he talked about an evil man by the name of Alexander. He said, "Alexander, the coppersmith, did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his own works" (2 Tim. 4: 14). Obviously, Paul meant the Lord would take care of Alexander on the great day of judgement. However, sometimes people reap some of their reward here on earth. Haman is a case in point. He built his gallows fifty cubits high on which he hoped to hang Mordecai but because of his plebeian attitude was hung himself. We use all kinds of cliches to express this phenomenon such as boomerang or the "the chickens have come home to roost", etc.

Some forty years ago certain brethren opposed the new sponsoring church concept and the benevolent organizations which were dipping their hands deep into the church treasuries. The brethren who were trying to support these new innovations decided to brand their opponents with the name "anti". Everyone understood this appellation was not given as a descriptive term but as a stigmatization. That is, to brand as disgraceful or ignominious. One does not have to be astute to know that the antithesis of liberal is not anti but conservative. Any dictionary would tell one that the name anti simply means against. Since everyone is "against" something, we knew the name was given in derision.

If these liberal brethren had wanted to describe our opposition to their encroachments, they could have called us conservatives. However, they chose to use an insidious type of rhetoric and came up with the name anti. Would you believe that after forty years their chickens have come home to roost? I picked up a publication called *The Spiritual Sword* and ran across an article titled "The new anti-ism." Well, to my surprise Garland Elkins, the writer, freely admitted they had been branded with the name anti! It goes without saying he did not like it. On page 19 of the October issue of the paper he said, "My reply to all such charges is the

same as Paul's when some of the enemies of the Lord accused him of being a member of a sect. His reply was 'neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me' (Acts 24: 13). "I wonder why brother Elkins has gotten so worked up about being called an anti? He has dished it out for decades. Does he not know that the reason he had been called anti is that he is opposing the Joplin summit meetings and instrumental music in worship? His opponents say, "He has made a law where God has not." Is that not justification for calling one an anti? In the famous metaphor of Tom Warren about the cow being tied with the rope, brother Elkins you need to know that according to some the rope is too short! As I recall, Tom said the men who make laws where God has not made them are guilty of staking the cow on a rope that is too short. Well, bless your life that is exactly what the Joplin brethren say you are doing. You can plead innocent all you want to but they say this qualifies you for the name anti. When we opposed the sponsoring church, which by the way is found on the same page of your Bible as instrumental music, these brethren with much elation called us anti. Now the shoe is on the other foot and these brethren are crying crocodile tears. Would Tom Warren, Roy Deaver, Garland Elkins and the Memphis crowd deny that they are AGAINST certain things in the church? Kind friend, that is all we did forty years ago. We stood opposed to the innovations and as a result received the ignominious appellation. On page 19 brother Elkins talks about the "Joplin Summit" and the "Tulsa restoration Forum". He refers to them as "summiteers." What has happened is the "Joplin Summiteers" have called the "Memphis Crowd" a bunch of antis! You see all of this started when the brethren who now make up the "Memphis Crowd" started calling us antis. Now the "Joplin Summiteers" are calling the "Memphis Crowd" antis. Well, brethren just hang around and it could be in a few years that some wild, classical liberal will brand the "Joplin Summiteers" or the "Tulsa Forum" as antis. They have a saying down here in Arkansas that if you don't like the weather just hang around for a few hours. The same can be said about the word "anti." If you don't like your present name just hang around and someone might call you an anti! Kind friend isn't this ridiculous? Brethren in the Lord trying to gain an advantage by stigmatization.

I receive papers every day and the hue and cry is against liberalism. And the sad thing about it is the very men who are crying tears over liberalism are engaged in liberalism and don't know it. They have sown to the wind and reaped the whirlwind. Back forty years ago, it was not uncommon to read an ad in the paper from a church who wanted a preacher. They would say, "No anti wanted" or "anti need not apply." This seemed to be funny to the innovators of that day. I suspect it is getting less funny all the time. Another common occurrence in that day was for people to request that their names be taken off the mailing list of a publication. Well, history is repeating itself because I noticed in **Contending for The Faith**, published by Ira Y. Rice that this is happening today. In that paper I read this state-

ment, "Please take us off your mailing list" and it was signed by the Church of Christ in Granite, Oklahoma. This means they will refuse to read the publication. So much prejudice is built up within the heart by name calling that many people will not read a publication. We are reading in some of the publications today the very same thing we endured forty years ago. I do not resent someone calling me a conservative; because I am indeed more conservative than many in the body of Christ. When I call someone liberal, I am trying to describe his position and not brand him with a nebulous name. When people do ugly things sometimes they reap some of the reward on this earth. History seems to be repeating itself over and over again. The call of God is for his people to stand for truth and take whatever vilification may come their way.

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## DREAMS

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God fully intended that our ability to dream profit us in some manner. Every faculty He created within man was designed to contribute to our ability to glorify Him. At the same time, we recognize that, since the fall, Satan has corrupted every good gift God gave us. Every ability God gave for the growth of our spirits Satan has degraded for the fulfilling of the lusts of our flesh. God gave man the mental faculty to imagine things which have only a partial basis in reality, to dream. We rightfully employ this ability to wonder at the hoped for beauties of heaven, to discover the relationships taught by a figure of speech, and to dream of what we can become through Christ Jesus so we may work to make that ideal a reality. As always, unless we are on our guard, Satan will turn this gift against us.

### Daydreams

Evidently we have only partial control over what we dream while asleep. But asleep, as in all our speech and actions, our dreams proceed from our hearts (Mt. 15: 19). What we are, do, and think in the day, we dream in the night. For example, now that it has been fifteen years since I have been scuba diving, I no longer dream of being trapped just under the surface, and awoken struggling for breath because my face was smothered in the pillow.

On the other hand, we have total control over our waking dreams. Satan attacks us through these in two basic ways—foolish dreams and evil dreamings.

### Foolish Dreams

Foolish dreams can be divided by their harm to our

hope of eternal life into two groups—time wasters and goal-diluters.

To destroy our souls, Satan need not engage us in great evil; he needs only to prevent us from doing good. We give much of our thinking time to "harmless" foolishness. Harmless, that is, until we realize we could have and should have been meditating on God's work, or praying to Him. James Thurber touched a responsive chord in most people when he described Walter Mitty's sequence of heroic daydream escapades as this mild character walked down the street. He stopped bank robbers, rescued maidens and received glory. Mitty was not satisfied with reality and so he escaped into a fantasy world. How many of us have our fantasy worlds? We wish, but working with patience is too slow, so we fantasize of being rich, heroic, or even great Bible scholars. Girls dream of meeting Prince Charming or of being movie stars. A boy fantasizes of being a hero in war or on the football field. We become all things in our dreams, but the dream time is wasted time insofar as producing any progress towards our wishes. While we wish and dream of being looked up to for our Bible knowledge, we cannot be meditating which leads to the wisdom we say we desire. But dreaming is easier than studying or reasoning, and Satan is pleased for us to dream on.

Many of our dreams are incompatible with our spiritual goals. We set goals that lead to spiritual maturity—greater knowledge, helping others, becoming elders or teachers. Then we dream of new homes, new cars, or new fishing boats. And when we soberly reflect on the recent past, more effort was given to realizing those dreams than to developing our souls. Instead of being realistic and worked for, our goals serve little more than as salves to our consciences. We call ourselves Christians and join boldly in "Sing To Me of Heaven", but our dreams are of earthly and corruptible things. Satan diluted our goal and our hope by making us desire the pleasures men have. I suppose he would prefer to engage us in immoral activities, but Satan is satisfied to keep us so busy dreaming of things that are not wrong in themselves that we cannot use our mental faculties for meditation, prayer, and transforming ourselves by remaking our minds (Rom. 12: 1-2).

### Filthy Dreamings

If locker-room and barracks conversations give a true indication, lustful and lewd dreams occupy a fairly large percentage of a young man's thoughts. Perhaps some justify themselves by a truthful declaration that they would never actually do these things, and are not actually under the condemnation, "Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Mt. 5: 28). Such would be a mighty weak argument to depend upon before the great Judge of hearts. But, more, Jude specifically condemns such dreamings. "These also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities" (Jude 8). Some have always been too cowardly to risk the consequences of the sin in which they long to take pleasure. So, in their daydreams, they boldly, "tell

off" the boss, or the preacher, change the rules or set aside restraints to their lusts, and they partake of flesh-defiling fomications and perversions they are too timid to attempt in reality. Jude's inspired words cut right to the heart of the filthy dreamings provoked by pornography; they strike home upon the vicarious thrills offered by the adulterous soap operas; they hit hard upon the enjoyment we dare not even admit to ourselves that is given by explicit bedroom scenes in movies and novels. We may deny these have such an impact on us and accuse preachers and elders who warn against them of having dirty minds, but advertisers know! Cynically, they use whatever will sell their product. The responsive lust that titillates our carnal minds sells novels, movies, soaps, and a wide variety of products. If it were not so, these practical men would use another means. Be not deceived. Guard your minds.

### God's Plan for Dreams

We ought to use our ability to dream to change what we are. Maxwell Malz said in Psychocybernetics that imaginary practicing would improve one's abilities as much as real encounters, that imaginary "walk-throughs" of a desired behaviour change could lead one to that change as effectively as live situations. God taught the same lesson 1900 years before Malz, "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4: 8). The more we turn our minds to these things, the more like Christ we will be since "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23: 7). But, because Satan has corrupted our minds with the desire for things and honor, with evil dreamings, and with time-wasting imaginations, we must wage a deadly warfare to "cast down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10: 5). It will be a hard battle, but we can win... through Christ. We must win, for we cannot know God while our minds serve his enemy. Satan has entrenched himself subtly into our minds and so craftily that many defend their right to use their minds in these ways. If we will see the green fields of Eden, we must begin to dream of them. If we would be spiritual men, we must imagine, dream, meditate, use our minds to transform ourselves. Children dream of fairies, wishes, superpowers. Bigger, older children dream of riches (Reader's Digest contest), glory, fancy homes. Adults dream of Jesus, Heaven, spiritual attributes and meditate to reach them. Isn't it time you grew up?

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### OLD PROBLEMS AGAIN

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More than one hundred years ago faithful brethren were telling the saints that adding the instrument was adding an unauthorized music to the worship. Singing was commanded by the apostles, but playing an instrument has no hint of authority in the New Testament (Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16). Teaching and admonishing were emphasized, but entertainment was not authorized. One form of music was commanded and that was singing.

The more digressive churches among us (liberal, if you prefer) of the 1950s and the digressive churches (Christian churches) of the last half of the last century are talking unity, and it seems that they are happy together. Both have their kitchens and other facilities for entertainment, and both have a careless attitude toward a "thus saith the Lord." If churches can go into the social gospel and entertainment business they can support human institutions such as a missionary society, sponsoring churches, colleges, benevolent societies, and Herald of Truth. If it is all right for them to support recreation and the institutions that collect money from the local churches and spend it, they can add the instrument. If authority can be found for one of these the same passages will authorize the others. I see no reason why the more liberal churches of Christ cannot become one with the Christian churches. They look like identical twins now, and they are coming to the realization of this fact. Their preachers will be able to preach at either place. The instrument will be no real problem to them.

If the message of history can be relied upon, modernism will come into this combined movement. To illustrate this, the colleges which these people support will before long (if not now) have teachers that question the Genesis story of creation, the miracles, the accuracy of the scriptures, and ultimately the deity of Christ. The Disciples church with its ultra modernism is the full blown institutional movement. They were the ones who came up with the American Christian Missionary Society, the instrument in worship, and the support of schools such as Butler University, Texas Christian University, and Drake University. Is Pepperdine University only one short step behind them?

The growing spirit of liberalism is causing many members of these institutional "Churches of Christ" to become restless. A few are visiting meetings among us now and showing interest in the narrow way of truth. By 1940 the stricter element among the Christian

churches returned to the churches their parents had called "antis." We can not expect a "unity movement" with our liberal brethren, but there are some fine people among them that are walking up to the seriousness of the apostasy. These unity meetings with the Christian church will sound an alarm for them.

The situation at Fifth and Highland in Abilene and its Herald of Truth and the far out digressiveness of other big sponsoring churches which have taken so many millions of dollars from local churches to build powerful and influential denominational machines ought to awaken many to the dangers of this centralization of power in the hands of a few in their "chief seats." In some ways they are farther out in "left field" than the conservative Christian church which split off from the Disciples church in 1968. Preachers of the two groups that are working toward uniting will be able to be happy members of the Ministerial Associations with the preachers of the protestant churches which no longer protest much against Catholicism, worldliness, or modernism.

When any unscriptural innovation is added the flood gate of digression is opened toward complete apostasy. Such movement is back to denominationalism. Faithful men earlier were involved in a "back to the Bible" movement. Apostasy is the very reverse of the "back to the Bible" movement. It is a step by step journey back to the human wisdom of the days before the "restoration." The worthy efforts to please God made by the pioneer preachers we have respected are rejected by the digressives as they turn back toward the goal of pleasing their religious neighbors rather than pleasing God.

Wise Christians are willing to use aids such as projectors, well-lighted and comfortable buildings, the modern printing facilities so that we may teach by written sermons, etc. When these things are used we still do the very thing that is commanded. We teach and worship. We, by the use of these things, are not changing the pattern of worship, or putting the church in some unauthorized work such as entertainment or general benevolence, or putting some big denominational machine above the local church. There is a

big difference between an aid and an addition. We need to be able to discern this difference.

The pattern for the Lord's church is all the New Testament says about the mission, worship, and organization of the church and the conduct and attitudes of its members. We are to accept the promises of the word along with the precepts and negative commands. We have no right to take away any rule or restriction given by inspiration. It is also very important to understand that we are not to add any restrictions not found in the sacred writings.

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## THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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### JAMES TRIGG

**W. R. JONES**, Conroe, TX—James Trigg preacher for the Highland Blvd. church in San Antonio, Texas, has lost his long battle with cancer. He was buried on June 3rd in Longview. James was a faithful husband, father and Christian. As a preacher, he did much good in God's kingdom. His work will bear fruit for generations to come. The Highland church stayed by him all the way through and they are to be commended for their loyalty. Vernell, his faithful wife, gave him "tender loving care" through the long ordeal. Our loving sympathy is extended to Vernell and the children in their loss which is shared to some degree by many of us.

**MARK L. CASEY**, 2578 Camino San Patricio, Santa Fe, NM 87505— I have been working with the Capitol City church in Santa Fe since June, 1985. The church is composed of five families and a couple of individuals. Santa Fe is one of the most popular tourist spots in the Southwest and we invite you to worship with us when in the area. Dee Bowman will conduct a gospel meeting for us July 20-25. For more information on our work, call (505) 471-6801 or 983-6675.

**NORMAN E. FULTZ**, P. O. Box 423, Raymore, MO 64083—After nearly nine years with the church in Raymore, May 25 was my last Sunday here. On June 1, I began with the Nashua church near KCI

Airport. My wife and I will be commuting until we can get a house built; therefore our mailing address will remain the same for a few months. Those needing to correspond with the Raymore church will need to use 107 Woodson St. as the address. Nashua's meeting house is located at 11425 N. Main St., Kansas City, MO 64155. Four have recently been baptized here at Raymore, two of them children of members, the other two being fiancées of two of our young men and both of them from denominational background. Harry Osborne of Baytown, TX is now working with the Raymore church. If visiting in, or passing through, the Kansas City area, we invite you to visit with either Raymore or Nashua. Raymore is on the southeast perimeter of the city, Nashua on the north.

**BILL SEXTON**, 4400 N. W. Gleason, Kansas City, MO 64151—I have been working with the church meeting at 6403 N. W. Roanridge Road in Kansas City since July, 1985. Two have been baptized, four restored and a family identified with us. Wayne Goff of Kilgore, TX held us a good meeting in June. We have a new building that will seat about 150. We are located at 64th St. N. W. at I-29 about 8 miles south of KCI airport. We invite those moving to this area to work and worship with us. We are small enough that you can get involved easily, with plenty of room to grow and make your contribution. If you are driving through Kansas City, stop and visit. If you have friends or relatives we could contact, please let us know. Ed Dye will be with us in September (22-28) and Keith Sharp in the spring of 1987.

**JACK HOLT**, Rt. 1, Box 409. Logansport, LA 71049—I have just completed three years and eight months with the Highway Nine church in Corpus Christi, TX. I am now preaching for the Stanley church in Stanley, LA. The work at Highway Nine went well. 14 were baptized. The church grew from 32 to 41 (in spite of the peaceful departure of 13 to begin a new work in Portland, Texas), two elders were appointed, a two-night open forum type discussion was held with a Baptist group, and I conducted two written discussions concerning the institutional question. Allen Dworack will be moving from Ohio to Highway Nine.

**STAUFFER-RAMSEY DEBATE IN KNOXVILLE, TN**

**GREG GWIN**, 9048 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37923—A debate will be held August 18, 29, 21 and 22 at the building of the church in Lenoir City, TN. Lenoir City is about 15 miles southwest of Knoxville, about one and a half miles south of I-75 on Highway 95. L. A. Stauffer of St. Louis, MO will represent the West Knoxville church in a discussion with Glen Ramsey of Cookeville, TN who will represent the Lenoir City church. Stauffer preaches for the Kirkwood church in the St. Louis area and Ramsey is vice president of Tennessee Bible College in Cookeville. The first two nights will concern the sponsoring church arrangement. The last two nights will deal with the role of the church in benevolence. This discussion is unique in that the liberal between first approached us about the matter. We are encouraged by their openness and the fact that this church is more conservative than many others in the area. We hope for much good to be done.

**FRY ROAD LECTURES**

**FRY ROAD CHURCH**, 2510 Fry Road, Houston, Texas 77084—Bob F. Owen, Temple Terrace, Florida and James W. Ward, San Antonio, Texas will be with us at Fry Road August 11-13. Theme for the morning lectures will be "God Is Able." The evening theme will be "God's Abundant Grace." Glenn Tomblin will direct singing each night from 7-7:30.

**PAUL K. WILLIAMS**, 18 Fairlie Rd., Eshowe, 3815 South Africa—The church in Eshowe is paying the expenses and salary for David Ngonyama to spend a month working with a small, spiritually weak church in Ingwavuma. Four have recently been baptized here. We run a tight schedule on Sundays with four services and three hours of driving. Gene Tope is to conduct a meeting July 2-4 in the Town Hall in Eshowe.

**CARLOS CAPELLI**, Casilla #83, 1665 Jose C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina—In late March I had a one night debate with a "Jesus Only" Pentecostal. In a short gospel meeting at Boulogne in late April, two were baptized. Luis Riffo made a trip in May to visit the poor brethren in San Cristobal and took clothes and food. While there for one week, one married woman was baptized.

**PREACHERS NEEDED**

**VALPARAISO, FLORIDA**—Wanted: An energetic person to preach the gospel for a small congregation in Northwest Florida. Attendance is about 20. We are able to supply \$160 a week support. Please write Twin Cities Church of Christ, 92 Eastview Ave., Valparaiso, FL 32580 or call Wayne Bolin at (904) 892-4736 for further information.

**PONTIAC, ILLINOIS**—The church at 935 N. Main St. is looking for a full time preacher. We have about 27 members with attendance between 40-50. We are able to provide partial support. For more information please call (815) 842-2993 or (815) 844-7287.

**KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA**—The brethren in Kissimmee, Florida are searching for a full time preacher. We can provide partial support. For information write: Church of Christ, 2461 Fortune road, Kissimmee, FL 32743 or contact John Dubose at (305) 846-1563.

**VERNON, TEXAS**—After four years with the church here, Roy S. Bradshaw is moving to Alamogordo, NM. The church here is therefore in need of a full-time preacher. We need an experienced man who is a good personal worker. With 22 members, the church can supply \$400 a month with the rest raised elsewhere. We would prefer a man between 30-60 years of age. The building is free of debt. Those interested may write: Church of Christ, P. O. Box 867, Vernon, TX 76384.

**REPUBLIC, MISSOURI**—The Eastside church meeting at 1421 E. Logan St. in Republic, MO needs a full time preacher. We are a congregation of 40 members in a town of 5,000. A man must be able to bring some support with him. Write: Clyde A. Eubanks, 702 E. Harrison St., Republic, MO 65738 or phone (417) 732-2039.

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**CORRECTION**

A news item in the May, 1986, issue concerning a new congregation now meeting in Summerville, SC, states that it is over 100 miles in different directions to reach other sound congregations. Since Ashley Heights in Charleston Heights, SC is only 12 miles away from this new work and since Ray Goff, who started that work with the goodwill of the Ashley Heights church where he formerly worshipped, the impression was inadvertently left that Ashley Heights was not a sound work. This is a mistake and we apologize to Ashley Heights and to the work in Summerville. The news item was condensed by the editor from an item sent out by brother Goff and the editor accepts the blame for this poor editing of the item. *Mia culpa!*

**FRUIT OF HOLT DOCTRINE**

A little more than half of the number which comprised the Ocean Springs, Mississippi church either taught or were sympathetic toward those who did teach the doctrine of Charles A. Holt which essentially argues that the local church is nothing more than saints in a given area who act individually or together at times but are not an organized, functional entity. Among those involved were two of the three trustees of the property and the treasurer. Those familiar with the doctrine and its consequences will realize the irony of the situation. They continue to meet in the building and have a common treasury. Because of this situation those opposed to this doctrine are meeting at 44 Pitman Rd., Ocean Springs. We meet on Sundays from 8-11 A. M. and on Tuesdays from 7-8: 15 P. M. Ron Washburn preacher of the Morris Rd. church in Gulfport will preach for us at 8: 00 A. M. on Sundays and Jimmy Jenkins, preacher for the Chico Road church in Pascagoula, has agreed to teach the adult class on Tuesday nights. We hope to find a preacher who will be willing and able, under these difficult circumstances, to come and work with us. Christians coming to Keesler AFB or the Biloxi area need to know about this and either meet with us or with the Morris Board church in Gulfport, or with Chico Road in Pascagoula.

(Editor's Note: This trouble has been brewing ever since Charles A. Holt revived his error of the late 1960's and started publishing his paper, THE EXAMINER. That paper and its influence is in the middle of this trouble. We report this only because brethren need to know the end result of this doctrine. This is probably not the last church to experience great difficulty over these views. It is indeed ironic that those who oppose a church treasury (except for emergen-



cies) and who make such a fuss about church property and "functional entity" are the ones here with two out of three trustees of property and who have control of the common treasury If this doctrine is allowed free reign it would destroy congregations everywhere Brethren, be alert CWA)

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**EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS TO FILIPINO BRETHREN**

Ever since 1970 the editor has received a large volume of mail from preachers in the Philippines. We have now over 100 Filipino preachers on the mailing list for this paper. Preaching trips there in 1971 and 1975 greatly added to this mail. For a long time I tried to answer every letter, but even with a secretary for a few years, it got to be more than I could do and still maintain my own work in teaching, preaching in meetings and keeping the paper on schedule. The volume has tapered off somewhat since I have not been able to carry my end of the correspondence. But I still get second and third letters from brethren who are indignant because they have not heard from me. I would personally like to be able to carry on extensive correspondence with every brother there. Circumstances are such that it is impossible. Also, some seem to be under the impression that I own a bookstore and am able to send any book advertised in the paper to anyone who requests it, free. Brethren, I do not own or run a book store. I own no stock in one. I have to pay for every book or tract I order. Religious Supply Center is a private business which buys advertising space in STS. The paper and the bookstore are not inter-related. I simply sell advertising space to them. I certainly do recommend their products and services to those in need of them. But it is not possible to send every book or tract requested. We have had many similar requests from brethren in Nigeria.

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**TELEVISION TRASH**

About the only time my wife and I have to watch a little TV is when we are traveling and try to watch an hour or so at bedtime. We have been appalled the last few weeks at how little there is to see which is not too violent, sexy or filled with humor spiced with double meanings, or outright crudity. We turned on Benson which we thought was fairly innocent, only to find ourselves subjected to a story about dog breeding laced with innuendoes and outright off-color humor. Then we turned on a show called 227, another comedy. The story involved one of the principals pondering whether to go to New York City for a weekend with a man. They were not married. She decided to go and the star of the show ended up apologizing for being judgmental. We didn't stay to the end.

On another comedy show recently the mother was in law school and had a fit of conscience about neglecting her family. Her effort to become a home maker resulted in her being made to look silly and her family encouraging her to go back to her career. The Bill Cosby show recently ridiculed a young man for being a "chauvinist" because he made remarks about cooking and home-making being a woman's work. He was made to look like a fool and the career-oriented mother and her career-minded elder daughter were glamorized. But there may be hope. The average time a TV set is on in a house to day has DROPPED to just 7 1/2 hours!

**IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH**

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| BAPTISMS     | 186 |
| RESTORATIONS | 110 |

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)