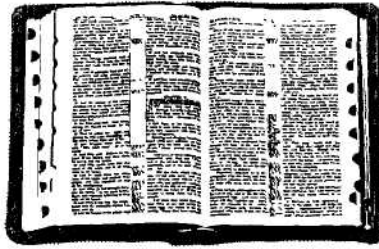


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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.

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VOLUME XXVII

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Number 9

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



UNIQUE CLAIMS OF THE BIBLE

Characteristics of the Book called the Bible are so unique and bold that the reader is at once aware that he is reading something that penetrates the very heart of man, and at the same time the bold claims of the Book far surpass anything else known to man. The Bible makes certain claims that are completely absurd to the human race if it is not the Book of God. These claims excel any claims for other writings, and the Book makes no apology for the claims.

It claims to be indestructible. The Bible claims to be a volume that cannot be destroyed in time or eternity, it submits to no power, but claims to survive all its enemies. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Peter asserts that the word of God will live and abide for ever, and that the word of the Lord will endure for ever (1 Peter 1:23,25). Every tool of opposition and destruction known has been hurled against the Bible with all its power, but this book has come out victorious over all.

It claims to be all-sufficient. The Bible claims, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16,17). It claims to *perfect* man unto *all good works*. It says it contains everything that pertains unto life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). It contains all truth delivered from God to man (John 16:13). It has been

once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). The Bible will do for mankind all that God wants done. It is the final authority in all matters. It is perfectly adaptable to all men of all ages. No other book can serve all generations of men as does the Bible. It lacks nothing and supplies all things for all men of all nations and times.

It claims to be perfect literature. The Bible claims perfection in literature. It possesses certain qualities that distinguish it from all other writings known. It contains every type of literature known to man. It was reported that Benjamin Franklin, who was one time the ambassador to France, was invited to a French Literary Society of Infidels. It was also reported that it was a rule of this society that each member would write an original story and submit it to the criticism of the other members. When Mr. Franklin's time came he copied by hand the entire book of Ruth and read it to the assembly. When he finished they applauded his great work and pronounced it a master-piece. They asked for permission to publish it to the world. Ben Franklin replied that he could not grant such permission because it was already in print; it was in the Bible. Before they learned that it came from the Bible, they called it the "best love story in the world."

The Bible contains poetry, biography, law, history, prophecy, and love stories. It is at the same time the most profound and yet the simplest of all writings. It never grows old with the passing of time.

It claims to contain the highest purpose. The Bible serves a different purpose to the books composed by men. Most other books are given to gratify the passions of men, either for knowledge or entertainment, but the Bible is given to curb and control these passions and to prepare the soul for eternity.

The Bible presents man as a sinner and unfit for his entrance into heaven. Other books tell of man's virtues and accomplishments, but the Bible points out the weaknesses of all men alike, even the greatest men of the world. Noah's intoxication is recorded with the sins of his daughters; Abraham's weakness in lying to Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister to avoid punishment; David's adultery with the wife of Uriah is recorded; Peter's denial of the Lord is given in detail. The Bible is

completely impartial in the account of the history of mankind. No ethnic group, no racial or social groups are depicted as inferior to others.

It is also a purpose of the Bible to give the promise of rewards and punishments to those who keep or do not keep its laws. No man can promise rewards beyond his own imaginations and expectations. Neither could this be so in punishments. Its purpose is to guide mankind into a righteous way of living to avoid the punishments stated and to gain the rewards promised.

The demands and claims of the Bible show its purpose. It claims to control the hearts and lives of all men and of all nations without a single apology. No branch of human philosophy has ever thought of such a demand.

It claims to be the foundation of the Religion of Christ. Nothing can survive if the foundation is destroyed. The Bible is the foundation of Christianity because it gives the laws and rules for such. Without the Bible the work of Christ could not exist. No other book has such an influence on the spiritual nature and welfare of all men. They are either saved by its power, or they are hardened in their rebellion against the truth.

The religion of Christ is dependent upon the revelation of God for its nature and working. Christ must be preached before men can believe. The Bible serves this purpose, as John states in John 20:30,31. The Christ must be known. The four gospel records are designed to do this. Some claim that Jesus was a pure moral man of the highest standing, but they deny that he is divine. This claim is absolutely impossible. How could a man be pure morally and be the greatest impostor of all history? Christ claims to be the Son of God and eternal with the Father. If he is not what he claims to be he is a deceiver and does not deserve to be the Saviour and the foundation of the church. But if Christ is what he claims to be, his word, the Bible, is everything it claims to be.

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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STATEMENT FROM CECIL WILLIS

The following statement was made before the church at Groveton, Texas on Wednesday night, July 23, 1986:

"My purpose in coming before you at this time is to make acknowledgement of each and every sin of which I have been guilty. I am sorry for whatever reproach might have come upon the name of Christ as a result of my sins. I ask your forgiveness, and your prayers that God might forgive me. I will be willing to serve the church in any way you request, and whenever you think appropriate.

My work schedule, at present, hinders me in attending many services of this congregation, but I do worship each Lord's Day with a small church in Trinity, Texas.

My marriage to _____ is ending; divorce proceedings are underway at present.

This statement is made to renew my relationship with this church. A copy thereof will be sent to the church in Huntsville for them to use as they see fit. Any additional questions you may have regarding my circumstances, feel free to ask."

Brotherly,

Cecil Willis

Ordinarily, we would not publish such acknowledgements made before local churches, though we rejoice anytime a brother seeks to correct wrongs in life. Because so many brethren have known Cecil Willis, appreciated his work in the kingdom in days gone by, and have agonized so much over events in his life in recent years, I thought it would bring great joy to the hearts of many to know of this recent event. A copy of this statement was sent to the church at Huntsville, Texas where he was living at the time he entered what many, this editor included, considered an unscriptural marriage. He has also sent copies to Woodland Hills and Southside in Marion, Indiana where he was living at the time his first marriage deteriorated.

The church at Huntsville, Texas took disciplinary measures. Following that, he began working at the Texas State Penitentiary in Huntsville as a guard where

he continues to work operating an electronic gate.

For a long time there was little contact between him and those of us who worked so closely with him in the past. More recent events have caused him to look more objectively at his situation and have opened the door for visits with several of us. I spent the day with him back in June and we forthrightly discussed many things. The influence of family, brethren, the force of traumatic circumstances and a conscience educated for many years by a close acquaintance with the word of God have all had a part in the statement quoted above.

Many people in many countries are in the kingdom now through the tireless work of Cecil Willis over many years. In the Ohio Valley and throughout the country, there are churches standing for the truth today which would have gone into liberalism had it not been for his dedicated work. Cecil and I have been friends since 1949 and worked together with the Brown Street church in Akron, Ohio during critical years in that area. We have traveled together, laughed, wept, prayed and preached together. I, along with many others, have wept much over what happened to his life. Brethren in many places ask me "What has become of Cecil Willis." It gives me much joy to report his repentance. Cecil knows I am publicizing his statement and gave his consent. It is painful to him. Any brother or sister who has ever had to make such a statement knows the agony of soul this involves.

I hope that many brethren will write to him and let him know that they still love him and that their prayers have been answered. He must not "be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him" (2 Cor. 2:7-8). This statement does not remove all the heartache and trauma of personal tragedy to which he is heir. The after-effects will long endure. But he is our brother and needs our encouragement. He certainly has mine. As long as he is striving to do what is right, he deserves the compassion, forgiveness and support of all who know him. Those who might wish to write him a note may reach him at: P.O. Box 15, Woodlake, Texas 75865.

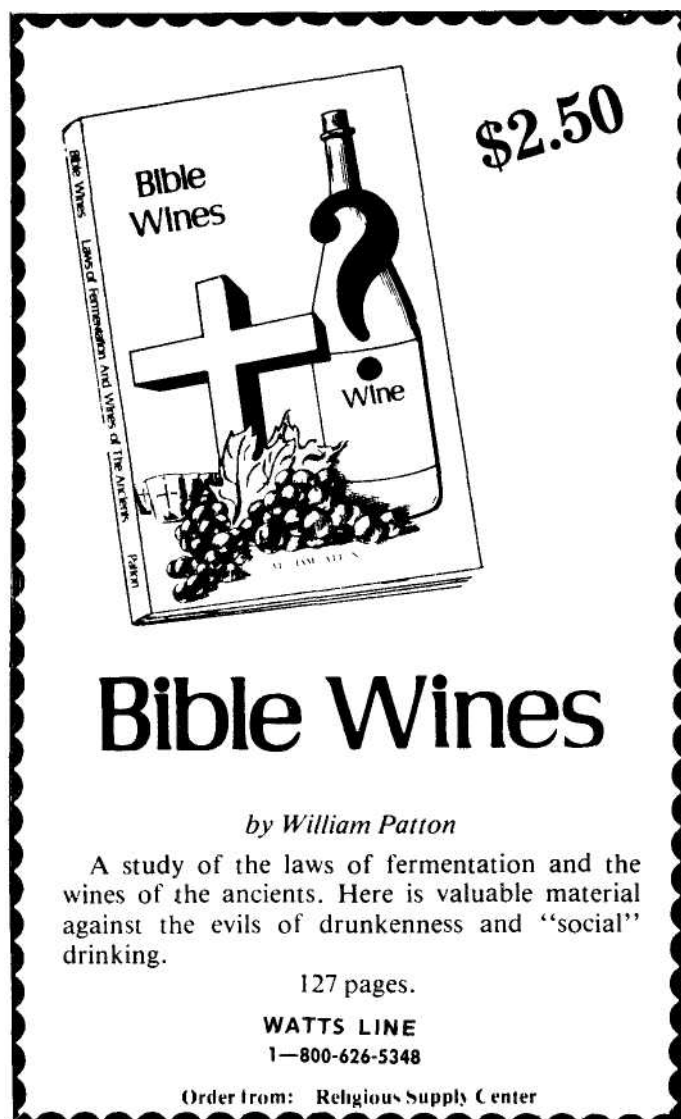
PATTON-PHILLIPS EXCHANGE

The January, February and March, 1987 issues of this paper will carry an exchange of three articles apiece by Marshall E. Patton and H.E. Phillips on whether persons "put away" may scripturally remarry. Both of them believe that fornication is the only scriptural ground for divorce and remarriage. Both believe that the guilty party cannot remarry. Both believe that fornication frees the innocent party to remarry. Brother Patton believes that after a divorce for causes other than fornication, that when one party remarries, the remaining party may then put the other away mentally and then be free to marry, certain conditions prevailing. Brother Phillips does not believe this.

In the March, 1986 edition of this paper, there was an exchange of articles on this subject between Jim Deason of Columbia, Tennessee and Weldon E. Warnock. This was in response to an article by brother Warnock in

his question and answer column which appeared in November, 1985. In the March issue, I also expressed my own view of the matter and differed with what brother Warnock had said. Brother Phillips was to have debated that, along with other aspects of the matter, with Jack Gibbert in Virginia several years ago, but was unable even to attend the debate due to sickness. J.T. Smith appeared in his place. Brother Smith has expressed his views on this matter in at least three articles in STS over the last ten years. Brother Patton spoke, by invitation, on the subject at the High School Road Lectures in Indianapolis, Indiana in July of this year. His outline clearly sets forth his views.

Both of these men are eminently qualified to address the subject, we hope to the benefit of all readers. They are also personal friends of many years and have been congenial co-workers in the publication of this paper ever since 1960. Their love for truth, for each other and for the readers of this paper cannot be doubted. That they will treat each other as brethren should in presenting and pressing different views, I have no doubt. We look forward to the benefits of their study. Watch for it.



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THE FAMILY TABLE

J. Wiley Adams

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The family meal is an occasion that can help to unify the family. Memories of pleasant times around the table for me are very pronounced. This is true whether I look back to my own boyhood days or whether I consider the matter in terms of my own family, children and grandchildren.

I grew up in different times that included the great depression and World War II. Breakfast was a main event at our house. Everyone had to work and thus everyone needed to eat a substantial meal. Diets and various food restrictions were unheard of. We all worked so hard nobody in the family was "fat." Everyone came to the table at meal time and no one dared say "I don't like" this, that, or the other which was on the table. We could not afford to be "picky" about our food. Whatever was on the table you were glad to have it, and you asked for more. You knew it had to last until the next mealtime. Eating between meals was not a well known practice in those days.

Since we lived in the country we always had plenty to eat. We raised our own hogs, chickens, had our own milk cows. Thus, eggs and butter were always in abundance with plenty of "clabber" to make biscuits. Vegetables were in abundance while jelly, jam preserves, molasses and various kinds of fruit were plentiful.

The abundant table, the family gathered around that table, my father's fervent prayers of thanksgiving before we ate, the warmth and security of family togetherness all combined to create something most wholesome and memorable. I remember such times now with pleasure and nostalgia.

We lived in the times of three meals a day. In Virginia we called them breakfast, dinner and supper. I still call them that in the absence of any good reason to change.

We learned a certain discipline at the table. You waited for things to be passed to you or if the bowl was too hot you were told to "pass your plate." Many an unnecessary spill was avoided by such a practice. There was order. Children were allowed to speak when they wanted something to be passed or an extra helping. Otherwise, they ate and listened to the conversation. In this arrangement good manners were learned without the aid of an etiquette book.

So the two things that were outstanding was the food and the talk. Both were involved in the family meal and as far as I was concerned essential the one to the other. The children were not allowed to dominate the scene. Such presumption would result in a hard look and gave

much promise of a hard lick should breach of conduct continue. I learned many things around the table. I doubt if I would have learned very much if I had been allowed to run my mouth all the time.

I just know that the prayers three times a day helped me. Even twice a day, when school and work schedules prevented a mid-day meal together, was a great uplift. Billboards and various advertisements sometimes set forth the idea "the family that prays together stays together." There is much truth in this but it might be even more emphatic to say "the family that prays and eats together stays together."

Contrast the foregoing things with some typical current practices. Moms and Dads often skip breakfast, leave at different times for different jobs. The children are told to "get yourself some cereal and a glass of milk and don't be late for school." They eat, if at all, one at a time, maybe a rote prayer is recited in an unintelligible and hurried manner, the kids leave an empty house (with their own key, of course) they eat lunch in the school cafeteria hurriedly, come home to an empty house. Mom and Dad arrive home from work late, send out for hamburgers, pizza, or some other calorie-laden, greasy fast food or perhaps a frozen dinner. They eat the evening meal with haste nervously. The children are so glad to be home and are so starved for some kind of family togetherness that they talk incessantly, all at the same time, as if they must hang on to this rare occasion for dear life.

Then the children are driven to their rooms to study their lessons, allowed an hour of TV (much of which is unsuitable), drive them to bed after a "quick prayer," so the parents can relax and watch TV before retiring. So goes many days in our modern society. Is it any wonder that families break up? There are no guideline memories or secure times for them to draw on. A popular country music song today tells quite a story. It is entitled, "Grandpa, Tell Us Of The Good Old Days" and goes on to emphasize a deep longing in the hearts of many young people for a return to grass roots values and a slower but more meaningful life.

A special meal time for me was always Sunday morning. Then we had "cheese biscuits." My mother is the world's champion at this delicious mealtime achievement. We all got up early enough to eat at the same time. The meal consisted of Mama's famed cheese biscuits, ham, red-eye gravy, scrambled eggs, with butter and jelly or preserves of some kind. My Daddy did not think the table was set unless there was something "sweet" on the table to finish off the biscuits. Then we all got up and got ready to go to worship services and we arrived on time. This was possible because we took our baths on Saturday night as well as shinned our shoes. Bible lessons were done on Saturday evenings and we still had time to listen to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio.

Brethren, have we lost something that should be revived? The family circle, the family prayers, around the family table? Will your children and grandchildren have such pleasant memories to sustain them in the days and years ahead? Are they being cheated from an invaluable

heritage? Think about it!

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

2212 Jordan Lane, S.W.
Huntsville, Alabama 35805



USELESS BONES

R.L. Whiteside once closed his brief response to a foolish question with the words: "Some people can drag in more useless bones to chew on than a hound pup."

I heard of one congregation that divided over the momentous issue of whether or not non-Christians marooned on a desolate island could scripturally baptize each other if they learned the truth from a New Testament. The church was located over a thousand miles from the ocean!

I wonder what A.C. Grider would have said had he been there. A lady once called on our question and answer T.V. program when Brother Grider was my guest. She asked what the situation would be if a person were 500 miles away from the water and wished to be baptized.

In confusion and perplexity I turned to Brother A.C. who calmly suggested to the caller, "If you're planning on getting that far away from the water, you ought to be baptized before you go."

I've been in classes where brethren would argue for weeks over whether the apostles and all of John's disciples had to be re-baptized and any other useless bone someone drug in. When I'm teaching a class, I nip such fruitless discussions in the bud. If a subject is: 1) not answered in the Scriptures; and 2) of no possible relevance to us today, it is useless.

When Bible classes are allowed to continue on such a level, a number of things result:

1. **The class becomes negative in its outlook.** The primary motive of study quickly evolves into a search for something to quibble and argue over. Those who remain in the class soon learn the rules of the game. "Bible study in this class is not designed to aid me and build me up, but to tear at someone or something." Bro. Jim Ward tells of setting forth some positive instruction in a class when a brother interrupted and asked, "Who can I use that on?" After a few seconds of awkward silence, Jim replied, "Why not try yourself?"

2. **Members become calloused in their dispositions.** Some brother (and sisters, too) forget their religion when they get into a hot discussion. They throw all restraint to the winds. It doesn't matter if they are replying to a "grizzled old warrior" of a thousand like skirmishes, or a newcomer to the class, and perhaps a

new convert, the name of the game is "win the argument." (In the name of truth, of course.)

3. **The class gets a reputation.** No one wants to try to teach such a group except possibly a champion debater. There are at least a couple of reasons for this. For one, they know such a group cannot be taught much of anything. For another, they don't like to have their hide nailed to the wall every time they say something. It hurts!

It might be wise to hang a sign in every classroom with the inspired warning: "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes" (2 Timothy 2:23).

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

1021 Welford Dr.
Xenia, OH 45385



WOMEN TEACHING BAPTIZED BOYS

QUESTION: *May a woman teach a boy who has been baptized, even though he is only 10, 11 or 12 years old? Some brethren transfer a baptized boy into a class taught by a man, believing that women may not teach male members of the church. Please comment.*

ANSWER: Yes, a woman may scripturally teach a boy who has been baptized. Those who prohibit it have an erroneous view of the Scriptures and they do a disservice to the boy(s) who is removed from the class. The students the man teaches are older and the subject material is perhaps too advanced. We would not allow our youngsters being placed in classes beyond their mental and emotional levels in the public school system, but for some strange reason it is all right in the church.

The verse used to try to prove that women may not teach baptized boys is 1 Tim. 2:12. Paul wrote, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Here, the apostle is saying that a woman may not teach OVER MAN, nor usurp authority OVER MAN. By what stretch of the imagination, therefore, does this scripture prohibit a woman from teaching a boy, even though he has been baptized? The passage would have to read: "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man and baptized boys, but to be in silence." The passage simply does not say what some brethren try to make it say.

The word, "man," in 1 Tim. 2:12 is from the Greek word *aner*, and is defined by Thayer, p. 45, "with reference to sex, and so to distinguish a man from a woman. . . with a reference to age, and to distinguish an adult man from a boy." W.E. Vine says that *aner* "stands (a) in distinction from a woman . . . (b) as distinct from a boy

or infant." *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 29, states, "A male person of full age and stature, as opposed to a child or female."

We conclude from the preceding definitions of these reputable sources that a boy in no way fits into the scope of the apostle Paul's limitations and prohibitions placed on women in the text under discussion. One who so advocates such a notion is doing it arbitrarily, without any scriptural basis whatsoever.

Let us observe that at the age of 12 Jesus is called a child. Luke 2:42 gives the age of Jesus as 12 when he went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. Verse 43 calls Jesus a child—"the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem." The word "child" in v. 43 is from the Greek word, *pais*." It means in this passage, as defined by Thayer, p. 473, "A child, boy, or girl." *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 298 states, "A child in respect of age, either male or female, and of all ages from infancy up to manhood, a boy, young, girl, maiden." Hence, at the age of 12 Jesus was not yet a man. He was still a child.

In view of the above declarations and deductions, the inevitable conclusion would be that a woman may teach boys in a Bible class. We have seen that there would be no conflict with 1 Tim. 2:12 as the apostle prohibits only the women from teaching over men. Since boys are not men, and "man" in 1 Tim. 2:12 excludes boys, as seen by the authoritative definitions, the theory under consideration falls "flat on its face" because it has no biblical support on which to stand.

The fact that the boy has been baptized does not alter the situation one iota. Baptism does not make a man out of a boy. Baptism simply changes the spiritual relationship. We had just as well argue that no male becomes a man until he is baptized as to argue that a boy becomes a man after he is baptized. Such is absurd. The implication of such fallacious reasoning is that a woman may teach men if they have not been baptized. On this basis a woman could buy a tent and conduct gospel meetings if the brothers in Christ would stay away.

Really, what is the difference between having a baptized 12-year old boy in a class taught by a woman, and having an unbaptized 12-year old boy in the same class? Not a bit of difference. Neither one is a man. Both are boys, although one has been baptized and the other one has not. Furthermore, how long could the woman continue to teach the unbaptized boys? Till they are 14? 15? Truthfully, is not this a matter of common sense and good judgment?

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INDIVIDUALISM VS. THE FUNDS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Part Three

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Introduction

In speaking of the churches described in the New Testament, one of this movement's adherents said, "They did not have a 'corporate treasury' because there was no corporation."¹ This position is exceedingly interesting since the movement has formed its own corporation, Truth and Freedom Ministries, Inc., and is appealing for Christians to donate funds to it!² So, the essence of their objection is, it is wrong for Christians to form an organization, a local church of Christ, which maintains a treasury, but it's all right to do this if the organization is one like Truth and Freedom Ministries, Inc.!

I believe the New Testament plainly reveals that churches maintained treasuries, and that they spent treasury funds to perform divinely authorized duties.

What the Bible Teaches

Acts 4:34-37 records: "For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales, and lay them at the apostles' feet and they would be distributed to each, as any had need."³ If this passage doesn't show that the Jerusalem church maintained a treasury of contributed funds for the relief of needy saints, I'm at a loss to tell you what the Bible would have to say to teach it.

What The Individualist Teaches

(1) In trying to push the idea that local churches should not maintain treasuries, Individualists have attacked 1 Corinthians 16:2 with all their might. That passage reads, "On the first day of every week let each of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come." According to the Individualist, "This is a plan for each person to budget or save on a regular basis for this great need. The teaching is that it was to be put aside *at home* on a regular basis"(emphasis mine, jhj)⁴

Admittedly, some commentators have taken this view of the passage, but to do so is to ignore the context. Why would Paul set aside a special day for giving, instructing all the churches to do the same (verse 1), if it was simply something done by oneself? And if Paul wanted to avoid a collection when he came ("...that no collections be made when I come."), why did he instruct them to prepare the gift in such a way that would require collecting those funds from each household when he came?

In 1 Corinthians 16:2, the word translated "put" comes from the Greek word TITHEMI, which means

"to place, lay, set."⁵ The word translated "aside" comes from the Greek word PARA, which means "by the side of." The New American Standard leaves the Greek word HEAUTOU, meaning "himself, herself, or itself," untranslated. The word translated "save" is the Greek word THESAURIZO, and means to treasure up. So, literally, the passage is: "On the first day of the week let each one of you **put by himself and treasure up**, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come." It is evident that Paul is commanding each Christian to decide for himself what he ought to give (to "put by himself"), and then he is to treasure that with the other saints. Any other view would require a collection when Paul came.

In commenting on this passage, Barnes expresses the following view: "The Greek phrase, 'by himself,' means, probably, the same as at home. Let him set it apart; let him designate a certain portion; let him do this by himself, when he is at home, when he can calmly look at the evidence of his prosperity. Let him do it not under the influence of pathetic appeals, or for the sake of display when he is with others; but let him do it as a matter of principle, and when he is by himself. The phrase in Greek, 'treasuring up,' may mean that each one was to put the part which he had designated into the common treasury. This interpretation seems to be demanded by the latter part of the verse. They were to lay it by, and to put it into the common treasury, that there might be no trouble collecting it when he should come."⁶

(2) Another argument which has been used to discredit the idea of churches maintaining treasured funds was stated like this, "There is no such thing in the New Testament as 'the Lord's money' or 'the Lord's treasury.' The pooled or collected money from the disciples of Christ is not sacred or holy money."⁷

I agree that the New Testament does not use the terms "the Lord's money," or "the Lord's treasury," but the ideas are there nevertheless. 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.

The dictionary has many definitions for the word "sacred." One of those definitions is, "set apart for, and dedicated to some person, place, purpose, sentiment, etc."⁸ I maintain without fear of being successfully disproven, that monies contributed to the local church are "sacred," and it is "the Lord's money" in the sense of the definition I have just cited.

(3) Individualists have also argued, "There is no instance in the New Testament of disciples giving into a general fund for general purposes." This is an argument drawn from abuse, and does not argue for the elimination of the church treasury. If Christians are not aware of what they are giving for, they ought to be. The institutional question divided churches in the 1950s and 1960s because brethren were convinced that the things they were being urged to give for were not scriptural. This illustrates that brethren are very much aware of what they are giving for.

(4) Perhaps most disturbing about the Individualists' efforts to impose this doctrine upon the people of God

are the statements they have made impugning preacher's motives in encouraging God's people to give. One of them has said, "... the preachers have a strong vested interest in 'the corporate treasury,' because that is the source of their livelihood! As an employee of the corporate church their wages, Social Security, 'hospitalization insurance,' house payment, living expenses, car expenses, and vacation come from this source! Every really successful 'Minister' deserves a really first-class 'Compensation Package,' as it is called! One can understand why they are so concerned with a large, and increasingly larger, financial income for 'the corporate church.' True, in our day, this is a mark of success in the ministry of the 'Pulpit Minister,' but of greater importance, it is his source of income."¹⁰

As Paul lamented in Romans 3:8, "... we are slanderously reported . . . their condemnation is just."

¹ The Examiner, page 15.

² The Examiner, page 15.

³ All Bible quotes from the New American Standard Version.

⁴ The Examiner, page 8.

⁵ All quotations in this paragraph are from *Holman's Exhaustive Concordance of the New American Standard Version*.

⁶ Barnes Notes: 1 Corinthians to Galatians, Baker's Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. ⁷ The Examiner, pages 7, 8.

⁸ New World Dictionary.

⁹ The Examiner, page 8.

¹⁰ The Examiner, page 8.

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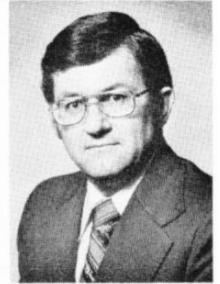
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HARDEST COMMAND OF GOD

Faith is unmistakably set forth as the foundation to the gospel. It is projected as a way of life for the Christian described as "by faith". Significantly, within Hebrews chapter 11, the great honor roll of faithful is introduced by this expression. Remember, "by faith Abel, Enoch, Noah," et. al., acted to the approval of God and their lives are held forth as examples of doing what God said in the way he said do it. However, man frequently fails in this and by that failure is irrevocably lost or he has an avenue of correction and restitution open to him. How thankful we ought to be it is the latter.

Repentance is as essential and vital to a desirable relation with God as is faith. True, faith is the foundation of that relationship and "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11:6). But Jesus also said, "I tell you, nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3, 5). Repentance seems to be an almost forgotten part of what it takes to be saved. Many seem to pay little attention to it, ignoring the fact its working and demands are vital to salvation: Salvation from the standpoint of procuring as well as maintaining a saved relationship with our God.

Repentance has been referred to as the hardest command of God. This suggestion does not presume to reflect upon the other requirements of God by way of either minimizing or slighting in any way. The reason for the difficulty of repentance attaches to the fact human will is so directly involved. It must be admitted that the obstinacy of the human will is the most formidable barrier to favor with God through the ages. It was Stephen who charged the Jews, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). This is to charge them with being "stiff-hearted", unwilling to bend, bow in submission. Thus, with being impenitent, unrepentant, "resisting the influence and direction of the Holy Ghost. This is pure and simple stubbornness, the most difficult issue any has to cope with. It represents the basic problem to proper relationships, to ongoing faithfulness to the Lord.

I want us to consider two classic examples of repentance given by the Lord. Evidence points to the fact our problem was basic to Jesus' day as well as our own. The entire mission of John the baptist in preparing the Jewish heart for the coming of the Lord can be compre-

hended in repentance as we remember, "John did baptize in the wilderness and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4).

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matt. 21:28-31). Special reference is made to the Pharisees and religious leaders among the Jews as these are represented in the number two son. He exemplifies their saying and doing not. Others, publicans and harlots, are represented in the first of the two sons, at first open rejection, outward rebellion. The change of heart in the first becomes representative of a great host of the Jews of Jesus' day and gives meaning to "the first shall be last and the last first" (Matt. 20:16). Those last by reason of their rebellion, sinful life, become first by repentance. Those professing and doing not, thus presuming prominence and first in their own eyes and profession are in fact last with God.

In application the primary bearing is upon repentance. We must take note of the initial action, only in so doing do we appreciate "repented". The rebellion and refusal of this son is calloused and obvious, "I will not". Here is epitomized the obstinacy of the human will, resentment at being told what to do. But, "afterward he repented" giving assurance that one does not have to be a slave to the past. A wrong start does not commit one to an irreversible course. Change in this son showed a number of things, among the first of which was reflection, he looked at himself, at his own attitude. The reflection produced a degree of humility causing him to admit wrong. Then desire for a better future is evident as these qualities blend to make us hopeful for him.

Progressively, take note of his obedient action, he "went". I impress upon us that this was everything, everything associated within the hopeful qualities mentioned accounts for nothing until now. He may not have said a word, yet there was, there is, no real repentance without obedient action which produces improved conduct. His direction is changed, the wrong for the right. May we suggest in a very simple way that the difference between repentance and impenitence is in the word "not". This continues to be the difference between rebellion and submission, between obedience and disobedience to God. When one says "I will quit sin, I will sin no more" and thus changes his course, this is repentance.

In Luke (15:11-21) we have the parable of the prodigal son. Again basic reference is to the Pharisees and the scribes as represented in the arrogant older brother. Those under obvious condemnation because of sin are represented in the younger. The action of this younger son pays complement to repentance. He, as was the case in our first example, reflected upon his position in that pig sty in a foreign land. Realizing it did not have to be so, he determined to do something about it and acted

upon his determination, "came to the father". With a confession of his failures there is implied the resolve to improvement. His action was accepted and he was restored while the attitude of the older brother was just the reverse.

Repentance cannot be equated with sorrow. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10). Sorrow is the cause, repentance is the effect within this passage. "I'm sorry" is always a proper sentiment but it is not enough within itself. What kind of sorrow produces repentance? Not the "sorrow of the world," mundane sorrow, sadness because of reverses and disappointments of life brought on by an acknowledged course of sin or sorrow at being found out. A deep seated sadness or regret that sees self as God sees, a sinner doomed and damned, a rebel to God, disobedient to his will and purposes, hopeless and helpless. Unless hearts can be touched and tendered by this repentance will not result. When regret for our sin produces a touch of the sadness of God within us then we become tender, receptive and responsible, we will repent. Our mind, heart and way, will change. May such tenderness ever attend each and willingness to repent be the continuing disposition of our heart.

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LIBERTY

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It is 9:30 p.m., July 4, 1986. The Washington fireworks are about over, while the New York Statue of Liberty fireworks celebration is soon to begin.

The words, "freedom" and "liberty," have been spoken and heard often today. It would be interesting to know how many times the words have been used in the last twelve hours. It is doubtful if any person in the United States has not used the word, liberty or freedom, today! What are my rights or liberties? "Rights" are frequently claimed which are based upon selfish "license" rather than proper liberty. The word "liberty" is often mis-used by selfish interests. What is liberty? How would you define the word?

One hundred and twenty-two years ago Abraham Lincoln commented, "The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty, and the American people, just now, are much in want of one." The "reasoning" of the worldly-minded demonstrates that the true definition of liberty is rejected in favor of a selfish concept. Daniel Webster said, "Liberty exists in proportion to wholesome restraint." There is no such thing as true liberty, where there is no restraint.

The practice of substituting licentiousness for "liberty" has been around a long time. Over nineteen hundred years ago, Jude wrote, "For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old, written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). This language shows that such practice is not just 1900 years old, but was "of old written of before!" Long before Jude's time, men were abusing the grace of God, by claiming "rights" entirely foreign to the provisions of grace. Ungodly men, then and now, presume on the grace of God. Their attempt, then and now, is to stretch the grace of God to include what they want, irrespective of the will of God and the rights of their fellow men.

Brother H. Leo Boles, in preaching on liberty, would swing his arm around, saying, "I have the right to swing my arm around, but my right ends where the other person's nose begins." The person who contends for certain things as his rights, without considering the rights of others, is ignorant or utterly indifferent to what constitutes true liberty.

Article one of the amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America forbids Congress making laws which denies freedom in certain areas of human activities. The Article states, "Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of people peace-

ably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

Frequent attempts have been made to prostitute each of these freedoms to serve selfish interests and lusts. Space limitations will not permit a detailed discussion of each, so this paper will deal briefly with the "freedom of speech."

How should a Christian talk? The answer to this cannot be learned from the Constitution of the United States of America, nor from the interpretation of that Constitution made by the Supreme court of the United States. The bounds of freedom for the child of God are found in the Scriptures. Not all the passages bearing specifically on the freedom allowed the Christian can be examined, so the reader is urged to look up and examine all the passages that prescribe the kind of speech approved for the child of God by our heavenly Father.

The name of God is bandied about on TV, radio and in conversation. Characters on various shows seem to go out of the way to use the name of God in vain. Profanity is popular with those who "fear not God and regard not man." And sad to say, there are some who claim to be Christians who will take the name of God in vain.

But what is the law of God here?

Exodus 20:7 "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain..."

Matthew 5:34-37 "... but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black, but let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one."

Not only is the name of God blasphemed on TV, radio, press and in many conversations, but lying, vulgarity and other speech styles reflect a lack of refinement and utter disregard for the rights and feelings of others.

One of the characteristics of the unrighteous is, "With their tongues they have used deceit" (Romans 3:13). Jesus identifies liars as children of the devil. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do . . . when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father thereof" (John 8:44). God through John declared that for "all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). Note also some other passages which limits our speech to truth. "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor" (Ephesians 4:25). "All liars" surely include lying advertising.

Corrupt speech, filthiness, foolish talking, jesting, etc., are prohibited. "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying. . ." (Ephesians 4:29). Corrupt speech does not become pure speech by reason of being used on TV, radio or magazines.

"He that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (1 Pet. 3:10).

David prayed, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah my rock, and my redeemer" (Psalms 19:14).

Another passage of scripture which is a restraint imposed upon our speech by God is Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one." It makes no difference that society tolerates lewd, profane, and lying speech, the Christian must obey God rather than man.

CHRIST IS THE ANSWER, BUT WHAT IS THE QUESTION

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A popular slogan heard for several years asserts, "Christ is the answer." No Bible believer would be disposed to contradict a statement so obviously true, but an astute student of the Bible ought to question the application of this claim. To what question is He the answer? For what problem is He the solution? It should be immediately clear that Christ is not the answer to every Bible question or to every spiritual problem. It was not He, for instance, who revealed the mind of God to the apostles and prophets, but the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:1-6). Furthermore, He is not the solution to the problem of a closed mind or dishonest heart. Honesty and a love of the truth are necessary in such a situation. Although we admit a limited application of the claim, such limitation should not prevent us from a beneficial consideration of the matter.

Some Questions To Which Christ Is the Answer

The first question to which Christ is the scriptural answer follows: **How can a holy God justify sinful man?** Given man's own sinfulness—a self-generated condition, not an inherited one—the question of the ages concerns the divine dilemma of God's finding a way to make man right and, at the same time, maintain His own honorable justice. This concern is the content of a wonderful passage of scripture, Romans 3:23-25. Paul's explanation of God's plan for man's justification includes grace, the basis; redemption in Christ, the means; propitiation, the effect; and God's righteousness, the demonstration. Upon no other basis than His gracious favor did God propose to make men righteous, utilizing no other means than purchase by blood. In consequence of this purpose it became possible for sin to be covered and God's demands to be satisfied, so that God's righteous character and plan became the focus of the entire scheme. The appropriation of such a blessing is then considered in the following verses (27-31), where the principle of faith is set forth as the means by which man actually becomes justified before God.

A second question to which Christ is the only answer asks, "What name shall we wear in religion?" In view of Christ's central role in the scheme of redemption, it should not surprise us that following His exaltation at God's right hand His power is celebrated in Acts 4:9-12 as Peter explained the healing of the lame man. After all, it was God's plan to give Him position of prominence and preeminence in the building of the spiritual temple (church), as the quotation from Psalms 118:22 shows. In a rather dogmatic claim, the apostle then added that salvation was not possible in another. He does not share His authority or His honor, two attributes of His name, with any other. It was Christ whom the Father suffered to be crucified! It was Christ whom the Father raised from the dead! It was Christ who was seated in honor at the Father's own right hand! It is Christ who presently carries out His unfinished work! To wear another's name is to deny Christ's authority and to honor another not nearly so deserving.

Question three with which we deal asks **how a Christian can overcome sin.** It should not surprise us to learn that such victory is possible in Christ, the very one through whom God proposed to save us and justify us. Romans 8:1-4 shows that the Christian, in walking according to the Spirit, is free from the law of sin and death. This achievement was not possible under the Law, nor is it possible under any system of law (legal justification). This same victory over sin after initial forgiveness is the subject of 1 John 1:7-9. By means of a continuing life of walking in light, fellowship with God and forgiveness of sins can be maintained. The maintenance of such blessedness, however, depends upon penitent confession of sins.

Yet another query that challenges our attention wonders **whether there is a clearly defined way to live to please God.** Here also, Christ is the answer. It is His example held forth for our adherence, in such passages as 1 Peter 2:21-24 and John 14:6. No other example so perfectly demonstrates the purpose and attitude necessary to gain God's favor. The purpose and attitude necessary to gain God's favor. The purpose of example is to clarify through demonstration. The math example shows mathematical principles at work. Jesus' example shows all principles of right and truth embodied in one person's effort to accomplish God's will. Just as the math example encourages a student by showing him how to work the problem, Christ's example serves to encourage Christians by showing them the relevance and application of the divine will to life.

The final question for our present consideration asks, **Can God really sympathize with one so wretched as I?** After Paul's lengthy description of a similar condition in his own life, he seemed to despair of success in serving God. "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:24). From the depth of despair the apostle then climbed the mountain of rejoicing, where he exulted, "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Because of Jesus' acquaintance with earthly life and all of its temptations, He understands and sympathizes with us in our weaknesses (Heb. 4:15). Christ's earthly sojourn is God's assurance

to us that our needs do not escape His attention or our infirmities, His sympathetic care. In this boldness we need to pray to Him, for He gives mercy and favor in our time of need. Such assurance of an understanding ear is truly consoling to those admitting their weaknesses.

Some Problems to Which Christ Is the Solution

Christ came to solve the problem of truth for man. Sages and philosophers have pondered the enigma of what constitutes truth, while poets have filled the volumes of earth with their ideas and suppositions. Only Christ has given to man the authoritative solution; for He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (Jn. 14:6). Notice the exclusiveness of that declaration, and then read further in the same verse to have the point made even more emphatic. "No one comes to the Father except by me." Not only is Jesus the way to God, but He also brought to the earth the truth whereby men might make that spiritual journey to God and enjoy that life Jesus offers. All other claimants to the status of truth in the spiritual realm are hereby relegated to the realm of falsehood. No teaching except that sanctioned by Jesus and given by Him or His apostles qualifies as truth. The long quest for truth can end in this consolation.

Because Jesus brought the truth of God's word to men, the **problem of enlightenment** is also solved. The Age of Enlightenment in the history of Europe and the United States was a fruitless fishing expedition: men were seeking enlightenment in a world of darkness, while the light was nearby all of the time. Jesus is the light of the world (Jn. 1: 4-9). As "God with us" (Matt. 1:23), He is "light, in whom is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). His word partakes of that quality of light: it is the word of light (Psm. 119:105). His followers become the children of light as they walk in light (Eph. 5; 1 Jn. 1:7). There is no excuse for anyone remaining in spiritual darkness.

When one's sins are forgiven and he is walking in the light of truth, he is not alone. God is also there, as well as other children of light. The **problem of companionship** thus finds its solution in Christ. The Lord has promised, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). When the disciple quits following, he leaves Christ through his own unbelief. Multitudes may and will oppose right and truth, but Christ and his "three hundred" enjoy the spiritual comradeship that will encourage faithfulness in spite of opposition.

There also is the solution for the **problem of human weakness**. Muscular strength will not win spiritual battles. Human will power by itself will sooner or later weaken. The Christian soldier needs to "stand fast" and to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10). Even as the Lord told the apostle Paul, in our weakness His strength is made perfect. It is for this reason that God's favor is sufficient to see the Christian through the conflict to a victorious end. There is no battle too arduous or foe too powerful for this Divine power available to the Christian. He need fear nothing as long as he continues his resolve to avail himself of this might, which exists in abundance.

In respect to God's redemptive plan, Christ is truly

God's "man for all seasons." Combining both divine and human natures (Phil. 2:5-8), he is competent to understand God's righteous demands and man's human needs and to meditate the difference existing between God and man. There is truly no spiritual problem which the Savior cannot help one solve.

The Savior's invitation of Matthew 11:28-30 beckons, "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . ." Man's weakness is the occasion for God's power to be demonstrated. Man's extremity is God's opportunity.

Bring Christ your broken life,
So marred by sin;
He will create anew,
Make whole again.

Your empty, wasted years
He will restore, And your
iniquities Remember no
more.

WHERE ART THOU?

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The Lord God had planted a beautiful garden in Eden and there he had placed the first man and woman. Adam and Eve were given only one law of restraint, "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Satan came and deceived Eve by twisting God's Word. Eve broke God's law and sinned by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree. Then she gave the fruit to Adam and he also sinned and ate of the tree. Upon eating the fruit, they realized their nakedness and covered themselves, then they heard the Lord walking in the garden and in their shame and sin they tried to hide themselves from God. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, 'Where art thou?' " (Gen. 3:9).

God's question to Adam is the first recorded question in the Bible. It was a relevant question of tremendous importance. The question was asked by the God who had walked and talked with Adam and Eve before and from whom they now shamefully hid. He was their Creator, the all-knowing and all-seeing Jehovah (Ps. 139:1-10). Try as they might, they could not hide from God, he knew where they were.

If the Lord knew where Adam and Eve were, why did he ask? God did not ask the question for his sake, but for Adam and Eve's sake. He wanted them to realize where they were and why they were there. They were separated and hiding from the fellowship of God in shame because of their sin!

The first question recorded in the Bible is still a relevant and important question today. God is still asking "Where art thou? He asks the question of you and me. He knows the answer. How will you respond?"

With Respect To Salvation

If you are of the age to know right from wrong then you have transgressed the law of God and sinned. "Where art thou?", God asks. Are you trying to hide from God behind your sin and shame? Try as you might you will never hide from God, just as Adam and Eve could not hide from God in Eden. Do you really understand just where you are as a sinner? You are not really hiding, you are lost and headed for eternal destruction.

Jesus declared, "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). He gave up everything to look for you. He "made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8). If you understand where you are as a sinner, it is time to come out from hiding, be found by Jesus Christ and become obedient to him in faith and baptism.

When The Saints Assemble

When the saints assemble together on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday evening and during Gospel meetings to worship God and study his word, "Where art thou?" God knows where you are when you are not meeting with other saints. He sees each and every person who professes to be a Christian who is sitting home watching TV, or out bowling or playing golf when the saints are assembled to worship God. As David asks, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?" (Ps. 139:7).

In John 20:19-20, the disciples were assembled together on Sunday evening, except for Thomas. We do not know where Thomas was, but we know where he was not. In his absence, he missed the fellowship of the other disciples, the encouragement and shared faith and above all he missed having fellowship with the Lord. Fortunately the next Sunday, Thomas came out from hiding from the assembly of the disciples and was present with the disciples when Jesus appeared again. Will you come out of your hiding place this next Sunday and Wednesday evening?

When There Is Work To Be Done?

The Lord told the prophet Jonah that he had some work for him to do. The work was to go and preach to the city of Nineveh. "But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1:3). Jonah tried to pull the old Adam and Eve disappearing act on the Lord and he was just as unsuccessful as Adam and Eve. Jonah learned a hard lesson that he could not run away from the Lord and the work the Lord had for him to do?

"Where are thou" when there is work to be done for

the Lord? Are you running and hiding as Jonah and Adam and Eve had done before him? When the building needs to be cleaned or repair needs to be done, where art thou? When it comes time to make a contribution for the work of the Lord, where art thou? When visiting and teaching needs to be done, where art thou? It is truly amazing how quickly people disappear when the Lord's work needs to be done. You may hide from the elders, the preacher and even yourself, but you will never be able to run away from God when his work needs to be done.

On The Day Of Judgment

"Where art thou" when the day of judgment comes? Will you be on the left hand of the Lord ready to go into everlasting fire or on the right hand of the Lord ready to go into heaven? Where you were with respect to salvation, when the saints assembled and when there was work to be done, will determine where you will be on the day of judgment. Sadly, many will be in the same place they have always been—hiding from God. Those who spent this life hiding from God in sin and darkness will spend an eternity hidden away from God in shame in the farthest reaches of darkness.

It is time to stop hiding from God. It cannot be done. All one ends up doing is hiding from himself and reality. Come out into the light of God's salvation, be present when the saints assemble, be present when the Lord's work needs to be done and you will be on the Lord's right hand ready to inherit heaven on the day of judgment.

ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

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"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY"

"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him. Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Lk. 11:1). The disciples were desiring to learn **about** prayer and how to pray. Our attitude should be the same as theirs. I want to study about prayer and improve my praying. Do you feel the same way?

I'm afraid that we all neglect prayer. We are not as concerned about it as we should be. We don't pray as much or as often as we should or even could. It becomes much of a ritual of reciting words and phrases which have come to have no meaning to us. Care is not always taken to do it right. We do not always pray for things or people as we ought. Thus we, along with the disciples, must say, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Praying is something that we must learn to do. We

ask to be taught so many things (e.g. how to sew, speak, sing, play an instrument, type, speed read, et. al.). Why don't we ask how to pray or to be taught to pray? How many of us would make such a request? Is it that we feel that prayer is automatic or spontaneous? Do we think that we have some natural instinct about prayer that the disciples didn't have? Could it be that we do not have as great a desire to pray as the disciples had? Do we not care to pray properly?"

There are a few things that are indicated in the request that the disciples made of the Lord.

1. Indicates A DESIRE To Know How

I want to know how the Lord wants me to pray. I believe that was the very notion of each of these followers of Christ. The dedicated Christian whose soul "panteth . . . after . . . God" (Psa. 42:1), longs to come into his presence in request and thanksgiving.

If I had the opportunity to talk with the President or some king, I would make all the preparation I possibly could. I would read books, and ask hundreds of questions about how you talk to such an honorable person. I would want to know the proper way to address such an one. Certainly we should be no less considerate and careful in addressing the creator of the universe.

The request, "teach us to pray", says we want to know how to do it.

2. Indicates That We NEED To Be Taught How

Knowing how to pray properly doesn't come naturally. I think that we many times fail to observe this point in teaching the young and new converts. They learn how to pray by listening to the brethren who lead public prayers. While there is much good in that, there is more to learn about praying.

The fact that we need to be taught is seen in Matt. 6:9-13 when Jesus took the time to give his disciples a sample prayer and teach them how to do it. This fact is also seen in the realization that there can be and needs to be improvements in our praying. Oh yes, "Lord, teach us" for we need to be taught.

3. Indicates A WILLINGNESS To Be Taught

Many people desire to know more, but are not willing to let someone teach them. They simply are not eager enough to learn. They must be willing to let someone teach them. They simply are not eager enough to learn. We must be willing to learn and make any corrections that are demanded by the Lord's teaching. This, of course, requires a degree of humility. When we humble ourselves as a child (Matt. 18:1-4), who asks questions and opens his ears realizing that someone must teach him, our readiness to learn will be evident.

We must put forth great effort to improve our praying and overcome any and all hindrances (1 Pet. 3:7) that we may have. Our willingness to be taught means that we will not be offended by the suggestions made for our improvement.

4. Indicates A Realization Of Its IMPORTANCE

Prayer is not a matter about which we are to be casual or careless. The disciples realized that prayer was of such importance that they must learn how it is to be

done. Is not talking to our creator important? Is it not worthy of the time and effort it takes to be taught? After all, remember that our spiritual life and salvation are dependent upon your prayers.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

P.O. Box 1487
Chiefland, FL 32626



IGNORANCE, INCREASE, AND LEADERSHIP

The above mentioned ingredients are a sure recipe for destruction, shame, and rejection. Many of God's people have experienced such adversity, never knowing what caused their predicament. For others, the truth dawned too late to do them any good. A few learned their lesson, have tried to warn others. Where do you fit into the picture?

It may not always be clear which of these ingredients is first placed in the mixing bowl, or in what proportion, but where one is, the others are, have been, or soon will be. Even those who reject the idea that the destiny of God's people is determined by any kind of pattern, are destined to become a part of the very pattern which they repudiate.

Ignorance

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee..." (Hos. 4:6).

There may be several reasons for ignorance, including willingness on the part of those so afflicted (2 Pet. 3:5). As terrible as it is to see someone perish through ignorance, the fact remains that we are still accountable to God (Acts 17:30). There certainly is no excuse for ignorance of God's will in a land so abundantly blessed with Bibles and education.

And, just as Israel had access to the law and the prophets which were read in their synagogues, many of God's people today are able to sit in Bible classes and still not see and hear what they are reading. They allow their minds to be manipulated, and their positions assigned to them without ever investigating the truthfulness or the logic of such positions.

Increase

"As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame" (Hos. 4:7). It is ironic and tragic that God's people tend to get weaker as they multiply. This need not be the case, and for a time may not be the case, but eventually the pattern falls into place.

Like Israel, we become lifted up with pride, overestimate our own power, and forsake the very principles

which gave us our increase. We then turn to the world to boast and to compare with human accomplishment, and become lost in the hordes of others who travel the broad way (Ex. 23:2; Mt. 7:13,14).

Leadership

"... O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths" (Isa. 3:12). It is no small wonder that so much is said about the qualifications and responsibility of those who lead the people of God, in both Old and New Testaments. Surely, irresponsible leadership can only account for so much ignorance among so many people.

Jeroboam knew that if the people were to continue following him, he would have to keep them away from Jerusalem, away from the source of knowledge (1 Ki. 12:26,27). And, though the majority followed him, "... this thing became a sin..." (v.30).

Catholicism thrives where ignorance of God's word prevails. It is no secret that the Catholic church does not want the Bible in the hands of the "laity," and history is replete with incidents which resulted from efforts of the clergy to keep the Bible from even being printed "in the vernacular" (native language). And, in those countries where Catholicism is in control, ignorance, superstition and idolatry abound.

To a lesser degree, it has also been the course of modern Protestantism to substitute human creeds and

knowledge for the Bible. While lip-service is paid to the Bible, the people are nearly totally ignorant of what the Bible teaches, and their leaders are determined to keep it that way. Their doctrines and practices will wilt under the searching light of God's word.

Sadly, many are the instances among God's people where their leaders (elders and preachers), are determined to keep their followers ignorant of the real issues which trouble them. Those preachers and elders who promote the innovations which divide the body of Christ are experts in avoiding situations where their positions can be examined in open, fair discussion. They are not going to tell their brethren the truth, and will do their best to see that no one else does. They can't afford to let their sheep get the scent of fresh water and green pastures if their meager fare is to be the menu of the day. Yet, in view of the judgment, and the reward for leaders, they can't afford not to.

BOUND VOLUME 25-26 (1984-85)

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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

T.T. CARNEY

We are saddened to learn of the death of brother Truman T. Carney. Brother Carney preached in the St. Louis area for many years. For the past several years he had lived in Mayfield, Kentucky. I have heard many fine comments from others about his love and dedication to God and his word. We extend our deepest sympathy to sister Carney and all his many friends and loved ones.
James Hahn, Hazelwood, Missouri.

OLEN HOLDERBY, 2010 N. Sierra Vista, Fresno, CA 93703 — Several years have passed since last report from Fresno. There are several encouraging signs in the work here. As of last year, all our facilities are free of debt, new seating has been installed and paid for and all necessary equipment bought and paid for. We are now assisting in the support of two preachers in other areas, regularly, and have given temporary help to several more. We have had a fluctuating membership, due to employment (or lack of it). Several stable families have placed membership with us this year. We have recently baptized 15, all adults but one. Attendance has stabilized to 90-110. Several classes are under way at any given time with members and non-members. We use in our adult classes a modified version of the "Round-Robin" type of teaching, and it is working very well for us. We do not have elders yet but are looking in that direction. We are working peacefully and in harmony. We have a considerable number of out-of-town visitors. Should you come our way, please visit us. Should you have anyone in this area you would like for us to visit, please let us know.

PAUL K. WILLIAMS, 18 Fairlie Rd., Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — David Nkonyama reports four baptized at Ingwavuma and the church strengthened. Two others were baptized here. Gene Tope was here is a

gospel meeting in July.

RUBEN C. AMADOR, P.O. Box 7274, Houston, TX 77248, reports a safe and profitable trip to Argentina in July. He visited congregations in five cities, preached much and reports three baptisms on the trip. His report indicates much progress in the work in that country.

NEW BUILDING IN BUENOS AIRES

CARLOS A. CAPELLI, Casilla #83, 1665 Jose C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina, reports that the Jose C. Paz church is now in their new building. Ruben Amador conducted the first meeting in this facility. While the building still lacks some things on the interior, it will seat 100 persons and has three classrooms. They still need pews. 110 attended the first service in the new building. Two were recently baptized in Mendoza, Argentina where Fernando P. Venegas preaches.

OSCAR ELLISON AVAILABLE FOR MEETINGS

OSCAR ELLISON, 1426 E. Glenwood, Springfield, MO 65804 — We have moved to Springfield to spend the rest of our lives and are doing what we can to help the new congregation which purchased choice ground at 216 E. Walnut Lawn in S.W. Springfield. It has a small house on it where we are meeting until other plans can materialize. We are remodeling it to make it as attractive and practical as possible. Brother Tom Shiflett, a retired math teacher from SMSU, is doing most of the preaching as a labor of love. I am available for gospel meetings wherever I am needed and plan to donate whatever I am paid to help retire the debt on the property. But I am available for such work whether or not brethren can support me. I hope to spend the final years of my active life doing this. (Editor's note: Brother Oscar Ellison is a most able student of the

word and has much to offer. His preaching is excellent and he would do brethren good anywhere. Brethren need to hear what men of his knowledge and experience have to say. I am honored to count him among my friends. His writings in THE PRECEPTOR for many years did much good. He has been a great help to the work in earlier years in southwest Missouri, and more recently in Oregon and Arizona. He loves the cause of truth and is unselfishly devoted to it. CWA)

PREACHERS NEEDED

WAVERLY, TENNESSEE — The East Side church in Waverly needs a full time preacher. Attendance runs 40-50. Some outside support will be needed. We are located 65 miles west of Nashville near Kentucky Lake. Call Ray Gentry (615) 582-3806 or Robert Paschall (615) 582-3033; or write the congregation at: P.O. Box 207, Waverly, TN 37185.

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA —Our preacher is moving and we are presently looking for a preacher to work with us. We would prefer an older man. Anyone interested should write to the church at: 892 Haywood Rd., Asheville, NC 28806.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

JOHN BERLIN, 5396 Winchester Ave., Sciotoville, OH 45662 — Having resigned our work with the Sciotoville, Ohio congregation, I am now looking for work with another congregation. I have been preaching fourteen years now. I would like to relocate as soon as possible. Write me at the above address, or call (614) 776-2239.

SEEKS CONTACTS

JAMES H. BAKER, JR., P.O. Box 44012, Philadelphia, PA 19144 —I am interested in making contacts with all faithful black preachers of the gospel whom I do not already know. I am a young black preacher (29 years old). (Editor's note: Brother Baker is doing a fine work in Philadelphia, from all reports. A.C. Grider was there with him in a meeting a few months ago and was much impressed with the work being done. CWA)

IN NEW BUILDING

JERRY ACCETTURA, 7479 Moon Road, Columbus, GA 31909 — After 55 years of meeting at 2216 Hamilton Road in Columbus, the Rose Hill congregation met on August 31, 1986 in its new location at 7479 Moon Road. This is north of the Airport from exit 6 off of I-185. We welcome all visitors to this area or those moving into this area.

JIM ALLEN, 2101 King St., Beaufort, SC 29902— In late May, 1986, I began work with the church in Beaufort, SC, a lovely town of 30,000 located near the Atlantic Ocean in the southern part of the state. We are near several resort areas to which many visitors come each summer. Hilton Head is one of these. Every Sunday, a group of men from the congregation holds services for Marine recruits at Parris Island. This has been done for many years and has helped many young men and women to obey the gospel. If you know of anyone stationed at Parris Island or the Marine Air Station, please let us know. You may want to write us at P.O. Box 4, Beaufort, SC 29902. We invite you to meet with us when visiting or vacationing in the area. We meet at 2107 King St. For more information you may call (803) 524-4400 or 524-4652.

MIKE SCOTT, P.O. Box 53, Middletown, IN 47356 — For the past four years we have worked with the small, rural church here. We have 30-35 in attendance. We need "brave volunteers" to come and work with us. Your services can be utilized almost immediately. We have a challenge in this community. Since coming here in 1982, several have been baptized, a few restored and numerous home Bible studies have been conducted. We have more work than able bodied members to do it. Write me at the above address or call me at (317) 354-4361 or 354-4776.

WAYNE S. WALKER, 5170 Chippewa Rd., Medina, OH 44256 —I was involved in four gospel meetings this past spring. April 14-18 I led singing and taught singing classes while Jeff Smelser preached each evening at 7th and Parish in Uhrichsville, Ohio. Mike Reidelbach preaches there regularly. April 20-25 I was with the church at Wheelersburg (near Portsmouth), Ohio. Danny Holton has moved

there since the meeting. May 5-11 I was in Cambridge, Ohio where Mike Vierheller is located. May 18-23 I was with Silver Park in Alliance, Ohio where Jack Jones preaches. I will be in a vacation Bible school in Ft. Wayne, Indiana in July and in a meeting in Covina, California in October.

At Medina, our spring meeting was with Mike Reidelbach. An architect is currently working on plans for our new building. We are losing two families this summer, but have recently baptized one and had a family of three place membership with us. I will lose \$200 a month in support in October and need to replace it.

MIKE HUGHES, 530 N. Bayou, Cleveland, MS 38732 — On July 18, we began work with the church meeting on Rosemary Road in Cleveland, MS. The brethren have a good attitude toward upholding the truth. We will yet need some outside support.

KEVIN A. SULC, P.O. Box 463, Westfield, IN 46704 — Since coming here we have had some growth. Three have been baptized and two restored. Two families have begun to work and worship with us. We now have 29 members with 42, counting children, in attendance. We have marked one who fell away. We have started a local bulletin called The Water. We are striving to read through the Bible this year. We have tried to better organize Bible classes and have added a class. Several home studies have been conducted. We have had three well attended gospel meetings the past year with Alan Jones, myself, and Robert Speer doing the speaking. We plan a meeting this fall with different speakers on the book of Hebrews. Alan Jones, Phil Morgan, Joe McCameron and myself are still going to the State Reformatory in Pendleton, IN to study the Bible with a few of the inmates. During this past year I was married to Lauri, a wonderful co-worker and thank her for her support and help. Visit us when in the area. We meet at the corner of Main St. and Cherry St. in Westfield (Main St is S.R. 32).

BOUND VOLUMES FOR SALE

ART ADAMS, 2805 Russell St., Portage, IN 46368 —I have Volumes 5-26 of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES for sale at a reasonable price. Purchaser must pay the shipping. I am not interested in splitting the set. I also have bound volumes of other periodicals for sale plus some commentaries and other books. Anyone interested may send for a list of these books.

SUTTON-FROST DEBATES

Carrol R. Sutton and Jack L. Frost (of the "Corona End Time Tabernacle of True Holiness Church" of Berry, Alabama) have signed an agreement to have several public debates. The first one is scheduled for Sept. 8,9,11 and 12,1986 at the South Tuscaloosa church of Christ, 501 37th St. East, in Tuscaloosa. Time will be 7:30 p.m. The first two nights Carrol R. Sutton will affirm water baptism is essential to obtain the forgiveness of sins by an alien sinner. The last two nights, Jack L. Frost will affirm that water baptism is NOT essential to obtain forgiveness of sins by the alien sinner.

A second debate is scheduled for Nov. 10,11,13and14,1986at7:30 p.m. at a place in Tuscaloosa to be provided by Mr. Frost. At that time Mr. Frost will affirm that "The scriptures teach that the only scriptural mode of baptism ordained of God is sprinkling and pouring." Carrol R. Sutton will affirm that "The scriptures teach that immersion (a burial in water) is the only proper action of baptism." For more information regarding these debates, please contact either Bob Mitchell at (205) 752-9000 or Bob Smith at (205) 345-2378.

**POET'S CORNER
WEEP NO MORE**

Isaiah wrote of one great age to be
With mercy, justice, and God's grace in store.
"When He shall hear He then will answer thee."
God promised that His saints would weep no more.

Refrain:

Weep no more. Weep no more.
After tears are wiped away In
that glorious happy day God's
people shall weep no more.

He bindeth up the hurt of all His own.
The stroke of grievous wounds He healeth, Too.
The Lord will be exalted on His throne
So that he may have mercy unto you.

How blessed are the ones who wait for Him!
How clearly rings their laughter's cheerful sound!
He surely will be gracious unto them
In fruitful Zion where true joy is found.

O.E. Watts

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EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

* * * * *

FORKLAND HERITAGE

One of the fringe benefits of the work I do includes meeting interesting people in interesting places. I was recently in my second meeting with the Sycamore church near Gravel Switch, Kentucky (about 18 miles from Danville, KY, in the heart of Blue Grass Country). The church there dates back to 1840. They have been meeting in the present building since 1890 (except for a recent classroom addition to one side). The church is served by three good elders. Larry Barker, one of the elders, preaches for them. Attendance runs about 100. The building is well kept and has a certain elegance about it. The community, situated in a valley along the North Rolling Fork River, is unique. Several years ago, when schools in that county consolidated, community residents bought the old school property for the community. It has become a center for wholesome community activity. Each year on the second Friday and Saturday of October (Oct. 10 and 11

this year) they hold the FORKLAND HERITAGE FESTIVAL on the premises of the old school. Only community people participate and all crafts and items for sale or on display at this event, are made by people in that community. For two nights there is a pageant presented in the old gym-auditorium using community people. The play is built around events which have happened there over the years. It is written and directed by the former principal of the school (for 40 years). She is also a member of the Sycamore church. Quilts, sorghum molasses, woodcrafts, ham biscuits, folk entertainment, hay rides, and other pleasantries which bring back yesteryear are in abundance. Last year over 22,000 people attended. I was there one day year before last for a memorable few hours. I just thought our readers might like to read a little bit of good neighborhood news for a change.

* * * * *

CAUGHT IN COUP ATTEMPT

Levy Maravilla, one of the elders of the Hazelwood, MO church, his wife Connie and son Mike, were staying in Manila, Philippines at the Manila Hotel in July, during the time of the attempted coup by one of Marcos' supporters. The hotel was the nerve center of the attempted governmental takeover. As you know, it ended without bloodshed after a few hours. The Maravillas were not harmed, but had an experience I am sure they would not like to repeat anytime soon!

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	396
RESTORATIONS	141

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)