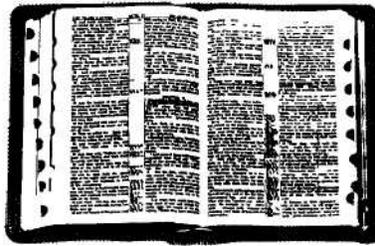


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XXVIII

JANUARY, 1987

Number 1

WAKE THE WORLD
AND TELL THE
PEOPLE

Wilson Adams
891 Autumn Valley Lane
Gambrills, MD 21054



CHARIOT SCENES AT 35,000 FEET

It was late the afternoon of Thursday, September 12, 1985, when our family boarded the big Boeing jet that would take us non-stop to Orlando, Florida. The kids were caught up in the anticipation of excitement that surrounded a first trip to Disney World accompanied, no less, by the thrill of flying the friendly skies which, on that day at least, would prove to be less than cordial.

No sooner had we settled in than I noticed fear had etched itself into the face of a middle-aged woman seated to my right. It was quite apparent that she was nervous, a condition that escalated into panic as we began our push back from the gate. "Please," she said, "Can I talk to you?" "Certainly," I replied. She continued, "This is my first flight and I think I'm going to be sick..." With that, she grabbed the air sick bag which I immediately took from her while saying "There's nothing to be afraid of. . . etc., etc." (You've been there, right?)

And, so, we talked. About aviation, about her family and mine, about her trip and about the Bible. Her name was Nancy Smith. Nancy lived on Maryland's Eastern Shore and was traveling to Florida to visit relatives in the Kissimmee area. She found out that I was a preacher (which must have comforted her for I heard her say-"Thank the Lord!") traveling to Orlando to begin a gospel meeting on Sunday. I invited her to attend, drew a map, and invited her relatives, too. She thanked me for the invitation and indicated she might come if

she had the time.

The weather worsened as we neared our destination (I didn't need this!) It was apparent that central Florida was experiencing one of her typical summer thunderstorms which had, by now, decided to camp out over the Orlando airport. The flight attendants asked that the shades be pulled due to the terrific lightning that seemed to be wrapping itself around the aircraft. The turbulence was the worst I had ever experienced. Add to that my little boy's inopportune question: "HEY, DAD, ARE WE GOING TO CRASH?"-and Nancy was about to lose it all.

Thus, while the pilot was making his attempts at landing, I was making my attempts at comforting and encouraging Nancy. "Now there is absolutely nothing to be worried about. . ." (Did I really believe that?) "Nancy," I said, "If the good Lord answers our prayers and gets us down from here in one piece, you need to come to church." Without hesitation, and very emphatically, she said, "I'll be there!"

We landed safely. Nancy met her party and we met ours and I left wondering if I would ever see her again. I would.

On Sunday night I walked into the church building at Par St. and there sat Nancy and Nancy's relatives. They had all come. After the services we had a chance to speak further. "When are you going back to Baltimore," she wanted to know. "Saturday at noon," I told her. She continued, "I'm supposed to go back on Wednesday but I sure would like to wait and fly back with you." We spoke briefly and they left. I wondered once more if I would ever see her again. I would.

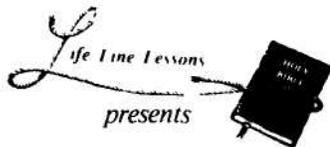
Sure enough when we arrived at the gate for the return trip, Nancy was waiting on us. We arranged our seating so we could be together and this time the weather was beautiful. We talked for two hours about God's plan for man and God's plan for her. She had questions and the Bible had answers and, so, at 35,000 feet and at 600 m.p.h. we talked. (Come to think of it, didn't Phillip do this kind of thing some 2,000 years ago in a little lower and slower chariot?)

Nancy Smith went home and so did we. I later phoned her and at her invitation my wife and I crossed the beautiful Chesapeake and drove the hundred or so miles

to her home for a further study the next week. I would like to tell you that Nancy obeyed the Gospel. She didn't (at least that night). The brethren there agreed to "follow Up" on Nancy and continue the study. At this writing I know not the outcome.

Brethren, there are opportunities for Christians to teach virtually everywhere. So often we pray, "Lord, grant me opportunities to reach and teach the lost" and then He does and we walk blindly by. Let us pray for opportunities (Col. 4:2-3), but let us also pray for wisdom (James 1:5) to enable us to seize the occasion and for courage to speak unashamedly (Rom. 1:16). WAKE THE WORLD & TELL THE PEOPLE is not a call to greater attempts at organized evangelistic outreach programs but, rather, is an appeal for Christians (you and me) to simply begin doing what we say we believe in doing-reaching and teaching the lost.

You see, there are Nancy Smiths everywhere. People who are hurting, people who are searching, people who are in sin and who need Jesus. Who else will teach them if you and I don't? Pray for opportunities yes, but pray for the wisdom and courage to seize the moment and speak the word. The Nancy Smiths will be there, you can count on it. The real question is: Will YOU be ready?



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Editorial

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PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

The completion of the walls of Jerusalem under the aggressive leadership of Nehemiah, produced a mood of thanksgiving and spiritual introspection which God's ancient people had not experienced for years. Decades had passed since the first group came back into a desolated land under Zerubbabel. Under the prodding of Haggai and Zechariah, the temple was completed and dedicated sixteen years after they laid the foundation and then left it to secure their own personal interests. Ezra led a second group out of Persia back to Judah and did much to purge the people of sin and to teach the law of God. But nothing seemed to spark genuine repentance along with their outpouring of gratitude like the rebuilding of the walls of the city.

Nehemiah 8 tells of an unusual meeting, not at the temple (near the northeast corner of the walls), but in the street before the Watergate, in the southeast corner of the city. It was really a PEOPLE meeting. The gathering was not called by Ezra, nor Nehemiah, nor the priests nor the city fathers. The PEOPLE came together and made request of Ezra, the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses, and read it to them (Neh. 8:1). What followed was a protracted meeting lasting for several days and culminating in the observance of the feast of tabernacles which they had not kept since the days of Joshua (Neh. 8:17). All morning they listened as the priests and Levites read the law and "gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (Neh. 8:8). In the afternoons they celebrated, cooked good things and sent portions to those who were poor among them.

These people were, for awhile, truly people of the book. They were unhurried. From "morning til midday" they heard the law read and discussed. They took time to listen. They were not preoccupied with the "hurry up, get it over with" spirit of many pseudo-worshippers of our day.

These people of the book were attentive (Neh. 8:3). Verse 7 says "and the people stood in their place." This does not mean they occupied a standing position all that time, for verse 5 indicates that when Ezra opened the book before them "all the people stood up" which means they were seated until that time. But it does mean they sat and listened and stayed in their place. If anyone had to go out to the brook Kidron to get a drink

of water, no mention is made of it. Modern worshippers could learn from this. Too many assemblies are disturbed and listeners distracted by a continual procession of children, and sometimes adults, just wandering in and out. True people of the book come to listen and learn.

They were reverential in demeanor. When Ezra stood up before them and opened the book, the people stood while he "blessed the great God." They shared the sentiments of the prayer with becoming "amens." They lifted their hands, an oriental gesture which was an act of supplication to God the provider of all things, an expression of thanksgiving for the source of all blessings and an appeal for inspection of the hands and hearts of the worshippers. They bowed their heads and worshipped with their faces "to the ground." There was none of the gross familiarity with the Almighty which appears in much of modern worship where some do not seem to know the difference between Deity and humanity, nor respect it if they do know.

They had tender hearts which were stirred by the grandeur of the occasion. "For all the people wept, when they heard the word of the law" (verse 9). They did not supplant understanding with emotion, for they first heard and understood the words of the law. Neither did they leave their emotions at home. It was a noble occasion. It was a time for serious reflection on all God had done for them and a time to re-acquaint themselves with the law of God. They were not in captivity. They were safely in Judah. Inside the walls of Jerusalem stood the temple. Before them stood God's duly constituted priesthood reading to them from the book of the law which distinguished them from all other people. In their hearts that day, a covenant was being renewed. There are some days which tower above others—mountain peak days. Most of life is lived in the ordinary, but this day was far from ordinary. People whose hearts cannot be stirred cannot properly serve the Lord. On Pentecost, Peter's words cut them to the heart (Acts 2:37).

People of the book are people of change when they discover that they have not been observing something which the book of God plainly teaches. The feast of tabernacles was required in Deut. 16:13-17; in Num. 29:12-40 and in Lev. 23:39-43. In spite of that, they kept it only for one generation after entering Canaan. But when they saw their error, they decided to do exactly what the Lord said. That being the precise time of year for such observance, they kept the feast.

The result of all this was great joy among the people. Nehemiah and Ezra said to the people "for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (verse 10). Redeemed, worshippers of God ought to be the happiest people on earth. We ought to "rejoice evermore" with a "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

We ought now to be genuine people of the book. Our appeal ought, first, last and always, to be to the testimony of the law of God. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Jesus asked "What is written in the law, how readest thou?" Romans 10 is a good example of the appeal to the word of God made by Paul. He said "For Moses describeth the

righteousness which is of the law" and then gave them what the word of faith (of the gospel) says (verses 5-6). In verse 8 he asked "But what saith it?" and then quoted Deut. 30:14. In verse 11, he said "For the scripture saith." In verse 13 he quoted from Joel 2:32. In verse 15 he said "as it is written" and quoted Isa. 52:7. In verse 16 he said "For Esaias saith" and quoted Isa. 53:1. There is a reference to Psa. 19:4 in verse 18. In verse 19, he wrote "First Moses saith." Then in verse 20 "But Esaias is very bold, and saith" and then gives a quote from Isa. 65:1-2. There is no doubt about it. Paul was a preacher of the book.

To the degree that preachers and teachers of the present age fill their speaking with human wisdom, pretty, catchy phrases and spiritual pabulum, to that extent they cease to be men of the book. And you can be sure they will not produce genuine people of the book. Who can deny that there is an abominable ignorance of the content of the book of God among Christians today. God's people have always been destroyed for lack of knowledge, even as they were in Hosea's day. Everywhere, the people of God need to hear exposition of scripture. While there is a need for topical preaching, there is a far greater need for effective presentation of what God said in the context in which it was first said. That needs to be followed by plain application of the truth of scripture to the needs and lives of the people.

The best preventive against apostasy is to remain people of the book.

BLACKFORD WRITES COLUMN

With this issue we begin a regular column written by Dick Blackford of Owensboro, Kentucky. Some of his material has appeared at times and it has always been excellent. He has had wide experience in preaching. For many years I have read his bulletin with interest. His writing is fresh, pointed and with a dash of wit which makes it always interesting. Above all, he is sound in the faith and his material manifests a reverence for the word of God. We welcome his column and believe our readers will profit much from what he has to say. * *

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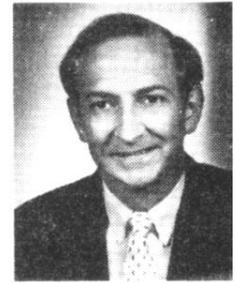
PATTON—PHILLIPS EXCHANGE

We expect to begin the exchange between Marshall E. Patton and H. E. Phillips in the February issue, one month later than originally intended. Two thirds of the work is now in my hands and the rest is expected before too long. The exchange concerns the remarriage of certain "put away" persons. Who these "certain" ones are will be clearly pointed out in the discussion itself. Watch for it.

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SINCERE WORDS

The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth (Ecc. 12:10)."



Dick Blackford

P.O. Box 225
Owensboro, KY 42302

WHAT WE OWE OUR READERS

I appreciate brother Adam's confidence in asking me to write for SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES. I hope that I will not disappoint him. Most of all, I accept this assignment with a great feeling of responsibility to my Creator and to those who are subscribers to this magazine. Since STS has a wider circulation than any church bulletin I have edited, the magnitude of what I write will be greatly increased for good or harm. A keen awareness of that responsibility causes me to begin by writing on my obligation. I have fallen short in times past in fulfilling my responsibility, therefore I do not hold myself up as an example. However, there are some areas I wish to set before the reader in which I will try to be responsible. Of course, all of us who write should feel a certain debt to those who take the time to read what we have written. Among those responsibilities are:

1. **TRUTH.** Obviously, this is first. It matters not with what eloquence we may be able to express ourselves. The ability to articulate is no guarantee of anything. We must not forget such men as Aaron (Ex. 4:14), Apollos (Acts 18:26), Tertullus (Acts 24:1,2), Robert Ingersoll and other great orators who had excellent command of language but erred in their message. Only the truth can make us free (Jn. 8:32). This must be a writer's first consideration for "if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Mt. 15:14).

2. **SIMPLICITY.** Though Paul wrote some things "hard to be understood," there is a "simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3) and it was "the common people who heard him gladly" (Mk. 12:37). Are we writing for the intellectuals? This may be the reason people listened and responded more readily to Christ than they do to us. A photographer once said, "I could ask you to participate in a synchronized coordination of the neophysiological reflexes with semiautomatic impulses, but it would be simpler if I just asked you to smile." An intellectual should be able to understand the simple, but not all of us can understand the complicated.

3. **EDIFICATION.** "Let all things be done unto edifying" (I Cor. 14:26). This should be uppermost in our minds under every teaching situation. We are to build up, not tear down the brethren. To edify is to promote the spiritual growth and development of the character of believers. Spiritual progress is our goal. If we give only pious platitudes, pop psychology, and suchlike, we may develop people with winsome personalities but

very little Bible knowledge. If we dwell only on issues and isms we will develop harsh, unfeeling members interested only in intellectual and academic pursuits and argumentation. Let us build up the total man.

4. **SOUND JUDGMENT.** When one puts his thoughts in writing he has no way of knowing into whose hands they may fall. Some things should not be put in writing. There is no point in deliberately placing oneself in a libelous situation. Satan does not miss an opportunity to destroy our work. We must exercise prudence. This also applies to the raising of various issues. A good question to ask is "Does this issue deserve the magnitude of attention it is getting?"

5. **BREVITY.** Preparing for a long trip, a man said, "I am just about packed. I only have to put in a guide book, a lamp, a mirror, a microscope, a telescope, a volume of poetry, a few biographies, a package of letters, a book of songs, a sword, a hammer and a set of books I have been studying." "But you can't get all that into you bag," responded his friend. "Oh yes, it doesn't take much room." With a smile he placed a Bible into the corner of his suitcase and closed the lid.

The Bible is the most concise and compact book ever written. What book deals with a wider range of topics than the Bible? The Bible records several thousand years of history. It contains geography, science, mystery, romance, poetry, biographies, adventure and touches on many other subjects.

I am not arguing for articles of a particular length. Some topics deserve more space than they are given. Others may be too long for what we had to say. It is interesting to note that it takes only about 16 minutes to repeat the Sermon on the Mount, reading aloud at normal speed. Yet it is nothing short of a masterpiece — delivered by the master teacher.

A friend of mine once remarked that too many words are wasted. His comment was that "we are drowning in a sea of words." A brother who works 8 hours per day, spends a considerable amount of time traveling to and from work, tries to fulfill the role of a husband, father, handy man, and financial wizard, does not have the same amount of time for reading that a preacher might have. I appreciate the fact that such a brother would subscribe to a paper and try to keep up on his reading and studying. I will try to do my best in consideration of him and watch the verbiage.

6. **COURTESY AND FAIRNESS.** I regret that some quit subscribing to periodicals because they often contain controversies. The daily newspaper has controversies in it but I still want to keep up with the news. Come to think of it, the Bible contains controversies.

It may be that the objection is to the manner and attitude in which a controversy is carried on. Someone once said, "Rudeness is a weak man's imitation of strength." A teacher of God's word must walk a fine line. There is a danger in our efforts to speak the truth with all boldness that we will be unkind and unloving. And there is a danger in our efforts to be kind and loving that we will compromise the truth. If during my association with STS I find myself involved in controversy, I resolve now to do my best not to belittle the one with

whom I share a disagreement by unkind personal remarks. Paul said, "only let your conversation be at it becometh the gospel..." (Phil. 1:27). This should govern our writing as well as our speaking.

Finally, consider Paul's exhortation to the preacher Timothy. "And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will" (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

CONCLUSION: This is a big order and I may have to eat some of my words. But if I fall short it will not be the fault of the goals themselves. It will be due to my own shortcomings. Pray for me.

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"NOT AFTER MAN"

THE KING'S MESSAGE: "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. .. for am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ. For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:6-12). I finally bought my own personal computer. I had used the one at work long enough that I had become dependent upon it. "Dependent" means that I am "spoiled" and do not want to go back to the old way of working. I studied a long time about which computer to buy. You see, one must select "hardware" (the machine itself) which is compatible with desired "software" (the programs which are put into the machine to enable you to do what you want to do). There are all sorts of software programs, but they will not all work on the same computer. They must be compatible with both the machine and the disk operating system (DOS) loaded into the basic memory of the unit to tell it how to run your software. I knew before I bought that NOT EVERY PROGRAM IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE SYSTEM I HAVE CHOSEN.

The Lord's "System"

When Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), he declared that His "system" would not run the program designed by and for those whose ideology, methods, and ambitions are centered in the material "here and now" rather than in spiritual eternal life. He knew also that many who have similar ambitions for the afterlife will not be able to operate His "system" because they insert improper directions or "commands" from sources other than the "User's Manual."

From inception, the Lord's kingdom was not designed to focus on the temporal, material state of man. Prophecy pointed toward spiritual purposes, spiritual hopes, and spiritual fulfillment. The rulership of the kingdom

was to be spiritual. Messiah was to lead men back to God and save souls in spiritual citizenship in a spiritual kingdom (Acts 3:12-26; 26:22-23; 1 Peter 1:9-12). The hope was truly spiritual (Acts 26:6-7; Romans 15:4; John 5:39-40). Therefore, when Christ established the church, He brought into existence a spiritual body in fulfillment of God's spiritual promises to accomplish spiritual purposes (Luke 17:20-21; John 18:36; Romans 14:17). The nature of the church is evidenced by the spiritual quality of its head (Eph. 1:19-23), its members (John 3:1-7; 2 Cor. 5:17), its worship (John 4:23-24), its work (Eph. 4:11-16), and its rewards (1 Cor. 15:22-23; Eph. 5:27-28).

Improper Operating Commands

That certain types of "programs" will not operate on His "system," is apparent from Jesus' own statements introducing it to the public. He repudiated standard political methodology (Matt. 20:25-28). He turned down physical and/or military force as a means of carrying out His spiritual purposes (John 18:36; cf. Zech. 9:9-10). Money, physical property, and material wealth were rejected as energizers for His kingdom (Luke 9:57-58; 1 Tim 6:10). He never authorized the church to establish and/or sponsor social, political, psychological, or economic causes which were designed to promote earthly relationships or material well-being. The church is not a "social change" institution.

Application

The "Social Gospel" concept of "Christianity" was popularized by the New York, German Baptist preacher, Walter Rauschenbusch, around the turn of the century. It centers on the theme of improving society and social relationships through the "Christian experience" and "witness" (see Rauschenbusch's *Christianizing the Social Order* (1912) or *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (1917)). Most major denominations in America unashamedly espouse the "Social Gospel" concept. They conceive of fulfilling the kingdom mission by involvement in social and/or political causes, psychological counseling, marriage counseling, general physical benevolence and on and on. Their church sponsored "whole-life" programs include seminars for all kinds of human problems, activities for almost every interest, and psychological sermons or classes designed to deal with the human experience. Such programs, designed by men, however valuable from the perspective of the participants' social or emotional well-being, will not run on God's "system" because His "system" was created with other outcomes in mind.

We must not drift into this concept ourselves. I know it is extremely popular to appeal to people on the basis of their "human" needs. Lessons are exciting and seen as relevant when they are filled with "everybody's every day life" themes, but we must ask ourselves if much of what people want to hear is really relevant to the purposes of our worshiping and learning the Divine will. Preachers and elders may be able to build up memberships and make the work exciting by imitating denomi-

national activity, preaching sermons straight from denominational literature, and reading "how-to" books by denominational authors: but brethren, there is something terribly wrong when we think we need to go to those whom we believe to be so in error in their view of what the church is that they have no fellowships with God to find out how to carry on our work in the kingdom.

One thing we must ask ourselves is: "Why would we do this?" We must be honest in our inquiry and forthright in dealing with the consequences of our action. If our "seminar" or "activity" or "program" is to teach the Bible and comes within the bounds of work authorized by Christ, well and good. I am not saying that because a denomination does something it is necessarily unscriptural. If what we are doing is, however, designed as a tool to interest people so they will come worship with us, we have opened "a whole nother can of worms." If it is to make us popular and exciting or to please men, that is something else. Or, if what we are doing is designed to deal with some social interest, we will abandon our true purposes, put the wrong program on the "system", and come up without producing anything of value for the Lord. Such is short-sighted and counter-productive if our goal is the salvation of men and the growth of the spiritual kingdom!

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THE SILENCE OF GOD

We are supposed to have authority for all that we say or do in religion (Col. 3:17). And, Peter implies that if we cannot "speak as the oracles of God," we should keep quiet (1 Pet. 4:11). We should have the authority first, if we move by faith, for faith comes by hearing the word of God, and without that faith we cannot please God (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6).

But, some folks have no respect for what God says in His word. Others claim to have respect for what God says, *but show no respect for God's silence*. I have never been able to figure out how a person can show respect for what God says, while showing no respect for what God doesn't say. Martin Luther tried to implement this double standard, but it didn't work. In his "reformation" of Catholicism, Luther approached that task by trying to retain those practices which the Bible did not specifically forbid. But, he also rejected what God did say (in the Book of James), because it was contrary to Luther's doctrine of salvation by faith only. I maintain that no person can long have respect for what God does say, once that person manifests no respect for God's silence.

In modern times, the argument that "God didn't say not to" was best demonstrated by the efforts of digressive brethren to justify mechanical instruments of music in worship. Time has proven that lack of respect for the silence of God has led those same people to show utter disregard for what God has said in His word.

Brother Clifton Inman is about the only preacher in the Upper Ohio Valley who has even tried to defend the institutional practice among some churches of Christ, including the sponsoring church arrangement portrayed by the Herald of Truth. Even he was literally forced to use the "God didn't say not to" argument in his attempts to uphold these unscriptural and divisive practices.

Brother Inman began using his "not to" argument in the debate with Emerson Flannery in Columbus, Ohio. When brother Flannery pointed out this flaw in Cliff's argument, Cliff denied that he was using the argument. In the Willis-Inman debate at Parkersburg, W. Va., brother Inman again was forced to fall back on the old "not to" argument of the Christian Church, but caught himself, and said it was "an inadvertent statement." As late as the Adams-Inman debate at Middlebourne, W.

Va., brother Inman was still trying his best to keep from using the "God didn't say not to" argument, but his proposition demanded that he use it. It is amazing indeed that some brethren do not even have general authority for their institutional arrangements, sponsoring churches, and recreation complex, yet they insist that we come up with a specific prohibition to head off their unscriptural practices!

History proves convincingly that if man wants to do something, it makes little difference whether or not God has said not to do it. Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, and even admitted that God had told them not to do it. God told Israel not to do a lot of things, including "not's" in the Ten Commandments, but that didn't stop Israel from disobeying God. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire which the Lord "commanded not" (Lev. 10:1). Maybe they argued that if God didn't command it, then God was silent. They still died.

In the New Testament, we have been told "not" to love the world, think too highly of self, divide the body of Christ, murmur, compare ourselves among ourselves, provoke our children to wrath, and not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together. . ." (Heb. 10:25). But, people still do what God has specifically told them not to do. What makes you think that if God had specifically forbidden mechanical instruments of music in worship that those who want them would pay any attention to God? The same goes for a host of other things which God may not have specifically forbidden, but neither has He authorized these things by His spoken word.

The only time since the first century that we even came close to preaching the gospel to every creature under heaven, was when we preached and practiced the Bible principle of "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent." Not only have we digressed from this Bible battle cry, but we have also retreated from the divine mandate to be the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

"But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20). At the opening of the seventh seal, "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" (Rev. 8:1). When God is silent, some people can't keep quiet five minutes, much less "half an hour". Others have more respect for funerals, hospitals, weddings, or a golfer on the green, than they do for God. Man's problem is that if he insists on talking when God is silent, he probably won't be able to hear anything when God does speak.

OVERSEEING THE FLOCK OF GOD

Bobby L. Graham
1820 Epworth Dr. NE
Huntsville, AL 35811

Serving as an elder is a rather awesome responsibility requiring that one take the work seriously; if he doesn't view it as a spiritual work to be performed, then he should not consider accepting the position. It will be far better for him and for God's sheep needing oversight; for viewing an elder's role as a figurehead position, an honorary office, an opportunity to wield dominion over others, or a steppingstone to bigger things will lead to monumental problems among the people of the Lord, as well as that man's own condemnation by God.

Elders are pictured as overseers of the sheep in God's flock in Acts 20:28. Observe that they oversee sheep; this they do as they watch for souls (Heb. 13:17). Their primary charge is to be alert to their spiritual condition, not to plan budgets or to oversee buildings and property. These matters likewise come within their concern because elders in Acts 11:30 had oversight of financial matters, but these should never be allowed to become their principal concern. They are watchmen for souls, somewhat similar to the watchmen on the walls of ancient cities or to Ezekiel in Ezekiel 3:16-27. Others can plan budgets and care for buildings, but others lack the preparation described in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 to do spiritual work. Any decisions relating to buildings or property are important only to the extent they reflect a necessary connection to the true work of watching for souls. Far too often these mundane matters become larger than they should, even to the point of almost removing spiritual matters from the minds of overseers and from the agenda of work of the local church.

In their work of watching for souls, there is much that they must find time to do. Some of the more routine matters might be delegated to deacons or to others, but they cannot delegate their work of watching for souls to anyone. This is their personal charge. If they shun it or shirk it, they must answer to the chief shepherd in the final day (1 Pet. 5:4). They probably will need some help, but their attentive concern will not cease. They will go about their work ever mindful of the potential wolves awaiting the right time to pounce on the sheep; thus, they will prayerfully watch and work. By this point in these deliberations, it is obvious that there are some prerequisites to this watching and overseeing.

1. **He must desire the work** (1 Tim. 3:1). An "office-seeking" attitude is not referred to here, but a desire to serve God and others in the capacity of an elder, to be

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used up in the service of the Lord. His motive must not be prestige, power, or money, but an opportunity for humble service (Matt. 20:26-28). His work is not the wielding of carnal authority but the demonstration of godliness in life and oversight, so that spiritually minded people follow his lead, have confidence in his wisdom, and value his decisions.

He will often have to speak words of rebuke and warning, but his desire to do this work will impel him so to speak. That same desire will be reflected in decisions that he must make with other elders and with the congregation, though they be difficult and unpleasant ones.

Such desire will yield willing and eager service, according to 1 Peter 5:2. There will be no need for constant prodding of a qualified elder to do his duty, for such will be his attitude. In this very area a man's wife or family can be a great help or hindrance, depending upon their attitude toward the importance and value of the work that he is helping to do. When they understand the nature of his work and the need for it, they will be able to appreciate him for his faith and willingness to work, as will the saints who are being overseen.

2. He must desire to lead God's people (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thes. 5:12). This is the nature of his rule over the people of God. The word "rule" does not suggest the assertion of tyrannical will, but the leading of a kindly father. He must sometimes act contrary to the wishes of immature children so their good might be achieved. He will consider their wishes and act according to them whenever possible, but all of his decisions must reflect his spiritual maturity. Such is the very basis for his qualifications preparing him to oversee souls. The comparison of 1 Timothy 3:4,5 indicates that his ruling in the family prepares him for taking care of God's church. Just as there will be times when the entire family will decide a matter, so there will be numerous decisions in the local church that all will have a part in. Elders who fail to consult members regarding such matters are acting unscripturally and unwisely. There will also be decisions that the father will have to make alone, as he unselfishly considers matters beyond the maturity level of the children. Local elders will seek to teach and influence the Christians to accept and follow such decisions as these that they must make for the good of souls.

Their role as spiritual leaders requires that they understand the teaching of the Scriptures and that they give ample time to planning. Godly elders will act before the pressure of the members forces them to take action; to do otherwise is to fail to lead God's sheep. They will not wait to see what others expect from them, but they themselves will lead the sheep to understand the importance of serving God and growing spiritually. They will willingly give time, patience, prayer, and courage to such work. Without such ingredients they cannot lead the sheep, but with them their spiritual-mindedness will be obvious to all.

3. He must be willing to speak to others about their souls (1 Thes. 5:12-14). He will sometimes have to warn people about their spiritual course, rebuke wayward souls, and strengthen the weak. He should frequently

speak for the edification of all. While elders might use other teachers to do some of these tasks, they themselves will not consider their work accomplished until they have personally made such endeavors. Discernment and wisdom will characterize their efforts in this field, both of which are provided for in the qualifications of elders. It is in this area that elders find Bible classes so useful. Members should participate in these classes, so that they might then heed their warnings, accept their rebuke, and otherwise learn from them for the purpose of obeying them. They obey them as teachers of the Word and watchmen for souls, not as "power-crazy autocrats."

When it becomes necessary for these men to speak to such members, they will not find it easy but they will find a way to do so for the sake of their souls. Private rebuke or warning is not easily given, but such men desire to work in this capacity for the good that can result. They must know the sheep in their individual situations (abilities, inclinations, needs, knowledge) so they can address their needs in the way most calculated to accomplish God's will. They will be watchful (not "nosey") over the daily lives of the sheep, as well as their worship habits, so they will be some of the first to detect trends in their lives. They will not wait so long before speaking with them about their concerns that such discussions become a formality serving little purpose. In courage they will speak, and yet with patience will they deal with the sheep.

4. He will understand the value of working with other elders. The plurality of men pictured leading a local church must work as a team to do good. Each one will contribute his strengths; in fact, each must do his full part if the men work together effectively. Objecting to ideas proposed by others can be helpful, but men do not help if they act only in this area. These men must learn to talk together and to act in ways that show their love for God and His people. Such love and cooperation will overcome disagreements. Brief discussions before a worship period or after one will often fail to make effective contribution to a local work. Time is needed for careful planning, discussion, and study. Their time also should be used on occasions for meetings with members to listen, to teach, and to lead. They must make themselves available for private and public meetings with the church. Just as there can be little working together by elders in the absence of their communication, so there can be little leading by elders or following by members in the absence of communication between them.

There is nothing needed more in local churches than godly elders. Every person in a local band of disciples bears some responsibility to becoming an elder or working together with elders. Parents, wives, and children can do much toward the development of elders, as can those already serving and those not yet qualified. Changes in lives might be necessary for some to qualify in the future. In all efforts to develop men along the lines set forth in the Scriptures, may we keep in mind the four principles emphasized in this present study.

**"DID LIFE BEGIN
IN CLAY"**

**Dan McKibben
303 Wickliffe
Campbellsville, KY 42718**

There was an article in the 11-86 issue of Popular Science with the above title. The first paragraph reads "For years investigators who seek the origins of life adhered mostly to the theory that life's antecedents were organic molecules that got together fortuitously in a 'primordial soup'. Now a few scientists are postulating that life had a more solid beginning: in ordinary clay."

Well I think our pseudo-scientists have made a step in the right direction concerning where life came from. They have got it out of the "soup of the sea" and to the clay of the earth. Genesis 2:7 declares for us, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Now if these folks who have got the right place where man came from, could just get the right forces that acted upon the dust of the ground they would have it! For you see it was not "lightning or solar ultraviolet rays" that "triggered chemical reactions" but the power of Almighty Creator. It was God who took the dust of the ground and made man and gave him life.

The only reason I can think of why folks want to believe in the "soup theory" is because it alleviates their minds about being accountable creatures of God. You see there are 3 questions that our "soup friends" have not and cannot give a satisfying answer to. #1 Where did life come from? #2 Why are we here? #3 Where are we going?

I'm glad to have the word of God that reveals plainly the answers to all these questions. Actually the answer to these 3 questions can be answered to a degree without the Bible. We should be able to recognize a Creator by just looking at the world (Psa. 19:1, Acts 14:17, Rom. 1:18-20). Secondly, we should realize that we are accountable creatures, that we should be thankful (Rom. 1:21), that we have a law written in our hearts of a 'rightness' and a 'wrongness' (Rom. 2:14-15), that we have a sense of the "ought" (Lk. 8:15), that man is a worshipful being, it is his nature, for the scriptures tells us who to worship, not really to worship, per se. And in answer to the 3rd question, it is man's makeup to believe in something beyond this life, as Eccl. 3:11 from the ASV reads "also he hath set eternity in their heart". Yet as all men have a degree of light in answer to these 3 questions, we need the word of God to bring the full light (2 Tim. 1:10, Jn. 9:5).

We may stand amazed at these "soup" believers, but we are no better off than they if, in practical living and application, our faith is dead and void of works. Jas. 2:14-26 was written to those who professed to be Christians. James showed that saying we have faith will not be enough to save, if it does not have the works of obedience to perfect or complete our faith. "You see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only" (vs. 24). Do we see it? We expect our denominational friends to see the point in reference to baptism, and rightly so. Why can we not see it in application to the word of God in our own lives? Just take a survey of the book of James and see if we live what we profess. If Jesus is our Lord then we must willingly be a slave to his commands (ch. 1:1).

If we believe in the Creator, that we are to serve him, and someday we will give an account to him and spend an eternity in heaven or hell, brethren let's live and act like it!

GOD'S PATTERN

**Wayne Greeson
2630 North 72nd Way
Hollywood, Florida 33024**

Patterns are an important part of our lives in many ways. When a contractor builds a house, he follows a pattern know as a "blueprint". When a mechanic repairs your car, he uses a pattern known as an auto repair manual. When a mother sews a dress for her small daughter, she follows a "dress pattern". And when your favorite cake is made, the cook followed a pattern called a "recipe".

In each case there is a standard pattern to be followed to achieve the desired results or the correct end product. The pattern must be followed or the end product will not be faithful to the original pattern and the results could be disastrous. The house not built to pattern may leak or worse, it may collapse; the car not repaired by the manual may run like a "lemon" or not run at all; the dress not made by the pattern may look more like a clown outfit; and the cake not made by the recipe could wind up unfit for the family dog.

Many people who have the common sense to recognize the need to faithfully follow patterns in their everyday lives, fail to recognize the most important pattern of all... the Bible. God has always provided a pattern for his people to serve as a guide to worship and service acceptable to him.

In the Old Testament, God led the children of Israel out of the slavery of Egypt down to the foot of Mt. Sinai. There God called Moses up the mountain and gave him a "pattern" of laws and a "pattern" for a place of worship for the Jews. As God gave Moses this divine

pattern, He also gave a warning: "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so ye shall make it" (Ex. 25:9). And He repeated this warning: "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shown thee in the mount" (Ex. 25:40).

Following God's pattern, the Jews constructed the tabernacle, a tent, and fashioned all the articles for worship to be placed within and without the tabernacle, the brazen altar, the laver, the golden candlestick, the table of shewbread, the altar of incense and the ark of the covenant. For over 500 years the tabernacle served as the place of worship for the Jews.

Not all the Jews heeded God's warning through Moses to follow his pattern. Two priests determined to disregard God's pattern of worship and follow their own worship. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron "offered strange incense before the Lord, which he commanded then not" (Lev. 10:1). The consequences of violating God's divine order were immediate and dire, "And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:2). God's drastic punishment of these two men was for our benefit to teach us to treat his pattern with respect and obedience.

When David became king of the Jews he planned to build a permanent place of worship, a temple, in the city of Jerusalem. While David was not allowed by the Lord to actually build the temple, David did make all the plans and preparations for the construction of the temple which he passed on to his son, Solomon, to complete. As David commissioned Solomon to build the temple he explained the source of the blueprints, "'All this,' said David, 'the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern'" (I Chron. 28:19). David urged Solomon to follow God's pattern in the commands of his Law as well as building his temple.

Despite God's warnings again the Jews failed to faithfully respect and keep God's pattern. Towards the end of his life Solomon drifted away from God and his commandments. Following Solomon under the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, more Jewish kings were unfaithful rather than faithful to the Lord. Because of the apostasy of the Jews, God allowed them to be taken into captivity and the temple to be destroyed.

While in captivity in Babylon, God sent a special vision of the temple to the prophet Ezekiel. In the vision Ezekiel saw a man with a measuring rod measuring God's temple and all the articles in it. Why? What was the meaning of the vision? "Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern" (Ezk. 43:10).

Just as God gave the Jews a pattern through Moses and David, He has given us a pattern of work and worship through Christ and His apostles. The Old Testament, the tabernacle and the temple were only "a copy and a shadow of heavenly things" that are now provided for us by Christ under the New Testament.

The pattern Christians have to follow is complete and sufficient. It is complete as it has "given unto us all

things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Pet. 1:3). It is sufficient as it "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" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

As God warned the Jews not to violate or tamper with His pattern. He warns us also.

1. **WE MUST OBEY GOD'S PATTERN**-It is necessary to obey "that form (pattern) of doctrine which was first delivered to you" (Rom. 6:17). To fail to obey His pattern leads to sin and spiritual death (Rom. 6:18-23).

2. **WE MUST WALK BY GOD'S PATTERN**-The inspired apostles, led by the Holy Spirit are an "ensample" or pattern for us to learn from, imitate and walk after (Phil. 3:17; II Thess. 3:9).

3. **WE MUST KEEP GOD'S PATTERN**-"Hold fast the form (pattern) of sound words, which thou has heard of me..." Paul instructed (II Tim. 1:13).

4. **WE MUST MAKE ALL THINGS BY GOD'S PATTERN**-As Moses was warned to follow the pattern of God in all things, so God warns us in the New Testament ". . . for 'See,' sayeth He, 'that thou make all things according to the pattern..." (Heb. 8:5).

Will you heed the warning?

"... HOW CAN I DO THIS GREAT WICKEDNESS ...?"

Derek R. Chancellor
Rt. 16, Box 661
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

Today we are seeing the effect of an immoral society on every hand. The sins of immorality are growing among Christians at an alarming rate. Much too often we are hearing of our young ladies pregnant out of wedlock. Many of our young men are marrying because their young lady friend became pregnant. The problem is not just confined to the young. All along we hear of husbands or wives who have been unfaithful in the marriage relationship. Often the result of this unfaithfulness is divorce because of adultery. Paul describes adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness as being works of the flesh. After listing many other things that are works of the flesh. Paul then says, "they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). We must go to the Bible to learn some practical steps that will help us arrest this growing problem.

In Genesis 39:7-15 Potiphar's wife tried to get Joseph to engage in an immoral act with her. Joseph did not yield to the temptation. In this passage there are at least four very practical steps that Joseph took in order not to sin. Let us notice the four steps that Joseph took.

"But he refused. ..." (v. 8) The first thing we need to notice is that he said "no." And to take it just a step

further, when he said "no" he meant "no." Saying "no" is not always easy because sometimes we have just not learned to control our desires and lusts, as we ought to. We must learn to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11). By and large, we are not a people that like to say "no." We hear so much today about being positive in our life that we almost feel guilty saying "no." But we must learn to say "no" to sin. We do not want to become a totally negative person, but where sin is concerned we must say "no." Could it be that the most obvious is often the most overlooked?

"... How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" We must come to the understanding that when we engage in immoral acts we sin. We transgress God's law (1 John 3:4). We need to have the same understanding as did David, "I have sinned against the Lord" (1 Sam. 12:13). When the prodigal son made up his mind to go home, he realized that he had sinned against his Father and heaven (Luke 15:18). The context seems to indicate that at this time Joseph remembered all that God had done for him, and that this remembrance helped him not to sin (v. 2,9). God has done so much for us. We show our love for God as we keep His commandments (1 John 5:3).

"...He hearkened not unto her. . ." (v.10). We learn that Potiphar's wife did not make just one advance toward Joseph, but "she spake to Joseph day by day." Probably, not a day goes by but what the world entices our minds with fleshly joy, pleasure, or fun of immorality. Remember in the parable of the sower, the rocky ground was those who had received the word with joy, and later were choked with cares, riches and pleasure of this world (Luke 8:14). The pleasure this world has to offer is but for a season (Heb. 11:25). Christians who are listening to the world will "bring no fruit to perfection." It must be understood that the world is talking, and the world is opposed to God (1 John 3:15-17). Brethren, there are times when we must associate with worldly people (1 Cor. 5:10), but we must not listen to them.

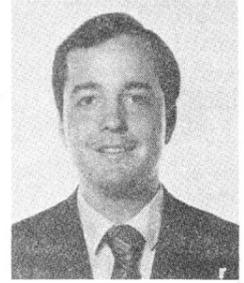
Joseph, "got him out." (v. 12) Joseph knew there was a time to leave, and he left. Could it be that far too many times we play with sin? A little look, a little flirt, a little suggestion, a little touch, we try to see just how far we can go. The next thing we know we have been caught in our playing around with sin. There comes a time when a Christian must simply leave! The words of 1 Cor. 6:18 are so very applicable here, "flee fornication..."

God's word does give us some very practical steps to take in dealing with immorality. First, say no. Second, realize that we sin against God. Third, do not listen to the world. Fourth, sometimes we just have to leave. The word practical means, "actively engaged in some course of action or occupation" (Webster). In order for God's word to help us in dealing with the temptations we face, we must put it into practice in our lives.

READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY

WHAT THE COUNCIL
OBSERVED
ABOUT PETER AND JOHN

Frank Himmel
723 15th Ave. W.
Palmetto, FL 33561



The first recorded gospel sermon resulted in three thousand conversions; the second resulted in two thousand more, but also in the preachers being thrown in jail. The next day those apostles, Peter and John, were arraigned before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court. Rabbinic tradition says that body of seventy dated back to Moses' day (Num. 11:16), but the first historical record of it is in the Macedonian period (c. 200 B.C.).

Be that as it may, the Sanhedrin had considerable power, and we might expect these two fishermen from Galilee to be somewhat intimidated in its presence (imagine yourself before the United States Supreme Court). It had only been about two months since Peter, under similar circumstances, had vehemently denied the Lord (Mk. 13:53ff). However, this time it was different. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, delivered a brief but pungent address. Even the Council noticed a difference. "Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Consider with me what the Council observed about Peter and John.

Confidence

The confidence of Peter and John was three-fold. First, they demonstrated confidence with reference to their own position. Remember, this was the same Council that had recently put Jesus to death (with Roman approval). But if these apostles were afraid it was not evident. Jesus had earlier admonished them not to fear those who can kill the body but are unable to kill the soul (Mt. 10:28). To face death unafraid reflects confidence in one's salvation. Humility and awareness of our shortcomings prevent over-confidence on our part, but we can be assured of our standing before God. Paul said, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16). Later in the same chapter he reminds us that God is for us (v. 31). We can surely believe He has forgiven us if we have complied with His conditions. How many times did John say, "By this we know...?"

Second, Peter and John were confident in their preaching. The word rendered "confidence" or "boldness" in our text literally means "all speech." The Council observed the "all speech" of Peter and John, that is, their unreserved and explicit preaching.

They said what was needed and said it plainly. Notice especially verse 12. "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." Imagine telling the Jewish high court that the only way they could be saved was by accepting Jesus Christ, the one whom they had recently convicted of blasphemy and had crucified! Such distinctive preaching is needed today (2 Tim. 4:1-4). It is the only kind that will save.

These apostles also expressed confidence on this occasion in what could be done. The Sanhedrin decided to release them with an injunction against any further preaching about Jesus. "But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard' " (vv. 19, 20). Their prayer later that day was, "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Thy bondservants may speak Thy word with all confidence, while Thou dost extend Thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy holy servant Jesus" (vv. 29, 30). A threat from the supreme court might silence the mouths of some, but not Peter and John. They were looking forward to accomplishing great things for the Lord. Would that we had that same confidence in the power of God and His word.

Uneducated and Untrained

The confidence of Peter and John arrested the Council's attention, especially because they were uneducated and untrained. The two terms used here are interesting. The first denoted "primarily, a private person in contrast to a State official, hence, a person without professional knowledge, unskilled, uneducated, unlearned;; (Vine, p. 585). Our English word "idiot" comes from it. Thayer says the second term means "illiterate," and refers to those "unversed in the learning of Jewish schools" (p. 8). It is from the same root as the English word "grammar." The Council marveled at the confidence of these "ungrammatical idiots."

Surely this example shows that formal religious training can be overemphasized. I am not opposed to education; quite the contrary. I am grateful for having had some good educational opportunities. But we err if we think a man cannot preach if he has no college degree, or has not attended one of the fine schools operated by the brethren. Such schools are not seminaries: they do not claim to be and we should not think of them as such. Every congregation ought to take a look at what opportunities it is or is not providing for the education and training of young men to preach.

Another application of this principle is in the area we call "personal work." Some seem to think such work requires a sort of "sales-pitch" or employment of a programmed approach if it is to be successful. Such is not evident in the New Testament. When the disciples were scattered from Jerusalem they went about

speaking the good news of Christ (Acts 8:4; 11:19). I doubt they had time to organize an "evangelism seminar" or "soul-saving workshop." They just talked about the gospel to those with whom they had contact. Consider some other examples of "personal work." When Andrew was introduced to Jesus he found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (Jn. 1:40, 41). How much do you suppose Andrew knew about Jesus at that point? Was he well versed in all the doctrines of Christianity? The next day another disciple, Philip, found Nathanael and announced to him the discovery of Jesus. Nathanael responded, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Was Philip prepared to answer this objection? He was not befuddled by it. He simply replied, "Come and see" (Jn. 1:45, 46). Could not we do the same? Just open the pages of God's word and examine them together with your querist, having a "Let us see" disposition. Learn with each other. Another excellent example is the Samaritan woman at the well, who led many to the Christ about whom she knew precious little (Jn. 4).

Association With Jesus

Having marveled at the confidence of these uneducated and untrained men, the Sanhedrin "began to recognize them as having been with Jesus." What led to this third observation by the members of the Council?

For one thing, the conduct of Peter and John. Their confidence before this court must have been far different than these judges were accustomed to seeing. A short time later the apostles were again arrested, miraculously released, and arrested a third time (Acts 6). Each time it was for obeying their commission from the Lord, and each time they went right back to the work upon their release. Such conduct made it clear that these were Jesus' disciples.

Our conduct, too, should lead others to observe that we are associates of Jesus. "Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desires of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. And in all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you; but they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead" (1 Pet. 4:1-5). Does the world notice that you do not run with them? Could your neighbors, schoolmates, co-workers, or other associates readily identify you as Jesus' associate based on what they see from day to day?

The other identifying mark of Peter and John was their speech. They talked about Jesus. They spoke the truth. They appealed to God as their authority (v. 19). They were not unkind, but firm in their conviction. Speech reflects much about one's character and in-

terests. Does your speech echo the words of Christ living in you?

These apostles were with Jesus because He called them and they did not refuse to follow. Jesus calls us through the gospel (2 Th. 2:14). If we believe and obey that call we can have fellowship with Him, too.

GUTENBERG'S PRINTED BIBLE

Luther W. Martin
707 Salem Ave.
Rolla, MO 65401

In the early half of the fifteenth century, the only kind of printing known to the western world was xylography; i.e., wood block printing. Wood was carved and then inked, much as we use hand rubber stamps today, and that was the only printing known, until Johannes Gensfleisch invented movable type printing.

He ultimately became known as John Gutenberg. He was from a family of gold and silversmiths. His father and his uncles before him had made coins for the Archbishop-Elector in the city of Mainz. The Gensfleisch family was of the upper-middle-class, and aspired to a higher status. They had named their residence "gutenberg", which originally meant "good-mountains" in the German language. So, like many patrician families they gradually adopted the name of their dwelling.

John Gutenberg actually invented the means of making metal type for printing, devising chemically an ink of the proper consistency, and identifying a paper whose texture would be compatible with the new ink and metal-type-printing. He borrowed funds heavily in order to produce his first printed book, which was a Latin Bible, based upon Jerome's Latin Vulgate . . . except that Jerome's Vulgate did not include the added apocryphal books, that Catholicism had embraced in later centuries. The Gutenberg Latin Bible included the apocryphal books accepted by the Council of Trent a century later, and also had additional material, that even Catholicism did not accept.

Jerome's Preface To The Apocryphal Tobit

Again we remind our readers that Jerome did not accept the apocryphal books, but was ordered by some bishops to translate Tobit anyway. Please note Jerome's preface:

"Jerome, priest, to the bishops Heliodorus and Chromatius, greetings. It is to be wondered that I do not resist the importunity of your exacting request. Indeed, you demand nothing less than that I translate into the Latin idiom a book written in the language of the Chaldees, namely the

Book of Tobit which the Hebrews, eliminating from the list of Holy Scripture those books they consider to be apocryphal, have set aside. I have conformed with your desire but not with enthusiasm. For the Hebrew texts are against me and call me to account for bringing to Latin hearers something which is not in keeping with their canon...." (Vol. I. page 254, The Gutenberg Bible). Perhaps I should state that the Gutenberg Bible was composed of two large volumes, with the first volume ending with the Psalms, and the second volume beginning with Proverbs. Jerome included a preface for each of the books of the Bible which he translated into Latin. Beginning with Emperor Charlemagne, of the late eighth century and early ninth century, the Latin Vulgate was required to include Jerome's prefaces in each copy. It was still being done at the time of Gutenberg's printed Bible 1450-1455 A.D.

A Reprint of Gutenberg's Bible In 1985

In the year, 1985, a French publishing firm, has republished the Gutenberg Bible. This Bible has been reproduced exactly like the original was printed, illuminated, and bound. Some 530 years ago, the Latin Bible was the first book to be printed in the western world with movable metal type. The pages were printed, then artists decorated these pages with various colored inks, beginning the individual books of the bible with artistic initials. After the pages were illuminated, the purchaser could have the book bound however he wished. Usually, beech-wood covers were used, and these in turn were covered with a fine quality animal skin.

The Bible that served in the year of 1985 as the original to be copied, is termed "The Mazarin Bible", inasmuch as it had long been in the library of Cardinal Jules Mazarin, in Paris. On Mazarin's death, he established through his will, a foundation that started the College of the Four Nations, which in turn was bequeathed the Cardinal's substantial library . . . in which this Gutenberg Bible was situated. So that which is termed "The Mazarin Bible" has served as the model for this exact 1985 reprint.

Jerome's Introductions and Prefaces

Almost exactly sixteen hundred years ago, Jerome translated the Hebrew and Greek Old and New Testaments into the Latin language. It was Jerome's Latin Vulgate (with some additions) that Gutenberg used as the first book to be printed. The interesting fact is, that for the first time in history, Jerome's comments which he penned as introductions and prefaces to the various books of the Bible, have in 1985, been translated from the Latin into English. This material from the pen of a noted ancient Bible scholar, is going to be most revealing, since it has formerly been hidden in the Latin language, and in Bibles that still contained Jerome's comments.

The excerpt that we copied from Jerome, earlier in this article, wherein he informed some bishops that he did not appreciate having to translate an apocryphal

book known as "Tobit"; will serve as a sample of Jerome's comments. His apparent devotion to the canonical books of the Bible is most refreshing.

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JOYNER W. ADAMS

The editor's father Joyner W. Adams of Chester, Virginia, passed from this life on December 9. He was 84. Funeral services were conducted on December 12 by Ronny Milliner and John Nosker. The next issue will carry a more extended notice from brother Nosker.

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

WAYNE S. WALKER, 5170 Chippewa Rd., Medina, OH 44256—The work in Medina continues well despite our loss of three families lately. Two have been baptized and two restored recently. Our building plans are on hold for the present. Because of zoning restrictions and other limitations, the land we own is unsuitable for our needs and we are waiting until we can sell it and buy a better lot. October 5-10 I was in a meeting in Covina, California where Alfonso Ferrer is the preacher. October 26-28 I was in a meeting in Ashland, Ohio where Arthur Wagoner is located. In 1987 I am to be with the Central church in Greenwood, SC in March, with the Rt. 3 church north of Madisonburg, OH in April; with the Lily Chapel church near Portsmouth, OH in May and with the church in Roseville, MI in October. I have time for a couple more.

CLAYTON M. ADAMS PASSES AWAY

Clayton M. Adams of Pulaski, TN passed from this life on October 20, 1986. Funeral services were held in Pulaski October 22 with burial in Marshall County, TN. Brother Adams preached for churches in Ala-

bama, Florida, Georgia and Tennessee. His last work was with the Bluff Springs congregation in Lewisburg, TN. He had resigned from the work there in July of this year due to failing health.

MRS. GLEN HUNTER, 610 S. 12th St., Paragould, AR 72450-C. E. Purdom was a faithful elder of the church at Second and Walnut in Paragould, Arkansas for many years and was know to many brethren throughout the country. He is living at the Greene Acres Nursing Home, Rt. 3, Paragould, AR 72450. Although he was declared legally blind several years ago, his mind has remained alert and he was able to attend Sunday worship services. He became ill a few months ago and is confined to the home. His 91st birthday is Feb. 18 and it would be very uplifting to him to receive a note from friends who remember him.

DENVER NIEMEIER, 10356 North State Road 267, Brownsburg, IN 46112—Again in 1987, the Traders Point church will send me out for four meetings with churches that are unable to support a preacher in such an effort. At present, I have openings for three such meetings.

During 1986, I was with the following churches in such efforts: Bicknell, IN; Old Kentucky Lake Road in Springville, TN; Paris, KY and Grant St. in Marion, IN.

TOM EDWARDS, 713 13th St., Ashland, KY 41101—The Tri-State church, which met at the Ashland Child Development Center, is now meeting at 713 13th St. in Ashland. The building accommodates us well and is in a central and convenient location. I have been preaching here for two and a half years. The men take turns preaching the last Sunday of every month and most of the members have been involved in teaching classes.

GILBERT COPELAND PASSES AWAY

JADY W. COPELAND, 2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd., Lakeland, FL.

Gilbert Copeland, beloved gospel preacher in several western and mid-western states, was born in Murfreesboro, Arkansas in August, 1909 and passed away in Anaheim, California early on the Lord's day, October 19, 1986. He was baptized into Christ at the age of 13, and after high school, attended Harding College. He soon began preaching the gospel, following his father, J. A. Copeland, in the work of the Lord. He worked with brethren in Hope, Camden, Nashville and Malvern, Arkansas as well as in Wichita Falls and Ft. Worth, Texas and in Montebello and Anaheim, California, where he lived to the time of his death. In addition to numerous meetings, he also worked for several years in Louisiana. In Anaheim, in addition to his preaching work, he served for several years as an elder until his health failed several years before his death.

Funeral services were conducted in the Anaheim building on October 22 by Otis Moyer, preacher and one of the elders, and Dennis Kilgo, son-in-law to Gilbert. Bob McCurdy, present local preacher, and Glenn Reagan spoke at the grave site. He is survived by his wife, Otsy, and three children, a number of grandchildren and eight brothers and sisters.

This writer, a brother, owes a great deal to Gilbert, having been of so much help to me in knowing how to set my priorities in life. Gilbert was a loving, caring and kind individual, yet had the ability to speak frankly, yet kindly, in teaching the truth both publicly and privately. Truly he "spoke the truth in love". Perhaps he was not known as a "big time" preacher, but traveling over the south and west, I often hear of the good work of Gilbert Copeland. "He being dead yet speaketh"—in the lives of his three faithful children, in the lives of his grandchildren, and in the lives of hundreds whom he taught and helped over a period of over half a century. May God's richest blessings be with the family.

PATRICK S. PARISH, 831 W. Pleasant Run Rd., Lancaster, TX 75146—Events of the past several years, which have been generally known among brethren, make it appropriate to publish a statement of the present condition and direction of the Pleasant Run church in Lancaster, Texas.

The confusion over grace and unity which was severe in some brethren in the Dallas-Fort Worth area had a pernicious effect on the Pleasant Run church. The eldership and the pulpit were infected with an entirely predictable effect on the membership in general. Many brethren despaired of the situation and went elsewhere. The determined and steadfast resistance of the faithful brethren who remained, and particularly of two of the elders, Eugene Sikes and Willard Brockington, finally culminated in the departure, in January of 1984, of the group caught up in this error.

There is still much to do. For years, preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God was not in vogue, and the effect of the spiritual malnutrition which is the inevitable result of such a famine continues to manifest itself from time to time. Such manifestations will diminish with the continual proclamation of truth. Willard Brockington and Eugene Sikes, the elders of the church, are providing vigorous, conscientious and knowledgeable leadership. Faithful men are filling the pulpit, both regularly and in special gospel meetings; the seed is being sown, for saints and sinners.

Are you moving to Dallas? Lancaster is a lovely community of 20,000 on the southern edge of Dallas. The congestion which threatens to turn the northern half of Dallas County into the world's largest parking lot is not a problem in Lancaster, with interstate highways on each side leading into Dallas. Pleasant Run Road is one of the main arteries and the building is right across the street from the high school.

BILLY ASHWORTH, 116 Armory Dr. Lewisburg TN 37091—After over four years of work with the Hickory Heights church in Lewisburg my wife Lois, and I will be moving to Columbia, Tennessee at the end of 1986. We have enjoyed our work here and will have many good memories of saints to add to the list we have compiled over the years of preaching Christ. This is one of the joys preachers and their wives have as a result of working in the Lord's vineyard.

Although I am discontinuing "full time located work", I plan to continue preaching the gospel of Christ which I have been doing over thirty-three and one half years. I have several meetings scheduled and look forward to more work in that area. Also, I have been contacted by churches to preach for them on a part-time basis. At the time of this writing, our plans are not finalized but I hope to be able to submit another report later to this paper when that is complete. We have purchased a home in Maury County, located on the Nashville Highway, six miles north of Columbia. We will appreciate hearing from all of our new friends who read this report. Also, I ask those who send bulletins to make a note of our new address. After January 1, please address us follows: Route 1, Box 215, Columbia, TN 38401. Phone number will be (615) 388-8355.

MICHAEL GARRISON, P.O. Box 1281, Franklin, NC 28734—We have had a very good summer in Franklin. We were blessed with many visitors. Among them were Don Brady, Melvin Curry, Keith Ward, and Harrison Beiro who brought us some good lessons. We also had meetings with Piet Joubert and Denny Freeman. We are using the Gene Tope Bible correspondence course and newspaper advertising to help reach people of this area. If you know of someone we should contact, please let us know. We are the closest faithful congregation to Western Carolina University at Cullowhee. Let us know of students there we should contact. We are about 20 miles from the campus. If in the area (a popular tourist area near the Smokey Mountains) we meet at 156 Old Murphy Rd. My phone number is (704) 369-5186.

VERNON LOVE, 310 Orange Ave., New Port Richey, FL 33552—The congregation here is now one year old and we are working to contact people of this area. Seven have signed up for the correspondence course which we advertise in the local paper. Over a year ago, one was baptized through the course and urged us to come here and start a congregation. We have 310 names of people who have bought homes that we will contact by mail. The area is growing and we need to be able to work full time. So far we have not received enough support to do so. If you are coming to Florida for the winter, why not consider our area and come help the church. We would love to have you.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

John Humphries, Jerry Parks, Gary Johnson and Bill Beasley spent six weeks preaching in India recently. They report much progress among the churches they visited. While their main objective was to strengthen the hands of the native preachers, they still were able to baptize 150 into Christ. We expect to have a more extensive report for our readers later. We rejoice in the good these men have done.

RANDY S. REESE, SR., P.O. Box 14, Ashiya Shi, Japan 659—We have just passed the six year mark. During this time some of the accomplishments have been: the updating and reprinting of three tracts, translation of Peter Wilson's "Babes in Christ" series. Also, we have started the first congregation outside Osaka in twenty years. I have had the pleasure of teaching and baptizing four into Christ. We have worked with six congregations and have seen one restored to the church in Iwakuni due to these efforts. Also, we have started six new classes and are continuing one with the Jehovah's Witnesses. We have several new programs in the planning stages at this writing. If you know of anyone who is coming to Japan, please give them our address.

THOMAS BUNTING, Ovsttunveien 23, 5050 Nesttun, Norway—Would you mind making mention of our financial needs? I lost \$550 a month this last fall and it has not been replaced. I will be losing another \$250 a month in April, 1987. This will be a total of \$800 a month we are losing. If there are any churches that could help to replace this loss it would be greatly appreciated.

RODOLFO BERDINI, Via Giuseppe Perego, 58-H/9, 00144 Rome Italy—Last September, we had a successful preaching effort in Latina.

We secured a public hall and Roberto Tondelli preached for three nights. We distributed 10,000 invitation cards from house to house and placed many posters on public walls. Each night we had from 30-40 visitors present. Several of these showed good interest. Several took tracts offered at the entrance and several requested the Bible correspondence course in 24 lessons. It has not happened in the last several years that so many people who were not members were present. For that reason we felt compelled to repeat such an effort in October. I spoke the first night and Roberto Tondelli the second night. We had 20 visitors present. We had debates both nights with visitors who asked questions on the themes under consideration. With this encouraging interest, it has been decided to establish a new congregation in Latina. Francesco Fosci works with this congregation. We gave up five members from the church at Aprilia to help start this work.

Vincenzo Ruggiero, preacher for the Poggiomarino church, died recently of a heart attack. He was 61 years of age. I preached at the funeral services. He leaves his wife, Lina, a son, Elio, who is 18 and two married daughters. This is a great loss to the work in Italy.

On October 14, I entered my 65th year of life. Many a man retires at this age and have pensions available. This right is not conceded to me for two reasons: (1) I have no pension fund. I have never been able to pay for it. Preachers in Italy are not recognized by the State and I could not have a social security. Today, the young people seem to have more opportunities in this respect. (2) I want to contribute to work for the Lord until my death. Our thanks to those who are helping me to do this.

PREACHERS NEEDED

DEXTER, MAINE—In September, 1987, Herbert Braswell will be leaving the work at Dexter and a replacement will be needed. The

church can provide \$450 a month support with the rest having to come from other sources. We prefer a man with some preaching experience. Anyone interested may contact Ralph Hall, RFD 1, Box 121, Corinna, Maine 04928. Phone (207) 278-8801; or LeRoy Hall, RFD 1, Box 144, Etna, ME 04434. Phone (207) 269-3480.

POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK—Our preacher is moving and we are in need of a full-time man to work with us. Attendance is about 25-30. We are located about 65 miles north of New York City in the mid-Hudson Valley. If interested call Greg Roark (914) 454-7170; or Ken Boyd (914) 471-8671, or write, Southern Dutchess Church of Christ, 786 South Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

ROCKWOOD, TENNESSEE—The Highway 70 church in Rockwood needs a preacher. Those interested please write to: 507 Rockwood St., Rockwood, TN 373854 or call collect Conley Daugherty, (615) 354-1854.

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA—The North Scottsdale church, a 30 member congregation near Phoenix, is looking for a full-time preacher to further establish and strengthen the Lord's body. We currently meet in a high school with a good potential for growth in a community of over 100,000. We can supply \$425 weekly toward support. If interested, call or write: Ron Clayton, 4402 E. Pershing, Phoenix, AZ 85254. Phone (602) 953-9685.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	515
RESTORATIONS	137
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	