

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES



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

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

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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THE NEW MAN

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LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST

When you get right down to it, what does it really mean to be a Christian? The New Testament looks at the answer to that question from several different angles. Here is one of the scriptural perspectives: "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9,10). To have obeyed the gospel is to be a "new man" in Christ, and this newness has little to do with how long one has been a Christian. The aged saint as well as the babe in Christ, is a "new man" — and he or she needs to think ever more deeply about the implications of that. If "The New Man" sounds to us like a new converts class, then that very misunderstanding is evidence of how much we have yet to learn about being a Christian.

A Dangerous Neglect. Sometimes we are guilty of failing to emphasize certain important parts of God's word. The Lord rebuked the Pharisees for having "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Mt. 23:23). They had allowed their concern for things like tithing to crowd out more fundamental aspects of divine truth. The Lord did not condemn their concern for these details — he condemned their neglect of things that, relatively speaking, were more vital. It was not either-or, but both-and. "These ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone." The remedy for having majored in minors is not to leave off the minors altogether, but to get them back in their proper proportion to the majors.

What has traditionally been the general thrust of our preaching and teaching? Does not honesty compel us to admit that we have given nearly all our attention to two matters; how to **become** a Christian, and what to **avoid** after becoming one? True enough, circumstances often impart a critical urgency to these. When first-aid is needed in life-and-death situations, it is not the time for dwelling on the "weightier matters" of medical practice. All can see the urgency of instructing the lost in the first principles of salvation, and then fighting on every front where Satan is trying to destroy the Lord's people. Still, is it true that we have failed to study and teach as we ought **not** to be, what **should** the child of God be and do? And why?

The Damage Done. We have paid a terrible price for our imbalance. In all too many cases, our level of Scriptural knowledge is distressingly low. Fed a steady diet of topical, and usually polemical, teaching, we often betray a shocking ignorance of the overall "theme" of the Bible, the relation of the parts to the whole, and the principal concepts that run throughout all the books. Outstanding exceptions notwithstanding, members of the Lord's body often have what could only be called a superficial devotion to the Lord himself. I am going to go out on a limb and argue that the heartbreaking prevalence of marital infidelity among gospel preachers is simply one evidence among others that our debate charts have been insufficient to build true faith, hope, and love in our hearts. When Satan can take the lust of the flesh and cut through the Lord's body like a sharp knife through warm butter, something is seriously wrong.

Our frustrating inability to rescue any but a handful of the lost in our communities is also connected, I believe, to the shallowness of our spirituality and the lopsidedness of our approach to the Scriptures. To win the lost to our Lord, we must be **showing**, in deed as well as word, that the life of the Christian is superior in quality to that of the unbeliever. It is a disgrace that the real spiritual resources of many of the Lord's people in our day are so impoverished that few could realistically be expected to look at their lives and want what they have. We have little light to let shine, and our salt has lost its savor. Until we study, and learn, and meditate upon—until we

actually build into our lives—what it really means to be a "new man" in Christ, the lost will largely be uninterested.

Pure Religion and Undefined. James wrote (ironically in a passage we have often dwelled on polemically, but not very often practically), "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27). At the very least, that says true religion involves both a negative **and** a positive aspect. It is critically important that the Christian **not** be blemished by the world. But having subtracted certain unworthy things from his belief and practice, what **does** he do? What **is** he to be? That is no less important, but you could not tell it from our teaching.

God does not arbitrarily require that we abstain from certain things. He never asks us to say no to a thing unless he has something much better to put in its place. The Scriptures certainly do contain "thou shalt not's"—but these are always placed in the context of "thou shalt's." In that sense, the positive truth of what the Christian **is** to be is more important ("judgment, mercy, faith") than the negative truth of what he must not be. The prohibitions of God's word are pointing in the direction of a higher quality life. In concentrating so exclusively on the wrongness of unscriptural ideas and actions, we have failed to emphasize the end toward which this teaching is a means. We have been losers and, what is worse, so have those whom we might have influenced in God's direction.

We face a crisis: either we truly grow in our understanding of the "new man" ... or our grandchildren will likely not be able to afford the gas to drive to the nearest sound congregation. We simply must learn, more than we have bothered to, about what life in Jesus Christ is about.

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Editorial

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THE BOSTON HIERARCHY

What used to be called the "Crossroads Movement" is changing so rapidly it is difficult to know what to call it. Churches caught up in it prefer to be identified as "discipling churches", or "restoring churches." For some time now the real direction of the movement has been centered in Boston. What is happening there and in churches around the world which are a part of this movement is far removed from what started with the Crossroads church in Gainesville, Florida.

Opposition to this movement used to center around their system of prayer partners, soul talks, near-cultish regimentation of the lives of the members, special singers, and various other unscriptural practices common to many of the liberal churches. But what is happening now goes far beyond any of that.

Kip McKean, who trained under Chuck Lucas at Crossroads in Gainesville, is rapidly becoming the universal evangelist of this movement. Old-line Crossroads churches which do not line up with the goals set by Boston are either being taken over or divided as new "church plantings" take place in cities where Crossroads churches already exist.

The Boston church has featured the notion of the "house churches." It is their view that there should be only one congregation in a city. In their case, they have many "house churches" with a diminishing hierarchy and with all of them subject to the elders of the Boston church. They meet as a whole once a week and the rest of the time function as separate entities. They have misunderstood and perverted passages which speak of "the church in their house" which passages simply referred to the saved in certain households. Thus, they have one eldership over many congregations. But that is not all.

The Boston church has taken over the work in several other places. They have in place now a concept and a practice which involves a full-blown hierarchy of churches. The January 4, 1987 bulletin of the Boston church of Christ sets forth the various levels of this hierarchy. They have the world divided up under 24 "pillar churches." Seven of them are in this country and 17 outside the United States. The 7 "pillar churches" in the United States are the "discipling churches" in Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, New York, Providence, San Diego and San Francisco. The Boston church is not listed

because it is at the top of this pyramid of ecclesiastical power. It is interesting that the Crossroads church in Gainesville is NOT listed as a "pillar church."

According to an article by Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr. in the November 5, 1987 **GOSPEL ADVOCATE**, Al Baird, elder at the Boston church of Christ recently preached a sermon titled "Authority and Submission" in which he set forth the argument that elders administer affairs in a local church but that the evangelist is an officer of the universal church. According to Baird, and an article appearing in the August 23 bulletin of the Mission church of Christ in San Diego, both the evangelists and elders are charged with the task of maturing the whole body and not just a local church. Shades of Rome! The Roman Catholic Church has John Paul II as universal bishop and the Discipling Churches have Kip McKean as universal evangelist.

The New Testament knows nothing of evangelist oversight. Elders were appointed in every church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) and had charge of the "flock among" them (1 Pet. 5:1-3). Evangelists were heralds of the gospel message with the right to preach the whole council of God and instruct brethren in setting things in order.

But things are far beyond that in Boston. Their November 23, 1986 bulletin reported: "We are excited to announce that the Elders of the Boston congregation have assumed oversight of the Kingston church of Christ, a two-year-old mission effort originally planted by the Miami-Gables congregation." The preacher from Kingston was taken to Boston for further training and Boston sent in its own preacher. Similarly, Boston has taken over the Gateway church of Christ in St. Louis and the Shandon church of Christ in Columbia, South Carolina. They moved in and divided an existing Crossroads congregation in Atlanta and "planted" another congregation under their hierarchy.

There is now a deep rift developing between old-line Crossroads churches and the Boston machine. Even John Whitehead, head of the "tape ministry" at Crossroads in Gainesville, has published a booklet called "Stop, Look, Listen" in which he warns against the Boston take-overs.

What is of concern to me is the fact that in the last year or two reports have come of several preachers among us who have gone to Boston to study their methods of evangelism. I am sure that most, if not all, of these men would oppose the hierarchy which has emerged. But what is it they hope to learn from such an unscriptural operation? Are they so worried about numbers of converts that they cannot see the great errors involved in this system? "Total Commitment" in this movement involves total submission, not only to the powers that be in the movement, but to the methodology of the movement. I am in favor of total commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ with all that entails but I am vigorously opposed to total, or even partial, subjection to human schemes for evangelism, regardless of how rapidly the churches which employ them may grow.

The best treatment of this whole movement which we

have seen, is the newly published book by Maurice Barnett, entitled THE DISCIPLING MOVEMENT. This material first appeared as a series of articles in GOSPEL ANCHOR but has been revised and updated for duplication in this paperback book. Gospel preachers, elders and other Christians need to read this book. It would be \$3 well spent and time well consumed. Religious Supply Center and other book stores have it in stock.

We have here a tragic example of the consequences of going beyond the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 9). Meanwhile, there is a need for vigilance about brethren among us who feel the need to travel to Boston to learn from these folks. It is like looking for a good biscuit in the garbage can. Why not go on to Rome and cut out the Boston way station?

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

A BAG OF DIVERSIONS

I see it nearly everywhere I go. A young couple comes to services with a small child and a large bag filled with toys, books, and other things to keep the child occupied. Certainly parents of babies have their hands full trying to concentrate on worship, hear what is said, keep the baby still and know when to take the child out to keep from totally disrupting the worship of a whole congregation. That is not always easy and young parents deserve our commendation and support, not to mention patience and understanding, as they struggle to cope with such unknown territory. But children soon get to the place where they can learn to sit still for a service. What is the sense in hauling in a bag of diversions for a child who is old enough to go to school, or even to kindergarten? What is being taught here? Is not the child being taught NOT to listen to what is being said, and NOT to observe what is being done and the spirit in which it is done? No wonder we have school aged children, including teenagers, who do not know how to listen and who wander in and out, and up and down the aisles, sleep, or fidget, do not try to sing, or sit when others stand. They did not learn the spirit of reverence for the Almighty when they were small. Young parents, explain to your children who are old enough to understand language, why you cannot talk with them during the Lord's Supper, or prayer, or while the word is being preached. But don't wait until you are in the assembly to do it. Children who are allowed such a bag of diversions soon tire of all of them, and the bag gets bigger each week. Head off the problem at the pass! Teach them to sit quietly and listen. Teach them to respect the Lord and his word. Teach them to respect the rights of other people who are trying earnestly to worship the Lord. If they become unruly and are old enough to understand correction, take them out and help them to understand that it is much more pleasant to stay inside and be reverential than it is to have to go out and have it explained with enforcement. And you parents who are listening to infidel advisers about disciplining your children need to spend more time considering what the Lord said about child rearing (Eph. 6:1-4).

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

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A SPEEDY SENTENCE

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11).

Esther heeded the importance of the time factor, and delivered her people (Est. 4:14). Jerusalem did not heed "the time of thy visitation" (Lk. 19:44), and was destroyed. We need to learn the importance of time in dealing with things which can have eternal consequences (Col. 4:5). This principle is clearly demonstrated in the matter of discipline.

Children

In order for discipline to be effective in the home, regardless of the form that discipline may take, it must be timely. Parents keep threatening that they are going to do such and such to their children, but never get around to doing it, or wait so long that the action has no effect. Parents should not make rash threats they don't intend to keep in the first place. But once a course has been determined, follow through. It is not then a matter of arbitration, negotiating, or a democratic process in which the children can out-vote the parents.

If the parents see that they are wrong, then back up, admit it, and apologize to the child. It is not easy to hurt the feelings of a child, but that child's life is going to be hurt when it faces college, the work force, or its place in the church if it has not been disciplined (trained). Teachers, elders, employers, and policemen cannot correct in a few days what parents have put off for years.

Criminals

Many crimes are committed by repeat offenders, and sometimes several crimes are perpetrated while the criminal is on probation for previous acts. Society keeps threatening to do something, and "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily" the criminal is encouraged to keep on breaking the law. It is not unusual for appeals or delays in the prosecution of **convicted** criminals to be drawn out over a period of twelve or fifteen years. Such procrastination can only convince others to pursue a life of crime.

The Church

"A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject" (Titus 3:10). All cases of church discipline may not fall into this category, but all discipline must be timely in order to be effective. I've known elders and congregations to postpone disciplinary action for months, or years, or just drop it altogether. Some members will think any action is too sudden, no matter

how long you wait. Patience is one thing, but when it gets into the realm of pampering, placating, and endless procrastination, it ceases to be patience.

Time must be redeemed, and we cannot appear to bid godspeed to rebellion, negligence, false doctrine or immorality. The soul of the offender is at stake, and without repentance, is already condemned whether the church takes action or not. The rest of the body needs to be encouraged for being faithful, and warned not to walk in the ways of the disorderly. The Bridegroom is on his way, and is 2,000 years closer now than when he left.

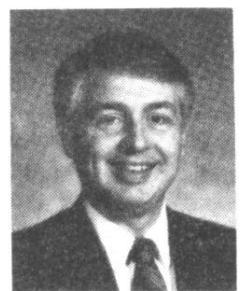
Several years ago a congregation was having a problem with one elder, who was privately teaching false doctrine and undermining the membership. The other elders were aware of the situation, but decided to "contain" the problem because they might lose twenty or thirty members if they took any action. This gave the wolf time to divide and scatter the flock, and when he thought the time was ripe, tried to take over the congregation with his followers. Failing in this attempt, he took not twenty-five of the members with him, but about half of the nearly six-hundred which constituted the membership of that congregation. That division is still a hindrance to the Lord's cause in that community, alienating brethren and giving the world occasion to speak evil of the way of truth.

Some "sentence against an evil work" must be invoked by the Lord, but whatever our duty is, we need to discharge it in a faithful and timely manner.

DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

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CHRISTIANS IN THE WORK-PLACE THE DIVINE COMMUNIQUE:

"Servants (*employees*), obey in all things your masters (*employers*) according to the flesh, not with eye service, as menpleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve (*work for*) the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for the wrong which he has done, and there is no partiality. Masters (*employers*) give your servants (*employees*) what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven" (COLOSSIANS 3:22-4:1).

God's word deals with all major relationships of life: family, government, society, the church, and the work-world.

There are five great New Testament texts which deal directly with our responsibilities as employers and employees: Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1; 1 Timothy 6:1-2; 1 Peter 2:18-21; and Titus 2:9-10. There are obviously many other Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments which also speak to work related issues.

When we read these passages, someone always says, "Man, those Scriptures were written to SLAVES!" It is true that they were written in a time when society was dominated by slavery. But that only emphasizes that the principles should be applied in our work which is actuated by choice and supported with wages. Certainly if God requires these attitudes and responsibilities upon those oppressed by involuntary servitude, how much more upon those who have voluntarily committed themselves to an employer.

Jesus' message is a call for SUBMISSIVE SERVICE on the job [a) SUBMISSIVE.. b.) SERVICE]. Let us note just one important exception: WE ARE TO BE SUBMISSIVE AS FAR AS WE CAN WITHOUT VIOLATING ANY PRINCIPLE OF SCRIPTURE AND/OR OFFENDING OUR CONSCIENCE (conscious sense of right). Peter and John settled that for us: "And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge'" (Acts 4:18-19). The apostle Paul added, "Children obey your parents, IN THE LORD..." (Eph. 6:1). That principle proves true in all relationships

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for Christians.

WHY GOD WANTS SUBMISSIVE SERVICE FROM US ON THE JOB

Paul stated in Ephesians 6, that we are to render "submissive service" to our employers because we are "**doing service, as to the Lord, not to men**" (vs. 7). Christ is the one for whom we truly work (Col. 3:24). What a difference in our work if we remembered that our real employer is Christ. We would not cut corners, take extra time on breaks, clock out early, or do less than our best if we thought each day about our true Boss. Our purpose is to glorify God and we do that when we give good service to our employers.

Paul also suggested that we should render "submissive service" on the job because "**whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord**" .. .we are seeking to receive reward from the Lord, not just pay from the employer (Col. 3:24-25).

Another reason we should be submissive is "**that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed**" (1 Tim. 6:1). We defend by our conduct the message of the gospel. To Timothy, Paul said that we work submissively "**that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things**" (Titus 2:10). The people we work with watch us. We preach sermons by how we work. God is interested in our being salt and light.. .not in our ease and comfort on the job. You say, "But I am in a bad situation. I want out!" Could it be that God has entrusted you with this bad situation to have someone show those people how men ought to behave.. .how Christ would behave.. .how they ought to behave? Is it better to quit or to show people the gospel of Christ in living color? Peter added, "**to this were we called**" (1 Peter 2:21). We need to entrust ourselves and our lives to God. He will judge us rightly. Trust the BIG BOSS to take care of us. Is it not interesting that one of the most powerful passages on the cross of Christ is found in the midst of a section on the working conditions of the Christian. If God allows you to be in a bad position, He may be giving you the opportunity to demonstrate the character of the Lord Jesus Christ so others can **see the way Jesus lived.**

WHAT KIND OF SERVICE DOES THE LORD REQUIRE?

Jesus wants us to serve our employers "**in sincerity of heart**" (Eph. 6:5).. ."**not with eye service, as men-pleasers**" (vs. 6).. .and "**with good will doing service**" (vs. 7) remembering that our "vocation" is to serve HIM.

Paul also added, "**whatever you do, do it heartily**" (Col. 3:23). The Christian cannot do a sloppy job with a clear conscience.

And we should respond without "**answering back**" and without "**pilfering, but showing all good fidelity**" (Titus 2:9-10). Too many actually brag about being argumentative with their bosses. Paul says not to do that! But you say, "My boss is a rat! They mistreat me. They do not pay me enough." Listen to Peter who says to be submissive "**with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh**" (1 Peter 2:18).

THE LORD'S MESSAGE TO THE EMPLOYER

Paul said, "**And you, masters (employers), do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that our own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him**" (Eph. 6:9). Employers must not work by intimidation.. .they should train, motivate, and discipline on the job, but in the spirit of Christ.

Again Paul said, "**Masters (employers) give your servants (employees) what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.**" Bosses should be just and fair in providing wages and working conditions. Employees must realize that employers must give an account for their jobs also. If he must let someone go, he should do it for the right reasons, however, not out of vengeance. The good employer who is a Christian is interested not only in the quality of the work, but in the quality of life of his workers. That must be remembered when he makes his decisions which affect their lives.

How different it would be if we all lived by these principles. Unions would be out of business. Management would be considerate of employees and employees would work heartily for their masters. Where does it all begin? **WITH ME.** Where is my security if the boss does not respond? My security is in the Lord because I know that **I "will receive the reward of the inheritance"** if I "serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:24).

IN MEMORY OF BRO. H. L. BRUCE **Jan. 13, 1934 — Oct. 31, 1987**

The people of God are troubled to learn of the death of a beloved servant of Christ, Bro. H. L. Bruce, by his own hand. This perplexing news is considered incredible by those who have walked by his side, and have a deep appreciation for his steady affirmation of the Word of Truth. A mind so clear in the understanding and the presentation of the Gospel, we think, cannot be the same mind that would contemplate an action so drastic, so uncharacteristic. Yet, as we consider the outcome, we are forced, reluctantly, to admit that it is altogether possible.

Bro. Bruce was widely known, having served in churches across the Southwest and West. Born in Arkansas at Sulpher Rock in 1934, and growing to maturity in that region, he ultimately came to the decision to become a preacher of the Word. He has served churches in Texas at Mt. Pleasant, Pittsburg, Clute, Baytown, and most recently in Amarillo with two congregations, Pleasant Valley and Dumas Drive. At other times he worked in Colorado Springs, Colo., and Ontario, Calif. He has also worked in many Gospel Meetings in other places.

Bro. Bruce had a reputation of integrity, boldness, and moral worth unexcelled, in the view of many who

knew him. He effectively presented truth when in the pulpit, depending upon the content of his lessons to have the proper impact on his hearers, rather than personal style and eloquence. He had a ready command of the teaching of God, and could defend the truth ably.

Separate from his ability as a preacher, he was a respected father and husband, as well as showing Christian friendship with many across the country. He was generous with his time to aid others in their understanding of God's Word. Yet, during the latter part of his life, he carried burdens that were not readily discernible to his friends and family. The problems that faced him have been experienced by many preachers of the Gospel, but his ability to cope with them was perhaps less sufficient than found among his contemporaries.

When a man reaches the decision that, as a Christian, the most dedicated and rewarding service that he could render to the Lord Jesus is to become a preacher of the "gospel of grace," he enters into that service with enthusiasm. He considers, as well, that this service holds the promise of saving many souls, a purpose and a goal certainly pleasing to the Lord. He therefore orders his life to fulfill this service, in order to reap these satisfying rewards for both himself and his Master.

Having made this decision, however, he may be unaware of the toil and trials inherent in this vocation (though some vicarious notion of this can be found in reading of the experiences of the evangelists of New Testament times). He may also be unaware of the personal temperament needed to fulfill his goals. When trials come, he may experience disillusionment because his resources to meet them are in short supply. If he retreats from his commitment, he usually is like John Mark, weakened only for a while. When the trial is past, he girds himself with the fortitude to try once again. He may have been strengthened by the experience of overcoming his doubts, but he may rather carry a deep scar of self-deprecation because of his temporary defection. So, he struggles on, embarrassed by his momentary retreat, fighting a battle within himself to recover his confidence, goaded by the knowledge that the expectations of his Master are demanding.

But experiences of this sort have the tendency to repeat themselves. Brethren whose minds center on worldly values, and worldly tactics to obtain them, cause endless heartache to men whose only goals are to hold up the truth, and live faithful to it. The apathy of worthy brethren, also, allows those with less pure motives to have their way. The spirit of many a dedicated man has been sorely tested in the forefront of some such spiritual battle, when, like Uriah, he felt isolated and abandoned. He stands at a fork in the road at such times, one way seemingly hopeless, leading to bitterness and uncontrollable depression; the other more hopeful way leading to freedom from anxiety, where every problem is committed to God "by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving," resting on the promise that "the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." He mistakes the way, however, and enters on that road which tends to unsettle the mind, so that it does not meet problems soundly. This

road may eventually appear to have no "point of return" to the disillusioned mind. In such a state, he may finally do harm to himself. We abhor the conclusion that a mind so influenced can be held responsible for its thoughts and acts, and this judgment brings us a measure of the comfort earnestly desired. Even so, regret and anguish comes to those who see the resulting tragedy, and wonder why they did not prevent it.

This scenario may not fit the case of our beloved brother fully, but many of us were aware of his anxiety, and tried to lift it from him. He reached out to us, but we did not perceive the depth of his depression. We advised the course to take, based on what we knew, thinking that he would have the mentality of a survivor. Our advice was based on the yearning to see him find relief, and a return to that placid state which is interpreted by the Apostle Peter as "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." But, tragically, we were too late in realizing the urgency that the situation demanded. Our tears are evidence of the anguish we feel for ourselves, for his bereaving family, for the church he served, and for all his Christian friends who "weep with them that weep."

But, the time has passed for our feeble help to bring back Bro. Bruce from the brink of despair. We mourn for him, as David of old mourned for the regal house of Saul, who also fell on his own sword in desperation: "Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon the high places! How are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice... How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

The family, the local church, the brotherhood, are all left behind to mourn, so, "leaving the things that are behind," let us "wipe the tears from every eye," renewing our commitment to be "like minded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tender-hearted, humble-minded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

— by Joe Neil Clayton

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MAMAS, DON'T LET YOUR BABIES GROW UP TO BE PREACHERS

Periodically, I am made aware of situations where young men were discouraged from preaching the gospel by their parents. Or to say the least, were not encouraged. Reasons why some would not want their sons to proclaim the most important message on earth may vary. Possibly, we have touched on some of them. Don't encourage your son to preach:

1. IF YOU DONT WANT HIM RIDICULED. Because of the way preachers are caricatured in cartoons, plays and movies, ridicule may be a part of his life. Preachers have been depicted as dried up little pipsqueaks with high voices or as overweight, over-indulgent gluttons. And they have been depicted as possessing poor physique and pulpit technique or as bumbling idiots out of touch with reality. A few may fit these descriptions but there are no more of these among preachers than among other professions. Also, don't forget that some have no control over their physical stature or ability. Apollos was dynamic but he had to be corrected (Acts 18:24-26). They said Paul's bodily presence "was weak and his speech of no account" (2 Cor. 10:10).

2. IF YOU DONT WANT HIM MALIGNED WHEN SOME WELL-KNOWN EVANGELIST GOES ASTRAY. Some love to stereo-type and categorize. Lumping all preachers together as "one of a kind" is no more fair than categorizing men of any other vocation by the bad ones in the group (e.g., "cuss like a sailor. All sailors don't cuss). No profession is immune to temptation - specifically, to hypocrisy. But don't forget that Paul was misrepresented (Rom. 3:8; Acts 16:20,21).

3. IF YOU DONT WANT HIM TO BE UNPOPULAR. Most folks, including preachers, like to be liked. Some preachers are popular because of what they preach (Rom. 16:18). Others are not popular because they love truth more than popularity (Jn. 12: 42,43) and are not influenced by numbers. They speak plainly and boldly, realizing that it may turn some against them (2 Cor. 3:12; Eph. 6:20). They don't check to see which way the wind is blowing before speaking. Some who feign support may not want to be closely associated with them. The apostles and prophets experienced this. Don't forget, the disciples of Jesus followed "afar off."

4. IF YOU DONT WANT HIM IN AN OCCUPATION WHERE THERE IS NO ROOM FOR ADVANCEMENT. The kingdom of heaven does not have elevated or rank-

ing positions (Mk. 10:37-45). The Scriptures do not depict the work of a preacher as being a stepping stone to anything else. We are all in Christ (Gal. 3:28; Mt. 23:6-12). If your son sticks with it, he will begin as a preacher and when he is old he will still be just a preacher. If you envision him climbing the career ladder with the objective of heavy fringe benefits and early retirement, you will not want him to preach.

5. IF YOU DONT WANT HIS FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO BE UNCERTAIN. Some are adequately supported (Phil. 4:14-18). They may have had past hardships in raising support to go to difficult areas or to begin a congregation. There are still a number of men who are under supported. Some have their support discontinued without much notice. I do not personally know any gospel preachers who are getting wealthy by preaching. For the most part, the electronic evangelists are in a class by themselves. However, a preacher must be willing to suffer hardship (2 Tim. 2:3,4; 4:5). Because of this there may not be an abundance of young ladies who will want to marry him.

6. IF YOU DONT WANT HIM TO EXPERIENCE ONE OF THE GREATEST OF JOYS. Seeing a complete turn around by a life headed in the wrong direction is a reward no money can buy (Lk. 15:7). Being encouraged by the growth, dedication, and courage of brethren cannot be compared to the earthly pleasure of winning a ball game, etc. "Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth" (3 Jn. 4; Phil. 1:3-5).

Not all remain true to their decision to follow Christ. But it is still most gratifying to have some of the best friends a man can have. And to be associated with those who have an abiding appreciation for spiritual values and for those who proclaim the good news is a reward far better than words can describe.

One who preaches may experience any or all of these things. If you don't want any of them to happen to your sons, then Mama's don't let your babies grow up to be preachers.

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STUDIES IN 1ST & 2ND TIMOTHY 1 TIMOTHY, CH. 4

First and second Timothy, primarily, instructs preachers as to what they are to preach and not preach, how they are to conduct themselves, and the need for diligence in their work, that they might "save themselves and them that hear" (vs. 16). Since every Christian is responsible for saving oneself and others, the instruction in these letters should benefit all.

Be Warned And Warn Others Of Apostasy (vs. 1-5)

One of the greatest threats to one's eternal welfare is apostasy. Though the Calvinistic doctrine of "Impossibility of Apostasy", in various forms, has been vigorously taught, the Bible plainly teaches that saints must be continually warned, and on guard, lest they be "led away", "depart from the faith", "make shipwreck of the faith", "become lukewarm" and die spiritually.

The preacher of the gospel must be alert to this danger and constantly warn, rebuke, and reprove if he is to be successful in saving himself and his hearers.

God's grace has, through the Holy Spirit, warned of this danger, even describing in detail various threats. Paul warned the elders of the church in Ephesus that after his departure, "grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock" (Ac. 20:29), and cautioned them to watch and not forget his warnings, given diligently for three years.

The warning given in the first verses of chapter four is from the Holy Spirit himself. Saints would depart from the faith. The faith in this text is the true gospel of Christ. It is the same thing that Felix and his wife, Drusilla, heard when Paul spoke concerning "the faith in Christ" before them (Ac. 24:24). It is "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints", for which they are to diligently contend (Jude 3). The gospel of Christ can, and will be, perverted by many people (Gal. 1:6-7).

The false teachers who would cause departures from the faith would speak lies with pretense, or in hypocrisy. They could and would do this without feeling the sting of conscience because their consciences had been darkened — "seared over". These evil men were not limited to Timothy's day. They are ever present in the latter times or throughout the gospel age.

Two false doctrines, mentioned in this text are (1) "forbidding to marry" and (2) "commanding to abstain from meats." The Holy Spirit had clearly revealed that

marriage, properly formed, is authorized by God, and is good and honorable in the sight of God and all men. Verses 3-5 tell God's will concerning eating meats, which

is the very opposite of the doctrine of abstinence. Any doctrine, or practice, that is not authorized by God, or is contrary to what He has revealed, would be just as false and offensive to God as the ones given in this text.

Essentials To Being A Good Minister Of Jesus Christ (Vs. 6-16)

A good minister will remind brethren of the presence and dangers of false teachers, resulting in departures from the faith. He will not draw back from doing this because some error has become popular and opposition or exposure would jeopardize his popularity and financial success. The ministers ability and eagerness to expose and warn concerning error shows he is "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine"; that he is "sound in the faith".

There are some things that a good minister must refuse. In this text, "profane and old wives' fables" is mentioned. I once heard a radio preacher read this verse so that it said "refuse profane, and old wives, and fables." Obviously, this verse does not teach that old wives are to be refused. Preachers should be careful not to misread a scripture, lest they cause someone to believe and act in an unscriptural way. The thing that a good minister is to refuse in this verse is fables, called "profane and old wives' fables." The reference is to Jewish fables, perhaps mixed with Gentile tales, that had been handed down through generations by word of mouth, particularly by old women who liked to sit around talking of various things they had heard and seen. A good minister will teach only divine truth, rejecting the tales and fables of men.

Rather than being active with fables, good ministers will be found exercising themselves unto godliness. This exercise involves teaching and living the doctrine that is according to godliness (1 Tim. 6:3). Faithfulness in this is far more profitable than the bodily exercise that only profits physically and temporarily.

The statement that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" is the faithful saying that is worthy of all acceptation. The Bible teaches, and experience shows, that eternal things are far more valuable than the material, and both are realized through godliness (Prov. 3:1-2; Ex. 20:12). The blessings of God in this life, coupled with the reward in eternity, makes all our efforts and sufferings in this life seem as nothing. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. . . But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pet. 4:12-13). A good minister, therefore, perseveres because his faith (trust) is in the living God who is the saviour of all men (All men must look to Him. There is no other) and will fulfill his role in this respect for all those who truly believe.

Young ministers must not let the fact that some may "despise their youth" or look down upon them because of their youthfulness, turn them back, or away, from faith-

fulness in teaching and warning, or being an example of the believer in every way.

The exhortations given to Timothy in the last few verses of this chapter are important for every good minister to heed. "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine". Study, teaching, and carefulness as to what is taught (only the truth) are "musts" for every good minister of Christ. Neglect or failure in any one of these would jeopardize the minister's objective-saving self and them that hear.

Timothy is further charged to "neglect not the gift that is in thee, given by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Many think a spiritual gift (miraculous) is here referred to. Timothy may have had a spiritual gift, but if it had to do with revealing truth, why was he told to give attention to **reading** and **doctrine.. .to study?** These were essential to Timothy being a good minister, as they are to every good minister today.

Paul often spoke of his being made a minister of the gospel of Christ as a gift, or the grace of God. (1 Tim. 1:12-13; Gal. 2:9; Rom. 1:5; Eph. 3:8). The word "gift" in vs. 14 and in 2 Tim. 1:6 is, in the Greek, "charisma", meaning "a gift of grace, a favor which one receives without merit of his own; in the N.T. a gift of divine grace" — (Thayer). In Rom. 12:6-8 and 1 Pet. 4:10-11, the word is used of both spiritual (miraculous) gifts and natural gifts.

The "laying on of hands" does not always signify impartation of a spiritual gift (Acts 13:11-3; 6:1-6). In these two references, it signified the endorsement of and obedience to the Spirit's instruction concerning certain appointments. The fact that Timothy's gift was "by prophecy" simply means the Holy Spirit had signified Timothy was to be "put into the ministry". Paul's selecting and laying his hands on him (2 Tim. 1:6) was in line with revelation and what the elders (presbytery) of Timothy's home congregation had done, analogous to the action of the elders at Antioch in sending out Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:1-3). In view of these things, it seems to me, that the gift of this verse (4:14) that Timothy was not to neglect was the ministry to which he had been appointed. The exhortations given to Timothy to not neglect his gift would, therefore, apply in the case of every good minister of Christ today. All must meditate upon the charges, warnings, and exhortations given with reference to faithfulness in doing that which results in "saving thyself and them that hear thee." (To be continued)

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STANDING ON THE PROMISES

What does a promise mean to you? What does it mean to you to make a promise? It may all depend on how careful or careless you or others are in making and keeping promises. Have you ever been given a promise that wasn't kept? Have you ever made one you didn't keep?

The Lord has made numerous promises and kept them. He promised that he would destroy the world (Gen. 6:7) and he did. He promised that he wouldn't destroy it by water again (Gen. 9:11) and he hasn't. He said that he would make of Abraham a great nation (Gen. 12) and he did. He promised that a child would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14) and he was. He said that he would make a new covenant with his people (Jer. 31) and he did. He has kept every promise he has made.

That is assuring for it says that any promise that directly concerns us or the future will be kept. I can't think of one promise that he has failed to keep. Thus, there is no reason to question any promise he makes. In fact, God's promises are so assuring that it is as good as done when he makes the promise. That is why God speaks of things that are not as though they are (Rom. 4:17). Have you ever known someone like that? If they say they will, you can mark it down as already done. Then on the other hand there are those who make promises that mean nothing. They have made them before and they weren't kept. Why should we believe them this time?

To stand on the promises of God is to believe them and trust what he says. Again, it is all the same as if it has already happened. We must be like Abraham who was "fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:21). God will never let us down. He will never give us a reason to be ashamed that we had faith in him (Rom. 9:33). The promises of God mean everything to us. For if we can show one reason to question any promise he makes, the whole system of Christianity falls to the ground. Let's consider a few promises God has made.

That We Are Forgiven

God has promised that we are forgiven (completely free from sin) if we just meet his conditions. He said through Joel that whosoever would call on his name would be saved (Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:13). The alien sinner is promised salvation and remission of sins on the conditions of faith, repentance and baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). The erring child of God is promised to

be cleansed from all sin upon repentance, confession and prayer (Acts 8:22; 1 Jno. 1:9). We can trust God's promise so much that we can know that we are his children (Rom. 8:16) and that we have eternal life (1 Jno. 5:13).

That God's Way Works

Human reasoning may tell us that it won't or that another way is better. But, if God says his way will work — it will work! I must stop and realize that God's commandments are for my good (Deut. 6:24). Though it may not always seem to me that his way is best, I must stand upon the promises.

One such promise is that the gospel will convert people to Christ. The Psalmist said, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul..." (Psa. 19:7). Paul said that the gospel is the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Now, we may think it won't do any good to talk to our neighbors. We may think nothing could change that drunkard down the street, but God says his word can do that. He didn't promise that it would convert everyone who hears. However, he did promise that it would convert some, for his word will not return unto him void (Isa. 55:10-11). That is exactly why I keep preaching the gospel. God says it will work.

Another promise is that discipline (withdrawal of fellowship) works. I realize that there are many brethren who question it and say that it doesn't do any good. On the other hand there are a few who think that God knows what he is talking about. Discipline has two purposes: (1) To save the erring - (1 Cor. 5:5) (2) To keep the church pure (2 Cor. 2:5-11). God said it would work and demonstrated it. I believe it. Do you?

That God Takes Care Of Us

God has promised that he will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). He is always faithful. It may seem at times like he has turned his back on us. But, be assured that if ever we are separated from God it will not be God leaving us, but we will be leaving him! The point in the above text is that such a promise ought to make us content.

God has promised that all things work for our good (Rom. 8:28). The context deals with suffering in this life (vs. 17-18). Thus, such statements as v. 28 are made to encourage us in the midst of suffering. I am not yet convinced that "all things" (v. 28) is limited by the context, though I'm not going to argue the point. However, the point is that God is working for us. Whatever happens, in some way God is able to use that or turn it for our good.

God has promised that there will always be a way to escape temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). Temptations will come and be strong (1 Pet. 5:8). These trials are not from the Lord (Jas. 1:13). But, the Lord has provided a door of escape. We will never be in a temptation from which we cannot escape.

God has promised that he hears our prayers. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers. ..." (1 Pet. 3:12). John said, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14).

(To be continued)

THUNDER OVER THE VATICAN COUNCIL

Luther W. Martin
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James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were given the name "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17). Why they were given this name is not known. Were they loud? Boisterous? Eloquent? Arrogant? I do not know.

In the New Testament, a voice from heaven proclaimed: "I have both glorified it (God's Name. LWM.), and will glorify it again." The people who stood by said "that it had thundered." Others asserted that an angel had spoken to Christ. (See John 12:28-29).

When Moses stretched out his rod, the Lord sent thunder, lightning, and hail (Exod. 9:23).

When the Philistines engaged Israel in battle, the Lord "thundered with a loud thunder" and so confused them, that Israel was the victor (1 Sam. 7:10).

The Psalmist wrote: "At the voice of Your thunder they hastened away" (Psalms 104:7).

The Dogma of Papal Infallibility

The last session of the Council of Trent was held in the year 1564; some 47 years after Martin Luther broke with the Roman Catholic Church. The ecumenical Council of Trent had been summoned to patch up the damages to Catholicism that Luther and the other reformers were inflicting. Trent was first convened in 1546, and continued intermittently into 1564. It would not be until the year 1870, that another ecumenical council would be assembled. Slightly more than three centuries would elapse, before the Roman Church would again convene a world-wide council.

There had been many conflicts in the Catholic Church, with many of these disagreements arising over the matter of "infallibility". Did the ability to rule and make decisions 'without error' rest with an ecumenical council, when one was in session, or did such errorless ability reside within the person of the Pope of Rome? Councils had contradicted councils! Councils had contradicted Popes! Popes had contradicted popes! Catholicism needed some firm, dependable (?) source of authority. . . .since she was not content to follow the Bible! Consequently, the 1st Vatican Council was called together, hopefully, to reach a decision on the subject of Papal Infallibility. (NOTE - If a Council assembles and declares a Pope to be 'Infallible', is not the Council the 'Infallible' entity?) Well, be that as it may, let's get along with our story.

The last session of the Vatican Council met on a hot, muggy, July morning, July 18, 1870. It was before eight in the morning, and there was a crowd outside St. Peter's Basilica, each person straining and stretching to get a

glimpse of the inside of the building. Under the great dome of the building, those who had gained admittance were crowded together, trying to see around to the right, the vast transept. It was this part of the building that had served as the Council hall.

Some tall folding doors had been installed, and on this occasion they stood open. Just inside this area, and 'altar' had been built, and one of the cardinals was officiating at a 'Mass of the Holy Ghost'. On the opposite side of the hall from the 'altar', stood a throne, the Papal Throne. There were eight tiers or levels of seats, cloth-covered, in a great semi-circle, with the Papal Throne at the center, and on these several hundred seats were bishops, abbots and heads of religious orders. The assembly totaled 535 "Fathers of the Council". (NOTE - Fifty-five 'Fathers' had left the night before, rather than vote on the subject of Papal Infallibility.)

At floor-level, there were numerous chairs and tables for the tellers, notaries and secretaries of the Council.

Now, remember, in 1870, they had no public address systems. They had no electric lights by which to adequately illumine such a hall and gathering as was assembled.

The cardinal's 'Mass' was now ending and the Pope himself (Pius IX), entered the room to the sound of several silver trumpets. The Pope was being carried high above the crowded throng, and yells and shouts began: "Viva il Papa!" This outburst continued until he was seated upon the Papal Throne. An hour was devoted to the litany of all saints. When this was concluded, a cardinal chanted Matthew 16:13-19 wherein Catholicism asserts that Jesus in this Scripture, made Peter the head of the church; and that the Apostles would have successors to their Apostolic Office until the end of time. Further, these successors to Peter and the Apostles would be able to so rule, as to avoid errors or mistakes. This, of course, served to introduce the subject about which they were going to take a vote!

Thunder Over The Vatican!

It was right about here, that the storm broke! As the skies became darker, candles were brought into the hall. For another forty-five minutes a bishop read the "Dogmatic Constitution", the document that had been drafted during all the sessions leading up to this very last session. It was the result of all the discussion and argumentation that had been expressed in the Council's deliberations on this subject. The storm's fury was on the increase.

The last part of 'Constitution' read: "We teach and define, as a dogma divinely revealed: That when the Roman pontiff speaks **ex cathedra** (from the chair), that is, when as Pastor and Teacher of all Christians he defines by his supreme apostolic authority a doctrine on faith or morals to be held by the universal church, he possesses by divine assistance, promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer wished His Church to possess in defining doctrines of faith and morals.. .. And if anyone should dare, which God forbid, to contradict this Our definition: let him be anathema!"

Upon the completion of this reading, the bishop called out:

"Most reverend fathers, do the decrees and canons contained in this constitution please you?" The bishop left the pulpit, and one of the secretaries ascended the pulpit, and began the task of calling each of the "fathers of the Council" by name, and they began to respond "Placet!" (It pleases.) Only two voted "Non-Placet!" (It does not please.) These two were: Edward Fitzgerald, of Little Rock, Arkansas; and Aloysius Riccio, of Cajazzo, Sicily,

The hall was so large, and the thunder so loud, that Vatican footmen were pressed into service; stationed up and down and across the room, the footmen repeated the name of the person being asked to cast his vote; then the footman would repeat to each other down and across the room "Placet!".

This procedure required ninety minutes to complete. Meanwhile the storm continued to flash with lightning and peal with thunder, during the entire time. The hall was generally in darkness, except for candles, and when the lightning flashed. Finally, when the seven tellers and the five notaries completed their tallies, the Secretary of the Council ascended the Papal Throne and handed the tally sheets to the Pope.

With this action, the cardinals, archbishops, bishops and abbots, etc., all gave a great shout, that muffled the last peals of the dying thunderstorm..

A Catholic writer recorded that as they sang the Te Deum', the sun came out and a shaft of sunlight rested upon the countenance and gray hair of the Pope. All in the hall took this as an 'omen' of heaven's approval!

My question is: "Was the previous ninety minutes of darkness and thunder and lightning, an 'omen' of heaven's disapproval?"

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JUDAS KNEW THE PLACE

JN. 18:2

David Posey

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The events leading up to the crucifixion, though told by the gospel writers in a factual, almost detached manner, include a number of interesting details. One such detail is recorded by John in the 18th chapter. In verse one, we're told that Jesus went to the garden where He had spent so much time in prayer and fellowship with His disciples. Then in verse two, John says, "And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples."

"Judas knew the place." Such a small notation in John's record, yet striking in its implications. I'm impressed with what Judas knew but I'm equally stricken with what he didn't know. Judas knew where to find our Lord, but he didn't **know** the Lord! And therein lies all his trouble. He was more than three years in His presence, witnessing the signs and hearing the teachings of God in the flesh and yet he didn't know Him. How tragic! When he **did** find the Lord, he couldn't deal with Him. In verse six, John tells us that Jesus stopped these evildoers dead in their tracks as He stated emphatically "I Am." They "drew back and fell to the ground." No, they were not **taking** Jesus anywhere — Jesus was laying down His own life (cf. 10:18). As for Judas, he was unable to deal with the Lord. He went out and hanged himself.

I can't help but wonder how many of us "know the place" and yet have never really come to know the Lord. We know where to find Him. We study and pray and attend services and partake of the Lord's supper and give of our means... but do we know the Lord? Consider the startling fact that those who knew the place best — his chosen disciples — hardly could be said to have known the Lord after over three years: one betrayed Him; another denied Him; all forsook Him (Mk. 14:50). Only Judas was ultimately lost, but how weak and blind were His own disciples! They knew the place, but not the Man.

God has a place and no one will be saved outside His place, the church. But God's place is centered in the Man; it is the place **OF** the MAN (the church **OF** Christ). Knowing the place, by itself, does not make you a spiritual person. Knowing the Man does! I'm convinced that many of us have been all too anxious to enter the "place" without the corresponding commitment to the Man who bought the place (1 Cor. 6:20). Have we become "church-men" **without** becoming Christ's men? It's like this: if confronted with two doors, one which leads to heaven itself and another which has a sign over it which

reads, "Lecture About Heaven", many of us would hasten through the latter! A person like that, who knows **only** the place, as necessary as that is, cannot stand in the presence of Christ, any more than Judas and his "detachment of troops."

Many of us know where to find Christ. We know how to enter His body, the church. We are even acutely aware of the consequences of refusal to enter "the place. Yet, we are not ready to accept the consequences of finding **Christ**. John the Baptist told those Pharisees who came to his baptism, "Brood of vipers! who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?!" (Mt. 3:7-9). How many preachers would tell those coming to be baptized that "knowing the place" is not enough! You had better learn Who it is you're dealing with! To the Jews, John said, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (Jn. 5:39). They knew the place, but they missed the Man! Eternal life is not in the searching, but in the coming to Him, the drawing near! He goes on to say (v. 40), "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life." Oh those foolish Jews," we say. Yet, do we know Christ? Have we completely given ourselves to Him. Or are we content with knowing the place? Are we content with memorizing, giving and attending, but fall short of full trust and allegiance. We may need to say with Jacob (Gen. 28:16) "Surely, the Lord was in this place, and I did not know it!"

A true knowledge of Christ is cause for both joy and sober reflection. It impresses us and intimidates us at the same time. Yet the man of God pursues this knowledge at every turn. He seeks, almost by obsession, communion with his Lord. Therefore, he knows the place and goes there often to enjoy the fellowship found there. He would not think of missing such opportunities to encourage and receive encouragement. But such is not the only course he pursues. You might say it's just the beginning. After all, he spends most of his time apart from the gathered body. He knows that eternal life is found in knowing Christ not **just** in knowing the place (Jn. 17:3).

This spiritual man is unlike his carnal colleagues who say, "if only I could see Him in the flesh!" Christ said, "it is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life." Christ was not seeking a veneration of His flesh. He was and is seeking believers. Ironically, it was this statement, among others, that caused some of His "disciples" to "walk with Him no more" (6:66). They knew the place but could not handle the words of the Man whom they found there! We are so like them today. When the words get hard (v. 60) we get soft. The place is often a place of comfort. It even builds our esteem and salves our wounds, and that's fine. But the Man comes and rocks our boat and shakes us out of our comfort zone. He wants more than lip-service. He wants our bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). He wants us to know Him and accept the implications of the knowing.

So, **how** can we know Him? Some are well on the way to knowing Christ, but perhaps don't know that they

know. I can read a book about flowers and can study the names and know what the seeds look like. However, until I go out to the garden and begin to look at the real thing, I may not know what I know. As I stroll through the garden, I will become aware—"Oh, that's a godetia!" By the same token, we need to understand our experiences and develop a sensitivity to spiritual things. We need to recognize such human responses as loneliness, emptiness or hopelessness as originating in our spirit. They are longings which can only be satisfied, completely, by allowing Christ to take over our life. So many people, even some church-going folk, think that a sense of emptiness can be satisfied by piling up possessions or sense of loneliness cured by seeking a new love. But these human "remedies" are similar to drinking sea water. Yes, it's wet, but it never satisfies! Christ says, "I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn. 17:3). You may know the place but until you know the Man, a sense of true satisfaction will elude you.

When all is said and done, it comes down to this: Are you doing the will of God? Not, do you **feel** like you are doing it? Not, do you like the idea of doing it? But **are** you doing it? Not some of it. Not just those things that are rather pleasant to do anyway. Not just what you want to do. But all of it. Every single command. "By this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 Jn. 2:3). Think about something — how long have you been coming to the place? Sure, you know it; probably intimately. But do you know Christ? Do you see His will as having an impact on everything you do? Have you crucified yourself and given everything to Christ? "Judas knew the place."

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"A FLY IN THE OINTMENT"

Frank Himmel

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The Preacher said, "Dead flies made a perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor" (Ecc. 10:1). That statement follows the observation that one sinner destroys much good (9:18). The point of each is that only a little bad can offset a great deal of good.

I remember an incident from childhood that well illustrates the point. Our family went out to eat on some special occasion. Mom was enjoying her salad, in fact was nearing the bottom of the bowl, when she discovered a dead fly amidst the lettuce. Suddenly the whole salad lost its appeal. The fly was small in comparison, but offset all those other tasty ingredients.

This principle has a host of applications. Three areas that immediately come to mind are...

In Our Character

Sometimes an individual has a number of admirable traits, yet has one outstanding flaw that negates those others. Perhaps it is a hot temper. Perhaps it is egotism, or maybe even a lack of self-confidence that keeps him from using the abilities he possesses. In any case the deficiency is a "fly in the ointment."

The rich young ruler had many things going for him. He had been interested in spiritual things since his youth. He humbled himself before Jesus. He knew and kept the law. In a sense it was a compliment when Jesus told him, "One thing you still lack... ." (Lk. 18:22). But that one think kept him from being acceptable.

One need not commit every sin imaginable, nor the most heinous wrong he can conceive, to stand condemned. One little fly will do nicely (see Jas. 2:10, where the sin was partiality). Not a few men would otherwise be qualified to serve as elders or deacons but for one missing quality. No one is perfect. But let us work on our weaknesses so they do not offset the good in us.

In Our Thinking

Haman, the villain in the book of Esther, was exalted by King Ahasuerus to second in the kingdom. He was given great riches. He was entrusted with the king's signet ring. He even had a large family. But he told his wife, "Yet all of this does not satisfy every time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate" (Est. 5:13). You see, Mordecai refused to bow to Haman.

Do not all of us have a little Haman in us? We have so very much to rejoice over and be thankful for: prosperity, health, good families, loving brethren, etc. Yet so often our focus is on the one thing we do not have, making us

discontent and prone to complain. Do not allow life's problems to occupy your thoughts more than God's rich blessings (Ph. 4:6-9). You may not be able to remove this fly, but at least you can shoo it into the background.

In the Church

Do you remember Achan? The entire nation of Israel was held up at Ai because of his sin (Josh. 7). He reminds us that a single fly can be highly infectious in the ointment of God's people.

One wolf can devour many sheep. One false teacher can lead numbers astray. One factious man can cause a split. One sower of discord can keep things in an uproar. One mouthy fellow can disrupt a Bible class. One Diot-rephes can drive away many good brethren. One ungodly member can injure the church's reputation in the community (God swatted a couple of flies in the Jerusalem church for this reason [Acts 5:1-11]). One wagging tongue can cause much hurt. Truly, "a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor."

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MIKE SCOTT, P.O. Box 16641, Kansas City, MO 64133 — One was baptized into Christ at Sterling Ave. in Raytown, MO on November 1. Also a family was recently restored. Some of my support will be trimmed in 1988 and will need to be replaced. Prospects for growth are good here. Visit us in Raytown when in the Kansas City area.

ADONIS BAILEY, 506 College St., Ozark, AR 72949 — In October I conducted my first gospel meeting at Southwest church in Fort Collins, CO. The meeting went well and good was done. The first of the year I plan to move to Irvine, KY and work with the West Irvine church. The church is small but willing and eager to work and grow. They can only supply \$500 a month support. I have raised another \$450 but still lack what is needed. Any church or individual interested in helping, please contact me at the above address. I will furnish references and provide information about the work at West Irvine. My phone number is (501) 667-2520.

MICHAEL GARRISON, P.O. Box 1281, Franklin, NC 28734 — I am to go to Queensland, Australia for several gospel meetings the last of February and most of March 1988. I have received my visa and plans are in the mill for the trip. I ask for the prayers of the saints for a safe trip and for the success of the preaching of the gospel. The invitation came about through David Bennett in Bundaberg, with whom I have been corresponding for 12 years. All goes well in Franklin. Four have been baptized here and several have moved into the area who now worship with us. When in this area near the Great Smoky Mountains, come and meet with us at 156 Old Murphy Rd., Franklin, NC. My number is (704) 369-5186.

O. FRED LIGGIN, JR., 2909 Seminole Village Dr., Middleburg, Florida 32068 — On Oct. 1, 1987, Fran and I moved to Middleburg, Florida after over nine years with the Beach church in Panama City, Florida. Their new preacher is Bill Watkins from the Brooksville, FL area. The congregation in Middleburg is only five years old and therefore is not self-supporting yet. We are still \$600 a month short of our needs. We would appreciate any assistance. This past month we had one baptism and two restorations. The potential for growth in this

area is good.

RICK LANNING, 12165 70th Ave. N., Maple Grove, MN 55369 — In May, 1986 my family moved from Port Arthur, Texas to Minneapolis, Minnesota. We came to work with the one sound church in this city of 1,500,000 souls. Wilson Copeland was already working here and I came to be a co-laborer with him. I thought then, and believe even more strongly now, that there is a need for 2 x 2 type preaching in some areas of the world. The arrangement has worked out great and much has been accomplished. In addition to preaching at the Brooklyn Park church here in the northwest corner of the city, Wilson and I also have preached often for other churches in the state (Duluth, St. Charles, Rochester, Pine City, St. Paul and Red Wing). It is a beautiful state and this has been a delightful city in which to work. The church here is strong and growing. There is much optimism for the future. Visit us when in the area. If you know of anyone whom we might contact for study and/or encouragement, please let us know.

A very fine preacher in his mid-thirties in the Philippines is in need of replacing support he is losing from the church at Kemp, Texas due to some pressing local needs. I have personally worked with this Philippine preacher and maintained close contact with him. He is married and has four children. For information about him, write me at the above address or call (612) 425-2385 collect.

RON ADAMS, P.O. Box 112476, San Diego, CA 92111 — We are pleased to announce the permanent location of the North San Diego church. The congregation was formed about a year ago to meet a need in the north part of the city in the Mira Mesa area. We are now located at 6904 Miramar Rd., Suite 102, San Diego 92121. We are within easy driving distance for people living in the Mira Mesa, Scripps Ranch, Rancho Penasquitos and University City areas plus the city of Poway and Moramar Naval Air Station. Three elders and four deacons have been installed.

JUAN M. GARCIA, Av. Agriculture pts. #104, Cd. Delicias, Chih. 33000 Mexico — Roberto Spencer of Odessa, Texas was with us in a meeting in October. We had good attendance and two were baptized.

My wife and I were in Caborca, Sonora for a gospel meeting of 7 days. There were new visitors and two were baptized. I am 61 years old and have been preaching the gospel in Mexico for 37 years. Mack Kercheville of El Paso, TX and Glenn Rogers of McAllen, TX know me and my work for the Lord.

PAUL K. WILLIAMS, P.O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — A former Catholic was recently baptized. I am well impressed with him. Most Saturdays see me traveling two hours or more to teach contacts. We have about 20 correspondence course lessons coming in each day. We use two courses both of which are offered in English and Zulu. These are doing much good. Helen and I plan to be in the states for August - October, 1988 and would like to speak to brethren interested in this work. We are scheduled for meetings at Gooch Lane, Madison, AL and Mt. Zion near Akron, Ohio during that time.

FRANCISCO A. DUQUE, Amulung, Cagayan, 1104 Philippines — The work at Amulung, Cagayan (northern Luzon) began in August, 1987. Rudy Gumpad, Rey Ugale and I worked together to begin this congregation. We have baptized six so far. This is Roman Catholic territory. We are conducting studies in homes.

CLARK MAXSON, 3433 Country Brook Lane, Birmingham, AL 35243 — During a recent meeting with John Clark, I hired a professional video taping company to record two series of sermons. With the cooperation of the congregation and brother Clark we have very high quality video tapes of his lessons on "The Family" and "Evolution and Special Creation." These tapes are now available to all at cost. Each series contains four one hour lessons recorded on four one hour cassettes for easy handling. The cost is \$40 per series plus \$2.00 for shipping.

DEATHS

CLAUDIA (Nee: Leber) ELLIS (February 6, 1920 — November 20, 1987), beloved wife of Kelly Ellis, died in her sleep of a heart attack November 20, 1987. Claudia and Kelly were married 47 years. Her chief interest in life had been her husband's work. She stayed at home much in order that he might go and do the work of an evangelist. She had fierce pride in his ability and usefulness in the kingdom of God. Claudia deeply loved Kelly because he loved the Lord, and, in this, accepted the essential sacrifices to further his work.

Claudia leaves two daughters as well as her husband: Sue Cooper of Stanford, KY and Betsy Meadows of Cleveland, OH; five grandchildren, two brothers and two sisters.

Claudia was a faithful Christian and was a member of the Lexington Ave. church in Danville, KY. Over 40 years ago she had stood with Kelly and a few others in the beginning of that church, and faithfully remained until her death. Her life was exemplary, and her house was the home for many gospel preachers through the years.

Memorial services were conducted before a capacity audience, including some 25 gospel preachers, from the Preston-Pruitt Funeral Home in Danville at 2:00 P.M. Monday, November 23, 1987 by Steve Wolfgang and Earl E. Robertson. Interment was in the beautiful Buffalo Springs Cemetery, Stanford, Kentucky.

Earl E. Robertson, 514 S. Green St., Glasgow, KY 42141

OSCAR SMITH, JR. of Houston, Texas passed away on September 23, 1987. He preached the gospel for many years, including 20 years in Texarkana and for about that long with the Norhill church in Houston. After resigning as preacher at Norhill, he served as an elder until his death. During World War II he conducted a young men's training class out of which came 20 gospel preachers. His radio preaching spanned 40 years. The editor of this paper appreciated Brother Smith, though we became friends late in his life, and was much encouraged by him. Funeral services were conducted at 1:00 P.M. on September 25 from the Pat H. Foley Funeral Home in Houston, Texas with Homer Hailey and Herman Burnham officiating. Our sympathies go to the family.

EDITOR

PREACHERS NEEDED

RUSTON, LOUISIANA — A full time preacher is needed to work with the Hwy. 80 church. We are in a college town with a great

potential for teaching the gospel. Only partial support can be provided. Please send resume with references to: Church of Christ, 2902 W. California Ave., Ruston, LA 71270, or contact Lewis Johnson (318) 251-0486, or Toby Crump (318) 255-2957.

FT. TOWSON, OKLAHOMA — The west 2nd and Boston Sts. church will need a preacher in January, 1988. James Lynn will be leaving then to work with the church at Etna, Arkansas. We are a small church of 15. We can provide \$700 per month support. We seek a man who is retired or semi-retired who can bring some support with him. Those interested please contact: Willis Watkins, HC 64, Box 70 (phone 405-873-9359) or Morris Tate, HC 65, Box 15 (phone 405-873-2808), Ft. Towson, OK 74735.

BOWLING GREEN, OHIO — The church is in need of a full time evangelist with a strong interest in personal evangelism. We are located in a large university town with excellent evangelistic opportunities. Full support is available. Contact the Central Church of Christ, P.O. Box 82, Bowling Green, OH 43402, or call (409) 352-2164.

OWEGO, NEW YORK — We are looking for a preacher to help us spread the gospel in our area. While we are trying to conduct home studies, we all hold full time jobs. We are willing to help in teaching and need someone to help make further contacts. We are not looking for a pulpit preacher, nor do we want someone to teach only what we want to hear. If some could even spend a few weeks to give us a hand, we would be very thankful. Because of our size, we can only supply \$300 a month. For a single man, one of the members has offered room and board to help. Based on past experience, we estimate that a small family will need \$2100 a month to live comfortably in this area. We have 3 families and 4 individuals who meet together. Ten are members. Owego has 7,000 with about 50,000 in the county. The nearest city is Binghamton (25 miles away) with a population of 150,000 in the area. The nearest churches that are faithful are: Sidney, NY (60 miles away); South Berlin, NY (80 miles away); and Walton, NY (80 miles away). Contact: Jeff Hamilton, Rd. 1, Box 100-2 RT17C, Barton, NY 13734 (phone 607-687-5930); or Gary Whistle, RD 2, Box 247, Endicott, NY 13760 (phone 607-862-0064).

PREACHERS AVAILABLE

KEVIN CAMPBELL, 1047 W. Vineyard Rd., Griffin, GA 30223 — I am a young man interested in preaching for a group of the Lord's people. My wife and I will consider any location or opportunity. For references or information call (404) 228-8953 or write to the above address.

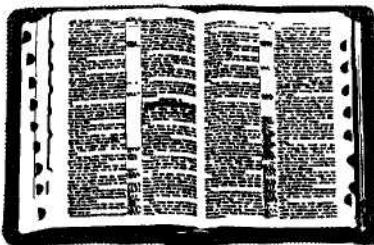
DEBATE TAPES

JACK HOLT, Rt. 1, Box 409, Logansport, LA 71049 — The two night debate with Mac Deaver conducted in February, 1987 on the benevolence question is available on audio tape for \$7 per set. The four night discussion with Eusebio Lacuata in August, 1987 on the benevolence question is available on audio tape for \$12 a set. Video tapes of my debate in July, 1987 with a Pentecostal preacher on the Godhead are available and also video tapes of the Deaver debate. The latter two items can be ordered from Chuck Ainsworth, Rt. 5, Box 712, Lindale, TX 75771.

BRASS TACKS TO BE SUBSCRIPTION PAPER

The fresh, eight page paper, BRASS TACKS, edited by Gary Henry, will become a subscription paper with the January, 1988 issue. It has been published in the past by the Douglas Hills church in Louisville, KY as a part of its teaching work. Gary Henry has now moved to Jackson, Mississippi and will issue BRASS TACKS from that place. Gary Henry is a gifted writer. We are pleased that we will be having materials from him all along in STS. But we are also pleased that he will publish his own paper. The articles all written by Gary, cover a wide range of subject matter. Gary has a keen insight into current trends in society and how these impact upon the Christian. His knowledge of the scriptures is deep and wide and his devotion to truth is beyond question. Frankly, once I pick up my copy of BRASS TACKS, I find it hard to put it down until all of it has been read. Subscription price will be \$6 a year. Write to: BRASS TACKS, 1603 Edgewood Place, Clinton, MS 39056.

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"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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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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FAITH AND WORKS

For three centuries zealous discussions have taken place in Europe and America on the role of faith and works in the scheme of redemption. Theologians formulated a system of theology in the 15th and 16th centuries that placed "faith only" as the condition for receiving salvation from God. Martin Luther, John Calvin and others rejected all works of every kind as having anything to do with the forgiveness of their sins. John Calvin developed a system that had seven major points, one of which was that salvation was by faith only, without any works on the part of man. The system of doctrine is called Calvinism, and is a vital part of most Protestant denominations today.

Faith means different things to different people, partly because of their religious background. The Bible defines and describes the nature and function of faith. Our word "faith" means trust, confidence, belief, conviction, persuasion and expectation. "Trust" carries the idea of conviction, care, accept, believe in, rely on and expect. "Conviction" implies belief, certainty, confidence, fervor, lack of doubt. All of these terms strongly imply action as the result of acceptance of testimony and evidence.

Our word "works" means labor, toil, force, operate, strive, struggle, cultivate. "Labor" signifies exertion, toil, travail, work. The opposite of "work" is leisure or rest. The bottom line of these terms is to DO SOMETHING as opposed to DO NOTHING!

What is amazing about those who teach that no works

are permitted in the scheme of redemption is that they REQUIRE works in their efforts to justification by faith only. Some use prayer as a means to get through to God in order to be saved. Their prayers are human efforts, sometimes very strenuous, with earnest pleading and loud crying with tears and sweat. That is some of the most fervent works one can do in his appeal to God for salvation. Somehow men do not consider prayer, however zealous, a work, but they consider baptism a work by which men seek to be justified. They claim baptism is legalism, but they call prayer a matter of mercy and grace on God's part.

After salvation from sins has been obtained by faith only, going to heaven is a matter of works to these religious bodies. They teach that if a man is benevolent to his neighbor, feeds the poor, visits the sick and is honest and kind to all men, he will go to heaven because he does these things. Is that not a matter of "working" good deeds in order to go to heaven? Salvation in heaven is no more a matter of "works" than salvation from past sins.

One of the plainest passages in the New Testament on faith and works is James 2. Verse 14 introduces this question: "what doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" This questions whether or not faith can save if it does not have works. Read it very carefully.

An illustration is given in verses 15 and 16 to show that faith alone will not accomplish anything. "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Relief to the needy is not accomplished by SAYING be warmed and filled, but by GIVING the things that warm and fill the needy. The inspired James concludes, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Faith without works is worthless, just as saying without doing does not accomplish anything in benevolence. A dead faith does not save!

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" What kind of works? What works keep faith from being dead? It certainly is not the works of the

law by which one earns justification (Romans 4:1-5). Abraham was justified by faith and not by the works of the law. The works of the law are not conditions of salvation and never have been. Working of the law is earning perfection with God; it does not provide for complete forgiveness of sins. Obeying conditions of the law of Christ by which one receives forgiveness of sins is by no means the works of the law. The works of faith in James 2 refer to those conditions of obedience by which God blesses the believers.

Abraham is an example of justification by faith in both Romans 4 and James 2. There is no contradiction in these two passages; the understanding is the way faith and works are used. In Romans 4 "faith" is that body of truth that, when obeyed, will justify the believer through grace. Abraham is the person who is cited as an example of that justification (Romans 4:1-5). In James 2 "faith" is that belief in "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), and "works" is the obedience to that belief. Works do not earn anything—it is not a matter of debt, but the doing of what faith requires in order to receive the blessing of faith from God.

Whatever one may say about Abraham's faith and works, he was "justified" BY WORKS, WHEN he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar..." (James 2:21). The inspired writer concludes: "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." The word of God clearly states that faith was made perfect by works. That means that faith without works is no better than the belief of devils; it accomplishes nothing.

Now, is the doctrine of justification by faith only true to the word of God, or is it a corruptible doctrine of devils? Here is the conclusion of James 2: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (verses 24,26). This means that one who has faith must obey the conditions of that faith before it will justify him.

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Editorial

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LUTHER BLACKMON — A HERO OF FAITH

Repeatedly, the Bible sets forth the example of worthy servants of God whose faith should be emulated. We are taught to remember the faith of Abraham, the patience of Job, the powerful prayers of Elijah, the courage of Daniel, the boldness of John the Baptist, the zeal for souls of Paul and the sinless example of the Son of God. There are other worthies who are mentioned by name with no details provided as to their lives and labors. Some are only included in categories but remain nameless. Paul wrote of "those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3). It is in this vein that I write now and then of worthies who have, in one way or another, touched my life. The present generation will not remember anything about them unless those of my own generation who were linked to them in time leave some sort of record for them to ponder.

Among the heroes of my life, Luther Blackmon stands out and fills a special place. Born and reared in the piney woods of east Texas, he became a preacher of outstanding ability whose name and work became known throughout the nation. Early in his young manhood, his marriage failed. Though his wife married another man, he did not believe he had a right to marry again and remained single the rest of his life. He told me that he felt he was as much to blame for the failure as she had been. He was irresponsible in those days and allowed the world to dominate his life. He credited Roy E. Cogdill with putting the fear of the Lord in his heart and helping him to get his life on the right track.

When he decided to preach the gospel, he gave himself fully to the task. Though he spent some time at Freed-Hardeman College (a short time), the bulk of his training was self-directed. He read widely. He had a talent for saying things clearly and forcefully. His humor was gentle at times and at other times had a bite to it. His east Texas expressions were legion. He said he was reared "two wagon greasings from town" — so far out that he "had to walk toward town to pick up kindlin." Of an overly friendly fellow, he said "he was as friendly as a wet dog."

His preaching was powerful. His association with Roy Cogdill, James W. Adams, Foy and Cled Wallace, Yater Tant, Robert Farish, Robert Welch and a host of such men helped to mold his thinking and his preaching. I first heard him preach at Brandenton, Florida while I

was a student at Florida College in 1949. He was in his prime. He was handsome, always sharply dressed and groomed (a trait which remained with him throughout life). He knew how to **preach**. He built a rapport with his audience and held them spellbound as he skillfully expounded the scriptures, illustrated his points memorably, drove them home with finality. His memory was remarkable. Not only could he quote lengthy passages, including genealogies, tables of nations, judges, kings, dates and places, but he took the trouble to memorize pieces of prose and poetry which "spiced up a sermon," as he put it. He was a master at "words fitly spoken." But his emphasis was always on the text of scripture. The rest was polish and ornament and he did not confuse them.

His writing was fresh, concise and possessed a cutting edge when occasion demanded it. His writings in the 1950's, during those agonizing years when the carnage of division ravished the churches of this land, were clear and forceful. He left no doubt as to what the word of God taught on the nature, work and organization of the church nor where he stood. His penetrating analysis of times and events shed much light on the issues at hand and inflicted heavy wounds on the forces of apostasy. His tract "Marching Feet and a Sounding Trumpet" clearly showed the pattern of digression into the wilderness of the social gospel. Nothing could have more plainly set forth the fundamental issue on the benevolent work of the church and the private responsibilities of Christians than his tract "Benevolence, the Brethren and the Bible." He was especially well informed on evolution. His tract, "God Or Evolution?" remains a classic.

Since 1949, it was my privilege to hear Luther Blackmon a number of times. But it was not until 1965 that we had occasion to be closely associated. He was preaching at Bedford, Ohio (Cleveland area) when we moved to Akron to work at Brown Street. He held two meetings at Brown Street while we were there, and I preached in a meeting at Bedford during that time. During those years, there was a close association among the gospel preachers of that area and Luther was always in the middle of it. He lived in a big, two-story house in Bedford (where he lovingly cared for his mother until her death) and delighted in having large numbers to come to eat, talk, sing or play music. He made any social gathering a delight. I remember the first time he came to hear me preach. It was in a meeting at Salem, Ohio. He put me at ease, listened intently and encouraged me much. He was a true friend to other preachers, young or old.

The last time I heard him speak was at Florida College when he dealt with existentialism. It was a classic. In the course of his remarks he paid his respects to some young men who were enamored with the new unity movement. They had circulated a paper in which they wrote disparagingly of the scholarship of J.W. McGarvey and questioned the academic attainments of some of the well-known pioneer preachers. Luther said "If the mantle of a J.W. McGarvey was to fall on one of these young intellectuals, it would fit him about like a cowhide on a mockingbird." I don't think they liked his speech! But I did!

In his declining years, he lost his memory. While still able to choose and take care of himself, he selected a retirement home in Marion, Indiana where Cecil Willis saw to his care until his death. I saw him last in 1975 while in a meeting in Marion. He came to every service, listened intently and always made comments on the sermon. Some nights he knew me and called me "Connery," the nickname he made up for me, but other nights he did not know me. He would, on such occasions, apologize for his poor memory. He died in June of 1977. Roy E. Cogdill, his life-long friend, spoke at his funeral at Norhill in Houston, Texas. A younger generation would do well to search out the writings of this great servant of God. You will find them in the GOSPEL GUARDIAN of the late 1940's, through the 1950's and in TRUTH MAGAZINE from the early 1960's until about 1975.

In a time when preaching has lost much of its punch, when mediocrity in the pulpit is accepted and even expected, and when some churches even advertise that they are not looking for a "strong pulpit man," it is refreshing to remember a man who skillfully handled the word of truth so that it pierced the hearts of honest men and women and turned their lives around. Such men as Luther Blackmon were not mere reeds, shaken by the wind. They believed in something, **stood** for something, fought for something, and died in hope. Such a man was Luther Blackmon — one of my heroes. Please don't forget him.

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HISTORICAL CONFIRMATION AND DOCTRINAL CERTAINTY

Sometimes I feel as if there may be a hesitancy on the part of some to speak with clarity and conviction in the area of doctrinal certainty. There should be no hesitancy. There should be no tinge of apology. There should be no feeling of inferiority in clearly delineating denominational error and pointing out practices which are unapproved by scriptural injunction. *"Preach the word in season and out of season"* is more than a simple cliche, —it is the hallmark of every gospel preacher, yea, even of every child of God.

As we *wake the world and tell the people* we must repeatedly impress upon the minds of those we teach that our faith rests not in human tradition nor in some "church" doctrine or ecclesiastical pronouncement of human hierarchy but in the verifiable documented context of the historical record of the New Testament. Two books which are indispensable in reaching the unbeliever with the FACTS of the case for Christianity — *Luke* and *Acts*.

Luke was an historian of first rank.

When he penned both the gospel account that bears his name as well as his work on *Acts*, he wrote in the historical context. He had to. Luke sought to bring about the conversion of a friend named Theophilus, a high-ranking Gentile governmental official who had the ability to verify and document every reference that Luke made. Hence, Luke wrote in the context of history. This is not some mythical fairy tale from never-never land. This is not even theology. This is HISTORY — with times, places, people and events—all of which could be verified by Theophilus (*Luke 1:1-4; 2:1-3; 3:1-2*). No doubt he did.

After setting forth the evidences for faith in Jesus as the Christ (the book of *Luke*) the writer turns next to presenting a picture of the spiritual body which houses all believers — the church (the books of *Acts*). We center our thoughts on chapters 19 and 20.

In *Acts 19* the city of Ephesus is thrown into confusion because the spread of Christianity has affected the city merchants whose very livelihood depended upon the production and commercialization of the pagan paraphernalia associated with the goddess Diana (19:24-27). A riot soon ensues as a result of Paul's stand in opposition to paganism and the townspeople congregate in the theater to hold their famous "pro-Diana, anti-Paul" rally (19:28-29). Here we wish to emphasize three points:

1) Today archaeologists have unearthed some of the miniature statues of Diana from the ruins of ancient Ephesus.

2) Today you can travel to the small village of Ayasaluk, Turkey and see the nearby ruins of old Ephesus — ruins that include the remains of the temple of Diana as well as the theater into which brethren Gaius and Aristarchus were brought before the angry Ephesians (19:29-31). (*This is not mythical fantasy. This is historical reality!*)

3) Secular historians and writers confirm Luke's record that Christianity did, indeed, harm the economics of paganism.

All of this shows the absurdity of those who claim that one can't be certain about the contents of the Bible. Such a statement is made by one who, either hasn't studied it, or is prejudiced against it, or BOTH. Its accuracy is seen both archaeologically and historically.

We need to understand and stamp indubitably upon the minds of our young people (and *all* people for that matter) that what we believe is **not** the result of church tradition and business meetingisms ("we've just always done it that way..."). What we believe is not the result of that. What we believe is couched in the verifiable context of the historical record of the New Testament. **And woven through the historical record is the doctrine of Jesus Christ.**

As proof of that assertion let's move on into Acts 20. Here in the historical context we find two important revelations of the will of God.

1. The doctrine of the Lord's Supper, 20:7. When someone asserts that "you really can't be certain about when to partake and how often"—it simply is not so. WE CAN BE CERTAIN! Notice in verse seven that Luke records: "*we were gathered together.*" The term "gathered" is the passive participle indicating that an outside force initiated the gathering. This was no accidental get-together. They "*were gathered*"—the implication being that it was by divine authority and implementation.

Today we gather on the first day of the week by the same divine decree. We CAN BE CERTAIN OF THAT DOCTRINE. Why? Because it is rooted in the context of the historical record! Furthermore, God placed His stamp of approval upon the gathering through miraculous confirmation — the raising of Eutychus from the dead.

"It doesn't make any difference what you believe or do in the name of religion.. ." Wrong. Absolutely wrong. IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE! Here the doctrine of the Lord's Supper is (1) rooted in the context of the historical, (2) given apostolic approval, and (3) confirmed by miraculous demonstration. The New Testament doctrine surrounding the Lord's Supper rests squarely upon a platform of certainty!

2. The doctrine of church organization, 20:17, 28. The Ephesian church had a plurality of elders (vs. 17) whose work consisted of "overseeing," "shepherding," and "watching" (vs. 28). And which flock were they to oversee, shepherd, and watch? The one "*among which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers . . .*" i.e., the Ephesian flock! (1 Pet. 5:2). Once more, another area

that the religious world claims as uncertain is clearly given in the context of the historical. The organization of the local church is not the result of "Church of Christ" councils or veiled traditionalism but, rather, it is built squarely upon the same platform of verifiable evidence as the Lord's Supper.

". . .the New Testament is not just a moral meditative philosophy which in philosophic terms lets us know how to be kind to our fellow man. It is factual history and Acts is a record of the establishment, growth and development of the church in the first century. The Epistles are not simply love letters.' Certainly, they contain love; but they also contain doctrines which reside in historical context that we can verify. The Epistles were written in response to specific needs with which the early church had to deal. They represent specific answers to those needs. Thus, we get the doctrine of what God wants the church to be which we can follow today."

Rodney Miller, **Our Hearts Burned Within Us**, pg. 145.

WE CAN BE CERTAIN! Our faith does not rest upon blind superstitious ignorance but upon solid pronouncements and examples of New Testament Scripture — Scripture rooted in the historical context. The Bible is as solid as a rock. Let us never forget that! The hammers come and go but praise our great God — **THE ANVIL STILL STANDS!**

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IN HIS NAME

THE KING'S MESSAGE: "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17).

Last summer while preaching in a series of Gospel meetings at Mableton (Atlanta), Georgia, I sat in a class conducted by a very fine young Bible student named David Curtis. David made some comments which peaked again my interest in a common New Testament expression, "... in the name of the Lord." I have long felt that this phrase represented to Paul the entire sphere of all that is represented by Christ Jesus: his authority, his person, and his word. Perhaps we have over-simplified the meaning of the phrase by simply using the synonymous phrase, "by His authority." Such has not been wrong, but we do not want to underestimate its meaning and miss great truth. The phrase "**IN HIS NAME**" is used with reference to numerous gospel ingredients:

SALVATION: "To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "In" or "through" the "name of Christ" here suggests the idea of acting by His authority or according to His stated will but it also suggests connection to Him.

BAPTISM: "For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16). "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). Add again to the concept of acting by His authority, the idea of relationship to Him, association with Him.

PREACHING: "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24: 46-47). "But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus" (Acts 9:27). When the apostles preached "in His name," they were acting as His messengers and speaking for Him as well as speaking by His authority.

GOOD DEEDS: "And whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives me" (Matt. 18:5). Receiving the little child in Jesus' name is receiving them "for His sake," as His agent in an almost substitutionary sense of doing it "for Him."

MIRACLES: "Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk'" (Acts 3:6). "And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, 'By what power or by what name have you done this?' Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: if we this day are judged for a good deed done to the helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole'" (Acts 4:7-10). "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to your servants that with all boldness they may speak your word, by stretching out your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of your holy Servant Jesus" (Acts 4:29-30). "But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.'" (Acts 16:18). The meaning here is that the apostles were acting not only with authority from Christ but with the Divine power of Christ or by His ability and strength.

GIVING THANKS: "Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). Paul is affirming that appreciation to God should be offered through Him as the One who takes our gratitude before the throne.

MAKING REQUESTS: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (John 15:16). Here the point is recognition of the Source of authorization or promise.

ALL THINGS: "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17). "In the name of the Lord Jesus" suggests constant awareness (Acts 17:28) of the pervading influence of Christ in our lives (Gal. 2:20).

The point of this is obviously not simply a word (or phrase) study. There is only One who is able to make possible the relationship with God through which we receive such abundant blessings. Christ Jesus has the authority and the position. It is by Him and through Him that we can thank God (John 16:23-24). Whatever we do is to be accomplished by His authority according to His word (Col. 3:17). Understand that our praying in His name is not just a phrase at the end of our prayers. It is a recognition that every prayer is through Him, every direction is by His authority, and every blessing is made possible through Him. He is "all in all." Again, the "name" of Christ suggests the entire sphere represented by Him: His authority, His person, and His word.

There are some powerful implications of all this in providing rules for acting "In His Name." First, one must

not do something in another's name if that person does not want him to do it. You certainly would not take out a loan to do business in another person's name without his approval. Second, in order to act in another's name, one must have relationship with him. My wife can act in my name and my friends may with specific approval, but not just anyone. And third, in order to act in another's name, one must do it on his instructions, for him, and with him in mind. All that certainly applies to our responding to the Divine communique ordering that "whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS TEACHING THE BIBLE

QUESTION: *Is it scriptural for a person (one or more) to form an organization such as Charles Holt's Truth and Freedom Ministry, Inc. to teach the word of God. The question is not concerned with whether or not what is being taught is the truth or not, but is the organization scriptural?*

ANSWER. The answer to this question depends on the nature of the organization. If the organization supplants and rivals the local church, then, obviously, such organization is unscriptural. For instance, a man-made church or a human missionary society would fall in this category. The local church, designed by God and completely and sufficiently equipped to execute its mission in the world, is the only authorized organizational arrangement to carry out the work of the church (Acts 13:1-3; Eph. 4:8-16; 1 Tim. 5:16, etc.).

However, Christians may join themselves together (or function individually) in SERVICE organizations to furnish or supply Bible teaching to individual saints or to local congregations. This is done through magazines, books, tapes, class literature and tracts. To provide this service the organizations charge for SERVICES RENDERED to cover the costs, and even to make a profit. We recognize the right of churches to utilize service institutions, such as electric and gas companies, lumber yards, mercantile stores and printing companies.

Searching the Scriptures, Guardian of Truth Foundation, Christianity Magazine, and others are simply service organizations that provide a benefit to both Christians and churches. Although they may give away a few magazines for advertisement or some brother or sister may send a check to help defray some printing cost, their

nature is not changed. They still remain service organizations.

In regard to Freedom Ministry, Inc. which publishes The Examiner, edited by Charles Holt, it would also be classified as a service organization, although the subscriptions are paid for indirectly by contributions from interested brethren. (This observation does not mean I endorse the contents of the paper. In fact, I perceive much of it as erroneous, subtle and dangerous.)

Many of us send money to religious journals to pay for subscriptions for others, whose names we submit. I do not see any difference between sending my money and sending my articles, as far as joint-effort is concerned. My time and energy are as much a contribution (probably more so) than my money.

Too, individuals are given the responsibility of teaching the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:2; Acts 8:4; 11:20). This in no way intrudes upon or usurps the local church's mission. What we have is parallel action, both the individual and the church doing what God ordained. Preachers may even be supported financially by other individual Christians (Gal. 6:6). The preacher may be publishing a paper to teach the word of God among the multitudes and use such individual support to help pay for printing and postage.

Parenthetically, schools operated by brethren that teach, among other things, the Bible, are service organizations for parents in the education of their children, and for other interested individuals.

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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

Ask the question "What is a Christian?" and many will answer by outlining the steps that must be taken in order to **become** one. This is akin to explaining what the president of the United States is by describing only the election and inauguration process. Surely there is more to understanding the meaning of life in Christ than memorizing the "first principles." In a familiar passage, we are admonished to go beyond the fundamentals to spiritual maturity: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection" (Heb. 6:1).

We sometimes also make the mistake of discussing the meaning of being a Christian solely in terms of the Christian's **conduct**. To be sure, discipleship is an active matter, not just an honorary status one enjoys. But what the Christian **is** is no less important than what he **does**. In fact, the key to doing the right thing is being the right person. Deeds are to character what fruit is to a tree. When we come to grips with what it means to be a Christian, we will find that right behavior takes care of itself.

Fellowship. The heart of the matter is that the Christian is a person who is in fellowship with God, his Creator. In place of his old alienation, he now enjoys "reconciliation." In sin and apart from Christ, a man is "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). But forgiven of sin and in Christ, one is at peace again with God. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). The condemnation of sin having been done away, it can be said that "our **fellowship** is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jno. 1:3).

Because he is in fellowship with God, the Christian shares life with God. In the language used to describe the communion of men like Enoch and Noah with God, the Christian "walks with God" (cf. Gen. 5:22; 6:9). Looking at it in a slightly different way, the Christian is a person who comes to "know" God. Jesus prayed to his Father, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent" (Jno. 17:3). At the practical level, that means the Christian is one who thinks often about God, studies eagerly the word of God, meditates on the character of God, rejoices in the approval of God, and thrills continually at the prospect of heaven with God. The Christian lives life

"near to the heart of God."

Commitment. Not only is the Christian a person in a reconciled **relationship** to God, he is a person who has wholeheartedly devoted his will to that of his Lord. He has committed himself to total obedience to Jesus Christ. In a sense, 1 Pet. 3:15 contains the crux of Christian living: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." The actual authority of God is immutable—his Son **is** Lord of lords and King of kings. But, while others do not, the Christian **acknowledges** the authority of Christ. He enthrones Christ in his heart as the Lord that he deserves to be. One cannot talk any more fundamentally about being a Christian than to talk about the lordship of Christ. The Christian pays a good deal more than lip service to that principle.

Too, the Christian's commitment to the Lord's will has to do with more than just the work and the worship of the church. **All** of his conduct is submitted for the Lord's approval, not only those parts that are connected to the collective "teamwork" of God's people. In his daily, individual activity, as much as in what he does at the church building, the Christian is seeking to do all the Lord's will, and only the Lord's will. Colossians 3:17 ("do all in the name of the Lord Jesus") is the banner over the entirety of his life's activity. He takes not a single step, as an individual **or** with the church, without being able to give thanks for the Lord's approval.

Character. A Christian, in short, is a person who is being transformed into the likeness of God's own character. He is a "partaker of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:5), a person who is in the process of becoming conformed to the very holiness of God. Peter wrote "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15,16). Learning not merely the Book of God, but the God of the Book — in order to share the divine character — that is what being a Christian is about.

Seen that way, obedience to the instructions of God is no burdensome task. The Christian's highest joy is to please the Father whom he loves. To do what God wants — to be as God is — is the noble aspiration that motivates every thought and word and deed of the new man in Christ. To be like God and to be **with** God is really what it means to be a Christian. As William Barclay suggests, "if a man all his life has sought to walk with God, if he has sought to obey his Lord, if goodness has been his quest through all his days, then all his life he has been growing closer and closer to God, until in the end he passes into God's nearer presence, without fear and with radiant joy — and that is the greatest reward of all."

So, in conclusion, there is one other way we can look at the meaning of being a Christian, and that is in the context of the benefits to be enjoyed. There are many, many good things about being in Christ. Indeed, there are no lastingly good things outside of Christ! And while the Christian does not choose to be who he is merely for what he "gets out of it," the fact is that being a Christian means walking with a God "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph.

1:3). To be a Christian means not only to be the friend of God and the servant of God, but also the heir of God.

IS THERE TOO MUCH SOFT PREACHING?

A. C. Grider

Rt. 4, 1671 Bill Street
Shepherdsville, Kentucky 40165



Somebody wrote me recently and wanted to know if I would come to their city and preach in a meeting. It seems that they wanted some real plain sound preaching of the gospel. The man said, we have reached the point where many of our meeting preachers have become so soft they wouldn't say "boo" if they met the Devil in the middle of the road.

And I am hearing complaints from all over the country about the wave of softness that has invaded our preaching of the truth. Several years ago I moved to Harriman, Tennessee to preach for the church there. The church had had a seven day a week radio program starting the very day the station opened. I preached two weeks (14 sermons) and had to go away for a gospel meeting. The preacher I had relieved was asked to fill in for me while I was away. He went to the station and preached and the announcer asked him if he believed like Grider did. He said that he did. But he suggested that he did not approach the subject exactly like Grider did. The announcer said, "I've heard you preach seven days a week for three and a half years and did not know that you believed one had to be a member of the church of Christ to be saved. But I listened to Grider two weeks and found that he believed such. No, you don't approach it like Grider does. You don't approach it at all." I believe that three and a half years had been wasted along with a lot of money. I preached at Harriman two years and seven months and had one hundred and eleven responses, seventy-four of them baptisms. Twenty-nine of those baptized came out of denominations.

My meeting schedule for the years 1987 and 1988 will include fourteen meetings at places where I have not been before. But the people there know what kind of preaching I will do. Why would so many churches all of a sudden turn to me for a meeting? Could it be because of the wave of softness that has characterized so much of the preaching that has been done in recent years? I believe so!

I am not suggesting that anybody preach like I preach. Don't any body say the things I say. But, please, let's get on with the preaching of the truth. Let's make it plain and easy to understand. Let's let the people know that there is one and only one plan of salvation for the alien sinner and that involves "baptism into Christ for remission of sins." Tell the people they need to be

members of the kingdom, body, church of Christ to be saved. Tell the people in the denominations that they are NOT SAVED and will never be saved until they obey the gospel of Christ. Cite chapter and verse for your preaching. There is still nothing wrong with good old chapter and verse preaching. Don't ever preach through, or half through, or even a fourth through a meeting without setting forth the plan of salvation. If there is one sinner present he has a right to know that "everyone" should "repent and be baptized for the remission of his sins."

Of course we don't want any preacher to ever say a word to purposely offend an individual. That would be a sin. But we want preachers to not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. We want preachers who will not keep back anything that would be profitable to the hearers. Remember, the plan of salvation is in the counsel of God and it is profitable to any and all who are not saved.

When I left Harriman, Tennessee I moved to Trion, Georgia and stayed there for two years. Brother Cecil Williams and I were both on the same radio station seven days a week for those two years, and I became curious as to the good that was being done. Brother Williams was like myself. We didn't know any better than to just preach it like it is. I asked the radio audience to let me know if they were faithful members of the church of Christ as a direct result of our preaching on the radio. I asked the same question five straight days on the radio. I received one hundred and thirty-five names within that week of people who had obeyed the gospel by listening to us. Plain preaching will get the job done. Soft preaching will waste money, time, and souls.

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Donnie V. Rader

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STANDING ON THE PROMISES (PART 2)

In our last article we discussed how that God has kept the promises that he has made. That gives us the assurance that any promise he makes that directly affects us, he will keep. In fact, we can be so assured that his promise will not fail that we can speak of it as already being fulfilled (Rom. 4:17). In that article we talked about the promise that we are forgiven, that God's way works and that God will take care of us. Let's consider a few more basic promises God has made.

That The Kingdom Will Never Fail

Despite the gloomy forecast from some of the analysts, God's kingdom will not pass away. The pessimistic talk of some sounds as if they think that there will be no church in the future. There are some who think that there have been times (since 33 A.D.) that there hasn't been any church.

Daniel's prophecy of the kingdom said that it "shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44). The apostle Paul states that we have received a "kingdom which cannot be moved" (Heb. 12:28). Anyone who has any knowledge of the Old Testament knows that there has always been a remnant. Paul argues that there is a remnant now according to the election of grace (Rom. 9:27; 11:1-5). There maybe times that it is smaller than at other times. But, you can mark it down that the kingdom of God will be here. That's a promise!

That Christ Will Return

Jesus said, "I will come again" (John 14:3). The angel promised that he would return in the same manner as he ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11).

Because of God's longsuffering, some concluded in the first century that he wasn't coming (2 Pet. 3:3-4). Peter labors to show that his promise is still good. He will return whether man believes he will or not. He will come again whether man is ready or not (2 Pet. 3:5-10).

I stand upon that promise. I believe that he will come again. I don't know when that will be (Matt. 24:34-35). It will be unexpectedly (2 Pet. 3:10). That will be the end of time (1 Cor. 15:23-24). Thus, we must be prepared for his coming (Matt. 25).

Our attitude should involve more than merely believing that he will return. We should anxiously look for his coming. Paul described it as an "earnest expectation" (Rom. 8:19). That is a picture of one who waits with his head raised and his eyes fixed on a distance hoping to get a glimpse of someone or something he wants to see. It is

also a description of one who stands upon the promise that he will return.

That the Faithful Have Eternal Life

Those who serve God faithfully are promised eternal life. "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" (1 John 2:25). Jesus said that the righteous shall enter "into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46). We are so assured of this that some passages speak as if we have it now. John says that we can know that we have eternal life (1 John 5:13). I believe that God will keep his promise. Do you?

That The Disobedient Will Be Punished

I'm sure that there are some who think that God will not keep that promise. They think that since God is so kind and loving he surely would not condemn anyone to hell. Yet, the apostle Paul strongly emphasizes the warning. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

I stand on the promise of God. Will you stand with me?

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

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Owensboro, Kentucky 42302



THE UNIFICATION THEOLOGY OF SUN MYUNG MOON

I recently went to Japan and Korea at the expense of the Unification Church. My wife and two couples from the congregation accompanied me. It was stressed that we would be unqualified to speak on "Unification Theology" if we did not attend all the lectures and that we would receive a diploma upon completion of the seminar. I attended all the lectures, have my diploma, and according to the Unification Church I am qualified to speak on the subject.

The conference was attended by over 200 ministers—Methodists, Mormons, Baptists, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Pentecostals, Catholics, Lutherans, and several groups I had never heard of. We were told that no one would try to convert us. It became evident that their main interest was in being accepted into the mainstream of the ecumenical movement (they did not realize that we were not ecumenical when they invited us). We were informed that they merely wanted a chance to explain their position and that we were free to disagree.

That we did during the question-answer periods and group discussions.

Readers of STS may think it useless to deal with this subject since "nobody would believe it." This is a mistake. That they are to be reckoned with is evidenced by their phenomenal success. The church officially began in 1954 and now has missionaries in 138 countries with a membership of 3 million — within 33 years. They have outgrown us! Plus, they have influenced many to accept and work with them in the ecumenical movement. The church possesses great wealth with ownership of a number of industries and newspapers in major cities. It is not the purpose of these articles to engage in a lengthy refutation of the errors of Sun Myung Moon, but to more fully inform the readers of their doctrine. Some brief refutation will be made. The following abbreviations will be used: UC (Unification Church); SYM (Sun Myung Moon); DP (Divine Principle); OTP (Outline Of The Principle, Level 4); PSP (People Serving People — Projects Of The UC); CIC (Christianity In Crisis, by SYM); TUC (The Unification Church, publication).

HOW ECUMENICAL ARE THEY?

One day we were taken to a Buddhist Temple to hear a monk deliver his interpretation of "Shinran's View of Salvation." (Shinran was a Buddhist theologian who lived in the 12th century). The lecture was similar to what one would hear in an ecumenical denomination, except that Buddha was the central figure instead of Christ. That evening we were told by the conference director that he accepts Buddhists and that all the world religions (Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Confucianism, Hinduism, Christianity, etc.) were raised by God at different periods of time to direct men toward Him.

In the first Q/A period I pointed out to the lecturer that he had quoted John 14:6 where Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life," but that he had left off the last part of the verse both in his lecture and the printed outline which reads "no one can come to the Father but by me." I asked how he could harmonize Jesus' narrow and exclusive statement with his (the lecturer's) willingness to fellowship Buddhists, etc. He gave a vague and rambling reply which, in essence, said "they are our brethren in prospect." This sounded extremely familiar as Leroy Garrett and Carl Ketcherside have been saying that about Methodists and others who do not practice immersion (I wondered which one got it from the other). The UC has outdone some of our brethren who want to make one or two issues the basis of fellowship. The UC admits that it is trying to unite all men on the basis of "Godism." This is the only way we will ever be able to defeat communism, they say—is for all believers in God to unite, stop fussing and fighting and begin fellowshiping each other, and oppose communism.

Almost every religious movement teaches some truth. It is not the truth that harms us, but the error. Therefore these articles focus on erroneous teaching of the UC. Unifidianists admit that much of their teaching is not found in the Bible but came to SYM by "divine revelation."

I. GOD. The UC says "God" combines both masculinity and femininity. The "original Trinity" was composed of

God, Adam, and Eve. But after the fall a 'spiritual Trinity' was accomplished by God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit came as the True Mother, or second Eve there have been many who receive revelations indicating that the Holy Spirit is a female spirit" (OTP, 144).

II. GOD'S DESIRE FOR MANKIND. One of the three major purposes is for humans to be "united as husband and wife and give birth to sinless children, thereby establishing a sinless family and ultimately a sinless world" (PSP, 12), thus setting up the kingdom on earth under our "True Parent," (SYM). This includes a universal plan to achieve an Ideal World involving the integration of various disciplines such as religion, thought, culture, economics, and politics" (TUC, 12). Part of this Ideal World concept includes plans to build "an international highway passing through all the countries of the world and for men to gain a higher-level global view of value" (TUC, 19).

III. SIN. SYM teaches inherited sin. His supposed revelation is that "Lucifer" (Satan) had an illicit sexual relationship with Eve before she cohabited with Adam, causing people thereafter to be born in sin. The UC puts this figurative meaning on the eating of the forbidden fruit (DP, 72). "Satan usurped the position of God,... so that people thereafter were born in sin" (PSP, 12). "... The original sin remains in the flesh and is transmitted continuously from generation to generation" (DP, 148).

IV. CHRISTOLOGY. "Fallen mankind can be restored to God only through Christ (the Messiah) who comes as a new Adam and weds a new Eve. Together they will become the new spiritual fountainhead of the human race through whom we can be reborn into God's family" (PSP, 12). It is taught that Jesus of the NT did not succeed at finding a wife, being thwarted by his crucifixion. Therefore, when Messiah comes (the third Adam, who happens to be SYM) he will fulfill this mission "... A perfected man and woman will stand on earth and will become the true spiritual parents of human-kind... Through accepting these True Parents ... reparation can be made that will allow even original sin to be eliminated and... every person will eventually become perfect" (PSP, 13).

V. JESUS. Moon teaches that Jesus was a perfect man who was unable to find the perfect wife, but he was not God. "When he prayed, he made it clear that he was not God by calling God Father (John 17:1)" (OTP, 142; DP, 212). "Jesus knew he could not fulfill the purpose of his advent as the Messiah through redemption by the cross ... it is equally true that redemption by the cross has been unable to remove our original sin and restore us as men of the original nature who cannot sin; thus, it has been unable to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth . . . Jesus did not come to die on the cross . . . however devout a man of faith may be, he cannot fulfill physical salvation by redemption through Jesus' crucifixion alone" (DP, 142,143,148).

(Our next article will deal with John the Baptist the Betrayer; Marriage In The Unification Church, The Place Of Korea In Prophecy, and The Nature Of The Second Coming).

PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

James R. Cope

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Temple Terrace, FL 33617



BUSY, HAPPY, COMMITTED

Recently, looking through the 1912 volume of the **Gospel Advocate**, I discovered a personal report covering approximately 15 years of W.A. Cameron's evangelistic work between 1897 and 1912, mostly in Georgia and Florida. As will be observed brother Cameron was a meticulous record keeper. He moved to Florida 80 years ago at about age 37. I first met him almost 40 years ago. Brother Cameron's last 25 years which ended in 1959 (his 90th year) were spent in St. Petersburg with the Disston Avenue church. Harry Pickup, Sr., and I conducted his funeral. (He always claimed to have started Harry in preaching). It was my privilege to work with him regularly during his last five years. I was in and out of his house almost weekly.

For the special consideration of any gospel preacher or any teacher of God's word who may think his own to be the roughest financial situation imaginable and that his efforts are not appreciated by his brethren, I submit the following article from the **Advocate** of July 18, 1912, pages 844, 845. The **Advocate** Editor titled the report: "Brother W. A. Cameron's Good Work." The first paragraph is obviously his introduction to the Cameron letter.

"Brother W. A. Cameron, of Largo, Fla., has addressed an open letter to the church of Christ at Valdosta, Ga., containing a summary of his work for the past fifteen years and giving some facts about his present circumstances. We publish part of this letter in the hope that the churches most interested will see that there is no abatement of Brother Cameron's efforts in spreading the gospel. He says:

"I have preached three thousand and sixty-six sermons (prayer-meeting talks and funerals not included); I have preached in schoolhouses, courthouses, and private houses; in jails and stockades; under mill sheds, cotton gins, and brush arbors; in the open woods and on street corners.

I have traveled fifty thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine miles, walking, wading, horse carts, ox wagons, carriages, boats, and trains. I have had nine hundred and forty-eight additions (this includes one colored man), have set in order thirteen new congregations, and have assisted in securing and building more than eighteen thousand dollars' worth of church property.

I have received contributions as follows: In 1897, \$8.60; 1898, \$35.70; 1899, \$94.74; 1900, \$43.30; 1901,

\$63.70; 1902, \$545.19; 1903, \$485.86; 1904, \$619.39; 1905, \$522.87; 1906, \$732.80; 1907, \$980.15; 1908, \$810.87; 1909, \$912.78; 1910, \$754.79; 1911, \$869.38; 1912, \$318.86.

I have given these contributions year by year to encourage some poor preacher who is ready to quit, believing that starvation is at hand, and perhaps to shame the churches who are sitting on the do-nothing end of nothing and letting one man carry a load like that.

But the visible results of that meeting do not end here.

'During my labors I baptized Brother R. B. Sanders, who for six years has been carrying the message under the same strain as myself, yet he has one hundred souls for his hire.

'Again, I baptized Brother A. L. Colson, who as yet is only a boy, but has forty-four souls to his credit.

'Brother C. C. Brown, of Bradford County, whom I baptized and who is confined mostly at home with an invalid wife, is not idle; he has won fifteen sheaves for the final home.

'Brother F. L. Price, of Istachatta, Fla., a most earnest and worthy brother, to whom I taught the way of life, has one hundred and sixty-nine additions. All this gives us a grand total of twelve hundred and sixty-seven additions as the present visible results. We have suffered much to accomplish this, but are not cast down — only hope to suffer more.

In 1901 I sacrificed my home in Valdosta, Ga., paid up my back debts, and wife and I boarded while I continued to push the work further South, where the full gospel had never been preached.

During these years I taught vocal music to any and all free of charge who would sing to the glory of God. My voice has failed me and I can teach no more.

Through the kindness of Brother J. H. Brown, of Clearwater, Fla., I was enabled to buy me a little home here, and moved here on January 1, 1907. The home consists of a piece of land 150 feet square and a four-room cottage (furnished). The first cost was seven hundred dollars. The brethren here paid fifty dollars on it. I had two hundred dollars left from the sale of my Valdosta home, which was paid on it. Since then I have paid one hundred dollars, leaving a balance of three hundred and fifty dollars. This balance falls due October 19, next, and must be paid. This is a destitute field, nearly as much so as the isles of the sea. Only one way that I can pay it-quit preaching until I have worked it out.

I have never asked one soul for one cent since I have been in the field, and I am not asking for anything now. I have simply laid the facts before you.

'Brother F. B. Srygley has been here on the ground and can tell you the situation.' "

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INDIA TRIP 1987

**Jerry Parks
1425 Wurtele Ave.
Louisville, Kentucky 40208**

As a result of the concern and generosity of many individuals and congregations, I was privileged to make my second trip to India. There are many interesting and exciting stories I could tell but space requires that I simply present the facts.

My traveling companions this year were John Humphries and Gary Johnsen. John and I left Louisville on Monday, October 12th and met Gary at Kennedy Airport. Gary was flying from Phoenix, Arizona. From this point on the three of us traveled aboard Air India flight 111 to London, New Delhi, Bombay and finally on to Hyderabad. The flight, including the layovers in the various airports, takes a total of approximately 48 hours.

When we arrived we were much in need of some sleep but it was early in the morning at Hyderabad and folks were already arriving at T. George Fred's house to visit with us and to make plans for us to visit their villages. We were also anxious to open some packages containing projectors and filmstrips, Bibles and other items that we had sent several months earlier. We were very happy to see that most everything that we had sent had arrived in good condition. Finally, after unpacking our suitcases we were able to get some much needed sleep. Our schedule of activities was for John and T. George Fred to travel to Kazipet and other areas in the Hyderabad area. Gary Johnsen and I would leave on an extended trip that would take us all over the state of Andhra Pradesh. T. Wilfred would travel with us and serve as our translator. Before we left on the trip we were able to visit the India Bible Society and purchase a total of 1432 Telegu Bibles which we would distribute to "daily wage" people who would never be able to purchase one of their own. We were able to make such a purchase because of many generous people here in the U.S. who provided us with money to make such a purchase. It was a joy to see the happy faces of people walking away clutching a Bible in their arms. They were so appreciative and grateful. It would be a wonderful thing if all people had that kind of appreciation for a copy of the scriptures.

Gary and I along with Wilfred left on schedule on Saturday October 17th on our trip that would take us to Kothagudam, Yellandu, Khammam, Vijayawada, Guntur and the Krishna Delta. All total we visited at least 38 villages or towns. In some of the places we only had one opportunity to speak to the people. In other places we spoke as many as five times. It was obvious that much preparatory work had been done by the local preachers and I am happy to report that as a result of the combined effort of the places visited by John, Gary and me, we were

able to witness the baptism of 183 people.

There were many things that contributed to the number of people who were baptized. Probably the most effective teaching tool has been the monthly magazine that is being published by brother T. George Fred. In addition to the first principle articles he is writing, there is also a 14 lesson Bible Correspondence Course that is being published. One lesson is included in each month's magazine. There are 1200 copies of the magazine being mailed each month. Of this number, approximately 500 letters and completed Bible Correspondence Course lessons are being received by brother T. George Fred each month. In addition to the monthly magazine and the Bible Correspondence Course there have been several tracts that have been translated into the Telegu language. 10,000 more copies of L.A. Mott's tract "What Is The Church of Christ" as well as 32,000 insert papers containing information on basic bible subjects have been printed. Brother Bill Beasley has written several other tracts that have been translated into Telegu. We were able to distribute this teaching material everywhere we went and it is very effective. We also had several sets of N.T. tapes that we were able to provide for Indian preachers who were trying to improve their ability to speak the English language.

Thanks to other concerned and generous brethren we were also able to provide several tape recorders and teaching tapes on various subjects. 2000 Telegu song books were printed and will be provided for free distribution to churches all over Andhra Pradesh. There were a number of other books and teaching supplies that we were able to take with us in our suitcases but I will not try to mention all these at this time. We had opportunity to provide some assistance to needy saints and this was also a real joy to be able to see brethren being relieved of suffering and pain which is such a common sight in India.

Probably the most exciting and possibly far reaching accomplishment was the securing of a Visa for Wilfred to return with us to the United States to spend some time studying with several preachers in the Louisville area. This is quite an opportunity for him to increase his ability to work as a preacher and translator. Wilfred's Visa had been denied several times therefore it was necessary for us to travel to the American Embassy in Madras to talk personally to the American Consulate who has the authority to issue such a Visa. He was very gracious and after our visit and explanation, he agreed to approve the Visa. We proceeded immediately back to Hyderabad to secure a ticket for Wilfred on the same flight as was scheduled for our return trip. Wilfred made the return trip with us and I am happy to say that he is now staying at our house as our guest. Again I must say how thankful we are for concerned and generous brethren who provided the funds to make all this possible.

There is much good yet to be done in India and I look forward to other opportunities to be a part of this wonderful and exciting work. Also, I am happy to report that brother Tom Moody of Louisville, KY and Gary Sandusky of Madison, Indiana are planning a trip to the same area this coming January and February. This will

provide an opportunity for much reinforcement and I am happy that they will be able to make the trip. If you would like any additional information about the work in India or if you would like to help in some say, I would love to hear from you.

A LITTLE MAN WHO WALKED TALL IS FALLEN

Norman E. Fultz
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Kansas City, MO 64166

His is not a "brotherhood" name. He never wrote for one of the journals which circulate among us. Most who read the lines written to memorialize him will not recognize the name. Those who will are the several gospel preachers who could not but be impressed with him as their labors brought them into contact with him, and perhaps a scattering of other brethren in other parts of the country who perchance came to know him or to know of him. Yet the crowd at his funeral was the largest crowd I've personally seen at a funeral in quite a long time, the exception being someone who was widely known. It bespeaks the great respect with which he, and the good family from which he came, are held in his native Dyer County, Tennessee.

Melvin (known affectionately as "Butch" by friends, family and brethren) Gwinn, a deacon in the Northside church in Dyersburg, Tennessee laid the armor aside on Saturday morning, November 7, 1987. He was fifty-one years old. An illness of a few weeks, the exact nature of which eluding the medical staff, had kept him hospitalized, much of the time in intensive care. He was having a great deal of trouble breathing. Butch had fought diabetes for many years but had controlled it sufficiently to live a far more productive life than many who have no ailments. A salesman with Sears in home improvements, he did well in his position besides having other business interests. He found some time for hunting and fishing. (I well remember his initiating me into duck hunting on a frigid morning several years ago.) He maintained his home and lawn meticulously, reflective of the cleanliness of the life he lived. He was a busy man; yet he found time to preach the word of God at every opportunity, to teach Bible classes regularly, to study personally with any who would grant the opportunity, and always to visit weak and erring Christians to encourage and, in needful circumstances, to admonish them. At the time of his death, he had for sometime been studying with two young men who had been converted from denominationalism and who were married to young ladies at Northside. They mourned his passing. As Lee Forsythe, present preacher at Northside, stated in his funeral remarks, Butch's business interests, his work, his hunting and fishing, and such things, were his hobbies. Being a Christian was his occupation, and going

to heaven was the goal he ever kept before him. Lee spoke of Butch's love for his wife Barbara and daughter Shelly, a senior in high school, and of his single-minded concern for their salvation and his constant prayer that Shelly would someday find a mate who would be a help to her in going to heaven.

Richard Creel, who now lives and preaches near Atlanta, also spoke at the memorial service. Richard was the first of several young men, fledgling preachers, who stayed in the Gwinn's home as participants in a program of work begun at Northside while this writer served as evangelist there in which the young men would be gaining experience through a summer of study and preaching. His choking speech reflecting the deep emotion he felt, Richard spoke of the great encouragement and noble example received in the Gwinn home and of the complete selflessness which characterized the Gwinn's toward the young men, taking nothing for the hospitality extended. Butch and Barbara maintained contact with their "extended family" after they went elsewhere in the work of the gospel. For example, even while Richard was in London, I could get an "up-date" about him when visiting the Gwinns.

Butch was a man of very small physical stature, but as one of the elders of Northside church remarked to me the day of the funeral, "he walked tall" spiritually. Always tactful and courteous, he nonetheless stood firm in his convictions against error and was fearless to discuss Bible matters with anyone.

Not only a friend of youth, Butch and Barbara were considerate, affectionate, and compassionate of the elderly. Vivid in this writer's memory is an incident of several years ago. There were a number of widows in the Dyer County churches with which Butch had been more closely associated — Northside, Tigrett, the congregation in his home community, and Fowlkes where he did much preaching. Upon the occasion under review, he and Barbara prepared large portions of food and made a feast for the widows and elderly and gave them a joyous outing in the city park. When others learned of their plans and offered to "pitch in", they simply informed, "No, we want to do this."

Butch Gwinn will be missed. He'll be missed in the city of his residence, his place of employment of many years, the Tigrett community where he grew up, and in the churches where his preaching services were rendered. Northside church will especially miss him. I'll miss him on my trips back home, and others around the country who knew and loved him for truth's sake will miss him. But most of all he'll be sorely missed by his devoted Barbara and Shelly and all the family. But none of us sorrow as those who have no hope; for Butch Gwinn possessed and nurtured that hope which serves as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast.

This totally inadequate memorial is written, not only to pay tribute to "the biggest little man" I've ever known, but with the hope that it will encourage others to "fight the good fight of faith."

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WILSON ADAMS, 891 Autumn Valley Lane, Gambrills, MD 21054 — This is to let readers of STS know that there is a church meeting in a private home in Millsboro, Delaware. Tim and Connie Fannin have recently moved from eastern Ohio to southern Delaware to work in the public school system there. To my knowledge there are no other faithful Christians meeting in the state of Delaware. Their address: 12 Mill Landing East, Millsboro, DE 19966. Phone: (302) 934-8903. Millsboro is about an hour south of Dover on Highway 113.

JOE GRIFFIN, 3826 Espejo N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87111 — After a most enjoyable work with the South Platte church in Kansas City, MO, we have moved to work with the church meeting at 1908 Sunshine Terrace, S.E. in Albuquerque. Our meeting place is near Kirkland A.F.B., the University of New Mexico, the Airport and I-25. If you know of someone living here you would like for us to contact please let us know. If you are in our area, we hope you will visit. Our phone number is : (505) 275-7021.

CALVIN RUNNER, RR 1, Box 29, Bloomfield, KY 40008 — David McElwain, having worked with the Highview church at Chaplin, KY for the past two years, is moving to Wilmington, North Carolina in January, 1988 to work with the church there. David is in need of some support from other places since the church there cannot fully support him. He is married, has one child and he and his wife, Marilyn, are expecting another child in March. David has a good Bible knowledge and is a sincere student of the Bible. If you can help this young man in his efforts to preach the gospel, it would be deeply appreciated. We are glad to recommend him. For more information call: Ed Lewis (919) 791-7654; or Calvin Runner (502) 673-3103

DICK BLACKFORD, P.O. Box 225, Owensboro, KY 42302 — While in Japan we were able to visit with Bob Nichols, a faithful gospel preacher originally from Franklin, KY. Bob has been preaching in and around Osaka since 1956. He has learned the language and the culture well. Japan is a difficult area in which to preach, for several reasons. Not only is there a vast difference in culture and language, but it is difficult to get religious concepts across. The country is largely Buddhist and Shintoist. Christianity (in its broadest sense) makes up less than 1% of the populace. (Much of the population is within a 30 miles radius of Tokyo where 27 million people reside). The average Sunday attendance at any church claiming Christianity is 17 (which includes all Protestant and Catholic churches). It is difficult to teach the concept of one Almighty, all-wise God when most have been taught that God is nature (a rock, the wind, etc.), or that one should worship his ancestors or the emperor. The general attitude toward religion is humanistic and "work" is the religion of many. Buddhism and Shintoism are practiced more out of tradition than conviction. With so many people in a small area travel can be difficult and

expensive. A ride on the bullet train from Tokyo to Kyoto costs approximately \$180 per person (about 250 miles). The devalue of the American dollar presents a major problem for men supported from the U. S. In the fall of 1985 the ratio was 260 yen to the dollar. While we were there the ratio was 138 yen to the dollar, which means Bob's income was cut almost in half. Since my return to the States the ratio has worsened. Near the end of November it was 136 yen to the dollar. Bob's son (Bob W.) has returned from schooling in the U.S. and is presently working with his father and is a real asset to the work. Pray for them in this difficult work. We take so much for granted in the U.S.

GARRETH L. CLAIR, 4736 Robinhood Park, Columbus, Ohio 43227

— For the past four and half years (except for 8 months with the Paradise Valley church in Phoenix, AZ) we have worked with the Columbus St. church in Bedford, Ohio. In the last few months three were baptized and two brought back to faithfulness. In 1987 we conducted meetings in Norwalk, Columbus (McNaughton Rd.), Mansfield (Grace St.) in Ohio, Escondido and Hemet in California and Dumas, Texas (6th and Meredith). In November, 1987 we moved to begin work with the McNaughton St. church in Columbus, Ohio. So far, we have seen two baptisms, two restored and two have placed membership here. The church in Bedford is looking for a preacher. The church is sound and able to support a man. For those coming to our area, my phone is: (614) 864-3429.

WAYNE S. WALKER, 310 Haynes St., Dayton, Ohio 45410 — Since coming to Haynes St. six months ago. I have conducted a meeting here and we had a fine meeting with Royce Chandler of Mason, Ohio. Our Sunday attendance averages in the 70's with a weekly contribution of about \$700. We are currently using Dial a Bible Message, a weekly radio program, and correspondence course to spread the word in our community. As a result of this, two have been baptized, two restored, two confessed sins, one placed membership and a family left an institutional church to worship with us. Last fall I was in a week-end meeting in Canal Winchester, Ohio and a week's meeting at South McComb in Roseville, Michigan during which one was baptized. In 1988 will be in meetings in Florida, South Carolina, Kentucky and Ohio.

B. J. THOMAS and WALTER RINER, Elders Church of Christ, 2917 Foster St., Bossier City, LA 71112 — Ken and Debi McDonald, members of the Bossier City church, have a new baby daughter, Terri Lynn, who was born with spina bifida which has caused other complications. Little Terri Lynn has already undergone several hours of neuro-surgery and will face possible surgery again in the future. The cost is far beyond their means and that of the church here to help them. Brother McDonald preaches some for small congregations in

this area. Debi's father is Luther Bolenbarker, who preaches for the Green's Bayou church in Houston, Texas. Ken and Debi are strong in the faith and worthy of our prayers and help in their need at this time. A special account fund has been set up in her name: Terri Lynn McDonald, Account No. 254-30-1, Red River Valley Bank, P.O. Box 5392, Bossier City, LA 71171-9989. Her parents address is: 5128 Tara Lane, Bossier City, LA 71111.

NEMESIO LOMOCSO, Salug, Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines — I wish to make it known to brethren everywhere that I have learned the errors of the premillennial movement and have renounced it. Before the church at Siocon, Zamboanga del Sur on Sunday, November 1, I publicly repented and asked forgiveness for having had any part in upholding this false system.

FERNANDO P. VENEGAS, Casilla #122 C.C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina — 1987 has ended on a joyous note in our work. In November three souls were added to the Lord. These contacts were made by members who wanted to share their faith. My part was only to water the seed they had sown. In December we had a meeting in which Sergio Pino preached and one more was added to the Lord on December 6.

EFRAIN F. PEREZ, Casilla 1317, Valparaiso, Chile — The year 1987 has been one of the best in our lives in the Lord's work. In 1987 we have seen more than 60 baptisms in this area and three new congregations have been started. Juan Canelo, Jorge Caro and Amilio Acevedo, the three men who were leaders in a pentecostal church and now standing for the truth and making good progress in our preacher training program. Also, at Quilpue three were recently baptized — a man, his wife and their son.

ROLANDO P. AZURIN, 148 Ayusan Norte, Vigan, Ilocos Sur 0401, Philippines — In 1981 helped start a work in Tayum, Abra meeting in the staff house of the Sellophil Resources Corporation, a pulp plant where I was a security guard. We started with seven members and grew to where the meeting place was crowded. At one time the plant employed between 2,000 and 3,000. Now, due to inflation and other problems, the plant closed in 1982 and what members were there have scattered. Some other preachers came and helped me start a work in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, my hometown. We met in my little nipa house. We started with 8 members, but with support from the church in Martinsville, Virginia, we grew to 23 members. The population here is heavily Catholic. We are working with prisoners in the Vigan provincial jail and baptized five of them last November. Because of pressing needs there, the church at Martinsville has ended support of my work as of December, 1987. You might contact them for information on our work here: Church of Christ, Rt. 7, Box 241, Martinsville, VA 24112

PREACHER NEEDED

BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA — The church meeting at 2727 Alta Vista Dr needs a faithful gospel preacher. Brent Phillips, who labored with us for the last eight years, has moved to Phoenix, Arizona to preach there. We bid him Godspeed, as he has served the Lord diligently and faithfully in this community. He left under favorable circumstances and with our blessing and goodwill. Prior to his work, Bill Robinson, Jr. Labored with us for four years. Interested parties may contact either of them for references on the work here. HJ3. Phillips, Gene Frost, J.T. Smith and Bobby Witherington, among others, have held gospel meetings here and could offer further background information on the work here. We are about 45, meeting in a rented building. Contribution averages \$360 a week. Though small in number we are spiritually strong and determined. We can supply \$900 a month. Other support will have to be raised elsewhere. This area is not without its challenges and requires a man devoted to the Lord and dedicated to Truth. Those interested may contact: Kent Franklin, 2029 Jason St., Bakersfield, CA 93312, Phone (805) 589-2054; or Richard Thomas, 10800 Lonon, Bakersfield, CA 93312, phone (805) 589-3157.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

GEOFF VANBUREN, P.O. Box 782, Lafayette, Oregon 97127 — I have preached part-time for four years and would like to devote

full-time to this work, if possible. I am 32 years old and in good health. My wife, Leslie, and I have been married six and a half years and have a three year old son, Jared. I presently work for a rubber company in Portland as a sales representative. Right now, I teach a class each Sunday morning and preach each Sunday night at the McMinnville congregation and have been studying privately with Loren Stoneburner, the full-time preacher at McMinnville. I have spoken for congregations also at St. Helens, Forest Grove, Beaverton, 160th in Portland, Hillsboro, S.E. in Salem and Sweet Home. You may contact any of these church about me. We have video tapes of classes and sermons. Write me at the above address or call: (503) 434-5832.

RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION AND ONE LESS LIQUOR STORE

TOM MOODY, 4001 Taylor Blvd., Louisville, KY 40215 — One evening recently I received a phone call from a lady who lives down the street from the South End meeting house. She had just learned that someone intended to put a liquor store in the building directly across the street from the church building.

Upon checking, she was told that the application for the license had been in nearly one month and that there had been no opposition whatever. Upon checking further, this diligent lady learned that virtually no one in the area knew of the liquor license application! Our neighbor went to work, first informing me, then telling just about everyone in the neighborhood.

Most communities have in the past had ordinances forbidding the selling of alcohol within so many feet of a place of worship. Almost everyone I spoke to was amazed to learn that this is no longer the case in Jefferson County. The law was changed, but somehow the change escaped the attention of most people!

The only way to keep this liquor store out was by protests of residents in the immediate area. Within days of this information getting out to the people in our neighborhood, the local Alcoholic Beverage Control Board was flooded with letters of protest (Note: not just petitions, but dozens and dozens of personal letters!). We have received notice that pending appeal by the applicant, the liquor license has been denied. We are very thankful. This is a seemingly small victory in view of the fact that an abundant supply of alcohol is easily accessible to people in this area. Nevertheless, we are happy that:

1. Despite the growing official (political) disregard for the concerns of religious groups, most people in this neighborhood, even those not members of the South End congregation, still are outraged that someone would sell alcohol almost at our doorstep.

2. People in this neighborhood recognize the evil and suffering alcohol can produce and are determined that at least some restraints be placed on its sale.

3. The members at South End are (so far as I know) unanimous in opposition to and disdain for the sale and use of alcoholic beverages. This cannot be said of all churches these days.

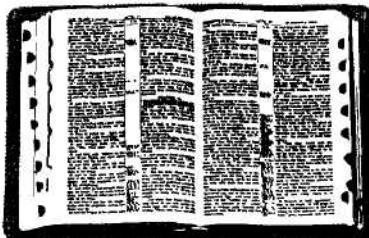
On the subject of alcohol and other drugs, the following scriptures are good to know: Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 23:29-35; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18. (From South End EXPOUNDER).

EDITOR'S MEETINGS FOR 1988

- March—Imhoff Ave., Port Arthur, Texas
Middlebourne, West Virginia
- April—Westvue, Murfreesboro, Tennessee
Fayetteville, Tennessee
- May—Sun Valley, Birmingham, Alabama
- June—Bell Rd., Nashville, Tennessee
- July—Etna, Arkansas
Ridgeway, Virginia
- August—Grandview, Tompkinsville, Kentucky
- September—Plant City, Florida
East Orange, New Jersey
- October—Greencastle, Indiana
Salem, Indiana
Douglas Hills, Louisville, Kentucky
- November—Oxford, Mississippi
Norhill, Houston, Texas

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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MARCH, 1988

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SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

P.O. Box 1487
Chiefland, Florida 32626



THE POWERFUL WORD

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful... and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

It is difficult for mortals to comprehend the power that is inherent in God's word. That awesome power was displayed in the acts of creation, and will manifest itself again at Christ's coming (Heb. 11:3; 12:27). Many other expressions of God's power can be seen in events which were characterized by either salvation or destruction, or both (Ex. 14:13). We shall concern ourselves with the part God's word plays in the matter of salvation.

Man has some control over what direction God's power will take in things pertaining to salvation. God's word can discern "the thoughts and intents of the heart" whether we like it or not, and whether or not we do anything about it. But if man will mix faith with God's word as expressed in the gospel, it can mean salvation for those who believe and obey (Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:2). The gospel **alone** cannot save, and neither can faith **alone** save — it takes a combination of both, plus works (Jas. 2:17-26). Both Felix and Agrippa were affected by the gospel, but neither was saved (Acts 24:25; 2G:28). But let us consider some examples of God's powerful word in our own time.

During the 1950's, I did considerable preaching in rural Barbour County, West Virginia. During one meeting with the Union congregation, nineteen were baptized and three were restored, but one of those baptisms especially emphasized the power of the word. Upon my arrival, the brethren were disturbed because one of the

members had been teaching that girls should not be baptized until they were sixteen years of age, and boys eighteen, respectively. The brother was contending that they could not sin before reaching those ages.

One night while we were baptizing a half-dozen or so, I noticed that the brother in question was displaying an unusual amount of interest in the proceedings, standing at the very edge of the baptismal pool. I learned later that his thirteen year old daughter was among those baptized. The word of God had convicted her of sin, in spite of her father's notion, and we never heard any more about his peculiar doctrine.

During a meeting at Beallsville, Ohio, I stayed in the home of some close friends, including a young man for whom I had great respect. We had even gone squirrel hunting together during the meeting, and I perceived him to be a quiet, model young man. One day he came to my room and "supposed" I had found out about his sins from the way I had been preaching to him (he thought). I was as surprised as anyone, but the powerful word had "discerned his thoughts," and he repented and confessed his sin that night.

At Huntingdon, West Virginia (1955), the local preacher invited some of his Baptist friends to the meeting one night. The same preacher had tried unsuccessfully to have my meeting canceled because he thought I was too hard on a brotherhood project in the area. He had a reputation for being "soft" on other issues.

Unknown to me, his friends had informed him before meeting that they were only attending as a courtesy to him, and had no intention of being baptized or uniting with the church of Christ. In the course of my sermon, I just happened to discuss those subjects wherein most Baptists disagree with the Bible, still ignorant of their presence or the circumstances surrounding the same. At the singing of the invitation song, those same people were among those who came forward requesting baptism for the remission of sins. In forty-five minute's time, the word of God had rooted out error, and found a place in their hearts. I also noticed that the local preacher was squirming a good bit on the front row during the sermon, and couldn't understand why. Then, he arose from his squirming to relate the events of the evening, and

extolled the power that was in the gospel! Indeed, the gospel not only affected the hearts of those who were converted, but it also appeared to have a good deal of effect on the one who had invited them to meeting.

On another occasion, a good sister invited some friends who were members of a particular denomination, and on that particular night I compared that denomination's doctrine and practice to the teachings of the Bible. Again, I was unaware of the circumstances, but she told me later she was embarrassed for her friends to the point that she wanted to slide under the seats. After the meeting, her friends not only expressed their appreciation for the sermon, but promised to miss their own prayer meeting the next night and return again, which they did. That sister said she would never apologize for the truth again as long as she lived.

Of course, the New Testament is filled with inspired examples of those whose lives were influenced by the word of God, but the above have been mentioned to persuade us that the word of God is still "quick and powerful." Why anyone would want to preach or obey anything else is beyond my power of comprehension.

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By Earl Irvin West

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RELIGIOUS SUPPLY CENTER, 4001 Preston
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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69
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A SENSITIVE SUBJECT

About a year ago I wrote an article for this paper on "Keepers At Home" based on Titus 2:5. It drew mixed reactions. Some women thanked me for it and others threw bricks. Some wrote that they had caught a great deal of criticism from sisters in Christ when they decided to leave the job market and return to being a home maker. In the last few years I have preached in meetings on the home in various places, approaching the subject in different ways. But increasingly, I am finding any treatment of this subject strikes a raw nerve with many of the women and some of the men. I have encountered more open hostility on this subject than anything else I discuss.

Even when allowances are made for those who are single, widowed or divorced and who must provide a living, and even for those in family circumstances where an extra income is necessary to meet the needs of that particular family, there is defensive (and sometimes abusive) response from those women who work outside the home by their own choice. The spirit of the feminist movement is flourishing in the hearts of many among us.

The rationalizations are many. Some are "bored" at home. Others want to feel "fulfilled." Some want to discover "who I really am." There are those who leave their babies with strangers to satisfy selfish ambitions while forgetting the needs of the child. There are mothers of teenagers who are absent from the home at a critical time in the lives of those youngsters. They are left to watch the soaps, or direct themselves. The justification is that this will make them more self-reliant. Others contend that the extra income can supply so many things the family needs.

God designed the family. He knows more about it than we do. His word is still the last word as to what families need. Unless you have cut it out of your Bible, Titus 2:5 still teaches that older women are to teach the younger women to be "keepers at home." And 1 Tim. 5:14 says younger widows are to be taught to marry, bear children and "guide the house." This expression means "the management and direction of household affairs" (W.E. Vine, p. 185). Many households are not being directed at all.

There are some problem areas created by career women which we need to consider.

(1) Experience has demonstrated that a strain is placed on the marriage itself. The simple logistics of finding clean clothes when they are needed, grocery

shopping, attending to a sick child, arranging a time when service people can come to repair an appliance or some home fixture which has broken down, helping with school functions and neighborhood activities in which children are involved—these, and many other things go begging. Unplanned meals, no time for a family to sit down together, much less read the Bible and pray together, inadequate time to stay in communication with children (or with husbands or wives)—all of these place a strain on the family. Career women tend to develop an air of independence which is harmful to a marriage. She has her money and he has his. The ornament of a "meek and quiet spirit" said to be of "great price" in the sight of God (1 Pet. 3:4) gets badly tarnished. If a woman is not careful, she can begin to feel that she does not actually "need" her husband and can very well manage on her own. Instead of depending on the husband to "provide for his own" and the husband depending on the wife to "guide the house," this interdependence is lost.

Children are the big losers. They are alone too much of the time, or else with people who do not feel the same degree of concern for their training as godly parents should manifest. We are rearing a third generation which has not seen a proper example of homemaking. We are finding some young women who really would prefer to be at home but who are pressured by their own mothers and grandmothers or other sisters in Christ to make their mark in the world. This includes the wives of gospel preachers and elders in the churches.

(2) Hospitality is hindered. Entertaining guests requires housecleaning, preparation of food, attendance to shopping and numerous details. "Given to hospitality" is one of the requirements for elders (1 Tim. 3:2). It is also required of all Christians (Rom. 12:13). Does anyone seriously think we have as much of this in practice as is needed? Teenagers do not feel at liberty to invite their friends to their homes. Teenagers who are Christians need to be together in domestic settings (not just at the pizza palace, bowling alley or skating rink). Let's be honest. There is something flat about having guests in your home and then telling them "you're on your own."

(3) Evangelism is retarded. We have lost much of the spiritual force generated by godly women who had time to be excellent students of the Bible, who were willing and had time to teach neighbors, or arrange for studies in which someone else could come in and teach them. Harried households find it inconvenient to plan an evening a week for several weeks to have a home Bible study to which friends or neighbors are invited. Am I just imagining this?

(4) Benevolence goes begging. Who has time to sew for the poor, or cook for the needy, or go help a fellow Christian who is sick, or perhaps a neighbor. Again I ask, where will we find a Dorcas? Why there is not even time to sew on a button for a family member.

(5) An unhealthy respect is being developed toward what the word of God says on this subject. Preachers with career wives are not going to say anything about it. They have often already lost control of the leadership of their own family. Elders with career wives are not going to stress the need for teaching along these lines. Young

people in classes are not going to be taught much on the subject. Bible class teachers often get caught in a buzz saw if they try to discuss these passages. They will have their carcasses picked by career-oriented women (aided and abetted by some of the men). Simply ask, "well, what does "keeper at home" mean, or what does "guide the house" mean, and then prepare to take cover. You are going to catch it! But I'll tell you what you will hear. You will hear nearly everything except a fair, clear-cut presentation of what these expressions from the word of God mean. It is dangerous to play fast and loose with the word of God, on this or any other subject.

We need gospel preachers to present God's ideal for the family, without fear or favor. We need elders to insist that this great need be met. We need teachers in classrooms who are prepared to teach, without compromise, what the word of God says on this matter. We need mothers in Israel who will teach their children, by word and example.

At the risk of being hanged from the nearest tree, I'll say it again. One of the great perils facing the nation, the home and the church is simply this: **mother isn't home.**

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Ken Green

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WHEN TO SPEAK

There is "a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Eccl. 3:7). There are certainly occasions when we ought to remain silent. One can do a great deal of damage by saying the wrong thing at the wrong time.

But it is also true that one can accomplish much good by saying the right thing at the right time. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Prov. 25:11). "A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season (lit. 'in its time'), how good it is" (Prov. 15:23).

The ability to converse and communicate in words is a unique gift that the Creator has bestowed upon us creatures who are made in His image. There is a time to speak. Let us observe some of the occasions when we ought to speak.

1. We should speak when there is a worthy cause to defend. It has been suggested that sometimes silence is golden, and sometimes it is just yellow. There are times that we need to speak out and be heard in defense of worthy causes.

In our day and time there are many social issues which overlap into our personal lives of service to God, our family lives, and our religious freedom. Christians should study and prepare themselves on such matters as

abortion, pornography, homosexuality and all sexual immorality, the feminist movement, the teaching of evolution and other phases of humanism to our **children in** the schools, and other such issues. Then when opportunity arises to speak out, either privately or publicly, they should do so.

In the church, Christians should equip themselves to speak out against the innovations that seek to find openings into Scriptural worship, work, and organization.

As Paul expressed it, we are to "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). Such should be our aim whenever we speak in defense of a worthy cause.

2. We should speak when we have opportunity to teach the gospel. By its very nature, the Great Commission will continue to be in force until the day of the Lord arrives (Matt. 28:19, 20).

Some say, "My life is my sermon." That is good so far as it goes. But it's often used as a crutch. Living a good life is not enough. There are a lot of people **who do not** drink alcohol, use profanity, or run around **on their** spouses, who are lost. They are involved in some religious cult, or denominational error, or are not religious at all. They need to hear the gospel.

It has been demonstrated theoretically and mathematically that if one Christian led one other to Christ, and then the following year those two won two more, and the process continued to double, it would take about thirty-three years to reach over 5 billion people, the population of the world.

We can discuss evangelism, conduct TV and radio programs, and send out gospel papers, but I think we **all** realize that we'll not get the job done until we speak the gospel to our neighbors.

3. We should speak when someone needs encouragement. "Anxiety in the heart of men causes depression, but a good word makes it glad" (Prov. 12:25).

Barnabas was called the "son of consolation" or "encouragement." The same word, translated "consolation" and "comfort" is used almost thirty times in 2 Corinthians.

Rom. 12:8 shows that some are especially talented in the use of "exhortation" or encouragement.

When we see someone who needs an uplifting word, such is a time to speak.

Some seem to have a gift of discouragement. Practically everything they say tends to add to the burden. One young preacher was told off by a church member. He was told that he couldn't preach and might as well quit trying. Another member, wishing to comfort the young man, told him to "pay no attention to what he says! He just goes around repeating what he hears other people say!"

4. We should speak when there is a song of praise to be sung. We should "make a joyful noise unto the Lord."

God put singing into the kingdom. Jesus and His disciples sang hymns together (Mark 14:26). We are admonished to teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord (Col. 3:16).

God did not command us to sing well. If He had, that would likely be a command some of us could not obey. He does tell us to sing, and our periods of praise and admonition in song would improve one-hundred percent in most places if everyone would open their mouths and make a joyful noise.

5. We should speak when there is a warning to be issued. Were we to see someone heading for certain disaster of a physical sort, we would quickly sound a warning. Were we to look up from a busy sidewalk and spot a flowerpot plummeting from a high story window, we would certainly cry out to the crowd. Were we to come across some children playing with a firearm, we would obviously get involved.

Ezekiel was advised that he was a watchman upon the walls of Zion. If he failed to sound the warning to those who were heading for destruction, he would share in that destruction. If he warned the worker of iniquity of his impending doom, he would deliver his own soul (Ezekiel 3:17f). We are all watchmen upon the walls!

Paul stated, "I have not ceased to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). He realized that he was therefore free from the blood of all men.

There's a Great Day Coming, when the saint and the sinner shall be parted right and left. Are you ready for that day to come? There's a sad day coming, when the sinner shall hear his doom, depart, I know you not! Are you ready for that day to come?

When a warning needs to be sounded, that is a time to speak.

6. We should speak when a wrong needs to be set right. Jesus instructs us that we should strive to be reconciled to our brother before we offer our gift of worship to God (Matt. 5:23, 24). If our brother has offended us, we should go to him (Matt. 18:15). Such is the time to speak in love.

Probably the majority of problems in churches are caused by folks who are not big enough to forgive and forget. We should let our "moderation" (gentleness, yieldedness, sweet reasonableness) be known by all men (Phil. 4:5).

There are some old accounts that need to be settled in the proper way. Such is the time to speak.

7. We should speak when thanks need to be given. Six times in Paul's epistle to the Colossians, he tells us to give thanks (Col. 1:3,12; 2:7; 3:15,17; 4:2).

The Gentiles sank into idolatry and immorality because when they knew God, they did not glorify Him, "nor were they thankful" (Rom. 1:21).

Everyday we need to speak and express thanksgiving to our God, the giver of all good gifts.

8. We should speak when we have something worthwhile to say. "Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones" (Prov. 16:24).

We shall give account for idle speech, but when we have something worthwhile to say, we need to say it.

May the giver of wisdom grant us the ability to speak when we ought to speak and be silent when we ought to be silent.

WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE

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PEOPLE!

People! That's what I write about mostly — *Wake the World and Tell the PEOPLE*. ... One of the fringe benefits of being a gospel preacher is the privilege of travel and the opportunity to meet *new* people — of sharing good times and good food, friendly conversation and warm fellowship with fellow saints. It's a joy to be sure. And ... along the way, if one keeps an observant eye, there will be a chuckle (or maybe even two ...).

Shoneys & 1 Cor. 9:27

I ate breakfast recently with about a dozen guys who preach in the middle Tennessee area. We ate at one of those places boasting the "all you can eat" breakfast bar. As we began to make our way back for "seconds" one brother (was it *Harold Comer*?) was heard to say — "*Well, fellows, the Bible does say that one should buffet (BUFF-FAY) his body.*" In that case, brother Comer, I think I'll have some more grits and gravy.

Thrilled!

Every now and then you meet an exceptional young person who illustrates spiritual maturity at an early age. Take *Ellen Williams*, age 9, of Starksville, Mississippi. Ellen is a great listener. She takes extensive notes on every sermon and makes it a point to shake the preacher's hand and thank him for the lesson. She is polite and courteous and kind — a positive reflection upon two parents who have obviously dedicated their lives to *training up their children in the way they should go*. Not long after being in Starksville, my new friend had an English assignment which required that she use the word "*thrilled*" in a sentence. She wrote, "I was *thrilled* to meet Mr. Adams." (now if that doesn't make your day, nothing will!) To that I can only add this — "*I was THRILLED to meet Ellen Williams!*" — a young person trying to *remember her Creator in the days of her youth*.

A Touch of Wonder

Very few people have encouraged me as much as Laura. She has an effervescent energy that knows no bounds. Together we walked and talked and took in the little things of life — things like flowers, and rocks and leaves. Laura sees things that most other people miss. Maybe we get too busy. Maybe we get so caught up in making a living that we forget to make a life. Maybe we take it all for granted. Laura helped me remember to slow down and smell the roses... and search for shells... and look at rocks. Little things... perhaps, but for a little girl of three they provide another day of exploring the

beauty and grandeur of life and living. Laura has given me a touch of wonder that I hope I never lose. "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for such is the kingdom of heaven." Thank you, **Laura Felker** of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee for bringing me closer to Jesus.

Constructive Criticism

A little constructive criticism never hurt anyone especially when delivered by an eloquent four year old like **Derrick Phipps** of Wichita, Kansas (the great, great grandson of W.W. Otey): "Brother Adams, you get so loud sometimes that you hurt my ears. How 'bout preachin' quieter, o.k.?" Out of the mouth of babes....

A Lofty Perspective

The airspeed reached 80 knots as the little Cessna 172 gently lifted off the ground. The air was a crisp 50 degrees and the sky was a clear October blue. Far below stretched the farms and rolling hills of middle Tennessee as if on a canvas painted by nature and brushed ever so lightly with an autumn flair unparalleled in beauty. Just ahead lay the Natchez Trace parkway which meandered lazily southward toward Alabama. We were up nearly an hour but it only seemed like seconds. A man's mind can easily become mesmerized and problems all but disappear from such a lofty perspective. He banked left, cut back on the power and brought the nose down before flaring out for a textbook landing. As we taxied in I thought of Solomon's advice in Ecclesiastes 11:8 — "if a man shall live many years, let him rejoice in them all." Nobody understands that better than does **Winston Holt**, age 72 — a good pilot and a great friend.

Come to the Feast!

Not long back I ate lunch with some special people — brother and sister David **King** of Wichita, Kansas. The same night I enjoyed the good food and good conversation with another fine family—Larry and Susan **Angell** also of Wichita. Yes, I ate with KINGS AND ANGELLS. It was an honor. It was a good day!

Poetic License—?

In a Kentucky meeting the song leader announced — "Bringing in the Sheaves" as the song before the sermon. One little girl obviously misunderstood and sang the chorus in her own special (and LOUD) way, proclaiming — "Bringing in the CHEESE ..." Folks, it's rather difficult to get up and preach after that!

Did You Hear About the Time...

The name of **Connie Adams** is fairly well-known among faithful brethren. I am constantly reminded that "Connie Adams held us a great meeting" or "Connie Adams is my favorite preacher" or some such thing as that. However, in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee the name of **Connie Adams** evokes a somewhat different response. Several brethren there recently told me the story of how on one January Sunday afternoon in the early '60's Dad came over from Newbern, Tenn. to Lawrenceburg to pick up Weldon Warnock and together they were heading to the Florida College lectures.

"Come on and get your gear loaded and let's get going," he announced upon arrival at the Warnock house. "Go where?" Weldon asked, being innocently amused. "Why to Tampa of course!" Dad replied with a tinge of irritation. "Well Connie", "Weldon said "I don't really see

the need to be in too much of a hurry seeing that the lectures don't begin for another week!" Sure enough he had come a week early — and now, some twenty-five years later, the good folks around Lawrenceburg still remember the name of *Connie Adams* with a grin on their face. "*Brother Wilson, did I tell you about the time your daddy came to Lawrenceburg to pick up Weldon Warnock to go to the lectures, and. ...*" It gets funnier every time! (I have no defense! Editor)

Ah ... people, just being people. Folks, when we lose the joy of being with **people** we have lost the joy of Christianity. How can we "let our light shine?" — How can we bring lost souls to Jesus? — How can we *wake the world and tell the PEOPLE?* — if we are not *people* persons? What about you? Do you love *people*?

SINCERE WORDS

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



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THE UNIFICATION THEOLOGY OF SUN MYUNG MOON (2)

(This is the second of three articles which resulted from the author's trip to Japan and Korea to study Unification Theology. See previous article for abbreviations used).

VI. JOHN THE BAPTIST. The UC teaches that "John the Baptist was the second coming of Elijah" (OPT. 85). Moon teaches that John failed in his mission. "John the Baptist later became gradually more skeptical about Jesus and at last betrayed him" (DP. 348). "The greatest factor leading to the crucifixion of Jesus was the failure of John the Baptist (DP, 162). It is said that John "lived without fulfilling his mission to serve Jesus" and expressed his doubts by asking "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Mt. 11:3). This verse proves beyond any shadow of a doubt that John did not believe in Jesus and failed to serve him" (OTP. 88). "He could have been a glorious martyr had he been beheaded for performing his ordained mission. ... But he was beheaded merely for becoming involved in the love scandal of King Herod's family. That affair was none of John's business. Attending the son of God was his sole responsibility. But John deserted this divine mission and suffered a meaningless, even shameful death" (CIC. 140).

There is no question that John had faithfully and plainly proclaimed who Jesus was (Jn. 1:26-42). Like Mary, John may have wanted Jesus to proclaim himself before it was time to do so (Jn. 2:3,4; Mt. 11:2,3). Even if this be interpreted to mean that John's faith wavered,

let it be noted that Jesus sent a message back to strengthen his faith (Mt. 11:4-6). After the messengers departed Jesus immediately cleared the air and character of John from unjust suspicions (Mt. 11:7-11).

As to John's denial of being Elijah and Jesus' affirmation that he was Elijah, Unificationists have misunderstood the prophecy and fulfillment (Mai. 3:1; 4:5, 6). John was not literally Elijah, but an Elijah-type (many similarities between them). The angel made this plain when he said that John would come "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Lk. 1:17). Thus, in the literal sense John was not Elijah (this is what the Pharisees were asking and John responded correctly). Jesus was also correct in showing that John was one like unto Elijah. Literal Elijah did come at the mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-3).

VII. MARRIAGE. On the last day of the conference the director gave a lecture on marriage. The following quote is composed of excerpts from the tape. "Our ordination is our blessing. From the family, God will create the kingdom of heaven ... Reverend Moon asked for volunteers. 'All the white brothers who want black women raise your hand ... all the white women who want black brothers come over here. All the black brothers who want white sisters raise your hand and come over here. All the Jews who want Gentiles,... all the Spanish who want Japanese and etc., etc' _ Reverend Moon was in somewhat of a trance ... he's into this real spirit-filled attitude and mode and he's walking around choosing. This room was filled with more than a thousand people. ... That marriage and our relationship is so very important because the children that come from the marriage is the actual lineage ... of Christ. ... In the process of restoration we believe in the literal fall in the garden of Eden ... that Adam and Eve actually fell from God's grace because of an illicit relationship in love. So we believe that every man and every woman that has that same kind of relationship is recreating the Adam and Eve situation all over again. So we restrain from that and live together as brothers and sisters as Adam and Eve should have done before the actual blessing from God. ... We are indemnifying, changing the past through the process of restoring that nature, the natural nature, inside of us. Through the process then, we are qualified for the blessing. The blessing comes about when the woman and the man have gone through a certain period of indemnity. Now, living celibate is not new in the religious sphere _ I am thankful that God gave Reverend Moon a revelation that we only live celibate for **awhile**.... In that process when we are married we go through the holy wine ceremony. ... The holy wine ceremony is the communion and drinking and becoming of the blood lineage of Jesus Christ.... We are not married at this time. This is our pledge to each other.... During the blessing itself, we are then baptized or sprinkled with holy water. And from that we then pledge to work together as God's ideal family—as Adam and Eve should have done_ All of us unificationists have to obtain the literal words of Jesus, 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect'. ... In that relationship we believe that the husband or the man cannot reach perfection without a woman. ...

Now we do not believe that a man is not saved unless he's got a woman. ... Salvation comes through restoration" (Levy Daugherty, Conference Director, UNIFICATION LIFESTYLE AND MARRIAGE, Sept. 10, 1987, Seoul, Korea).

VIII. KOREA. The first and second Israel both had to walk the path of suffering. ... As the nation which is to receive the Messiah, Korea also had to walk that same path. ... Revelation 7:2-4 says that an angel would ascend from the rising of the sun, in other words, from the east, and would seal one hundred forty-four thousand chosen servants of God on their foreheads. Then what country does this refer to? The nation of the East is Korea. ... Korea is the land which is to receive the Lord" (OTP, 307-309). This is believed because Korea is an extremely religious nation and that it is the front-line of God and Satan because of the 38th parallel which separates democracy and communism. Thus the Lord must come to the same type of point, where life and death and good and evil again confront one another. ... The 38th parallel in Korea has this dispensational meaning to it" (OTP, 310).

IX. NATURE OF SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. The UC tries to draw a parallel to John coming as Elijah. That the second coming of Elijah took place through John the Baptist does not mean that Elijah, himself, was born again as John the Baptist. Elijah was in the spirit world, helping John the Baptist, who was on earth, since John was born with the same mission (Lk. 1:17). So, although the mission was the same, the person was different. ... Through this lesson learned from the second coming of Elijah, we can understand that the Second Coming might possibly take place by the Lord's being born on earth. We can also understand that though at the Second Coming, the Lord, as the Messiah, will have the same mission as Jesus, *he may not have the same appearance as Jesus*. ..." (OTP, 294, my emphasis, db). This paves the way for SYM to be the Messiah, in their theology. The Second Coming of Christ takes place through his birth on earth" (OTP, 296). When pointed out that Jesus was to return in the same manner in which he went (on the clouds, Acts 1:11) the following response is made: "In Daniel 7:13 Christ comes on the clouds ... but we know that Jesus at his first advent did not come on a literal cloud but was born of a woman on earth. Therefore we see that Jesus' meaning is that the second coming will follow the pattern of the first coming. ... What is the symbolic meaning of clouds? It means people. Hebrews 12:1, 'seeing that we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses.' ... It does not mean that Christ's return will come out of the sky on a literal cloud, just as Daniel 7:13 did not mean that Jesus of Nazareth would appear on a cloud of heaven ... What about Acts 1:11 ?... When the angel questions them, 'why do you stand there looking up into heaven' and states that Jesus will come 'in the same way' he is indicating that ... the second coming follows the same pattern as the first coming. The same course will be repeated." (Kevin McCarthy, Director of the Unification Church Education Dept., Sept. 8, 1987, Seoul, Korea).

The error here is that (1) Daniel is not talking about

the birth of Jesus but of his coronation — as one receiving a kingdom and dominion which shall not pass away or be destroyed. This is clear from the next verse (7:14). This did not occur at his birth. (2) While Daniel's reference to clouds may be figurative (signifying divine intervention), Luke's reference to clouds in Acts 1:11 is literal. They saw it! "A cloud received him *out of sight* — " They were told that he "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

(The next and final article will deal with the Failure of Elijah, John the Baptist, and Jesus To Accomplish Their Mission, The Role of Moon and The Bible, My Assessment Of The UC and SYM, and How They Should Be Opposed).

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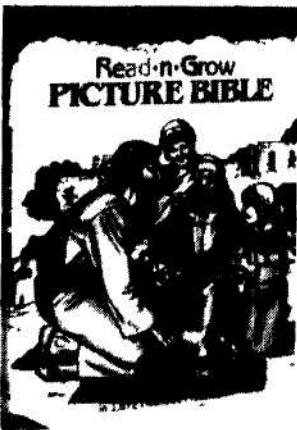
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STUDIES IN FIRST & SECOND TIMOTHY 1 Tim. 5:1-16

DEALING PROPERLY WITH AGE GROUPS — WIDOWS

The first two verses of this chapter instructs the young evangelist about proper treatment of different classes and ages. Instruction for Timothy in these matters, as he endeavored to save all classes and ages, and himself, would be equally important for every servant of the Lord. The family unit, Father-Mother-Brothers-Sisters, is used to illustrate the action called for.

All properly reared children will have been taught to "respect your elders." Elders deserve this honor and respect because The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16:31). Many years of experience, serving, and caring combine in the wisdom and dignity of the elderly. It is a shameful thing, and unrighteous, for young people to speak degradingly to, or of, their parents, or manifest a selfish concern for themselves and none for the happiness, contentment, and welfare of mother and father. Our text teaches it is the same way in God's spiritual family. Elderly men and women are to be treated as fathers and mothers. They may, and at times will, do wrong, but instead of stern, carnal rebuke, gentleness and kindness will entreat them. I fear, at times, a young "hot head" evangelist goes after an elderly saint, considered by him to be a "logger head," in such a way that an inferno is caused in the congregation, resulting in more harm to the preacher and congregation than the old gentleman's actions and thoughts would ever cause.

In dealing with younger saints the brother-sister relationship is to be observed. Ordinarily, brothers and sisters have a close, caring, sympathizing, tolerant, protective feeling for one another. This feeling should always be in evidence as we deal with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Are we as tolerant and sympathetic of different views and actions of our brothers and sisters in the Lord as we are with a brother or sister in the flesh? I am not talking about condoning evil or compromising faith, but the animosity that often exists among brethren over opinions and frivolous things.

Frequently, even an evangelist, looks upon sisters in the Lord with a lustful, sensual eye, rather than manifesting the caring, protective feeling they would have for their sister in the flesh. This is a quick way for one to lose his soul and the soul of others. Some wouldn't think of dealing with a brother or sister in the flesh as they

sometimes act toward fellow Christians. I know that all too often, some disregard all basic principles of right, decency, and law so that there is incest, physical and verbal abuse, bitterness and strife, but it is always wrong and destructive. Souls will be lost because of such action, whether it be with family members or members of the body of Christ.

The remaining verses of our text (v. 3-16) deal with the responsibilities of brethren toward their own and certain widows.

Honor is to be given to "widows indeed" (Who are truly widows-NKJ). The word honor is in the Greek "Time, noun; Timao, verb" and means "primarily a valuing... esteem" (Vine's). Also, involved in the word's meaning is the matter of material sustenance. This verse, and v. 17, along with Mark 7:8-13, are examples of the word being used with this meaning. The Lord's will is that "widows indeed" receive material support. But, who has this obligation? Verse four tells us that it is first a family obligation — children, nephews, etc. These are told to "first show piety at home, and requite their parents." Such action is good and acceptable before God. It is simply doing His will. Failure to so act is to deny the faith and be worse than an infidel (v.8).

Verse sixteen tells Christians to observe this instruction about relieving "their own" and "let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." This verse shows clearly that there is a difference in individual Christian action and church action. Liberal brethren who want the church to function in areas and activities not divinely authorized tell us that anything a Christian can scripturally do the church can, as a body, out of its treasury, scripturally do. Following this false reasoning, which contradicts this verse, they activate the church (treasury) in business ventures, institutionalism, entertainment, and various social actions. Such unauthorized actions, based on a theory that plainly contradicts scripture, amounts to the same thing that a Christian's failure to "provide for his own" does ... "denying the faith."

Beginning at verse five, the widow indeed is described, who may be enrolled for regular support from the church. She is desolate (really a widow, and left alone — NKJV; "who has been left alone" — NASV), but has her "trust in God" and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." There is no one with family ties to relieve her, so her relief comes through her faith in God. She is very different from that one who seeks sustenance through worldly living, disregarding God. Such an one may find physical sustenance from the world, but she is spiritually dead while she lives and is without hope for eternity.

A further description of the widow indeed is given in verses 9-10. She is sixty or more years of age, widowed from a scriptural marriage, known for good works such as bringing up children, lodging strangers, washing the saints feet (ministering to the needs of others), relieving the afflicted, being diligent in every good work.

This "widow indeed" is further contrasted with the younger widows who seek sustenance through a course of action that ignores Christ, even of entering a

Christless marriage. Following such a course, one is idle (free from home responsibilities), so wanders from house to house tattling, acting as a busybody, and speaking of things she ought not.

A safer, more honorable course, which the Lord sanctions, is that the younger women "marry, bear children, guide the house." This is an honorable endeavor which tends to strengthen one spiritually, protects against evil actions that furnish adversaries grounds for reproaching, and bears the fruits of righteousness and salvation.

The modern humanistic, woman's lib philosophy says younger women should seek self-sufficiency in the business and social world, apart from marriage, family, and spiritual values. The fruit of following this philosophy has been immorality, divorce, abortions, neglected children, and the loss of souls.

The instruction given in these verses has to do with salvation. Timothy was to "give these things in charge, that they may be blameless" (v. 7). Failure to treat the elderly and younger brothers and sisters as the Lord instructs, to provide for our own family, to honor widows indeed, to live honorable Christ-centered lives, will mean we are not blameless. We will be blamed with things that amount to "denying the faith." A failure to teach and emphasize these things would jeopardize Timothy's "saving himself and them that hear thee."

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KILLING A GIANT

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Evangelism may be defined as "proclaiming Jesus Christ as God and Savior and persuading people to become His disciples and responsible members of His church." Christians are sometimes intimidated by their responsibility to evangelize. We approach it as if it were some great giant that we had just as soon not go into battle against. We stand before the world to conquer it, but like Israel before Canaan "we become like grasshoppers in our own sight" (Numbers 13:32, 33).

We respond in various ways to our giant. Some of us just cower in fear. Others of us rationalize our way around our responsibility, while others simply dismiss it. Still others run frantically into battle with sword waving, only to be severely defeated by the first encounter with the enemy. Many of the lessons we hear and special studies on teaching the lost only serve to increase the size of our giant.

What we need to realize is that there is no giant except the imaginary one we have created. Isaiah 44:9ff speaks of the folly of idolatry. God says that it is foolish to cut a tree out of the woods, burn part of it for firewood and make a god out of the rest—then fall down and worship it. If it is foolish to fear a god that we have made out of a tree, then it is foolish to make a giant out of evangelism and fall down in fear before it. The devil would like for us to do this. That way his purpose can go forward unhindered.

Teaching the lost is not something that we should have to force ourselves to do. It should come naturally. We should not approach it clinically and mechanically. If we do, the sterile atmosphere created by our approach will turn people away from Christianity and make our giant even bigger. Evangelism should be a spontaneous outworking of the fire Christ has lit within us. If it is anything else, it will ring false and achieve nothing.

As the influence of our Christian lives is felt among the people with whom we have contact we are evangelizing. This influence should be particularly felt among our family, our friends and our work associates. It should be present both in the manner of life we lead and in our proclamation.

Let's imagine a typical middle aged couple whom we will call John and Anne. John and Anne have been Christians for about 18 years. They are well acquainted with their responsibility to personally evangelize. They have gone through classes on personal evangelism and listened to numerous sermons on the subject. They have even read books on evangelism in an attempt to get themselves excited about doing their work. But still they don't feel quite prepared to do their job. As a matter of fact, they are kind of intimidated by it. They feel guilty

that they are not doing what they are supposed to be doing.

Some interesting things have happened to John and Anne in the 18 years that they have been Christians. Shortly after they became Christians, John lost his job because he refused to bend to an unethical practice demanded by his boss. John was out of work for three months before finding a job that promised better working conditions and better pay. Here John's boss respects his religious convictions. Everyone in the office knows that John is a Christian and where he worships. He has invited each one to attend worship with him. No one has ever gone yet, except John's secretary. She went mainly because she liked John and did not want to turn him down. But, frankly she was impressed, especially with the Bible knowledge exemplified by John's teaching in the Bible class and the prayer that his oldest son led.

Anne is a housewife and mother of three. Between her work at home, the children and being P.T.A. president, she doesn't have a lot of time left over. But somehow she manages to teach a youngster's Bible class twice a week and attend the Ladies' Bible Class on Thursday. Anne has talked with her brother and sister-in-law repeatedly about their need to become Christians. They haven't yet, but they have been coming to worship occasionally. Anne keeps praying that they will obey.

John and Anne's family life is fairly typical. Their eldest son, now 19, went off to college this past semester. They realize that he will do some things while away from home that they would not approve of, but he is a Christian and they aren't too worried. Their next youngest is vice-president of the Junior class. He has decided against going to the dance on Friday night, afraid that it would be detrimental to his Christian influence. He's not perfect though. Sometimes he can be downright belligerent. The youngest, a daughter, just turned 13 last month. Sometimes she seems so childish and sometimes such an adult. Last Sunday she obeyed the gospel in baptism.

Do John and Anne remind you of anyone? Perhaps yourself? "But I thought you said that some interesting things had happened to them in their past 18 years as Christians." Did! You just didn't recognize it. Neither do John and Anne. Look back over their lives and notice what an influence on the lives of other people they have been. At work John stood for his convictions and demonstrated his Christian character at the sacrifice of his job. (I wonder if his example helped his teenage son make his decision about going to the dance?) Note John's influence at his new job. Everyone in the office knows they can depend on him to do right. Note also how he has encouraged them to obey the gospel — inviting them to study the Bible with him.

Anne has worked to persuade her brother and sister-in-law to obey the gospel. She keeps praying for them. John and Anne both encourage and train others to influence their friends by teaching Bible classes and worshipping God regularly.

In the training of their children their influence is definitely seen. All three are Christians. They are serious about their religious lives and stand up for what they

believe in.

Would you consider John and Anne personal evangelists? They are. Oh, they are not out knocking on doors up and down the street. They are not standing on a soap box preaching in the open air. Maybe they are not doing as much as they could be doing, but they are personal evangelists. They are influencing people for Christ.

They would probably be able to influence more people effectively if they only realized that personal evangelism was just that—personal. Evangelism is not the stupendous, super-tremendous giant that we have made it out to be. Yes, it involves public preaching, special visits, etc.—but it also involves simple things like riding along in a chariot talking about the Bible (Acts 8:26ff), discussing the Messiah over a drink of water (John 4:7ff), talking quietly to the Apolloses of the world (Acts 18:26), influencing our children (Ephesians 6:4), encouraging other Christians (Hebrews 10:24-25) and living a life before the world that models the love of Christ.

No, we cannot dismiss our responsibility to proclaim Christ by just being a good example to those around us. The message must be both proclaimed and lived out. Presence alone and proclamation alone are equally useless. We must employ both. But don't let your perception of proclamation get so big that it scares you. Keep it small and work small and you will have gigantic results. As George F. Will once observed, "It is extraordinary how extraordinary the ordinary person is."

A SEVEN-COUNT INDICTMENT OF MASONRY

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Masonry is a very old organization, existing for fraternal and benevolent purposes. Woven into the fabric of Masonry, however, are principles, beliefs, practices, and standards of authority that designate it a religious organization, thus placing it in opposition to Christ, who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn. 14:6). While honesty demands the admission that Masonry and other false religions do some good and teach some truth, faith in God requires us to join the Psalmist in hating every false way (Psa. 119:104). The Lord's apostle warned that Christians beware so they not be cheated through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men and not according to Christ. Their completeness exists in relation to Christ. All other ways, even that of Freemasonry, impose regulations that accord with the commandments and doctrines of men, which constitute will worship (self-imposed religion, humanly contrived ways of serving God) but fail to benefit people in true service to God (Col. 2:8, 9, 20-23).

Give attention to the following points, which are sufficient to arouse the opposition of all God-loving and Bible-believing people.

Its Role One of Supplanting the Religion of Christ

That this is the role of Masonry is admitted by some of its authorities but denied by others. The evidence from their sources, however, is undeniable and indisputable. **Masonry Defined** sets forth the creed of adherents as involving belief in God and belief in eternal life, which at first sounds harmless (pg. 88, 89). These beliefs are not based upon Scripture because people professing Islam, Hinduism, and other religious beliefs can be Masons.

The very essence of Masonry is advancing toward perfection through the various steps (degrees) of the Masonic organization (**Masonry Defined**, pg. 136).

Albert Pike's **Moral and Dogma** refers to all Masons as "Ministers," each Masonic Lodge as a "temple of religion," its teachings as "instructions in religion," and Masonry as a "a worship." (pg. 213, 214, 219, 325, 526.)

Any system of teaching or religion existing independent of Christ and the Word of Christ is a false system, having neither His approval nor permission. The slow reading of Pike's monumental work referred to earlier makes it clear that Masonry is a hodgepodge of Jewish religious elements, pagan beliefs and ideas, and especially symbolism and philosophy taken from the ancient mystery religions of the Greeks. Anyone denying the religion of Freemasonry is either uninformed or deceived.

It Espouses Belief in Resurrection and Afterlife Apart from Christ

This belief is required of all Masons, but they do not have to believe in the deity of Jesus Christ. There is but one conclusion: Masonry does not base its belief upon Christ's deity and resurrection. Among those people of the world who do not believe Christ to be the Son of God, it supports and endorses their faith, which in no way is related to the accomplishments and authority of the Christ. True faith in man's resurrection and hope for eternal life cannot exist independent of belief in what Christ affected in His own rising from the dead (Jn. 11:23-26; Acts 17:31,1 Cor. 15:20).

Its Religion One of Compromise

Masonic teaching accommodates Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and Moslems in their unbelief. It allows belief in Buddha, Jehovah, or the mystical Great Architect of the Universe. It uses other books than the Bible, such as the Old Testament for the Jewish Mason, the Koran for the Islamic adherent, the Vedas for the Buddhist, and even others. Whatever book expresses the will of God to a people may be used as a substitute for the Bible (**Masonry Defined**, pg. 77-79).

How could a Bible-believing person be part of a system of belief and practice that compromises in such a fashion as to permit other sacred books a place or other gods a following? It should be clear that no Christian ought to

compromise his belief or his influence through participation in this pagan system. If there remains any doubt, a consideration of the exclusive claims made for the Bible, Christ and His way in 2 Timothy 3:16,17; Acts 4:12; and John 14:6 should eliminate those doubts.

Its Elevation of Human Philosophy above Scripture

One who reads much from **Morals and Dogma** sees soon that Masonry there exists a higher veneration for human philosophy than for Scripture. The writings of ancient philosophers, the star-gazings of astrologers, and the symbolisms of mystery cults of antiquity are quoted and relied upon more than the Book of God. The traditions and commandments of men have a place equal to Divine Writ.

It is in this phase of this study that Colossians 2:8-10 and 20-23 apply. Such dependence upon the philosophical meanderings of men and speculative theology of ancient symbols surely shows doubt of sufficiency in Christ.

Its Method of Deception and Secrecy

In the first three degrees of Masonry, also designated the Blue Lodge, there is intentional deception employed, so that the initiate, thinking that he understands the matters, will really misunderstand them. In his later status of a prince (Adept), he will be given their true explanation (Pike, **Morals and Dogma**, pg. 819). Is it any wonder that early adherents of Masonry disavow any religious aspects being a part of Masonry? They do so because they have been lied to so they will imagine there are none.

One of the landmarks of Masonry is its secrecy (**Masonry Defined**, pg. 137). Of course, the real secret of the whole matter is that the "secrets" are not so secret now. It seems that some Masons have learned this secret. Masonic sources are available. One wonders why a system claimed so beneficial and valuable is so enshrouded in "secrecy." The valuable lessons of Christ were disclosed for the benefit of all. (Jn. 18:20).

Its Oaths Vain and Meaningless

The strange oaths of Masons can be read in detail in their various sources, including **Masonry Defined** and Duncan's **Masonic Ritual and Monitor**. All of the degrees of Masonry have their separate oaths, each of which involves the death penalty for breaking it. The penalties, however, are not what they seem to be, according to **Masonry Defined**. They amount to suspension and expulsion only. (pg. 242).

Who could take such an oath in view of Matthew 5:34-37 and James 5:12? False swearing is clearly forbidden here, if not all swearing of the frivolous sort.

Its Fellowship with False Doctrine and Heathen Ceremony

The fellowship made possible is not limited to a civic sharing or a benevolent association; it involves participation in religious activities custom-made to keep all happy in their profession of faith in many gods and lords.

Not only the Mason participates in these practices, but he also helps to support and propagate such spiritual mush through his efforts and his financial support. How in the world can a Christian support the preaching of the gospel of Christ by his contribution on the Lord's Day and then help to finance such compromise out of the other pocket?

A close study of 1 Corinthians 8:5, 6, in regard to the pagan practice under discussion in the context, will reveal that the Christian should not take part in false religious practices even when he thinks them to be lacking in religious significance, for the sake of influence on others. How much stronger is the application to those practices which are so obviously and admittedly (by the experts) religious! Ephesians 5:11 also speaks to this matter in its prohibition of the Christian's participation in "works of darkness."

The precepts and principles of God are clear. The understanding that one can gain therefrom will cause one to hate "every false way." He will detest such false ways so much that he will sever his connections with Masonry. Having done so, he will then find in Christ a sufficiency and a completeness unequalled elsewhere.

PRAYERS TO THE DEAD!

AND PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD!

St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Macon, Georgia, publishes a bulletin on Sundays, and their publication for August 16, 1987, contained a front page article by a priest named Tom Murphy, making reference to the subject of prayers for the dead.

Although Murphy does not give book, chapter and verse, he refers to the occasion when a woman from Canaan approached Christ, concerning the condition of her daughter who was demon-possessed. In this instance, nobody was **dead!** Prayers and petitions involved the **living!** (Read Matt. 15:21-28).

In fact, priest Murphy cannot show us a single passage in the New Testament where **anyone** prayed **TO** the dead, or prayed **FOR** the dead!

The **living** prayed for the **living**, whether the one prayed for was sick or in sin. In fact, the Psalmist wrote: "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence" (Psalms 115:17). The Preacher, wrote: "For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing..." (See Ecclesiastes 9:5).

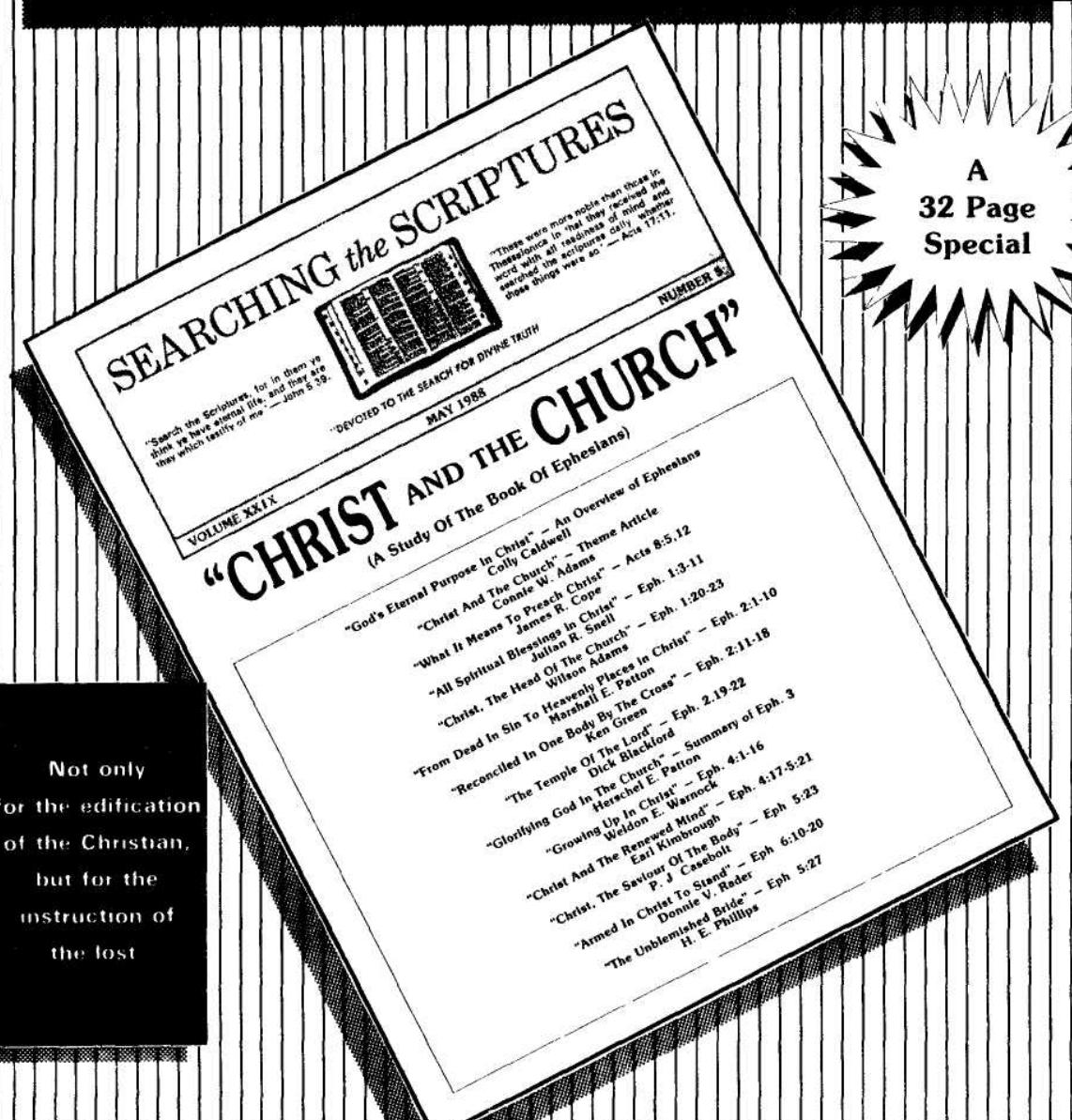
When Christians pray to God the Father, through Christ the Son, we are **living** beings who are petitioning a **living** Saviour. We believe that Christ is "alive and well" as is expressed in modern terminology... therefore we pray to Him!

Will priest Murphy please give us a New Testament passage that teaches the idea or validity of praying **TO** or **FOR** those who have died?

Since the Catholic Church was established **after** the time of Christ on earth, priest Murphy should be able to provide his followers with a New Testament passage that establishes such a practice, if it is indeed approved by Inspiration.

Luther W. Martin

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MUCH MORE THAN ELDERS

Carl Curry
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The New Testament uses several different designations when referring to elders. The church is guilty of habitually using only the term elder. There is a reason for God's apostles and prophets calling these church leaders by different words. No single descriptive noun suffices to cover the breadth of qualities and functions of God's holy servant. We need to familiarize ourselves with all of the biblical terminology appropriated for describing the leaders of the church while at the same time recognizing that these are not mere titles but expressions which reveal the nature and work of the bishops.

(1) *presbuteros* — (presbyter, elder) is actually a comparative adjective used to indicate the one or ones who are older or oldest (Lk. 15:25, Jn. 8:9). It became a term used to designate officials of a city or people and is often translated elder. Members of the Jewish Sanhedrin were called elders (Mt. 16:21; 26:3; 27:41; et al). These were the older men of the community who were respected and honored for their age and the wisdom that accompanies life's experiences. These men were sought out for advice and judgment because they had passed through the stages of life which yielded patience, mercy, compassion, understanding, and trust in God.

The apostles found this an apt expression for referring to the leaders of the church (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 20:17; Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1). The wisdom of God is upheld by the fact that there is no minimum age requirement qualifying one for becoming an elder. The constitution of the United States requires that a person be at least thirty-five (35) before he can be president. God knows that men develop and mature at different ages. No age could be specified at which men should be ready to serve.

The issue is not chronological age, but maturity that has produced one who is full grown and not a babe (Heb. 5:14). Such a man is respected because of his knowledge of the word and the application that he has made of it to his own life. His wisdom is demonstrated by a temperate and sober-minded demeanor. His presence inspires confidence in others since they recognize in him a man to be imitated. His counsel is sought out.

(2) *episkopos*—(bishop, overseer) occurs five (5) times in the New Testament and is usually translated bishop or overseer. In Pet. 2:25 Jesus is acknowledged as the bishop or guardian of our souls. He watches over or cares for us. The other occurrences of this word are applied solely to the overseers of the church (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7).

Bishops must care for and guard the whole church

over which the Holy Spirit makes them overseers. This term is closely connected with the reference to the church as a flock (Acts 20:28), and Peter used a participial form of the verb *episkepeo* to indicate the care and concern a shepherd must exercise (1 Pet. 5:2).

(3) *poimen* (shepherd, pastor) occurs eighteen (18) times in the New Testament, most often referring to those who keep watch over flocks of sheep (Lk. 2:8, 15, 18, 20). Jesus is the Great Shepherd trying to bring together the sheep that have been scattered (1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Heb. 13:20). Ephesians 4:11 is the only time a church leader is called a shepherd or pastor. It appears there among a list of church leaders, including apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers.

There is no doubt that this is a reference to bishops in the Lord's church. Two times the verb form of the word is used in a context where overseers and bishops are being discussed (Acts 20:17-28, 1 Pet. 5:1-2).

Preachers or evangelists are not pastors (or shepherds) unless they have been appointed to that office along with other qualified men. Elders are the pastors in the Lord's church. I have been asked at times if I were the pastor of the church. I politely reply that I am not a pastor and at present the church does not have pastors.

(4) *hegeomai* (ruler, one who rules) is a Greek verb that has two distinct meanings both of which are found in the New Testament. One meaning is to think, consider or regard (Phil. 2:3, 6; 3:7; 1 Tim. 1:12; 6:1). The other usage refers to princes or rulers; it is found only as a present participle when used in this way by the New Testament writers.

In contemporary Greek literature this word designated commanders of armies and fleets, provincial governors and other officials. Jesus was acknowledged as the prince or ruler who would come from Bethlehem (Mt. 2:6). Pharaoh made Joseph governor or ruler over Egypt and his own house (Acts 7:9-10). Three times the author of Hebrews directs his readers attention to the leaders or rulers over them (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24).

There is no doubt that the references in Hebrews refer only to the shepherds over the Lord's churches. This is reinforced by the next term to be explained where the elders are identified as rulers. They have the responsibility of governing even as the governors over Roman provinces who had no authority except to enforce the laws of the emperor and the Roman people. Bishops have no authority but to uphold the gospel of Christ and to insist that the saints abide by Jesus' teaching.

(5) *proistemi* (ruler, one who rules) has the double meaning to rule or direct and to be concerned about or for. In Tit. 3:8 it is used in this second sense where believers are identified as those who should be concerned about or engaged in good works. Paul applied the first meaning to elders when he wrote that elders who rule well are worthy of double honor (1 Tim. 5:17).

It is clear from 1 Tim. 5:17 that elders are the rulers in the church. Paul told the Christians at Thessalonica to know and highly esteem those who had the rule over them using this same Greek word for rule (1 Th. 5:12-13).

Some Christians balk at the idea that the shepherds have any ruling authority, but these passages demon-

strate that pastors not only have the right, but also have the responsibility to lead and direct. The parameters of this authority are the inspired word of God. This is the law that they must follow and execute in the church. Christians are to be good citizens in the kingdom of Christ so that the burden of ruling placed upon the presbyters will not be grievous.

What happens when the appellative "elder" is the only word by which the leaders in the church are designated? It is certain that our understanding of the function of these men will be greatly limited. It is no wonder that some profess the notion that the leaders are only the older men of the congregation; "elder" is the only thing they ever hear about these men.

We must expand our diction to utilize all scriptural terminology appropriate for the position. As shepherds and pastors they are displayed in affectionate terms provoking in us the picture of a tender and loving shepherd watching for the well-being of his flock. Bishops or overseers imply that someone is a guardian who is alert and aware of what is happening in the church, in the lives of the followers, and in the world around so that they can effectively direct the church along a safe course. As rulers or governors these men have authority over the

believers and are bound by divine law to uphold the commands of the Prince and Ruler over all. Finally, as presbyters and elders they are honored for their age and the wisdom that is produced by the experiences of life.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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ARNOLD O. SCHNABEL, P.O. BOX 271584, Tampa, FL 33688 — For the past six years I have been operating a construction company and have been limited in preaching. The management of the company has been turned over to others in order that I might devote more time to meetings and lecture series. Since 1960 I have conducted numerous meetings on the theme "Science and the Bible." These are based on my book HAS GOD SPOKEN? Subjects covered include Bible evidences from science, creation and evolution, archaeology and prophecy.

Since leaving full time preaching I have been active in the teaching and preaching program of the Carrollwood church of Christ in Tampa, where Ferrell Jenkins is now the evangelist. I am now in a position to do more meetings and Bible-Science series. This series is easily adapted to the week end and is especially useful for attracting outsiders and for our young students. Please contact me if you have a need for something of this kind. I can be reached at the above address or by phone at (813) 962-2076 or (813) 962-2829.

P. J. CASEBOLT, P.O. Box 1487, Chiefland, FL 32626 — I plan to be in a meeting with the church at Fly, Ohio, August 11-14. The main theme of the meeting will be the differences between the churches of Christ and the Christian Church, past and present. The church at Fly plans several such meetings in addition to their regular meeting schedule, placing emphasis on those things which have caused division among the Lord's people. Special efforts will be made to advertise the meeting among those congregations which historically take a more liberal attitude toward such matters. The church at Fly is to be commended for recognizing the need to discuss such subjects for the benefit of the present generation.

Immediately following the meeting at Fly, I am due at Eddy's Ridge, Ohio, August 15-21, which is in the same general area. The work here in Chiefland goes well, with the church helping to support seven other preachers besides myself.

CECIL BELCHER, 610 W. State St., Kokomo, IN 46902—After four years work with the Courtland Avenue church in Kokomo, we have accepted the challenging opportunity to work with the Poplar St. church in Selma, AL. There are at present eleven members composing this church. They stand opposed to institutionalism and the other innovations of the past several years. The church there is able to supply only a part of our needed support. We have some support already committed and at present we are in need of an additional \$600 per month. I can be reached at the above address, or by phone at: (317) 467-4255.

The church here at Courtland Ave. is a good church and will be in need of a man to come here to work with them. The church here is self-supporting and anyone interested in the work here should write to: Church of Christ, 1217 S. Courtland Ave., Kokomo, IN 46902; or call Jeff Davidson (317) 883-7876 or Paul Bennett (317) 883-5238.

DON GIVENS, 556 University Ave. #3207, Honolulu, Hawaii 96826 — We have now concluded two and one-half years in Hawaii. The work in the gospel with the Leeward congregation in Waipahu continues to be encouraging. The past year brought six baptisms, but as usual we also lose several members in the military who are transferred elsewhere.

Regarding financial support, I am now in a desperate situation, having lost the bulk of my monthly support. If any individuals or churches can help, please contact me and a full accounting of my needs will be given. I desire to continue preaching in this Aloha state where I am the only conservative preacher. When vacationing in Hawaii, come worship with us in Waipahu. The church building is about 17 miles from the tourist district.

GUTHRIE DEAN, 4822 South 29th St., Ft. Smith, AR 72901 — The congregation meeting at 2915 Blair Ave. is well and all are in good

spirit. We gained fourteen worshippers during 1987. We lost one due to death. We are conducting a successful radio program, have a weekly newspaper ad, conduct cottage classes, and carry on a correspondence work. Our elders are Adam Geary, James Inman, John Matthews and Doug Moody. The deacons are Chandus Boone, Wade McGrew and Robert Weare. My wife and I are retired on Social Security disability; but I help with the work as I can. Six of us are doing the preaching. I would appreciate hearing from you and receiving your bulletins. We still publish the **UNITY FORUM** and hand it out at the doors.

HAL SNYDER, P.O. Drawer 1, Newport, NC 28570 — Charles T. Pringle and Hal Snyder were ordained as elders January 3 at the church which meets at 2101 S. Lakeview Dr., Newport, NC. Preliminary preparations began in May, 1986 when Thornton L. Pringle, the preacher, began a study of the qualifications for elders. After studying Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus at great length, Ed Lewis of the Winter Park congregation in Wilmington, delivered a powerful lesson on "The Organization of the New Testament Church" during our meeting last October. In late November the congregation began considering several men to possibly serve as elders. Congregational suggestions are now being made for men to serve as deacons.

STEFANO CORAZZA, Via Tagliamento 9/2, 33100 Udine, Italy — A new work has been started in Malfalcone, Italy. We are renting a place to meet in the downtown area for \$400 per month. It needed several things, such as painting, cleaning, electric lights, show-case, furniture, heating system. On January 3, we conducted our first worship service. We have prepared 10,000 of a tract and the local bulletin called: SEMPLICEMENTE CRISTIANI (Simply Christians). This material was delivered door-to-door. Gianni Berdini of Trieste, has been a great help in setting up this new work. Also the brethren in Udine are near enough to be a great encouragement to this new work. The exchange rate on the U.S. dollar is still creating serious problems for us. Also, I am losing \$100 a month from the church in St. Peters, MO. We are thankful to all who have helped us with the work in Italy.

PAUL K. WILLIAMS, P.O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — Six young people have been baptized since our last report. Hendrik Joubert was here in late November for a meeting. I baptized him when he was 15 and baptized his wife when she was 19, performed their wedding ceremony and helped him get started preaching. He is now 31 and doing a fine job of preaching. His relaxed manner and homely illustration caused all the brethren to like him very much and they have invited him and his family to move here and work in Eshowe for the time Helen and I will be in the U.S.

PEWS AVAILABLE

The church in St. Peters, Missouri has 12,12 ft. oak pews for sale. They are in excellent condition. For more information call (314) 278-5833.

PREACHERS NEEDED

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA — The Georgia Avenue church needs a full time gospel preacher. Full outside support necessary. Roanoke is the center of business activities for the Western part of the state of Virginia and a beautiful area in which to live. There is much to do and an able man is needed. Write to: Church of Christ, 1015 Georgia Ave., Roanoke, VA 24012; or call T.J. Hall at (703) 989-3458.

KOKOMO, INDIANA — The church meeting at 1217 S. Courtland Ave. 46902 needs a full time gospel preacher. This is a well-established, self-supporting congregation of 150-165. Those interested may write to the church at the above address or call: Artie McDonald at (317) 963-2261. We need an experienced man. There are no elders here at present.

BRADLEY, ILLINOIS — We need an experienced, full time preacher. Full support and house for preacher available. We have about 65 in attendance. Write to the church at: 1505 E. Broadway, Bradley, IL 60915; or call James Spurgeon (815) 933-5684; or Coy Lentz (815) 932-5749.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

DAVID JOYNER, 1655 Hwy 18, Medon, TN 38356—I am interested in full-time work, preferably in location with elders. I am 36 years old, married for 15 years and have two children. Was reared in Chattanooga, TN where I obeyed the gospel at the age of 14. Presently, I am a deacon at Old Hickory congregation in Jackson, TN. I have preached off and on for 15 years. Reference: BUI Hall, Florence, Alabama; Paul Steen, Tampa, Florida (813) 988-7224; Gary Kerr, Jackson, TN (901) 664-5295 or 668-1794.



WITHOUT GUILE AND HYPOCRISIES (1 Peter 2:1)

Our Lord was said to be without the undesirable traits which head this item. We are urged to "follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:21-22). No place on earth has ever tested me in this regard more than the Florida College lectures in Tampa each January. It gets worse every year as I grow older and have greater difficulty remembering people I feel I ought to remember, and who obviously think so too. It gets to be embarrassing when I cannot connect a name with a face I ought to know, especially when the person is a former school-mate, or a preacher with whom I have worked in a meeting, or someone with whom I have stayed during a meeting, or who has graciously entertained me in their home. I frantically search my memory and sometimes come up empty. It does not help when someone appears to be hurt that I don't remember the name. "You don't remember who I am?" I have decided that the only honest response is to say, "I am sorry, but I cannot recall your name" and then take my lumps! It has nothing to do with "high-hatting" anyone. It has to do with forgetfulness.

A few years ago I was present at the FC lectures when I saw a couple waving and grinning and making their way toward me. I started trying to remember. Where was it that we met? A meeting? A debate? Were we in school together? I drew a blank. They delighted to dangle me on a string and enjoyed my discomfort. When it finally dawned on them that I was not going to place their names, they became offended. As the story unfolded, it seems that I had supper one night in their home during a meeting in a town in northeastern Arkansas in 1952 (the only time I was ever in that town), and we had not seen each other since then. It all reminds me of the forgetful man about whom Luther Blackmon used to tell. He said "I thought I never would forget old what's his name!"

SPECIAL ISSUE IN MAY

Elsewhere, you will see a notice about our May special issue on the book of Ephesians to be entitled "Christ and the Church." In fourteen articles our regular writers will cover subject matter from the great Ephesian letter. This material is needed by saint and sinner alike. An understanding of this book shows the place of the church in God's divine plan of redemption, its relation to the grace and love of God, its necessity for salvation, its all-sufficiency for the work God gave his people, and the transformed character of those who compose the body of Christ. Advance orders are now being received. It will help us to know how many to have printed, if you will order in advance. Previous special issues have been well received, some of them requiring as many as 20,000 copies to be printed.

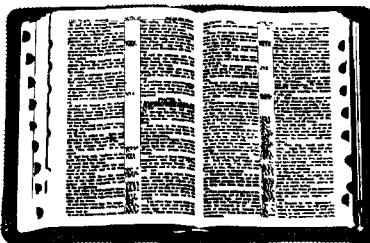
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS
RESTORATIONS

326
81

(Taken from bulletins and papers
received by the editor)

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 XXIX

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NUMBER 4

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

It is true of the church, collectively or severally, that Christ loved it enough to sacrifice himself on the cross that each one might be made pure and holy, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. He died to make people holy by redeeming them from all iniquity. We are separated and purified unto God for a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2: 14).

The blood that was shed on the cross was the power that cleansed us from sin. We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (Eph. 1: 7). The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1: 7; Heb. 1: 3; 9: 14). We are delivered from the power of darkness, and have been translated into the kingdom of Christ: "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1: 13, 14). The death of Christ is the power to obtain forgiveness of sins, thus be made pure and clean.

Preaching The Kingdom of God

Philip preached "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ," in the city of Samaria, and those who heard "were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8: 12). That the kingdom of Christ is the same as the church is shown in Colossians 1: 13, 14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." When Christ ascended into heaven to be seated at the right hand of his Father, he received his kingdom and began to rule. He was seated upon HIS throne with HIS scepter of HIS kingdom (Heb. 1: 8).

Jesus said he would build HIS church upon the foundation that he was the Christ the Son of God, and he would give unto Peter the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16: 18). The church he would build was his kingdom. Evil and wicked people would have no inheritance "in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5: 5). "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12: 28). The "general assembly" is the kingdom which cannot be moved. The apostle John said: "I John, your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom" (Rev. 1: 9). John was in the kingdom, Christians are translated into the kingdom of his dear Son, and Christ is sitting on his throne reigning in his kingdom right now. This reign began on Pentecost following his resurrection and will continue until he comes again to receive his disciples unto himself. Then he will end his reign and turn the kingdom back to the Father (1 Cor. 15: 26).

The Kingdom Is Used In Two Senses

The word "kingdom" is used to designate baptized believers who have been added to the church Jesus established. It is used interchangeably with the word "church." Philip preached in the city of Samaria the things concerning the kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8: 12). Baptized believers are delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1: 13).

But Luke said: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 23). Here the kingdom means the eternal state of baptized believers who continue faithful to the end; it refers to heaven. Peter also referred to the heavenly reward when he said: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1: 11).

The Reign of Christ

Christ began his reign in his kingdom when he arose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God (Acts 2: 34, 35). He will reign until the last enemy is destroyed, and that enemy is death which is destroyed in

the resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 28). After the resurrection Christ will deliver the kingdom back to the Father, and will be subject to the Father. If Christians reign with Christ, they must reign when he reigns, or between their addition to the kingdom and Christ's second coming. He will not reign on his throne after the judgment (1 Cor. 15: 28). They reign with Christ, so they must reign when he reigns.

The church is described as a chosen generation, a royal or kingly priesthood, an holy nation, a chosen generation (Rev. 1: 6; 1 Pet. 2: 9). We reign now by living through righteousness (Rom. 5: 17). We reign with the apostles by obeying their doctrine (Acts 2: 42; 1 Cor. 4: 8). We reign by enduring (2 Tim. 2: 12). We reign by over-coming (Rev. 3: 21). Christ is on his throne of glory now (Luke 24: 26), and his apostles are sitting upon twelve thrones ruling the twelve tribes of Israel. It is the throne of glory and the throne of authority now. In Matthew 19: 28 Jesus said those who followed him would be given thrones, and Luke 22: 28 those who continued with him would be appointed a kingdom in the regeneration. This is the dispensation of regeneration — born again. This reign of Christ began when he entered into his glory (Luke 24: 26) until he comes in his glory (Matt. 25: 31). As Christians reign with him as he sits upon the throne of his glory, so shall they share his glory, and that is now.

Acts 3: 19-21 says that heaven, (where Christ is seated at the right hand of God—Acts 2: 32-33) must receive (retain) Christ UNTIL the time of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began. Christ will stay on his throne at the right hand of God until the end of the world, the last day when all that are in the graves are raised, and the day of judgment comes (John 11: 24; Acts 17: 30, 31).

The church is the fullness of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1: 22-23). "Ye are complete in him" (Col. 2: 10). If we are complete in Christ, and the church is the fullness of Christ, then to be complete in Christ is to be in the church, his kingdom.

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Editorial

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SMOOTHER THAN BUTTER AND SOFTER THAN OIL

It is a remarkable trait of the human family that we often prefer a lie to the truth. The lie becomes more palatable if it is expressed in pleasant sounding language. The current fad of making people "feel good about themselves" tempts us to be hypocritical. Our desire to have people think positively of us must never so cloud our judgment nor distort our values as to make us prefer a smoothly told lie to the truth.

The Old Testament prophets spoke plainly on the subject. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords" (Psa. 55: 21). Thus the Psalmist characterized those who did not fear the Lord. What a contrast: "smooth words" but "war in the heart." "Soft words" yet "drawn swords." Heretics by the score have charmed the hearts of the untaught with words "smoother than butter" and "softer than oil" while they declared war upon the kingdom of God and left ruin everywhere they could.

The rebellious people of Isaiah's time said to the prophets "Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isa. 30: 10). Jeremiah warned against the prophets who sought to heal the hurt of God's people by saying "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6: 13-14). Later through the same prophet, the Lord said "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken unto them, yet they prophesied: (Jer. 23: 21). Jeremiah warned of impending invasion and captivity unless they repented. His words did not make them feel good about themselves. He became a most unpopular preacher, but he was right. And the buttery, oily words of false prophets further lulled the people into a false sense of security.

The New Testament also warns against being deceived by smooth but deceitful words. Jesus said "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mt. 7: 15). The appearance is innocent, but there is "war in the heart." Paul spoke of those who teach contrary doctrines "which cause divisions and offenses" and said they serve themselves and not the Lord and that they do it by "good words and fair speeches" (Rom. 16: 17-18). He further said that the word of Hymenaeus and Philetus would "spread like a cancer" (2 Tim. 2: 17 NKJV).

R. H. Boll, who brought Premillennialism among churches of Christ, and some of his closest associates

were often described as "such gracious, sweet men." Maybe so, but I know that war was in their heart for I live in a city where the ravages of that war are still evident. The words of W. Carl Ketcherside have been "smoother than butter" and "softer than oil" but they have divided and alienated brethren. Young preachers have been lured into error by these smooth words even to shipwreck of the faith. Godly parents have shed rivers of tears, elderships have been dissolved and churches greatly disturbed. Smooth and oily words are being exchanged now between some in conservative Christian Churches and men among liberal churches of Christ. Among more conservative minded brethren there is evidence of intolerance for plain, pointed, Bible preaching. We have heard so much "motivation" that it is time to ask: "motivated to do what?"

The secular world cringes at calling sin what it is. People living together without honor of marriage do not want to be called adulterers and adulteresses. They speak of "meaningful relationships." We have heard all sorts of approaches to hinder the spread of AIDS and to cope with pregnancies out of wedlock, except the simple truth of God which mandates "flee fornication." Sleep-in arrangements outside marriage, homosexuality and use of illegal drugs may be called "alternate life-styles." These are words "smooth as butter" and "soft as oil" but they mask the real truth. They are abominations in the sight of God and all the soft rhetoric in the world will not change them. We can look the other way. We can call evil good, and good evil, but that will not change things from what they really are. While we must never forget to love the sinner and reach out in compassion to help lift him/her to a higher level in the Lord, we must also never become comfortable with the sin. It is hideous, not only because of the havoc it brings in terms of human health and personal relationships, but because sin alienates from God. And let us not forget that it was because of man's predicament that God in grace, mercy and love sent us a Saviour to rescue us from the ravages of sin. This is the good news of the gospel. But, please understand that it is impossible for anyone to perceive the need for salvation until he has been first made to realize that he is a sinner, lost and on his way to Hell unless he avails himself of God's plan to save him. We must not only hate the sin of others, we must despise our own sin.

I liked John T. Lewis. This good man spent most of his life preaching the gospel in Birmingham, Alabama. The fruit of his faithful and numerous labors are yet to be seen there. He was an elderly man when I saw him last in 1957. I was preparing to go to Norway to preach the gospel and went to Birmingham looking for support. Marshall Patton took me to see brother Lewis. We had hardly been seated in his modest home when he drove straight to the point. He said "Young man, what put this bee in your bonnet to go across the ocean?" After I answered that he said "What makes you think you can do any good over there?" That made me a little uncomfortable but it also made me think. His words were neither "smooth" nor like "oil" but I have never forgotten them. Before I left he bluntly said "Now, don't go over there and try to make Americans out of them, just teach

them the word of the Lord and make Christians. " All I could think to say was "Yes sir!" Then before I left he sent sister Lewis in the bedroom and had her write a check for \$100 to help on my travel expenses. I would much prefer a man who will speak plainly and tell me the truth, with genuine love in his heart, than to hear the buttery, oily words of false prophets.

"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4: 16)

WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE

Wilson Adams
891 Autumn Valley Lane
Gambrills, MD 21054



19 88
BOOZE 1
Maryland

Personalized license plates are obviously "in. " For an annual fee you can spell out almost anything. Some-times they reflect a person's occupation or one's passion for his car or even his/her own personality. Anyway, most are rather clever and fun to figure out.

I saw one the other day that said "BOOZE 1". I suppose it could have been owned by *Mr. and Mrs. Booze* but I doubt it. I suppose, too, that the owner was proud of his personalized claim to fame. Some mark of notability, huh?

Do you know what really upsets me? It's *Christians*, people who have been born again in the image of God's dear Son, who seek to justify their support of the booze business. **Alcohol is the biggest drug problem in America!** Would any sensible person deny that? Ask yourself the question: Has the saint the moral right to support an industry which sells an addictive drug as a social pleasure? Liquor enslaves... impairs... and kills!

We are not talking about one beer a day — we're talking whether or not it is acceptable before God for a Christian to support the liquor industry. Let me ask you this: How would it grab you if a Christian opened a liquor store or bar? *If a Christian has a right to moderately drink alcoholic beverages, what's to prevent him from selling it?* The more I study the question the more I am convinced that the support of the booze business by one of Christ's own is a shame and disgrace.

"Didn't Jesus Turn Water Into Wine?"

I get tired of people implying that Jesus gave credibility to the booze business by turning water into "intoxicating" (?) wine. Turn to John 2: 1-11 and let's look at it.

We need to understand that the word "wine" in the Bible can refer to *a fermented* (Prov. 20: 1 — "wine is a

mocker...) and *unfermented* (Isa. 65: 8) — "*as the new wine is found in the cluster...* ") beverage. But what do people do? We see the word "wine" and immediately jump to all kinds of conclusions. For example, in 1 Tim. 5: 23 Paul told Timothy to "*take a little wine for thy stomach sake.*" Now I am not opposed to the use of drugs for medicinal purposes at all, but let me ask you this — who says "wine" in the passage has to be intoxicating wine? Have you ever been sick and taken **grape juice** to settle an upset stomach? It works wonders.

Now back to John 2... The argument given is this: Verse 10 says, "*when men have well drunk*" (K. J. V.), indicating that intoxicating wine was the party beverage. ANSWER: Look again at the verse, It says, "*when men have well drunk*" NOT "*when men have gotten drunk.* " *There* is a difference. A BIG difference.

To our way of thinking the word "drunk" means intoxication, inebriation and insobriety. But is that the *only* definition? No, the word sometimes means "*full and satiated*" and can have absolutely nothing to do with intoxication. For example, see Isa. 34: 5; Ezek. 39: 19 and 1 Cor. 11: 20-21. In the Corinthian passage Paul says, "*for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another drunk.*" Paul, in this contextual setting, is using opposites and "*intoxicating*" is **not** the opposite of "*hungry*." But "*FULL*" is! And the term "*drunk*" by definition can mean "*full*." Further-more, in the Corinthian scripture, the apostle did not say a word about intoxication. He simply rebukes them for selfishness. Question: Can we seriously believe that these people were "*bombed out*" at the Lord's Supper and Paul didn't say a word about it?

Some have argued that John 2: 10 suggests that people would become intoxicated on the good wine and then the coarser wines would be brought out when no one could tell the difference. ANSWER: The head-waiter was **not** suggesting anything of the kind. It's just plain common sense (and common courtesy, too) to bring on the best of **anything** first, food or drink.

"To make a good impression we bring on the best we have — if this is not sufficient then we bring on whatever else we have. Would you bring a guest to your home and give him the inferior first? Would you not feed him the T-bone first and then the bologna sandwich? Of course you would. You would hope that a large helping of the best would satisfy him so that you would not need to produce the inferior. This is what the head of the feast was saying. He was not offering an insult but stating a kindness. He was saying the first was great but the latter was even better."

When men have "drunk freely" they don't feel like drinking more — when people have eaten abundantly they don't wish for more. This is the law of food and drink! This would mean that when the host had fed everyone well on the best of food and drink, they'd all be full and not inclined to eat or drink further so the inferior which is kept in reserve is not needed. (The Bible, the Saint, and the Liquor Industry — Jim McGuiggan, pp. 121.)

And is there anything to make us think that this wine

was UNintoxicating? YES! For one thing I seriously doubt that a sinless Jesus would make 150 gallons of intoxicating wine knowing the evil result such produces. How could He do so morally? For another thing, "wine" is used to refer to UNfermented grape juice. And for a final thing, people in Jesus' day did drink unfermented grape juice as a common beverage. Therefore, all things considered, I conclude that Jesus turned water into wine (unfermented juice of the grape). And, by-the-way, it was unsurpassed in quality!

"What About 'Not Given to MUCH Wine'?"
Question: In 1 Tim. 3: 8 Paul said that deacons are not to be given to "much" wine. Does this imply that the consumption of alcoholic beverages in moderation is approved?

Answer: Looking at the passage we raise the question: Is the apostle saying that the deacon is not to be a drunk? We believe that he is. That being so, we raise yet another question: Can you not urge a man to avoid drunkenness without approving moderate drinking? SURE YOU CAN!

Telling a man — *"Don't get bombed out on whiskey!"* — does not intend approval that drinking whiskey in moderation is acceptable. Or... *"Don't be a drug addict!"* (which is the same as saying — *"Don't be given to much drags"*) is certainly not approval for the occasional use of cocaine. *"Don't be a slave to sin"* certainly does not approve of sin in "moderation."

"Do not be given to wine" ▶ "Do not use drugs"
(1 Tim. 3:3)

IS THE SAME AS

"Do not be given to much wine" ▶ "Do not be a drug addict"
(1 Tim. 3:8)

And while we are on the subject... take a peak at Ecclesiastes 7: 17 which says, *"Do not be excessively wicked."* Am I to believe that such lends approval to wickedness in "moderation?" Deacons (and I believe all Christians) are not to be given to "much" wine i. e., they are not to be drunkards. But such does not imply acceptability of moderate drinking anymore than Ecclesiastes 7: 17 implies acceptability of moderate sinning!
* * *

"BOOZE 1" turned off the road and headed straight for a (*can you guess?*) liquor store. I suppose that people of the world will always do things like that but aren't Christians supposed to be different? The whole thing leaves me disgusted. How does it make you feel?

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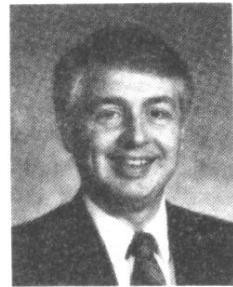
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GIVE ATTENTION TO THE RIGHT THINGS

DIVINE MESSAGE: "... give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Timothy 4: 13).

A recent headline over a Robin Wilson article in the **Chronicle of Higher Education** (February 10, 1988) declared: "Bennett Blames Lost Faith in Education on Colleges' Ouster of Classics." Secretary of Education William Bennett told college officials that "we are witnessing a shift in how the American people view the condition of higher education generally" because faculty members are replacing classic works from the curriculum with more contemporary "nonsense" promoted by "trendy lightweights." Brethren, we must not let that happen in our spiritual teaching and preaching!

Paul instructed Timothy to give attention to: a) reading; b) exhortation; and c) doctrine.

Give Attention to Reading

It was important that Timothy not only read, but that he read the right material. Shall we imagine that Paul was telling Timothy to read just anything? Paul knew that Timothy's reading would stimulate his exhortation and generate the doctrine in his preaching. Timothy had to read the right things.

Paul exhorted Timothy to continue in the things he had learned from the **Holy Scriptures** which, "are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3: 14-15). The Scriptures are the "Classics" and they should appear in our preaching work more than the composite of all else we read or quote (in preparation and in presentation).

Obviously, however, we are going to read some things in addition to the Scriptures. In this we especially need to "give attention" to what we read! Harry Pickup, Jr., recently said, "... our guiding principle in choosing much of our reading is a mistake. Some are not reading enough; that is, they read a little of the Bible, very little, and none of what brethren write _____. At the very least, our attention is disproportionately divided between Christian and denominational literature.... It is one thing to do research in order to gather data with discrimination from men of unsound faith; it is another thing to let them teach us their conclusions so that we believe their lies and to teach them.... A vast number of Christians are almost totally unfamiliar with the sound and scholarly writings of brethren of past generations.... To compound the problem, people who are exceptionally ignorant of the writings of these men are increasingly familiar with denominational writers.... If I don't want my

children to learn about conjugal love from a philosophical hedonist or a religious humanist, why would I want immature believers to learn about Christian living and the duties of a local church from an institutionalist and a 'social gospeler.' " (**Hebrews for Every Man**, "Let Us Press On To Perfection," Florida College Annual Lectures, pp. 166-67).

Two of the key words in brother Pickup's remarks are "disproportionately" and "discrimination." When we "disproportionately" choose literature written by men known to be doctrinally unsound we fill our minds with their erroneous ideas and vocabulary. "Oh," you say, "they are not 'unsound' on the subject I read." Now, that appears to adequately answer the problem, but that is terribly naive. The false teacher's assumptions on the nature of man, the plan of God for man, the work of Jesus, the requirements for salvation, the character of the kingdom of Christ, the work of the Spirit, or any other major doctrinal subject permeate his teaching and find their way into his writings in the most subtle fashion. When we have not read the Bible enough and when we have not first studied to compare the writings of men sound in the faith with the Word of God, we cannot expect to be able to properly "discern" between Truth and error in these other writings.

You older Christians might simply ask yourselves, "When my children (or other younger Christians) ask me what commentary to use, do I suggest that they read first from such Calvinistic theologians as Lenski or Hendriksen; or do I recommend that they read commentaries written by brethren of recognized faith in true New Testament teaching?" If the answer to that is obvious, then it ought to be equally obvious that my attitude is going to be similar toward other religious literature... at least until I know for certain that the young can deal with it in a careful, learned, questioning, balanced, and discriminating way making sure to read more from God and men truly committed to Him than from those with whom they would not even share fellowship in the church of the Lord.

Do not forget the admonition of Paul who said, "Preach the word.... for the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things..." (2 Tim. 4: 2-3). Are we afraid that the brethren and the lost will not accept the simple preaching of truth in our generation?

Give Attention to Exhortation

The faithful are discouraged by a lack of zeal among many brethren. Dedicated men are looking for ways to encourage the brethren to be active in the Lord's work. Paul exhorted Christians in his day! Barnabas encouraged men to serve Christ (Acts 4: 36). Paul taught Timothy to encourage others! These men and many among the apostles and first-century disciples of Christ were successful. But never forget that they were successful because they had a powerful message and they worked to get that message to the lost. It was the message which moved members to the right kind of activity because

they loved the Lord and they loved the Truth! They did not get their enthusiasm from the pagan or the sectarian ... nor from their messages or methods. They got it from the Word of the Lord (Acts 8: 4; 16: 4-5; et. al.).

In February, William Bennett commended college and university administrators for doing a good job of bringing education to all the people, but he expressed concern "about the watered-down curricula that... students would encounter once they arrived on the campuses." I commend the enthusiasm of men who use their great talent in the service of the King. I encourage them to keep that driving passion to convert the lost to Christ. More of us should imitate them in that lest we be condemned. The object is not, however, exhortation for exhortation's sake. One is not called upon to be a "Barnabas" in only one aspect of Barnabas' character. I believe Barnabas would say to give attention to "reading" and "doctrine" and base all exhortation on Biblical teaching using Biblical methods. None of us can "water-down the curricula."

Give Attention to Doctrine

A major concern of the Lord, and the apostle Paul, in instructing evangelists was the content of their preaching. Simply "preaching" (even preaching in an articulate convincing manner, or preaching that which is interesting and exciting, or preaching with numerical growth as the primary motive) is not enough to accomplish the purposes of Christ. Paul "did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom" because he "determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." His "speech and preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom" but demonstrated the power of inspiration through the Holy Spirit so that our "faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2: 1-5).

In that same speech, William Bennett expressed consternation that teachers moving away from the classics contended that they were inspired by "serious thinkers such as Karl Marx." Beside the obvious problem created by the teaching of an evil political system (a problem we may compare here in some ways to the dangers of teaching doctrinal error which we have already discussed), Bennett declared that their ideas seem to "spring from Groucho Marx" rather than Karl Marx. He quoted George Orwell who referred to "nonsense so bad only an intellectual could believe it."

We must give attention to doctrine in two respects. First, the doctrine must be pure. We must learn the truth. My friend, study the Truth! Study until you know that you know the Truth. Do not think that you can superficially study or study quickly or study from man in error and do it properly. Paul said, "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1: 13).

Secondly, we must work to know how to preach on doctrinal subjects. Do not be content with "fluff" (nice sounding, devotional and/or motivational lessons with little substance). Lessons which teach little provide little of the right kind of devotion or motivation. They also leave the brethren with shallow understanding of "why" they are motivated and "to what" they are devoted

and motivated. Such motivation is short-lived.

My brethren, we will sow what we reap in the pulpit just as we sow what we reap in other aspects of life (Gal. 6: 7). Paul admonished Timothy, "If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou has followed until now" (1 Tim. 4: 6). Let's not forget what gospel preaching is all about. It is about the Gospel!

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

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SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND TALENTS

QUESTION: *What is the difference between spiritual gifts and talents? A friend of mine says everyone has a spiritual gift, and if a person doesn't have such a gift, he has not God. My friend claims her spiritual gift is showing mercy (Rom. 12:1-8).*

ANSWER: The querist's friend misunderstands the difference between spiritual gifts and talents. The spiritual gifts of 1 Cor. 12: 1-10 were miraculous endowments. There are nine of them enumerated: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. No one was born with these abilities, nor did anybody develop them. They were given supernaturally by the Holy Spirit as He WILLED, dividing to every man severally (1 Cor. 12: 11).

First century Christians received these miraculous gifts through the laying on of the hands of the apostles. This is clearly seen at Samaria where Peter and John were sent by the other apostles to the new converts at Samaria in order for them to receive the Holy Spirit (i. e., the gifts of the Spirit). "Then laid they (Peter and John) their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money" (Acts 8: 17-18).

At Ephesus, after the twelve disciples were converted by Paul, he laid his hands on them, and when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts 19: 1-7). We do not have these spiritual gifts today. They were temporary and terminated when the perfect, complete revelation of God was given, that is, when the New Testament was finished (cf. 1 Cor. 13: 8-13; James 1: 25).

The manner of receiving these spiritual gifts no longer exists, namely, through the apostles. There are no living apostles among us to impart the gifts. Hence,

no person has such gifts today. Where is the man or woman that can prophesy, discern spirits, has miraculous knowledge, etc.? There are those who claim it and those who try to fake it, but where is the person who can give a genuine demonstration of it?

As to talent, it is a skill or superior ability that a person possesses or develops in art, mechanics, learning, etc. This is a natural ability, while a spiritual gift was a miraculous ability. We all have some talent in one field or another, to a lesser or greater degree, and we should always use it to God's honor and glory.

Actually, every native talent is a gift of God, a favor bestowed. In Rom. 12: 6-8 all of the gifts mentioned, with the exception of prophesying, are native, natural talents or gifts that are to be cultivated and improved through the proper exercise of them. The gifts specified in addition to prophecy are: ministering, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, and showing mercy. Prophecy is the only gift in the passage that required supernatural assistance.

All gifts in the Bible were not miraculous. Many are natural, native abilities and functions. The context shows which ones are under consideration.

THE HEAVENS SHALL PASS AWAY

QUESTION: *Is 2 Pet. 3: 10 literal? If literal, then heaven will also pass away.*

ANSWER: The passage says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

There are *three heavens* spoken of in the Bible, the third one being the dwelling place of God (2 Cor. 12: 1-4). Plainly, this one, the third heaven, will never pass away. But the first two heavens will cease. The first heaven is the atmosphere where the birds fly (Gen. 1: 20), and the second heaven is where the sun, moon and stars are hanging in the vast universe (Gen. 1: 14-18). These will pass away with a great noise and the elements (the components or matter of which the material universe is made) will be melted with fire, and the earth, on which we live, shall also be burned up.

Yes, 2 Pet. 3: 10 is literal, but it does not include the heaven where God, the angels and all the redeemed will dwell eternally. The querist must realize that heaven is used in different senses in the Bible and the third heaven is not under consideration in Peter's statement.

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LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF THE TEMPLE

There are many of us across the country that are preaching in the "shadow of the temple." Here in Orlando "the temple" is Calvary Assembly. A 5000 plus seat complex that casts a giant shadow across the entire religious community of Orlando. But Calvary Assembly is not the only mega church in the central Florida area. A few miles west on I-4 is the First Baptist, often referred to by those of us who live close to Disney World and Sea World as "Baptist World." Then only a few miles west of that group is the Carpenters Church in Lakeland which has a 10,000 seat auditorium.

In close observation of these major religious movements we come away with several conclusions. First, they are not wrong because of their size. The Jerusalem church was very large. Secondly, they are not wrong because they wield a powerful impact on the community. The Jerusalem church sent out shock waves that were felt all the way to the 20th century. Yet, there are major problems with this type of "megamedia" religion that is so popular. The theological base, if there be one, for this type of religion is mostly, Pentecostalism. It is about as far from New Testament Christianity as darkness from light. What are the major pitfalls of this type of religious business? 1. Bumper stickers and Politics:

As you drive past "the Temple" on your way to Par Street the highway patrolmen try to flag you into the Calvary Parking lot. You will note that every car pulling into that parking lot has a "Robertson for President" bumper sticker on it. It has been my feeling that Pat Robertson would do much better in the primaries than the press and the political establishment thought he would do. And such has been the case. Why is that?

The people on the national broadcast news don't drive by Calvary Assembly every week! There has been forming over the last few years an alliance with the New Right and the Republican party. The New Right is not doing what liberal religion has done since the 50's. It was from religious leaders that the Civil Rights movement and the anti-war movement formed its leadership in these social causes. Now, with the conservatism of the Reagan Administration it is only natural that Pentecostalism enter into the political arena. There is nothing wrong with being a Republican. On many of the moral issues of the day such as abortion, homosexuality, and ERA they have the preferred position. But there is a fine line between the Christian who is a citizen exercising his right to vote and the church becoming the "grass roots

political machine" for any one political party. It is not only a scriptural mistake but it is also an organizational mistake. What happens with the political pendulum swings back to the more liberal position? What happens when the mood of the country swings to the more liberal political party as it did during the 60's and conservative parties are "out"? Then the church will also be unattractive due to the political climate and not due to the doctrine it seeks to teach.

2. The financial fiasco:

Following the Jim and Tammy Bakker episode we have seen a great distance between the life style taught by our Lord in the sermon on the Mount and the life style of the rich and famous Bakkers. What will this type of excess in life style do to the financial base of these large churches? This may be particularly pertinent if the general economy of our nation takes a down turn in the coming year. People will have fewer dollars to do with as they please and the over extended churches will suffer. Isn't it amazing that more have not questioned the effectiveness of the vast television and radio shows anyway? How many "converts" do they make? Most of the time people are influenced more by their close friends through personal friendship. As the economy turns down and money dries up it will soon be obvious that these media programs are not the cost effective means for evangelism.

Most of the "temples" are built on the personality of one man. They are lead by charismatic preachers who become the focal point of a personality cult. Many of them will not survey beyond the effectiveness of that personality. Then the possibility of that huge debt and complex of buildings continuing to be used effectively ceases. The buildings will become a monument to a waste of many good but gullible people's money.

3. The defection to the shadows:

Because of the thinness of the doctrine of these mega churches there are those who have become aware of their needs by the glitter of their sparkle only to realize that there is nothing of substance in that glitter. They are the fallout as a result of the shallowness of these ministries. Here is where we need to be ready with the "Oracles of God." It is here that we in the shadow can pick up those that are sincerely looking for a deeper response to Jesus Christ than a "Christian Gymnastic team" performing on Sunday night. We need to be ready to open the word of God without a "holier than thou" attitude and show them the real substance of the word.

4. The end of the energy:

The result of the possibility of shifting political opinions, of economic downturn and finally the lack of substance to the doctrinal convictions will be that the endless amount of energy needed to keep these large "temples" going will also dry up as well.

Consider how much time, effort and money that goes into that which is not even spiritual in nature. The hours of labor for everything from young groups fund raising to tubing down the spring fed river in the summertime will somehow take its toll. The committee on the committees will have to meet to establish new by-laws for all the other committees. The softball league, the golf tourna-

ments, and the basketball free throwing competition all will demand so much time and effort until someone is going to ask, "Why? and What is all of this worth?" My father always said that a fellow won on a hamburger would have to be feed steak the rest of his life to keep him in line.

While these carnival-like attractions may have a magnetic appeal to the unchurched, soon the effort needed to top the last extravaganza is just not there. On one Sunday morning that the religious world calls, "Easter Sunday" several giant hot air balloons tried to land in our parking lot. They needed to land here because of shifting wind directions after they had taken off at the conclusion of the "Sunrise Service" in their parking lot. With the amount of paid and volunteer labor that went into that one service alone half of the city of Orlando could have been contacted concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

What does all of this say to us who live in the shadow of the temple?

First, be careful about the Lord's church and politics. We that preach need to be careful about our private political convictions becoming a part of the gospel message while we preach. One couple said after visiting with us, "We just want to find a place to go to church where we are not told how to vote." It is more than possible that we too may blur the distinctions between the individual's rights and responsibilities and that of the group of individuals assembled together.

Secondly we need to view objectively this type of religion. There are some things that they do well. Their emphasis on love for each other and seeking to build each other up is to be commended. If we have failed in that area we need to look to the word of God and if we find that it is taught there we need to practice it. Jesus used the unbelieving cities of Tyre and Sidon as well as Sodom to shame Capernaum for its unbelief. Maybe the spirit of evangelism, the spirit of joy, the spirit of love for one another ought to shame us who need some of those qualities while we live in the shadow of the Temple.

BREAD OF LIFE

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



Herschel E. Patton

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STUDIES IN FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY 1

Tim. 5: 17-25

"TREATMENT OF ELDERS AND GENERAL ADMONITIONS"

The first part of this chapter involved properly dealing with age groups, and particularly widows, studied in our last article. Verses 19-21 deal with another specified group — elders in the church.

Elders

We distinguish these from the elders (older in age), mentioned in the previous verses, because these are said to "rule" over brethren, and the only ones with this responsibility in the New Testament are elders in a local congregation (Heb. 13: 7; 1 Tim. 3: 4-5; 1 Pet. 5: 2). Arbitrary ruling (as lords) is forbidden (1 Pet. 5: 3). Their ruling is as shepherds over a flock, with watchfulness, tenderness, gentleness, and a genuine concern for the flock.

How should such men who rule well be treated? They are to be "counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine." These are men who preach the word as well as oversee a congregation. They give full time to their work.

The word "honor," in the Greek is TIME (Noun); TIMAO (verb) and means "primarily a valuing... esteem" (Vines). The word not only involves the idea of respect and esteem, but also the support of (providing for (1 Tim. 5: 3; Mark 7: 8-13).

Counting such worthy of "double honor," removes the matter of support for preachers and elders from being benevolence or pittance, and their being regarded with suspicion, jealousy, and envy. Two Old Testament scriptures (Deut. 25: 4; Lev. 19: 13) are cited as basis for this instruction. One teaches that the ox that works the corn is entitled to eat of it, and is not to be muzzled or restrained therefrom. The other simply states that the "laborer is worthy of his reward" (KJ) "wages" (NKJ & NASV).

Verses 19-20 deal with the treatment of elders when charges are made against them and when they are guilty of sin. In the first place, a charge (accusation) against an elder is not to be received unless it can be substantiated by two or three witnesses. Many elders and preachers have been seriously hurt (and the cause of Christ) by the expression of someone's suspicion, or the spreading of rumors. Brethren should give heed to Jas. 1: 19 "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak" in hearing

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accusations.

But, what if a substantiated charge is made against an elder, thus proving him guilty of sin? What does Paul tell the young evangelist, Timothy, (and every evangelist) to do? The answer is, "rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

General Admonitions

The charge given Timothy "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels (v. 21) was that he observe these things (Treatment of various age groups, widows, and elders) "without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." First there is the charge of "do (observe) these things." There may be present a temptation to not observe (ignore) proper action in some cases, especially in the matter of rebuking an elder who sins. Regardless of what may produce hesitation or timidity on the part of God's servant, God, Christ, and the elect angels all say "do it."

Secondly, the doing of what the Lord says is to be without preference or partiality. Some brethren to whom we have an obligation may be closer to us, more compatible, congenial, have more in common, than others, and this may enter into our treatment of them. The Lord says it must not. I can think of a number of things that might be a deterrent to an evangelist rebuking an elder who sins — His job may be at stake; The man is a heavy contributor; He has a large family and many friends who might be offended, etc. Sometimes evangelists, and brethren, instead of doing the Lord's will, desire to "sweep the matter under the rug" and keep it as quiet as possible. Race, station in life, position, personality, family, or any other like thing must not stand in the way of doing what the Lord says do.

Further admonitions are given to Timothy, the young evangelist, in verse 22. He is told to "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partakers of other men's sins; keep thyself pure." I believe these admonitions are given in connection with the previous verses, where the subject is elders. The action of verse 22, however, is not limited to elders, as a class, but involves "no man," or any man. The action required, or forbidden, would apply to elders, but also to others.

The expression "Lay hands suddenly on no man," has been interpreted and applied variously. I do not believe it refers to bestowing spiritual gifts by the "laying on of hands," because only an apostle could do that (Acts 8: 14-17), and Timothy was not an apostle. Obviously the reference is not to physical discipline, for this would imply that after due deliberation, Timothy might fight an unruly one. The most popular view is that the reference is to the common practice in New Testament days of "laying hands on" in ordaining one to the eldership or to some special work (Acts 6: 6; 13: 3). Timothy would be involved in this. A person should not be put into any important position hastily, before proper investigation and a time of proving (1 Tim. 3: 10) exists. There is merit to the position that this admonition refers to the disciplining of an elder who sins and is rebuked publicly (v. 20). "Lay hands on" is figurative of affirmative action, in this case, discipline, as "put his hand to the plough" (Lk. 9: 62). This view would make the expression repetitious

of vs. 19 where examination of witnesses would rule out haste. Whether referring to ordination or discipline, Timothy was to do neither in haste, but with care, investigation, and deliberation.

The next admonition, "neither be partakers of other men's sins" seems to be connected with the preceding one (a neither this **nor** that thing). If ordination is under consideration, we can see how Timothy might appoint a man to the eldership in haste (maybe because of an outstanding personality, self commendation, recommendation of friends, show of piety, etc.) and be a partaker, or participant in putting an unworthy, maybe sinful man into a position in the church.

The admonition, "Keep thyself pure," would be accomplished by Timothy following the apostle's instructions about dealing with elders and other men, if the command be limited to this context. The admonition, how-ever, is important and true, standing by itself. Thus, one would keep himself separate from the world and continually make Christ manifest in his life.

In verse 23, Paul gives the young evangelist some personal advice regarding his health. "Drink no longer water" (KJ): "no longer drink only water" (NKJ) suggests that Timothy practiced complete abstinence so far as wine was concerned. He is advised to drink a little wine for medicinal purposes. There is absolutely nothing in this passage to sanction or justify drinking intoxicating wine as a beverage. A little wine is recommended as a medicine for his sickness. Too, the wine here recommended for sickness is "a long way" from that used as a beverage today. The Greek word for wine is oinos and is used to designate both fermented and unfermented juice of the grape (Matt. 9: 17; Rev. 19: 15). The same is true of the Hebrew word "Yayan." (Gen. 9: 4; Isa. 16: 10; Jer. 40: 10).

In the closing verses (24-25) of this chapter, Paul instructs Timothy, and all who deal with men, about the nature of both sin and good works in men. With some, their sin is open and manifest, requiring no inquiry or proof in order to judge and discipline, but with others their sin is concealed from view, making judgment and action difficult. Eventually their sins "will find them out," especially at the judgment. It is the same way with good works.

Faithfulness in observing all these things, or neglect, will affect our destiny in the judgment, therefore, has to do with "saving thyself and them that hear."

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KEL AND WINNIE

This particular column is devoted and dedicated to the memory of two faithful saints — faithful to their friends and family, faithful to each other, and faithful to the Lord.

It would take several writers and many pages to chronicle the works and influence of these two saints, so I shall not even attempt to go in that direction. Suffer a few observations which may help us all.

M. Kelly Wilson departed this life in May of 1986. He was followed by his wife, Winnie, Jan. 30, 1988. In the flesh, I was one of their three sons-in-laws. In Christ, our relationship far exceeded that of the flesh.

Funeral services were conducted ably by brother Richard Brewer, of Macdale, West Virginia. While the flowers from Winnie's funeral are still fresh, it is fitting that both she and her husband be remembered at this time. To all who knew them, the names of Kel and Winnie were as synonymous as are the names of Christ and the church. To speak of one is to speak of the other, and this is as it should be (Eph. 5: 22-33).

For the past few years, Winnie was the victim and prisoner of Alzheimer's Disease. But, thankfully, both she and Kel enjoyed the fourscore years of reasonably good health.

Winnie's body gradually deteriorated and at the last, dehydrated, until it was only a shadow of the active tabernacle most of us remember. Likewise, it seemed incongruous that one who had cooked for and fed so many people should have to perish for lack of nourishment. But, like Solomon and Job, we must look beyond the vanities of life to find the greater lessons.

On a rainy February day, we carried what remained of that frail body up the steep hill to the cemetery overlooking the little town of Daybrook, West Virginia. Then, as the mingled tears of sorrow, sympathy, joy, and hope began to dry, the feeling of "vanity and vexation of spirit" began to flee also.

God speaks to us through his word (Heb. 1: 1), and Winnie, like Abel, "being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11: 4).

To see a body emaciated by illness and overtaken by death is to be reminded that "the sting of death is sin...., But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 56, 57). To see a body fail for lack of nourishment is to be reminded that spiritual food is more to be desired than food for the outward man (2 Cor. 4: 16).

Truly, God still speaks through his word, while Win-

nie, Kel, and others like them speak in death as well as in life.

When the doctors told us in June of 1985 that the end was near for Winnie, I penned the first five verses of the following poem. As she continued to linger on, I quietly filed the poem away. But, while we all were preoccupied with Winnie's illness, her husband died of an heart attack. The last two verses of the poem were composed on the occasion of Kel's funeral.

Like others, I supposed that Kel would outlive Winnie. My only regret now is that I did not show the poem to Kel while he was living.

Dear reader, if you have a kind word to say, or deed to do, get it done while there is time. Death may come to you, to someone else, or the judgment may come to us all, while we wait. As our Lord said, "... the night cometh, when no man can work" (Jno. 9: 4).

WINNIE

Winnie—That name alone will amply tell

The story of her life, To one and
all who knew her well
As mother, friend, and wife.

Winnie—The name that every tongue would know

Whose lot with her was cast.
Who saw her lovely flowers grow
Or through her kitchen passed.

Winnie—But simply "Mama" to her girls

Who learned from her the ways of life;
For them she sews, and knits, and purls,
Sorts out peace and discards strife.

Winnie—"Her own works praise her in the gates,"

"She shall rejoice in time to come;"
Her epitaph the wise man states
In Proverbs, Chapter Thirty-One.

Winnie—She always took the lowest seat,

The best she gave to others;
May she find on that golden street
A throne reserved for mothers.

* * *

Winnie—"Sing to me of heaven' always,
Tis my fav'rite hymn you see;"
With echoed strains from yesterdays
The song means more to such as we.

Winnie—Now her "burdens will be lifted"

As the evening shadows fall;
When the sands of time are sifted
Comes her "sweetest song of all."

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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

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THE UNIFICATION THEOLOGY OF SUN MYUNGMOON(3)

(This is the final article which resulted from the author's trip to Japan and Korea to study Unification Theology. See first article for abbreviations used). X. DID ANYBODY ACCOMPLISH THEIR MISSION? "Elijah ascended into heaven without having fully accomplished his divine mission (2 Kgs. 2: 11)" (DP, 153). "... The gospel of Jesus should have been proclaimed by John the Baptist himself. But through ignorance, he could not accomplish his mission, and at last he degraded his life, which was to have been devoted to Jesus, to a thing of practically no value" (DP, 159). "If Jesus had not been crucified, what would have happened? He would have accomplished the providence of salvation both spiritually and physically. He would have established the Kingdom of heaven on earth which would last forever... he should have fulfilled the salvation of both spirit and body... Jesus could not accomplish the purpose of the providence of physical salvation because his body was invaded by Satan... Therefore all the saints since the resurrection of Jesus... have enjoyed the benefit of the providence of spiritual salvation only... the original sin remains in the flesh and is transmitted continuously from generation to generation" (DP, 147-8).

Unificationists begin by showing how Adam failed in his mission, then attempt to create a whole string of those who did likewise till SYM comes on the scene. It is granted that Adam failed. But Elijah "went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kgs. 2: 11). Not bad, for a failure who later appeared with Moses and Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration! (Mt. 17).

Concerning John, the UC has wrongly interpreted John's question sent by his disciples ("Art thou he that should come, or shall we look for another?" Lk. 7: 19) as meaning that John became a skeptic and made shipwreck of his faith. That John and his disciples had faith that the Messiah would come is **proven** by their question. People who do not believe in the Messiah do not ask such questions. The question strongly implies that if this WAS NOT he, they would look for another! They wouldn't quit hoping and looking. Likewise, if they were convinced that it WAS he, they would be satisfied and would look for no other. This is plainly implied by the question. Further proof that Jesus did not interpret it to mean John had made shipwreck of his faith is found in the next few verses. Jesus said John was "more than a

prophet" (v. 26), that he was a fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy as being the "messenger... who shall prepare the way before thee" (v. 27), and that "among them that are born of women there is none greater than John" (v. 28). That doesn't sound at all like John had made shipwreck of his faith and betrayed Jesus!

XI. THE ROLE OF MOON. "With the fullness of time, God has sent His messenger to resolve the fundamental questions of life and the universe. His name is Sun Myung Moon. For many decades, he wandered in a vast spiritual world in search of the ultimate truth. On this path, he endured suffering unimagined by anyone in human history. God alone will remember it. Knowing that no one can find the ultimate truth to save mankind without going through the bitterest of trials, he fought alone against myriads of satanic forces, both in the spiritual and physical world, and finally triumphed over them all. In this way, he came in contact with many saints in Paradise and with Jesus, and thus brought into light all the heavenly secrets through his communion with God" (DP, Introduction, p. 16). During World War II, Moon went to the capitol of North Korea, Pyongyang, and began preaching. "He was arrested for his activities, tortured and left for dead outside the Dae Dong Police Station. His congregation found his bloodied, unconscious body in the snow, and began to prepare for his funeral" (PSP, 6). "I believe with all my heart that he was dead, but God brought him back to life: (Levy Daugherty, Conference Director, testimony at the "Rock of Tears," Pusan, Korea, Sept. 8, 1987). Unificationists view SYM as the "Lord of the Second Advent, who comes as the central figure of Christianity... will also play the role of Buddha, whom Buddhists believe will come again, as well as the role of the "True Man' whose appearance Confucianists anticipate, and 'Chung do Ryung'" ("Herald of the Righteous Way") whom many Koreans expect to come. In addition, he **will also play the role of the central figure whom all other religions await**" (DP, 189). "... Upon the Second Advent of the Lord as the True Parent of mankind (whom Unificationists believe is SYM), all men will come to live harmoniously in the garden as one family" (DP, 129).

XII. THE BIBLE. "The Bible is not the truth itself, but a textbook teaching truth.... Therefore, we must not regard the textbook as absolute in every detail (DP, 9).

If it only contains truth then it may also contain error. Jesus said of his Father, "Thy word is truth" (Jn. 17: 17).

"The New Testament was given as a textbook... to the people of 2000 years ago, people whose spiritual and intellectual standard was very low, compared to that of today... Today the truth must appear with a higher standard and with a scientific method of expression in order to enable intelligent modern man to understand it" (DP, 131). This leaves the gate open for continuous revelation.

MY ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIFICATION CHURCH AND SUN MYUNG MOON

All the members of the UC which I have met have been nice, mannerly people (with one exception). We were treated with the utmost of hospitality. Part of the plan appears to be to "kill you with kindness" in order to

soften your attitude toward a repulsive doctrine (that Moon is the Messiah for all the world religions). The people are very sacrificial as they work selling flowers, candy, etc. to promote the cause. It is my belief that the promise of marriage is dangled like a carrot before many of the members to keep them faithful, since they do not live together immediately (and are sometimes kept apart from their chosen one indefinitely). The hope of getting to unite with their mate keeps the members hanging on. The UC has experienced phenomenal growth because of this dedication. Because its goal is to unite all religions on the basis of "Godism" against the common foe of atheistic communism (and is having some success), it appeals to the longing within many to see this unity. I predict we will be hearing more from this movement which intends to engulf all religions.

Though SYM has appealed to mankind to "abandon our egoism" (TUC, 12), he is the very epitome of egotism, believing that he is the Messiah who has returned to set up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. He is a genius (so was Hitler) whose intelligence has been misdirected. This "genius" is seen in his ability as a master manipulator of people, ability to make money, and in his grand imagination in the plans he has for the world.

One of SYM's goals is to create one universal language. It is my opinion that he intends to keep the Korean race pure. We did not observe any mixed marriages that involved Koreans. It is further my opinion that the Korean language will be the one chosen.

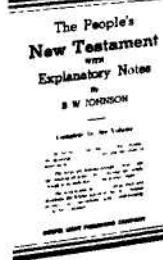
HOW SHOULD SYM BE OPPOSED?

The UC uses the Bible as a *foundation* for their religion, but later revelation becomes the *superstructure*. Like the Mormons, they are usually unfazed when you point out contradictions between the Bible and the DP, OTP, etc. They give precedent to later revelation. However, I try to take the Bible away from them. Here is my method of approach in studying with Unificationists: (1) Contrast what the Bible claims for itself and what the UC claims about the Bible; (2) Show that continuous revelation is the very reason we have so much religious division. It cannot be the solution for the problem it has caused (Mohammed, Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White, Mary Baker Eddy, the Pope, Oral Roberts, Pentecostalism, SYM, etc.); (3) Showing that he lacks the proper genealogy. If SYM is the Messiah, he should have the lineage to prove it (Mt. 1: 1-17; Lk. 3: 23-38). The lineage of Jesus exists to prove he is who he claimed to be. God promised Abraham that one of his descendants would bless the world. Paul identified this seed as Jesus (Gen. 12: 1-3; Gal. 3: 16). There were several intervening promises that were not fulfilled for hundreds of years. It was 300 years later that Jacob predicted that his own son, Judah, would father a line through which a ruler in Israel would be born (Gen. 49: 10). Nearly 640 years later David was promised that the Messiah would descend from his loins (2 Sam. 7). There were many similar promises which necessitated God keeping the Messianic line fertile so that at least one male would be born in every generation from Abraham to Jesus and this line-age would have to come through Abraham, Jacob, Judah, David, Solomon, etc. Each male would grow to

manhood and have a son until in this one line, running back for 2000 years, there would be an unbroken succession of male descendants until our Lord should be born in Judah. This is without parallel in all the annals of history. Can SYM prove he is descended from all of these OT characters? No, he cannot. But Jesus can! He is the only person living who has a Jewish ancestry that can be traced back to Abraham. Thus, SYM cannot be the Messiah. Nor can he perform miracles. He is deceived and is a deceiver.

Much more could be said. I have had difficulty condensing this material. Some things had to be deleted. I hope it will be helpful to those who encounter the Unification Movement.

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LESSONS FROM AN ICE STORM

Norman E. Sewell
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It was 'Christmas Day,' 1987 and it was raining and getting colder. My family had plans to travel for the day and spend some time with others in the family, and then to return home. It was an unusual day in that, although it was cold, the rain did not really freeze on the roads. We had a pleasant day and even a reasonably pleasant drive back, only to notice when we arrived in town that many of the street lights and business lights were off. We arrived at home at about 7 P. M. to find that there was no electrical power in our house, or in any of the houses around us for several blocks. While the ice had not built up on the streets, it had been building all day on the tree limbs, and on the power lines, and as the weight reached critical points lines broke, or limbs broke and fell on the power lines removing badly needed electrical power. For some people the power never went off at all that day, but did for a short time the next day. For some the power was off only a few minutes or a few hours. For some of us the power was off for 4 full days and nights, and there were some who were without power for at least one more day. In addition to trying to keep warm, and to have light, there were such things as food stored in home freezers, etc. to be concerned with. It was not a pleasant experience, and certainly not one that we appreciated at the time. But there are some lessons that can be learned from that ice storm. The question is, will we learn from it, or will we just gripe about it?

THE LITTLENESS OF MAN — We sometimes begin to think that we humans are pretty big stuff, able to do just about anything we want to do. After all, men have traveled into space, and even walked on the moon. But as wonderful as our technology is, and as much as we have learned, we still can't stop an ice storm, or a tornado, or an earthquake, or a volcano, etc. While Jesus lived He calmed the sea, walked on the water, and did many wonderful things which demonstrated who He is, the Son of the Living God. Perhaps it takes something like an ice storm to make us stop and realize just who we are and how much we need God.

PREPAREDNESS — The ice storm caught many of us not as prepared as we should have been. We needed candles or lamps that do not require electricity; we needed some way to heat our homes; and some way to amuse ourselves when we could no longer watch TV or go rent a movie. There was hardly even enough light to read. But the lesson we could have learned from the ice storm is that our whole life is one of preparation. It was Amos the prophet who told the nation of Israel, "**Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel**" (Amos 4: 12). And, it

does me good just to be forced to stop for a time and realize the need to be prepared for whatever lies ahead.

PATIENCE — Some probably learned not to be anxious about things that you cannot change while waiting out an ice storm and the return of our electrical power. Some undoubtedly became more anxious and distressed day by day. It was Jesus who taught in the sermon on the mount not to be so anxious about day to day things but to "**seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all things shall be added unto you**" (Matt. 6: 33). And Paul urged the Philippians, "**Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God**" (Phil. 4: 6). There are some things in life that you just can't hurry; that you can't change; and one lesson you can learn from an ice storm (if you will) is to simply trust in God and let things take their course as they will.

TO APPRECIATE LITTLE THINGS — The ice storm showed us something else too. There are so many things in life that we take for granted, like lights and heat or cool. We get so caught up in our daily lives we forget to appreciate having those things. And when all of **a** sudden those things which seem so ordinary and always there are taken away you begin to appreciate having them. What a wonderful lesson we would have learned if we would learn to appreciate good health while we have it, or having a house where there are lights, and heat and such simple things.

TO COUNT OUR BLESSINGS — Even in the midst of the ice storm some of us had blessings that others did not have. My family still had water since the power that **ran** the city pumps was still on; and we still had hot water because we had a gas water heater and that was in operation. And we had a wood burning fireplace insert. It didn't heat a very large area because there was no electricity to turn the fans, but it was fully able to heat the main living area so that we could stay in our home. And how blessed we were that the temperatures were not so cold. We had day time temperatures in the upper 20's and low 30's. Had it been colder things could have been much worse. And we had a warm rain one night and warm temperatures that helped speed the melting process so that power crews could get our power back on quickly. And, without television and other kinds of entertainment it was even possible for people to actually talk to one another without having to compete. Even in the midst of an ice storm there are blessings that we all had if we would just take a moment and realize what we did have and be thankful.

TO LIVE WITH INCONVENIENCE — Living in a house without electricity, and with only a little heat was indeed inconvenient. It was inconvenient to try to bathe under such circumstances; inconvenient sometimes even to try to sleep with so many blankets piled on your bed; and inconvenient to try to read or sew with the little light that you had. Forget about such things as using your computer or electric typewriter; or just about anything else except listening to a portable radio to keep up with the news. Since the power was off also in the meeting house, it was inconvenient to find another

congregation that had heat and power. But it was wonderful to meet with these brethren and to enjoy our fellowship together during such a trying time. Much of the world seems hung up on convenience. But, convenient or not, there is a lesson to be learned from living with things that are not so convenient. We can learn that we can still be Christians and follow Jesus every day regardless of the things that would hinder us.

Was the ice storm fun? Was it enjoyable in any way? Not that I know of. I'm sure it was a nightmare for those men and women who worked in very uncomfortable conditions trying to get power to essential services like hospitals and nursing homes, and of course residences took much longer. But it wasn't a total disaster either. We all learned that life can, and in fact does, go on even without electricity. And hopefully we learned that we must in all things trust God, "casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (I Pet. 5: 7).

HAILEY'S COMMENTS

By Homer Hailey

Vol. 1

Vol. 2

A collection of articles by this respected author which appeared in various periodicals, includes material on Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah and Daniel.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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BILL BOONE, 705 W. Pecan, Blytheville, AR 72315—Changes in my work schedule now make it possible for me to conduct singing schools to train song leaders and help congregational singing or to lead singing in meetings. Contact me at the above address. (Editor's note: I have known Bill Boone a long time. He is well trained in music and in the work of helping men to be better song leaders and congregations to improve singing. I hope brethren will use him).

LARRY R. DEVORE, P. O. Box 313, Medina, OH 44258—Our work in Medina continues to be encouraging. Since last report four brethren have made confession of sins, though one did not remain faithful. Also, two placed membership with us. Because of various problems, our building program did not get underway in 1987. We hope to begin in the summer of 1988. Please remember us in your prayers and when in northern Ohio, visit with us. My phone is (216) 345-9030.

PAUL S. BAKER, 108 Locust St., Mt. Pleasant, TN—We read with interest the articles in past issues of STS by P. J. Casebolt and Gailen F. Evans regarding the correcting of ceilings that were acoustically dead. Several years ago we installed acoustical ceiling tile in our auditorium. Later we added carpeting and padded pews. This put together just about destroyed all the echo we had in the building. Our singing was about as dead sounding as you could find anywhere.

After reading the above mentioned articles, we lowered the ceiling about 16 inches and installed the metal faced tiles, 2' x 2', by U. S. Gypsum Co. The first time we met after this we had to turn down the P. A. system and we could hear each other singing for the first time in several years. I am one of the song leaders and I never dreamed so much improvement could be made by just the right ceiling tile. We are very well pleased and thought you might like to know of our results.

RANDY PICKUP, 917 4th St., Cincinnati, OH 45215—On January 11-12, 1988, Greg Litmer and I publicly debated Richard Lotspeich and Don Stayton, two independent Baptist preachers, on the design of water baptism. It was unique in that it was "two on two" but in other respects it was a normal formal debate. On January 11, in the building of the Lockland church of Christ, the two Baptists affirmed; "The

scriptures teach that remission of sins comes before and without water baptism. " The next night, in the building of the Faith Baptist Church, Greg and I affirmed: "The scriptures teach that baptism in water is for (in order to) the remission of sins. "

Since all four speakers had little or no experience in public debates, humility causes me to admit that this discussion will, most probably, **not** go down in history as one of the great landmarks of polemic battles! But it was a good gentlemanly exchange with good order, interest and capacity crowds. As best we could, truth was taught and defended, error was exposed and good was done. While no immediate fruit was seen among those of the Baptist persuasion, many encouraging comments were made regarding the good of such discussions and the edification of brethren (especially young and new Christians) who attended and saw the extremes to which some will go in defending false beliefs.

This discussion came about as result of a call-in radio program which Greg and I conduct here in Cincinnati (as part of the teaching work of the Lockland church where I preach). Much good has been done by this program. Some have been baptized as a result and we have made other good contacts from it.

KEITH SHARP, 2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd., Lakeland, FL 33805—A couple of brethren have sent me copies of a brief article from a paper in Mississippi put out by institutional brethren, which purports to be a report of the debate between Thomas West and me conducted in Saratoga, Arkansas, July 20-21, 23-24, 1987. The report was so inaccurate as to be ludicrous. The debate involved social meals, the work of the church and church support of orphanages. If you desire to hear how the discussion really went, why not listen to the tapes of it? I was engaged in two other debates last year, also with institutional brethren. September 28-October 1, I debated Johnny Polk in Stamps, Arkansas on the orphanage and sponsoring church issues. November 16-17, 19-20 I debated Lewis G. Hale on the same issues. If you would like to obtain tapes of any or all of these debates, write or call Steven Saunders, P. O. Box 221, Fordyce, AR 71742. Phone (501) 352-8235.

PLATON MABUNGA, Seaside Church of Christ, Brook's Point, Palawan 2906, Republic of the Philippines—The church here is at peace. I preach in three congregations every Lord's day. Transportation problems have caused me to be late to some of these appointments. A new congregation of 16 members began at Cabor recently with these people leaving the institutional church at Tippulan. We now have a Muslim mayor but pray to God for the best. On January 28, 1988, eleven were baptized here. (He included a picture of 11 standing in the water—Editor). I am thankful for Searching the Scriptures which helps me so much for my Bible study. We are thankful to those who have helped us in many ways in our work here.

JOHNNIE P. MOCK, P. O. Box 65, Ancram, NY 12502—One was baptized here in Hudson, NY on January 9. She began attending with a young man who is a member. This resulted in a Bible study in a member's home. She is now married to the young man who brought her to hear the gospel. In February, Jim Swann of Birmingham, Alabama was with us in a meeting with lessons centered on Paul's letter to the Colossians.

BOB BOLTON, 701 Centennial Blvd., Richardson, TX—April 3-8 we had a gospel meeting with preaching by R. J. Stevens and Leon Goff with congregational singing led by Dane Shepard. (Editor's note: We regret that we received this notice too late to print the schedule before the meeting. We urge you, if you want an event published before it happens, to give us 4 to 5 weeks lead time. We send copy for each issue to the printer one month before the date printed on any given issue.)

E. PAUL PRICE, 920 N. Rockwell, Oklahoma City, OK 73127—The church in Norman, Oklahoma has changed its meeting place from the Howard Johnson Motel to the Old American Exchange Bank building at West Main and Berry Rd. We are still known as the West I-35 church. The mailing address is: P. O. Box 5624, Norman, OK 73070. We would like to contact any students you know at the University of Oklahoma. We have several who meet with us at present. We have a weekly article in the paper and a radio program in Paul's Valley. I am working with three churches and preach five times each Sunday plus teaching three classes a week and leading singing at times. I have been fortunate to keep support but will lose \$100 by August.

PREACHERS NEEDED

SOLDOTNA, ALASKA—The small church here needs a preacher. We have our own adequate facilities and will be able to assist, considerably, in a preacher's support. Some outside support will be needed. We are one of only three sound churches in the state. Those interested may write the church at P. O. Box 2288, Soldotna, AK 99669. You may call Jerry Holland (907) 262-4316; or William Lewis (907) 262-9357. Olen Holderby of Fresno, California is familiar with this area and with the church here. You may call him at (209) 292-3351.

BRADLEY, ILLINOIS—The church meeting at 1505 E. Broadway in Bradley needs a faithful preacher. Frank Vondracek has been here the last four and a half years but is moving to Davenport, Iowa. We bid him Godspeed. He is leaving here under favorable conditions and with our blessings and goodwill. We are about 60 miles south of Chicago on I-57. We are self supporting and have a four bedroom brick house beside the building. This area is not without its challenges and requires a man devoted to the Lord and dedicated to the truth. Those interested may contact J. J. Spurgeon, 378 N. Jackson, Bradley, IL 60915, or call (815) 933-5684; or Coy Lentz, 1531 Marquis Dr., Bradley 60915, or call (815) 932-5749.

CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA—The Walnut Bottom Road church located in south central Pennsylvania needs a full time evangelist. There are 30 members and we are able to supply \$250 support weekly. Work available immediately. Those interested should contact Don Shearer (717) 532-3193 daytime, or Gerry Smith (717) 776-3653 evenings. You may write to: Walnut Bottom Road Church of Christ, Rt. 5, Box 427, Carlisle, PA 17013.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

CARTHEL THOMAS is a fine young man determined to preach the gospel. He has already had some good experience. He is the son of Owen Thomas, gospel preacher of Charlotte, N. C. Carthel was baptized several years ago during a meeting in which the editor preached in Wellsburg, WV. Until the end of April he can be reached at Florida College. After that at 5327 S. Tryon St., Charlotte, NC 28217.



STATE LOTTERIES

A number of states now have lotteries which hold out the promise of instant riches to some lucky soul. The present governor of Kentucky was elected on a platform which included a state lottery in order to finance education and other worthy goals. The state legislature is now battling the issue. Emotionally charged arguments are being made in which elderly people and school children are used to arouse sympathy for a lottery which is perceived as the panacea for the ills of both. Who could be against improving the education of our children or relieving the needs of the elderly?

Every argument we have heard for the lottery comes down to one thing: the end justifies the means. Never mind that a lottery rests upon the principle of greed, or the mistaken notion that you can get something for nothing. Never mind that it violates every principle of the word of God by which one may obtain substance (the law of labor, inheritance, barter, gift, legitimate investment). Never mind that it panders to the weakness in people and very often addicts those who have very little to begin with. Never mind that such addiction can ruin the careers of even the well-to-do, wreck homes and leave families devastated. We must "do evil that good may come." The states which have had lotteries the longest are having to grapple with costs directly related to this sanctioned gambling. It costs more than it provides. It is nigh unto impossible to keep out the mob and vested interests. Gambling attracts the mob like honey draws flies.

It is time for gospel preachers to draw their swords and fight this evil. We must teach people to "labor, working with their hands the thing which is good, that they may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4: 28). "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12: 17). There are no free lunches.

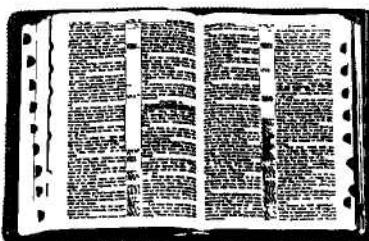
PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Pat Robertson is running for president largely on a platform of a return to moral values and putting God back in homes, schools and government. I am not totally out of sympathy with all of that. Whether the man can deliver what he promises is another question. But there is one thing that seriously bothers me and which has far reaching consequences in terms of peace and security in the world. Robertson is a dispensationalist. He believes that the nation of Israel has a divine right to the land of Canaan. He holds to an elaborate agenda which involves the defeat of all enemies of Israel, the epochal "battle of Armageddon" and the regathering of the nation of Israel for the millennium. But that whole agenda is based on a perversion of prophecy and a misinterpretation of Matthew 24 and Revelation 20.

If you think the middle east is unstable now, then put such a man in the White House and let him join forces with the already powerful Zionist movement and then look out! You ain't seen nothin' yet! Not only is dispensationalism a false doctrine Biblically, its ramifications in terms of the peace and stability of the world are beyond description. I do not presume to tell anyone how to vote. That is not the purpose of this paper. But I do propose to warn those who will listen of a grave danger which portends much evil in the world and which would threaten the peace and safety of God's people and have a hindering effect on efforts to preach the gospel.

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 XXIX

MAY, 1988

NUMBER 5

A SPECIAL EDITION

"CHRIST AND THE CHURCH"

(A Study Of The Book Of Ephesians)

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Connie W. Adams

P.O. Box 69
Brooks, Kentucky 40109



In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul drew an analogy between the relationship of husband and wife and that of Christ and the church. He summarized it all by saying "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (verse 32). "Concerning Christ and the church" — that is what the book of Ephesians is all about. And that is what this special edition of this paper is all about. In fourteen articles those who write regular columns in this periodical have summarized the divine syllabus on Christ and the church.

Why This Special Edition?

For many years, denominationalists of every kind have so distorted the image of religion in the minds of the masses (both friends and foes of religion) that the beauty

and simplicity of divine truth on the church of the Lord as presented in scripture has been all but lost. Modern religion is in shambles. From the cold, sterile formalism of dead ritual performed in imposing sanctuaries of the traditional churches, to the more exuberant exercises of charismatic sects, people of religious inclination would have a hard time discovering the simple facts about the body of the saved which is presented in the New Testament.

An honest seeker for truth about the church revealed in the Bible would never learn it from listening to the popular media preachers of the day. Even aside from the scandals which have rocked the world of media religion, one would not learn what to do to be saved, nor what the New Testament church is, nor how it is structured, nor what is its work. These "ministries" involve organizations which are without precept or precedent in the word of God.

It has been preached up and down the land that the church is not essential. We should just "preach Christ" and say nothing about the church. Those who say this do not know what "church" is in the Bible. Dispensationalists reduce the church to nothing more than an after-thought, or an interim arrangement to offer a sop to man until such time as their speculative millennium kingdom can be set in motion. Even among those who profess to be nothing more than simple Christians, there is often either a nebulous notion about Christ and the church, or

an outright denominational concept. To preach that one who is "in Christ" is in the body of Christ, the church, is offensive to many. Their limited understanding of what the church is and its true relationship to Christ, causes them to view such preaching as too narrow and restrictive. Second and third generations of church members, who did not have to struggle their way out of denominational creeds and loyalties, have become what they are, many times, more out of tradition than clear understanding and deep conviction.

The book of Ephesians is good medicine for all such ills. In this grand treatise, the apostle Paul transports us to the inner chambers of the divine purpose and planning of the Almighty "before the foundation of the world," thence to the earthly scene of blood sacrifice, then to the elevation of the Son of God to the right hand of Majesty and the possession of authority over things visible and invisible and headship over all things to the church, which is his body. From that vantage point, his reign of grace in the hearts of men is presented as it blends the previously discordant elements of Jew and Gentile into one body by the cross and rears the majestic holy temple in the Lord for the habitation of God through the Spirit. Such wondrous prospects for alienated humanity explains the urgency of gospel preaching as presented in chapter three. All men must have opportunity to be "partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." This work must be done so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith and that we might be filled with all the fulness of God. We are then shown how God made every provision necessary for this body to exist and function according to divine wisdom to the end that the saved might be edified and developed to their maximum potential in Christ. Such a noble calling is not without price. We must reject the vanity of human wisdom and order life and its pursuits according to God's purpose for us. There is a continuing walk before him. Even the varied relationships of social life must be ordered according to his will. In all of this, Satan will oppose us and we must arm ourselves with the whole panoply of god in order to "withstand in the evil day."

I do not believe that one can hold to the common notions about the church which are so pervasive in denominational circles, and even among the irreligious, when the book of Ephesians is clearly understood. And it is mandatory that those within the church maintain sharp and clear understanding on this vital theme.

Concerning Christ

The coming of Jesus Christ into the world in the "dispensation of the fulness of times" summed up the divine and human. The "Word" which was "with" God and which "was" God (Jno. 1:1), "became flesh" and dwelt "among us" (Jno. 1:14). This enabled mankind to "behold his glory." All the attributes of Deity were in him and he demonstrated them in the world before witnesses who testified as to what they saw and heard (1 Jno. 1:1 -3). He was not only "the Word," he was the Messiah of Old Testament expectation. He was the seed of Abraham, the root of Jesse, the son of David, the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings. He is the central figure of all human history. The world cannot ignore him. To those who believe, he is precious, while to the unbeliev-

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ing he is a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." His life, death and resurrection summed up the divine plan of the ages and brought earthly fulfillment to heavenly purpose. There is no salvation apart from him.

In Ephesians, Christ is the location of spiritual blessings, the object of God's choice in salvation, the means of our adoption into the family of God, our redemption from sin, the means of our inheritance, the head over all things to the church, our means of peace with God, the chief corner stone of our spiritual edifice, the provider of every necessary function for the church and its work, and the motive power for us to walk in love. He is our everything.

Concerning the Church

But Ephesians inseparably connects Christ and the church. The church is "his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (1:23). The fulness of the Godhead was in Christ (Col. 2:9). Even so, the fulness of Christ is the church. Whatever spiritual blessings are offered to the

human race through Christ (and they are all in him), are obtained in the church, the body of Christ. The church is the body of the saved. Whatever it takes to save one, makes him a member of the church. There is no salvation apart from the Lordship of Christ, but he is "head over all things to the church." He is the "saviour of the body." He is neither the head nor saviour of those outside the body. There is one head and one body (4:4). That is the usual arrangement, is it not. One body with two heads is a freak. One head with multiple bodies is impossible. Yet that is the popular notion among many. The church is presented in Ephesians as "an holy temple." This is the place of spiritual service. The church is said to be the family of God (3:15). It is the explanation to "principalities and powers in heavenly places" of "the manifold wisdom of God" (3:10). Through its existence and function according to divine wisdom, it glorifies God by Christ Jesus.

The church is God's calling (4:1). The word "church" is translated from EKKLESIA. The first part of this word, EK means "from," or "out of." The last part, from KLESIS means "a calling." The verb form, KALEO means "to call." Hence, the church means those called out. In its universal import, it indicates a people called by the gospel (2 Thes. 2:14), out of the darkness of sin (1 Pet. 2:9), and into marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9). We are called out of alienation into citizenship, out of despair into hope, out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Christ. This is the church in the aggregate. This is the picture of the church in Ephesians. Other passages present the local EKKLESIA, a body of saved people at a given place. It has form or structure and function as to worship and work. Those who comprised local churches were all saved the same way and added to the great body of the redeemed presented in Ephesians. They all believed and practiced the same things. They were all subjects of the one Lord, the one head over the one body, the church.

We must not lose the Biblical image of Christ and his church. It is our hope and prayer as we send forth this edition of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES that the material offered here will sharpen your focus on these grand and fundamental truths about Christ and the church as they are presented in God's essay on the church — Ephesians. We are indebted to these good men who have given of their time, knowledge and talent to express their thoughts for our learning and edification.

An Explanation and an Apology

Due to a mixup at the printing plant the article by P. J. Casebolt on "Christ, The Savior of the Body" was not set in type along with the others. Waiting for it would unduly delay this issue. Brother Casebolt has been consulted about this and has agreed for us to run that article in a later issue. We regret this and apologize to him and to you. (Editor)

WHAT IT MEANS TO PREACH CHRIST

James R. Cope

301 Green Castle Avenue
Temple Terrace, Florida 33617



WHAT IT MEANS TO PREACH CHRIST

The following points constitute the outline of the subject of this writing: (1) What is the meaning of the word preach as here used; (2) Significance of the word Christ as here used; (3) Reactions where "Christ" was "preached" in apostolic days; and (4) What happened and happens when "Christ" was and is preached.

What Does "Preach" Mean?

In his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words W. E. Vine declares that the Greek verb euangelizo, translated "preach," "is almost always used of the good news concerning the Son of God as proclaimed in the Gospel." Kerusso, the word used more than fifty times in the Greek text, signifies (1) to be a herald, or, in general, to proclaim...; (b) to preach the Gospel as a herald...; or (c) to preach the word, 2 Tim. 4:2 (of the ministry of the Scriptures, with special reference to the Gospel)", (Vol. III, p. 201). Vine suggests "proclaim" and "publish" as additional word studies in connection with "preach."

What Does "Christ" Mean?

The Greek word Christos means "anointed." In the Old Testament prophets, priests and kings were identified by "anointment" authorized by God. (Psm. 105:15; Lev. 4:3, 5,16; 1 Sam. 2:10, 35; Psm. 2:2). Three times Jesus accepted this identification: (1) when Peter declared him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:17,18); (2) when he responded "I am" to the high priest's question, "Art thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed?" (Mk. 14:61, 62); and (3) when responding to the Samaritan woman's statement, "I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things." Jesus replied, "I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:25, 26).

It is interesting to remember that in Old Testament times three classes — prophets, priests and kings — were "anointed" out of divine consideration for their identity and function in the service of God. (Ex. 29:7; 30:30; Lev. 4:3; 8:12; 1 Kgs. 19:16; 1 Sam. 12:3,5; 2 Sam. 1:14; Psm. 20:6). It was no accident that Jesus is thus described (Acts 4:27, 10:38; Heb. 1:5, 9). "I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): he will declare unto us all things," said the Samaritan woman to him. This prompted our Lord's reply, "I that speak unto thee am he." (Jno. 4:25,26). It should be no surprise to Bible readers that when Jesus had earlier read from Isaiah, chapter 61, in the Nazareth synagogue, that God "anointed" him "to preach good tidings to the poor" and perform other divine works, that the eyes of all present

were "fastened on him" (Lk. 4:16-21). Again, in Acts 4:23-31 Jerusalem saints quoted Psalm 2 and spoke to the heavenly Father about "thy holy Servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint." Likewise, Peter reminded the first Gentile converts that Jesus of Nazareth God had anointed ... with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:37, 38).

In Acts 8 five kindred statements occur regarding "preaching." The scattered disciples "went about preaching the word," v. 4; to the Samaritans Philip "preached (proclaimed — ASV) Christ," v. 5; they "believed Philip preaching," v. 12; he "preached Jesus" to the Ethiopian eunuch, v. 35; and Peter and John "preached the gospel" among Samaritans, v. 25. Repeatedly in the New Testament "preaching the gospel," and "preaching the word," are used synonymously with "teaching." Some persons think that "preaching" connotes more of a public conveyance of thought than "teaching," but this may be questioned — at least, in some instances. Maybe such a distinction was intended in the Acts 5:42 text yet Philip's "preaching" Jesus to the Ethiopian, apparently a private encounter, and the same Philip's "preaching Christ" to the Samaritans (Acts 8:5) with a ready response in both instances, would seem to negate any major distinctions between the two words. The same situation exists with "teaching" as evidenced by Paul's statements to the Ephesian elders, i.e., "teaching you publicly and from house to house" and "I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more" (Acts 20:20,25). The point in each instance is the proclamation, the declaration, i.e., **making known or declaring** — the "good news" about Jesus!

Reactions When Christ was Preached

The Book of Acts is our basic source of information on reactions of persons who heard the apostles and earliest evangelists preach Christ. He was the center and circumference of their proclamations.

One need not leave the Book of Acts to understand what was involved in apostolic days in "preaching Christ." Old Testament history projects the person of the "anointed one" to come to fulfillment of God's purpose to redeem Eve's descendants from sin when he said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between ... thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). This was the gospel of Christ **in purpose**. This **purpose** took the form of **promise** when God told Abraham to leave his native land and father's house and said to him, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3). This **purpose** and **promise** were expressed in **prophecy** through various Old Testament persons. Illustrative is Abraham's grandson Jacob who, in blessing Judah, said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). Isaiah foresaw the seed of the Abrahamic promise when he forecast the peaceful nature of his reign. Said he of the Messiah: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn

war any more" (Isa. 2:4). John the Baptist broke the silence of four hundred years when he announced "The kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Mt. 3:1,2). This was the same kingdom of which Daniel had spoken some six centuries previous when he referred to the Roman Caesar's and said, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed ... and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44).

Jesus of Nazareth came in fulfillment of numerous prophecies, was baptized by John the Baptist to fulfill all righteousness, and taught more than three years about the peaceful, spiritual kingdom purposed, promised and forecast for centuries. At the instigation of jealous Jewish religious leaders Jesus died on a Roman cross for those who manipulated his death but, in keeping with his promise, He conquered death through his resurrection. Forty days later he ascended to the Father's right hand in heaven where he was crowned and proclaimed King and Lord in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. Believing, sorrowful sinners, who fifty days earlier clamored for his crucifixion, now cried for his pardon. Apostle Peter, the Kings' spokesman, gave the King's answer of mercy to their "What-shall-we-do?" when he said, "Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:37,38). Three thousand Jews who fifty days previously had demanded His death now found their forgiveness in the very blood he applied to them in baptism, and "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). The number of converts rapidly grew until the men alone numbered "about 5000," "The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

Stephen, an eloquent convert, was murdered by stoning when he accused the high Jewish officials of crucifying the now resurrected Savior, in whose name he prayed for their forgiveness, even as he was dying by their cruel hands. This death of the first martyr sparked a persecution against the disciples which scattered them over the Roman Empire; but wherever they went, their preaching of Jesus was their preeminent commitment. One of them, Philip, "went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" with the result that "when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

These simple statements of Acts 8:5,12,13 summarize "What It means to Preach Christ." Philip's preaching and the Samaritans' response tell the story. When Philip preached "the things concerning the kingdom of God" he was establishing the identity of God's rule over the hearts of all men. When he proclaimed "the name of Jesus Christ" he thereby inferred the authority behind that kingly function, and when he preached baptism, he was telling them they must obey God to be saved. (None could or would have known the role of baptism regarding entrance into the kingdom if inspired men had not preached it). All of this tells us that since salvation is "in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17) sinners must be baptized in order to

have sins remitted. They must believe and obey this command of the King (Acts 2:33). Results of such faith are forgiveness of sins by the King's authority, promise of the King's presence in His faithful subject's life, and eternity with the King's Father. This is but a brief analysis of "What It Means To Preach Christ." It is to preach his God-given authority, and man's obedience to his commands. It is to preach the realm of his rule—his kingdom which involves his right to make and enforce his Father's law and to exclude unwilling subjects to these laws. It is to preach baptism as the act of obedience which demonstrates the willingness of the sinner's heart to obey the King, to be "born again," i.e., newly "born of water and the Spirit" (Jno. 3:5). This, in principle, is what it means to preach Christ, viz. his realm of rule, conditions of citizenship, and obedience to the King in thought, word and deed.

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AN OVERVIEW OF EPHESIANS

I find it increasingly difficult to carry out my plans for the future. All sorts of physical circumstances make impossible what I want to do. Unexpected health conditions or accidents change my plans, sometimes against my will. The plans and activities of other people (including my own children) interfere with mine. More often than not my own activities inadvertently bring changes in my other plans. There is so much I do not know and cannot predict that I sometimes wonder why I make plans at all. Practically, however, life cannot go on if I do not project myself at least into the immediate future. And yet, I must do so cautiously and with the realization that all my plans may be changed in a moment without prior notification (James 4:13-17).

Is it not wonderful that God can plan and it all comes to pass without change. His decision is as good as action. He speaks and it is done. He planned before the creation and none of his plans have failed. Thousands of years have passed. Millions of human beings have been free to act and interact at their own choice. Yet all of God's unconditional plans have come to pass. We are heirs of the greatest of these: THE "PLAN" OF SALVATION. What wonderful evidence of His divinity, omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence the plan of salvation provides! The book of Ephesians is designed to help us to appreciate GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST.

God's Plan in Christ

The first chapter of Ephesians is dedicated to explaining two great truths: a) that God's planning centers in providing spiritual blessings; and b) that all spiritual blessings are in Christ Jesus.

Whatever else we may think or hear preached from today's pulpits, God is most interested in our spiritual well-being, not in our physical or social happiness. Just look at the list of blessings attributed to the "riches" of his grace (1:7; 2:4, 7; 3:8, 16): He chose us (1:4); He adopted us (1:5); He redeemed us (1:7); He forgave us (1:7); He revealed the mystery of His will to us (1:9); He gathered us together in one body (1:10); He provided an inheritance for us (1:11); etc. etc. etc.! Nothing is said here about material prosperity or physical welfare and yet we are "rich." We really must come up higher in our thinking and set our minds on the things of God (Phil. 4:8). He has planned wonderful blessings for us but we will miss them if we place our affections on this earth (Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 12:13-21).

God's plans find fulfillment in Christ and those who

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receive them must be in Christ. Election, adoption, redemption, forgiveness, the gathering together, and the inheritance are all **in Christ** (see 1:3-14). "Predestination," "foreordination," and "election" are sound Biblical concepts when they are understood within the framework of faith in Christ. Before the world was created God chose (He "predestined," "foreordained," or "elected") to save those who faithfully serve Him in Christ. Since being in Christ is conditional (Gal. 3:26-27), the reception of spiritual blessings in Christ is conditional. God first chose Christ (1 Pet. 1:20; 2:4, 6) and then he foreordained that He would save all who are truly in Christ. Being "in Christ" is being in His "body," "the church" (1:22-23). Christ is Head over all things to the church. God "raised him from the dead," "seated Him at His right hand," and "put all things under His feet" (1:20-21). God tied all His planning to Christ!

The Objective of God's Plan

The great goal of God's planning is man's salvation. We have all sinned (Rom. 3:23) and that means we were all dead in sin (Rom. 6:23). Ephesians chapter two explains that God is so full of love that although we were dead in sin He raised us up to sit with him in the spiritual realm. We are saved by grace. We all deserve to die eternally. Nothing we could possibly do can merit our salvation. Only God can save us and that is what He planned to do on condition that we respond through faith and become His workmanship (Eph. 2:4-10).

The nature of God's plan provides for the breaking down of former barriers (such as that between Jews and Gentiles) and the building together of all men into a great spiritual temple. No one in the Lord's house is a stranger or foreigner (Eph. 2:14-22). We are one! How different is God's plan from the denominational ways of men.

The Revelation of God's Plan

Ephesians chapter three explains how and why God has revealed his plan to man.

God did not fully reveal his plan until it was enacted in Christ. In earlier times, He did not completely make known "that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel" (3:6). Now it is written in such a way that when we read we can understand it as fully as did Paul (3:3-4). This revelation was made not only so that we would know God's will but also: a) that through its resulting effects upon our lives the marvelous wisdom of God would be known to all in the spiritual realm (3:10); and b) that God would be given the glory which He so richly deserves (3:21).

Gifts Provided in God's Plan

God's plan calls for men to mature spiritually after having been forgiven of sin and to be united in the Truth with all others who are the children of God. We are responsible to provide: a) a proper attitude toward our fellow Christians making an honest effort to be united with them (4:1-3); and b) an unconditional commitment to uphold the truths upon which God's plan is based (4:4-6). God, on the other hand, gave gifts to help us to grow. These gifts are functionaries (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) designed to equip saints

for the work of ministering and building up the body of Christ until we all come to full maturity. God's plan is that each Christian should do his part to cause the whole body to grow in love (4:7-16). we must not let him down.

The New Man Created According to God's Plan

God's plan provides for a complete spiritual re-creation of those in Christ. God not only purposed to forgive but he wants us to be changed from the worldly, materialistic persons we were before we were created in righteousness and holiness. The last half of chapter four and the first half of Ephesians chapter five tell us how to live before the Lord. We are not to grieve the Spirit by corrupt thoughts, speech, and activities (4:25-32); but rather we are to walk in love (5:2), walk in light (5:8), and walk in wisdom (5:15) always giving thanks to God for all things in the name of Christ (5:20).

God's Plan Explained and Illustrated

To illustrate His plan, God chose to explain the order and arrangement He has ordained for the domestic relationships of life (5:22-6:9). Wives are to submit to their own husbands as the church submits to Christ. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. Children and servants are to be obedient while parents and masters are to fully provide the needs of those in their charge as the Lord provides for His own. These passages instruct us in human relationships, but they are really designed to teach us about God's purposes in Christ and the church (5:32).

Persevering in God's Plan

Finally, Paul encouraged the Ephesians to take up the armor of God so that we may withstand the enemy and receive those eternal blessings God has planned to provide (Eph. 6:10-24). God has certainly done His part. He has even given the means by which we can do our part. We must, however, apply it. Our enemy is not flesh and blood. We are not fighting other people. We are not fighting physical circumstances. **We are fighting the devil!** We must be armed! We must apply the Truth to our lives and wage the battle against sin. If we do not, insofar as we are concerned, God's plans and purposes will not be applied. Won't it be sad at the judgment, after God has so wonderfully planned for our salvation and worked out His purposes in Christ through the centuries, for us to fall short because of our shortsighted selfish worldliness?

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The thrilling responsibility of this assignment entails analysis of the lengthy context, Ephesians 1:3-14, as it complements the thesis in verse three. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (1:3). The extent, nature, and relationship where God has, before the fact, decided to bestow every blessing will, hopefully, stand out more clearly. Proper perception will surely generate within each Christian a thankfulness of heart and fulness of spirit which will cause a rising up to cry out, "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

God is the author of "all" or "every" blessing; their nature and sphere is spiritual; the medium through whom we have them is Jesus Christ. Thus we must immediately conclude that this text addresses not the natural blessings of God, but the fruit of the redemptive work of Christ. "Every" blessing includes all the Father intended and can bestow; all the Son can provide; all the Spirit can apply. The conspiring of Deity is here embraced in the blessings to those in Christ.

"Heavenly places," or, in the heavenlies, in the very nature of the expression is the idea of an exalted spiritual relationship, the highest of the high. A relationship into which God had brought these of the Ephesian church, into which all in Christ are brought. This is the church as perceived within the eternal purpose of God and revealed in the New Testament. Indeed, it is in Christ that all spiritual blessings are received. To be in Christ is to be in the church which is a reserved and peculiar relationship to God through Christ where, and only where, the redeemed obtain all spiritual blessings. "In Christ" produces an overriding idea of fellowship. Every spiritual blessing we have received, the exalted spiritual relationship in which they are received, is all contingent upon our relationship with Christ. The keynote of the whole epistle is unity of all in Christ. Things in heavens and in earth, Jew and Gentile, all are one in him. It is then, by reason of this "in Christ," that we attain to the highest of the high where all spiritual blessings are. In this section of the text these words seem to express the very heartbeat of the apostle. The sentence beginning in verse three runs continuously through fourteen and is marked all the way by many rich and happy turns of expression. The bottom line, however, is redemption, this epitomizes the work of Christ and the ultimate provision of the grace of God.

What God purposed and decided in respect to man's

redemption, the choice made, was in deference to those in Christ, (verse four). While nothing is said as to whether those chosen are chosen conditionally or unconditionally, verse five makes the choice "according to the good pleasure of his will." God foreordained the provisions of salvation and decided before the fact of salvation what it would take on his part as well as man's. He decreed the conditions which man had to meet if he was to be saved and enjoy all spiritual blessings. Every man is free to choose, whether to reject or accept the conditions of God for salvation. The chosen ones are distinct in character, "holy and without blame." The intimation is not that God makes one so by his direct power. Rather, God has chosen the class as object of his abiding love and leaves it to every man to decide whether he will be in that class or group. Further, the only way to be "holy and without blame" is to be "in him," in Christ, the idea of fellowship again.

Verse five introduces the idea of adoption by God through Jesus Christ. Adoption is a term of relationship, sonship in respect to standing. It is the taking of a child not one's own by birth to be a son, a legal heir, with all rights and obligations to that relationship. Sonship in Christ, here argued by Paul, is a new relationship founded upon the "good pleasure of his will." Through Jesus Christ the will of the Father is executed, the conditions of which not only provide for sonship but every blessing of sonship, every spiritual blessing.

What are **some** of those **spiritual blessings** which are reserved for a holy and blameless class, those in Christ, in fellowship with him and all involved? While our list will not be exhaustive, gleanings from this context will stir appreciation and provoke a more extensive consideration. **Redemption** is certainly to be of primary consideration, the forgiveness of sins, which is the consummate expression of God's rich grace (verse seven). Actually, all spiritual blessings revolve within the fact of forgiveness. It is in Christ, through his death that redemption is made possible. Redemption involves the idea of rescue from bondage. Man is in bondage to sin, Jesus died to redeem from that bondage, by his death made release possible. Let us not lose sight of the fact, however, that redemption is only to those who accept it on the terms offered. Redemption accordingly to the riches of God's grace, while available to all, must be appropriated.

Jesus shed his blood, this was the ultimate price he willingly paid to redeem sin-cursed man. "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28). "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season; that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that had faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:24-26). Redemption was provided in Christ and only in the death of God's own son, was God able to be just and at the same time justify the guilty. In so doing he showed abhorrence for sin and love for the guilty of sin,

justice satisfied, death for sin. Justification at the same time was made available through faith and obedience for all choosing to be in Christ. "In whom" (verse 7) looks to verse three, the antecedent of the pronoun "whom" is Christ.

Forgiveness by grace is a proposition frequently abused. The grace of God is not negated by faith and obedience on the part of man but rather appropriated. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Grace embraces all God has done in salvation, faith is man's part and the two, grace and faith, are brought together in obedience. Without faith and obedience on the part of man the grace of God cannot be appropriated. God makes available, man chooses to accept or ignore the gift.

The revelation of God's will and purpose is a complement to redemption. Our attention in this consideration is arrested by two expressions in verse nine, "made known" and "mystery." Since mystery suggests something unknown, hidden if you will, here it is declared that the "mystery of his will" is "made known." Everything in connection with redemption God has clearly revealed. Grace and revelation are united to enable man to know what God had in store for him and to become knowledgeable of the conditions essential to receiving it. Significantly, every passage in the Bible speaking of mystery, within context punctuates revelation. We confidently conclude, the mind of God has been clearly revealed to man, all can know the way of salvation. All this is in the "dispensation of the fulness of time." The divine plan, formulated in eternity, giving expression to the miraculous as well as the providential, reaches through the ages to become reality in the coming of Christ. At last, the coming of the Messiah into the world establishes the pivot on which God's plan and purpose revolves. The death, burial and resurrection of Christ, the publication of the facts, conditions and promises contingent upon this, the very essence of the gospel, ushered in the age of fulness looked for. All things essential to the good pleasure and purpose of God had come into place.

The age which saw the coming of Christ was ripe for that event. God's time had come, it was, "the time appointed of the father" (Gal. 4:2). The Roman Government had opened a system of highways for the gospel into every nation by conquest and toleration. Greece had given the world a universal language which would provide the richness for New Testament revelation. Idolatry was in process of erosion, superstitions were in decay and the skepticism for these things was common. "In the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. 1:21). Every aspect of man and his world identifies with readiness for the dispensation of fulness.

A dispensation for the gathering of all things in Christ. Here is established the keynote of the epistle, the unity of all in Christ. This is the sum, here is achieved the goal of the ages, the realization of God's eternal purpose. Jew and Gentile, all things, gathered as one in Christ. What had previously been one but had suffered separation is united again. Sin's separation and

alienation, through Christ reconciled and made friends. No improvement can be made on the inspired comment and explanation of another passage, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col. 1:16-20).

Let our study jell in the idea of verse 11, "we have obtained an **inheritance**." The reward of sonship now presents itself, the aim and ambition of our loving Father, an inheritance described as "incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:4). We then have an inheritance now, it is a present possession, we can be confident because of the guarantee. By trust in Christ produced through hearing the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is the earnest of our inheritance, (cf. vs. 11-14).

Here is **assurance**, heaven is ours as an inheritance and we can be confident because of our trust in Christ, the faith of the gospel and the guarantee of the Spirit which has given the basis of our faith, the word of God. Every word, phrase and verse of the New Testament which the Spirit has revealed is earnest, pledge, that it will one day be the inheritance of those in Christ.

"All spiritual blessings in Christ" embraces a richness from God epitomized in redemption but comprehending all that heaven planned and that God could provide for those who would choose to follow Christ.

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Ephesians 1:19b-23. (Go ahead and read the passage...) Is there a more majestic message in all of Scripture than Paul's great Ephesian affirmation of the unique supremacy and absolute sovereign rule of Jesus Christ? I think not. It is the mountain top of holy writ; the pinnacle point of New Testament preaching. It awakens our hearts to a hymn of praise for the unmerited mercies of God and inspires us to a more joyful confidence in the inexhaustible riches found in Him who occupies the Throne. Thank God for Jesus! — and for Paul's description of His exalted glory.

A Capsule Commentary

In verse 19 the apostle prays that we might come to know what is the "exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe." Just how great is that power? How much strength is available for the Christian? How much divine energy has God already poured forth on our behalf? **The resurrection and exaltation of Christ are set forth as the answers to these questions** (vs. 20-21). Paul urges us to open our eyes and see the inexhaustible power of God — a source of strength so great that it took a crucified Christ and raised Him in radiant glory to heaven's throne. That is *the act* above all others that shows the unlimited power of God to do all that He has promised for His children. And Paul is affirming that that same power works TODAY on our behalf if we belong to His body, the church. Is it possible, then, to overstate the worth of the church of Jesus Christ and the spiritual strength which comes as a result of being a member of it?

The exaltation of Jesus Christ is then depicted in terms of two relationships (vs. 22-23). First, His relationship toward the created universe and second, His relationship toward the new creation, His church.

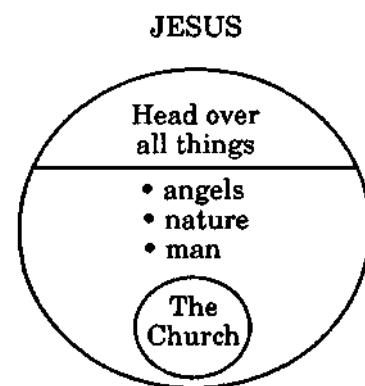
"And He put all things in subjection under His feet." Jesus Christ has complete universal rule and authority. It is a dominion from which absolutely nothing that exists is excluded. "And gave Him as head over all things to the church." The headship of Christ over the church is a result of His headship over all things and is included in the thought. He is head of the church i.e., it is Christ who brought it into being; it is Christ who serves as its source of life; it is Christ who supplies its strength; it is Christ who directs its activities and authorizes it to act as His agent in the performance of His purpose and work.

Paul here glorifies and elevates the church of Christ in a way that staggers the imagination. **He affirms that**

Jesus Christ governs the universe in the interest of His church! "*He is head over all things TO THE CHURCH...*" (emphasis mine — dwa). His love for the church is so great that He causes the entire universe to cooperate on behalf of His people. "*Which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.*" The very one who governs the universe and supplies its every need also governs the church and fills the need of every believer (3:14-21). Thus, we receive our fulness and completion in Christ (Col. 2:10).

A Kingdom Within A Kingdom

The headship of Jesus Christ is universal. He is King of kings and Lord of lords and there is no one on earth who is not subject to His reign and rule (whether they want to admit it or not is beside the point). "**JESUS IS HEAD OVERALL THINGS...**" There is no passage that says it any clearer than this one. (See also Matt. 28:18; Col. 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:22.) However, there are some on earth who are not just subjects of Christ but willing subjects of Christ. They have submitted willingly and lovingly to the dictates of the King and have been ushered into a special relationship with Him. This special relationship is the church. Let's illustrate it this way —



Yes, He who rules the world ALSO rules a select group of blood-bought people called the church. These have been chosen out of the world for the express purpose of proclaiming the excellencies of Him who serves as their sovereign Ruler, Lord and King (1 Pet. 2:9). These enjoy a special spiritual relationship that invites fellowship with the King. A *kingdom within a kingdom...* (I don't know how else to explain it, do you?) What a thrill to be in Jesus and to be a part of the kingdom, a believer in the body and a willing subject of Christ's headship.

Organized According To Divine Wisdom

Organization is the key ingredient for the accomplishment of anything worthwhile — including the things of God. (Isn't there a passage somewhere that says that God is not the author of confusion...) The term "organization" means "*an arrangement to help prepare for action.*" Where there is no organization there will be no action; chaos reigns and objectives fail.

The church of Jesus Christ is organized by the divine directive. God could have chosen any number of ways to rule and govern His church. For example:

(1) **Monarchy** — This is where all powers are invested in one man. He is the lawgiver, judge and execu-

tor of law. Henceforth, his subjects have only to submit and enjoy the blessings of his reign or rebel and suffer the consequences.

(2) **Communism** — This is a totalitarian system of government in which a single authoritarian party rules for all.

(3) **Democracy** — This is government where all powers are divided equally among the peoples.

(4) **Republic** — This is rule in which the powers are invested in the elected representatives of the people. The elected delegates have the authority of making, judging and executing laws for the people. Our country is an example of this form of governing procedure.

God chose the form of government He wanted for His church — it is a MONARCHY. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church and He is the only head. Jesus Christ has all authority over the church. Jesus Christ rules in the legislative, judicial and executive levels of church organization. He is the supreme head and single source of authority for God's people. That is why the headquarters for the church of Christ is in heaven — because Jesus is in heaven and headquarters is where the head is! Every religious group which seeks to depart from this monarchical form of government and turn the church into any other kind of organizational structure is operating in strict violation of New Testament teaching and has rejected Jesus as the absolute ruler and king.

Please understand this one thing... The fundamental reason why denominationalism is wrong is because they have rejected the headship of the very One they propose to serve. To denominationalists Jesus Christ is no more than a puppet king to be pacified rather than an absolute monarch to be glorified.

But... Jesus as head of the church had the right to delegate authority to the church and He did so. (In fact, there are two types of authority: (1) inherent authority, and (2) delegated authority. See Rom. 13:1). Jesus Christ delegated authority to the apostles. To these He gave the power to bind and loose what heaven had already bound and loosed (Matt. 18:18). The apostles spoke and wrote with divine approval and delegated authority. To fail in hearing and heeding them is to reject Jesus (1 Cor. 14:37).

Furthermore, in the local church Jesus Christ exercises His headship through the eldership. The elders are to rule, lead and oversee (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12); 1 Pet. 5:3) having received delegated authority to do so from heaven (Acts 20:28). Hence, to resist God-approved elders (men who have met the scriptural requirements of the office and are so recognized and appointed by the local church) is the same as resisting Jesus Christ! That is not to argue at all that elders have the right to make laws, change commands or set aside divine precepts. They do not. They are authorized to rule in the realm of GENERAL authority and are delegated by Jesus to make judgment decisions in the best interest of the flock. Thus, when one rises up in opposition to God-approved men when they operate in the area of authority delegated to them by Jesus Christ — it is the same as rejecting Christ! Let's make this perfectly clear: *To reject those who have delegated authority is the same as reject-*

ing Him who delegated it! It is a serious offense. It is a crime of treason against the King!

We must respect the authority and headship of Jesus. We must take our stand upon Scripture and speak as the oracles of God in order to meet divine approval. Not everyone has always done that. Some have espoused LIBERALISM and *loosed where God has bound*. Others have embraced LEGALISM and *bound where God has loosed*. Both extremes are wrong for both violate the authoritative headship of Jesus.

The Glorious Body

In seeking to describe the unity, concern and cohesiveness in the church, Paul used a unique illustration in which there could be no misunderstanding — the human body. Over thirty times in his writings he makes this comparison. In so doing he emphasizes three vital points:

(1) *No individual Christian can function effectively by himself* (Eph. 4:15-16). (What do you think that does to the "Christian at large" concept that some advance?)

(2) *No member of the body has the right to feel he/she is more important than any other member of the body* (Rom. 12:3-4; 1 Cor. 14:12-14).

(3) *There is only one head of the body* (Eph. 1:22-23).

Usually when we emphasize this last point we think first of our Lord's authority, and rightly so. But another point needs to be made and that is the closeness of the bond between body and head. It is the unfathomable quality of LOVE between Christ and His church that is stressed in the head-body symbolism. "*Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her*" (5:25). Jesus Christ stands today as the head of the church because He willingly gave Himself to save the body. It therefore behooves me to bow in His presence and dedicate my life to glorifying Him who is head.

Christ, The Head of the Church. Is there a greater joy in all the world than to grasp the hand of a new-born child of God and say with exuberant enthusiasm — "*Welcome to the body of Jesus Christ!*"? Yes, to be a member of the church of Christ and submit willingly and lovingly to the precious headship of Jesus is the greatest thrill of all!

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**FROM DEAD IN SIN
TO HEAVENLY PLACES
IN CHRIST**

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Ephesians 2:1-10

These verses set before us one of the most beautiful and thrilling experiences possible for the soul of man. It focuses attention upon the power and the grace of God by which a transition is wrought that involves the greatest possible contrast. It involves a resurrection from death in sin with all its consequences to life in Christ with all its exceeding great and precious rewards. The efficacy and magnificence of the power is clearly seen in that it lifts a soul from the deepest and darkest dive of sin to heights that are brilliantly bright with righteousness. It is the same power by which Jesus Christ was raised up from the dead and seated at the right hand of the heavenly Father (Eph. 1:19,20). The beauty of the whole transition is seen in the grace of God which is the underlying and motivating force throughout the whole experience.

Our text very naturally divides itself threefold: 1) A State of Spiritual Death, 2) A Spiritual Resurrection, and 3) A Spiritual Objective.

A State of Spiritual Death

The spiritual resurrection, which is the heart of this theme, is prefaced with a clear cut view of those involved prior to their resurrection. They were "quickened" ("Made alive" — W. E. Vine) from being "dead in trespasses and sins" (v. 1). They were in a state of spiritual death which involves separation from God (Cf. Gen. 2:17; Isa. 59:1,2; Jno. 5:24,25; 1 Tim. 5:6; Lk. 15:32). The pronouns "you" (v. 1) and "we" (v. 3) show conclusively that both Jew and Gentile were equally guilty before their spiritual resurrection. The expression "trespasses and sins" simply refers to specific transgressions and those more general — it covers the whole realm of sin and shows that any sin — all sin — (whether by commission or omission) separates from God and leaves one in a state of spiritual death.

The gravity and depth of their sin is clearly set forth in the following expressions:

1) They "walked according to the course of this world" (v. 2). While the word "world" is used in different senses in the Scriptures, I think it refers in this instance to people in general who are alienated from God (Cf. 1 Cor. 2: 6,12; 3:18,19). Their manner of life was in harmony with their present environment — a people without knowledge of God.

2) "According to the prince of the power of the air" (v. 2). This obviously refers to the devil. Elsewhere he is called "the prince of the devils" (Matt. 9: 34,12:24; Mk.

3:22); "the prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). These people were formerly under the control of Satan.

3) "According to ... the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: (v. 2). This spirit is without respect for duly constituted authority. Such is sometimes seen in a child who ignores and rebels against the rules of parents. This spirit of disobedience has wrought havoc in many homes—resulting in sorrow, shame, and untold suffering. If not corrected early in the home, it will magnify itself in rebellion to civil authority, and, certainly, it will show no reverence for divine authority. Jews and Gentiles of the Ephesian church were guilty of this spirit in their former life. Unfortunately, that spirit is too much in evidence today.

4) "The lust of our flesh" is that in which they had their "conversation" or manner of life in times past (v.3). While the word from which "lust" is translated is sometimes used to indicate a strong desire for that which is good, it most often denotes an "inordinate desire" for that which is evil. The word "inordinate" is defined by Webster to mean: "Not ordered or kept within bounds; unregulated; unrestrained."

God intends for man to be the master of his physical desires (1 Cor. 9:27). He has provided for the legitimate fulfillment of every desire in man. However, when these desires become so strong that God's order is ignored and fulfillment is sought otherwise, lust becomes the master and leads one into sin (Jas. 1:14,15). Peter refers to such as having become "servants ("in bondage"—W. E. Vine) of corruption"(2Pet. 2:19). Such was the way of life of the Ephesians in the past.

5) "By nature the children of wrath." Unfortunately, this expression has been misunderstood and misused so as to teach false doctrine. Calvinists use it to teach "Hereditary Total Depravity" — that sin is inherent in one's nature — that one is born in sin. However, the Greek word translated "nature" is sometimes used to describe that which has become a **habit** with an individual — something that has developed over a period of time. We sometimes refer to such as a person's "second nature." It is the nature of some to curse, but they were not born that way. Such developed through practice until it became a habit, and that is how it came to be a part of their nature. So it was with those of our text. They were by nature (habit) the children of wrath — the objects of God's wrath. Since Paul has already described a series of evil practices on their part, the context and all else revealed demand that this meaning be given to the word "nature" in this instance.

A Spiritual Resurrection

This part of our text begins with the contrasting conjunction "But" (v. 4). This reverses the former picture of the Ephesians and gives us a view of them in the highest position possible for one to occupy during his journey through time. It is called "heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (v. 6). While the word "places" or "things" (marginal reading) is elliptical in the original text, such is well supplied by our translators. The meaning is that these souls have been "raised up" to a position that relates them to heaven (Cf. Eph. 1:3, 20; 3:10). It is a spiritual relationship that identifies them with Christ

and all things that pertain to heaven. They even share in the reign of Christ who **sits** and **reigns** at God's right hand, and will till the last enemy, which is death, is destroyed (1 Cor. 15:25, 26; Heb. 1:13). Christians also sit and reign with Christ "in life" and "on earth" (Eph. 2:6; Rom. 5:17; Rev. 5:9,10). What a privilege — to sit and reign with Christ in heavenly places! What a contrast to their former state!

Three things are identified as the means by which this spiritual resurrection was wrought:

First, there is the **power of God**, mentioned first in relation to our Lord's physical resurrection and exaltation (1:19-23), and then in relation to our spiritual resurrection and exaltation (2:1, 5, 6). The same power accounts for both resurrections.

Second, there is the **grace of God** (vs. 5, 7, 8), used inclusively of His "rich mercy" and "great love" (v. 4), without which one's salvation would be impossible. The word "grace" basically means "unmerited favor." More explicitly, it means doing something that needs to be done for an individual which thing the individual cannot do for himself. This is the grace that accounts for the spiritual resurrection of our text — even our salvation. Man needs to be raised from a state of spiritual death to spiritual life in Christ, but cannot, of himself, accomplish it. What God does to make possible this resurrection is the grace by which we are saved. This includes the sacrifice of His Son, His atoning blood, the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the word — even the gospel of our Lord. Remember, Paul said, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us ..." (Titus 2:11). It includes the church which our Lord purchased with His blood, the providential care of a loving heavenly Father, etc. **Grace** identifies God's part in man's salvation.

Third, faith is necessary to our salvation. Paul says we are saved "by grace... through faith" (v. 8). This faith is not a "gift of the Spirit" as per Calvinism, but rather a condition to be met by man in the saving of the soul. It is something we "**do**" — a "**work**" we perform. Note the following:

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28, 29).

Thus, the faith that saves is an obedient faith — a working faith.

Because of some popular religious errors, some **NEGATIVE OBSERVATIONS** are in order concerning verses eight and nine: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

The fact that salvation is by an obedient faith does not invalidate its being a gift. Gifts are often conditional. The Israelites received Jericho as a "gift" (Josh. 6:2), but not without meeting the conditions of faith given in verses three through five. Without this obedient faith — marching according to the instructions given — the walls of Jericho would not have fallen.

It should be obvious by now that while we are saved by grace, we are not saved by grace alone, as per Calvin-

ian theology. Calvinism teaches that there is nothing for one to do in saving the soul — no commands to be obeyed, no laws to be observed, no conditions to be met — that salvation is wholly a matter of grace. Such contradicts verse eight of our text, which names faith in addition to grace as a means to our salvation.

It should also be obvious that the faith that saves is not faith alone (Cf. Gal. 5:6; Jas. 2:17-24). Notice especially verse twenty-four "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." The Greek lexicographer, Thayer, shows that every time the word faith (Gr. "pisteuo") is used in an acceptable sense, it is "conjoined with obedience: "Pisteuo —... used especially of the faith by which a man embraces Jesus, i.e., a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah — the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, conjoined with obedience to Christ" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, p. 511).

This helps us to understand why the Jews, the chief rulers, and even the devils (John 8:30, 44; 12:42; Jas. 2:19) were not saved even though they believed. Their faith was not "conjoined with obedience."

Furthermore, the expression "Not of works lest any man should boast" (v. 9) does not contradict our being justified by an obedient faith. The works of which one may boast are works of merit, which have nothing on earth to do with works of faith. He who fails to distinguish between the two, simply misses the truth. When Paul teaches here and elsewhere (e.g., Titus 3:5; Rom. 3:20) that we are saved not by works, the context will always show that reference is to works of merit. Our salvation is not by such works, but rather by works of faith. One of the greatest problems in the realm of religion today is a failure to understand and recognize the difference between the two.

A work of merit is that by which one earns what he receives. The reward is a matter of debt — not of grace (Rom. 4:4) — because the giver owes the worker. He has earned it! In relation to salvation such works demand perfect obedience or perfect law keeping. Once the law is transgressed, one becomes a sinner (1 Jno. 3:4). After this all the "deeds of law" will not take away his guilt (Rom. 3:19, 20) — something else is necessary. This is where the atoning blood of Christ comes into view. However, it applies only to those who meet conditions of faith.

A work of faith is a work by which one shows his faith. Even though he has not earned what he receives, it comes to him as a gift because he has made his faith manifest. Works of faith are within reach of every man, though he comes short of perfection. Only Christ kept the law perfectly (1 Pet. 2:22). Thus, our salvation is "by grace... through faith."

Those dead in trespasses and sins (aliens, as were the Ephesians) must meet the following conditions of faith: believe (Mk. 16:16) — repent (Acts 17:30) — confess (Rom. 10:10) — and be baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2: 38). Such have their past sins remitted — they are raised to spiritual life — they are raised up to sit in heavenly places with Christ.

As a Christian, they must continue to "walk by faith"

(2 Cor. 5:7), "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (v. 10). Thus, our faith continues to manifest itself.

A Spiritual Objective

The ultimate objective of God's majestic power and marvelous grace being manifested in raising up souls from the depth of spiritual destruction to heights of heavenly bliss was then and is now that such souls may forever stand as a monument to "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ" (v. 7). This thought is extended by Paul in the next chapter when these souls are pictured as the church, which, in all of its glory, stands as a monument to and is a manifestation of the "manifold wisdom of God" (3:10).

Blessed, indeed, are those who are raised up from spiritual death to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!

RECONCILED IN ONE BODY BY THE CROSS

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The unity of Jews and Gentiles (and all men) in Christ Jesus is one of the major themes of Paul's writings. No passage is more complete or compelling in this regard than Ephesians 2:11-18.

Warren Wiersbe, in his commentary on this letter: **Be Rich**, entitles Eph. 2:11-22, "The Great Peace Mission." He says that from 1500 B.C. to A.D. 850, there were 7,500 "eternal covenants" which were agreed upon by various nations with hope of bringing lasting peace. No covenant lasted longer than two years. But here we truly have an eternal covenant in Christ Jesus.

The apostle speaks here of separation (v. 11,12); and of reconciliation (v. 13-18).

When They Were Without

Paul calls upon these saints (and us) to remember some things. Verse 11 begins with the meaningful word, "wherefore." This always points back to what has been said. In view of the tremendous truths revealed in v. 8-10, we are to remember our former condition. We must never lose sight of the fact that we are totally unworthy of the unsearchable riches of God's grace which has been so abundantly bestowed upon us.

In time past these Gentile Christians had been called "Uncircumcision" by those who were called the "Circumcision." Paul was distinguishing between the false concepts of men and the truth of God. Those who were Jews in the flesh, but were not Christians, were only called the circumcision. They were not the true circumcision

(Romans 2:25-29; Col. 2:11,12; Phil. 3:2, 3).

The significance of this epithet was that the Gentiles were unclean. They were held in utter contempt. They were called dogs.

Such was a superficial distinction, but in v. 12, Paul expounds upon the true spiritual condition of the Gentiles prior to their conversion. They were spiritually bankrupt. Observe what they were without:

They were without Christ: The Jews were also without Christ but at least they were expecting a Messiah. To them, history was heading somewhere. To the Gentiles, it was going nowhere.

They were without citizenship: They were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." Israel was God's chosen nation. He gave her His laws and He was her King. The Gentiles were not so blessed (Deut. 32:10-14; Ezekiel 16:1-14f).

They were without the covenants of promise: God made no covenants with the Gentiles as He had with the fathers of the Jews. Still, His purpose in so blessing the Jews was that all nations should be blessed.

They were without hope: Almost any situation is bearable if one has hope. But these **had** no basis for hope. Their philosophies were empty and futile. Their religion was powerless, for their gods were lifeless. They were groping in darkness. Our age is much like theirs. Modern existentialism has rendered the universe and our brief existence in it but one vast joke. People without Christ have no hope.

They were without God: This is the bottom line. They were not atheists, but the true God was unknown to them (Acts 17:16-23; 1 Cor. 8:5). See Psalm 115 for an interesting description of their gods.

But Now

Paul now moves from the past to the present. The past of their lives, when they were without, spelled a pathetic spiritual poverty. But now the keyword is **reconciliation**. First, there is a reconciliation to one another to be considered; then the reconciliation to God.

God had put a difference between Jews and Gentiles. But now He no longer makes a difference between them. This was a hard lesson for the early church to learn. Jews and Gentiles were different in diet, customs, religious background and many other things. But now God says there is to be unity between them.

But, we may ask, what caused the enmity in the first place? Verse 15 gives the answer. It was the law of commandments. The middle wall of partition was the Old Testament law. It required a separation between Jews and Gentiles. There could be no possibility of unity until it was abolished.

In 1871 an inscription was found which came from the temple of Jerusalem. It reads: "No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death."

Witness those Jews who thought Paul had defiled the temple by bringing a Gentile into it (Acts 21:28-31).

It should be noted that the Greeks promoted divisions also. Racial pride is seen in all cultures and societies. To the Greeks, others were barbarians.

Such hostilities soon affected one of the cruellest wars ever fought which brought to an end, in A.D. 70, the Jewish state and economy.

This "law of commandments" was abolished or nullified. The Old Testament law was no longer binding upon them. It was abolished "in His flesh," or while He was in the flesh.

This was in order to make of two, Jew and Gentile, one new man in Christ. This new man is the body of Christ, His church (1:22, 23; 4:4). There were two Greek words for "new." One denoted that which was new in point of time, as a new suit or a new pen. It might be just like others but it was new. The other word was used of something that was new in quality, as a new invention. This is the word here. The church is not a new model of an old idea. It is a brand new development. Nothing like it has existed before.

Reconciled to God

Not only did Gentiles and Jews need to be reconciled to each other; more importantly they needed to both be reconciled to God. And not only do folks today who are estranged need to be brought together. They all need to be brought together with God.

Many Jews did not recognize this need. They felt that Gentiles needed to become Jews (be circumcised and keep the law) to be saved. Paul, however, taught that it was necessary for the Jews to realize they were sinners just like the Gentiles. Such is the major thrust of Romans 1-3. Peter declared: "(God) put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith... but we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they: (Acts 15:9,11).

Jesus is our peace (v. 14); Jesus made peace (v. 15); Jesus preached peace (v. 17). This is not speaking of His personal ministry. The gospel of reconciliation was delivered to the Gentiles through His chosen ones (Matt. 10:40). It was not enough that peace was provided. It had to be proclaimed.

"For by Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." The words "reconcile," "slay the enmity," "peace," "access," and "one," all convey the same basic message. There are many in this world to whom we have no access. It would be practically impossible for most of us to be granted an audience with the President. It would likely prove difficult to obtain access to the governor of our state. Yet through Christ we have access to the Creator and Sovereign God of the universe.

Wayne A. Detzler in his **New Testament Words in Today's Language** comments on "peace": "The world seeks peace in many places. When Neville Chamberlain returned from meeting with the Germans at Munich in 1938, he blithely said: 'I believe it is peace for our time ... peace with honor.' ... What a difference marked the attitude of Winston Churchill, Chamberlain's successor. Of the same conflict Churchill insisted: 'In war: resolution. In defeat: defiance. In victory: magnanimity. In peace: goodwill.'

As there was no possibility of peace to those who capitulated to Hitler, so "... the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the

wicked.'"

It has been truthfully observed that there can be no peace so long as God remains unseated at the conference table.

James P. Miller wrote: "No man can be saved without being reconciled, and the body is where this takes place. Men are not reconciled to God in the fraternity order, social clubs, and churches of men. It takes place in the body, the church. The religious leaders of our time would have to say that reconciliation is not necessary, if church membership is not necessary." ("The Glorious Bride")

THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD

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Ephesians 2:19-22

"So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, growth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit."

What a marvelous passage! These verses draw several inferences from the preceding verses. They all have to do with the new fellowship and relationship into which believing Jews and Gentiles have been brought. There is, however, great emphasis on the elevating of the Gentiles to a position of equal privilege and benefit. This is illustrated with: a city (or nation), a family, a building.

"No More Strangers And Sojourners"

The Ephesians had just been reminded to look back at what they were so as to get the full effect in contrast of what they had become. They had been as "strangers and sojourners." This was a comprehensive expression which included all who for various reasons did not enjoy the full privileges of citizenship in a city or nation. This was once the status of the Gentiles in regard to God's nation, Israel. "Strangers" refers to foreigners, as opposed to citizens. "Sojourners" were guests in a private family, as opposed to members of the family. Adam Clarke points out that in Athens strangers were permitted to reside in the city and pursue their business, but could perform no public duty; they had no voice in the public deliberations, and they had no part in the management of the state. They could only look on as spectators without interfering in any way in the affairs of the government. They were bound to humbly submit to all

the enactments of the citizens and observe all the laws. They could not transact business in their own name but had to choose from among the citizens one to whose care they committed themselves as a patron.

In Judaism, even proselytes were regarded as "strangers" as were all foreigners, and Jews only were supposed to have near access to God. They had no rights, nor as mere heathens could they settle among them.

"But Fellow-citizens"

As a result of the cross of Christ, the Gentiles are no longer strangers who have no home, no property, no privileges, no interest in common with its inhabitants. They have now become naturalized citizens living on perfect equality with all other members with the same privileges, protection, and government — and all rights of citizenship. Peace had been brought to those "afar off and those that were nigh" (v. 17). Here the glorious, blood-purchased church is depicted as a city. Abraham "became a sojourner ... as in a land not his own ... He looked for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:9, 10). This is the new standing of the Gentiles which corresponds to their low estate of verse 12, when they were "separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world." This is what the gospel can do!

"The Household Of God"

First a city, now a family is used to illustrate the church. When they were sojourners they were guests without domestic rights. Now they are members of the family! This took place through adoption (Gal. 4:5). God is their Father, Christ their older brother. This is a more intimate relationship than that of a citizen under a civil ruler. It is a closer and more tender thought. What closer kin is there than being in the same family? This includes "the whole family in heaven and earth" (Eph. 3:15). This speaks of the warmest and most intimate relationship which all Christians sustain to God. They are his family and may address him as Father. Where is this? It is in the church He loved.

A Building

It is interesting how Paul (by the Holy Spirit) uses these three examples (a city, a family, a building) to illustrate different aspects in the nature of the church. This building rests upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. How are we to understand this? Are the apostles and prophets themselves in the foundation? Or does it mean that the foundation is laid by them? In I Corinthians 3:11, Paul had said "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ." However, since the relation of Christ to the building is in the context expressed by another figure (chief corner stone), it is probably correct to think of the foundation as consisting of the apostles and prophets (No doubt this refers to the new testament prophets, Eph. 3:5; 4:11).

Christ is the chief corner stone; the apostles and prophets are the foundation; all believers are the "living stones" (1 Pet. 2:4,5) which make up the superstructure. Lenski well observes that the cornerstone was the great stone put in the angle of the substructure where the

walls met. It, also being joined to the foundation, was the stone on which the stability of the whole building depended. It actually formed a part of the two walls and gave this edifice its unity and strength. Jesus Christ is the connecting medium by which both Jews and Gentiles were united in the same building. It is interesting to note that both Jews and Gentiles are mentioned in the ancestry of Jesus (Matthew 1).

The Temple

In verse 21 Paul shows that "each several building" grows into a holy temple that is fitly framed together. It is as though the temple was begun in several distinct centers, and as the building progressed, these approached one another till they met and combined in one vast harmonious structure. The fitting together of the various parts of an elaborate structure constitutes the highest unity. This is what Jesus did for all men in cementing Jew and Gentile together in this building. In chapter four Paul gives instruction as to how this unity is maintained.

The temple of Diana at Ephesus might have in some way been used to illustrate what Paul was talking about. The pride of Ephesus was her world-famed temple in which the religion, the art and even the commerce of the city centered and flourished. It was a visible symbol of pomp and power, while the church has a higher splendor and a wider influence. The temple of Diana was reputed as one of the wonders of the world. However, though commentators are divided, it is this writer's opinion that Paul did not have in mind just any sanctuary, including those of pagans but that he had in mind the sanctuary at Jerusalem which was a type and a symbol of Christ (John 2:18-22) and also of the church.

The comparison of the church with a building is common in the Scriptures (1 Cor. 3:9,10). The comparison was probably taken from the temple since it was an edifice of great beauty, expense, and sacredness, it was natural to compare the church with it. The temple was the sacred place where God dwelt and the church (not a physical building, but people) is the place where he delights now to abide. The temple in Jerusalem is the only one that could be referred to as "a habitation of God." In the temple as well as in the tabernacle God dwelt between the cherubim. There was the symbol of his presence and there was the worship performed which He prescribed. After the model is the spiritual temple, the church, likened. God dwelt in the one, and he now dwells in the other. To have used the temple of Diana to illustrate the church would have been a disgrace, not only because of the idolatry but because of what happened to Paul and his companions when he preached against the Ephesian idolatry and the worship of Diana (Acts 19:23f).

The Cornerstone

The church is not a collection of loose stones and timbers. The materials are accurately and carefully united so that the building will be firm. Different materials may be used but one part is worked into another so as to constitute a durable and beautiful structure. The different materials are Jews and Gentiles throughout the world who have been touched with the gospel of a

Savior who loved them more than words can express.

Christ is the corner stone of this beautiful temple, the church. The corner stone is the most important in the building. First, because the edifice rests mainly on the corner stone. It holds the building together. It is the binding stone holding the two walls (Jew and Gentile) and built into both. Second, because it occupies a conspicuous and honorable place.

Because of its foundation, corner stone, and living stones that are "fitly framed together," it is an indestructible temple, unlike the physical temple in Jerusalem which was destroyed just as Jesus prophesied (Matthew 24:1, 2). It is unshakable. It cannot be moved. He "dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24). Think of the safety and glory in the church!

Paul did not say the church was founded on Peter. The foundation is not in Rome, but in heaven. The stones which make it up cross national, international, and racial boundaries.

Conclusion

There are many precious figures by which the church is depicted. Christ is the head, the church is the body; Christ is the bridegroom, the church is the bride; God is the Father, the church is His family; Christ is the husbandman, the church is his vineyard; Christ is the King, the church is His kingdom; Christ is the captain, the church is His army; Christ is the chief Shepherd, the church is His flock.

In this study we have examined Christ as the chief corner stone, and the church as a building, a temple. Each figure expresses the glory, the beauty, the strength, and the close relationship of Christ to the church.

*Some build their hopes on ever-drifting sand,
Some on their fame or their treasure or their land;
Mine's on the Rock that forever shall stand,
Jesus, the "ROCK OF AGES."*

(S.S. Journal)

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"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen" (Eph. 3:21).

This verse is what is called a doxology. It shows that the church is to continuously glorify God by Jesus Christ. The 19th Psalm tells us that "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." The church is another thing that glorifies God, as the heavens and firmament.

Eph. 3:21 is thought by some to teach that every good work of Christians must be done in and through the local church in order that the church might get the glory. This concept has caused some to object to schools, where the Bible is taught, papers, publishing houses, or any institution (organization) that does a good (Biblical) work, on the basis that they rob the church of glory. This shows a misunderstanding of what this passage says. In the first place, this text refers to the church universal and not to a local congregation. Furthermore, the passage does not speak of glory that COMES to the church, but the glory that the church GIVES to God.

To see how God is glorified in the church by Christ Jesus, we need to answer two questions. (1) What is the church? and (2) How does it glorify God?

What Is The Church?

The church is glorious in itself because of its origin, purpose, and destiny. The whole of Ephesians 3 shows this.

THE CHURCH IS GLORIOUS BECAUSE IT WAS DIVINELY PURPOSED AND PLANNED. We are told in verse 11 that it is "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus." Paul speaks of this eternal purpose as a mystery (v. 3-4, 9) which was divinely revealed unto him, the other apostles, and prophets (v. 3-5; 1 Cor. 2:7-13). It is called the "manifold wisdom of God" made known to principalities and powers in heavenly places (v. 10).

THE CHURCH IS GLORIOUS BECAUSE OF ITS MESSAGE OF SALVATION AND HOPE. It is called "the glorious gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4) and said to be "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16) for both Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 3:6). It involved the death of Christ for our sins, his burial and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4). It was preached to both Jews and Gentiles that "they might be fellow heirs of the same body, and partakers of his promise" (Eph. 3:6). Boldness and access with confidence is through faith in Him" (v. 12). Those who hear, believe, and obey the gospel that Paul, other

apostles, and prophets had revealed unto them, and preached, have by faith in Him enjoyed the promise of salvation (sins remitted) and entered the one body which is said to be a family, bearing the name of Christ (v. 15). This family (church) is to be spiritually strong (v. 16), with Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, rooted and grounded in love (v. 17), understanding the breadth, length, depth, and height of the love of Christ and filled with all the fulness of God (v. 19).

Summarily, the church is glorious because it was divinely conceived and purposed, divinely revealed, has a glorious message (gospel) for all nations, brings salvation from sin and makes one an heir of all the promises of God.

These purposes and plans came to fruition on Pentecost (Acts 2). At that time, the previously chosen, prepared, and charged apostles (Mk. 3:13-19; Acts 1:3; Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24: 44-53), who were waiting for the promised power-Holy Spirit-kingdom (Mk. 9:1; Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:6-8), received it and began their preaching. Those convicted by the preaching asked what to do, and were told to "Repent and be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). Many did this and were "added to the church" (Acts 2:47).

For awhile, the church was only in Jerusalem, where it "continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The number had increased to five thousand men in just a few days (Acts 4:4), and "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14). Acts 6:7 says "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

It was the Lord's will that the gospel be preached first in Jerusalem; spread through Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8; Lk. 24:47).

Persecution led to the dispersion of saints from Jerusalem and the evangelization of other places (Acts 8:1-4). Churches, therefore, came to exist in Samaria, Antioch, and other places, in Asia, Europe, even the whole world, as the gospel was preached and believers became obedient to the faith.

These churches were local congregations, composed of saved people through their obedience to the faith, who looked to Christ and his word as their only head (seat of authority) (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:20-23). Each church was independent, overseen by a plurality of elders (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9; Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3), with deacons performing the things authorized by the Lord and assigned by the elders (1 Tim. 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-4), and other members (saints) who worshipped and functioned as a part of that congregation (Phil. 1:1).

Each church had a common treasury into which members contributed (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and out of which money was used to support preachers (Phil. 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 11:8), relieve needy saints (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Cor. 16:1-2), and things expedient to doing the Lord's work, worship and edification (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:16).

How The Church Glorifies God

This church (body or family) of special people, continually glorifies God as each member maintains the faith and does not desecrate in any way what God purposed, planned, revealed, and brought to fruition through Christ and the preaching of the gospel.

GOD IS GLORIFIED WHEN THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST AND HIS WORD IS NOT USURPED by men, Counsels, Conventions, Boards or any man. This assures the will of God being done. Otherwise, human wisdom and traditions are glorified instead of God.

GOD IS GLORIFIED WHEN THE GOSPEL MESSAGE (TRUTH) THAT SAVES (MAKES FREE) IS FAITHFULLY PROCLAIMED ... without perverting, diluting, or mixing in any way (Gal. 1:6-7; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 4:1,6,16). False teaching glorifies only the teacher, fills his hearers with false hope, and makes for vain worship. Such reflects no glory to God.

GOD IS GLORIFIED IN THE CHURCH WHEN MEMBERS ARE ZEALOUS ABOUT SERVING THE LORD AND ARE READY UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK. Fruitless branches, unprofitable servants, and lukewarmness rob the church of its ability to glorify God and bring forth condemnation (Rev. 3:16; Matt. 25:30).

GOD IS GLORIFIED WHEN MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH (BODY-FAMILY) SHOW THEMSELVES TO BE A "CHOSEN GENERATION, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PECULIAR PEOPLE ... OFFERING UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES" AND CONSTANTLY SHOW FORTH "THE PRAISE OF HIM WHO CALLED THEM OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT (1 Pet. 2:5,9). Glorifying God is impossible when members love the world, are conformed to the world, and walk after the flesh (1 Jno. 2:15; Rom. 12:2; 8:1,12-13).

GOD IS GLORIFIED IN THE CHURCH WHEN EACH MEMBER GIVES PROOF OF LOVE FOR GOD AND ONE ANOTHER. Jesus said "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jno. 13:35). Envy, jealousy, suspicion, strife, and working ill to one's neighbor are the antithesis of love and a destroyer of glory (Rom. 13:10; 1 Cor. 13:1-7).

Conclusion

The Lord's desire is that the church be "presented a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). If the church is not this, it is because members failed to do and be what the Lord enabled them to be and do, thus placing spots and blemishes on the Lord's creation, created to glorify Him.

In order for one to glorify God in the church, he must first be in it (a part of it). One can never glorify God apart from his purpose and plan, or have hope of entering the glory land at the judgment (Matt. 7:21).

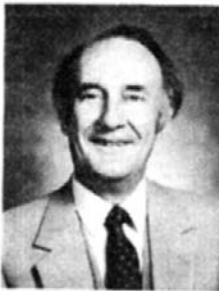
One may enter the glorious body and still, by unfaithfulness, not glorify God, resulting in the loss of the soul. These are those who "receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1); who were once enlightened (Heb. 6:4) ... "escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" but became "again entangled therein, and overcome" (2 Pet. 2:20).

Entering this glorious body (family), faithfully "walking in the truth" (2 Jno. 1:4), "by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7), "in the light" (1 Jno. 1:7) and serving diligently (1 Cor. 15:58) is how to glorify God in the church.

GROWING UP IN CHRIST ... Eph. 4: 1-16

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Christians are to grow to maturity. Babes in Christ are to become spiritual adults, striving to attain the likeness of Christ. We read, "... we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love" (4:15-16, NASB).

As a result of the relation to Christ the entire church (God's people) is fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies. Each individual Christian (part; joint) harmoniously working in his proper station and function, causes the growth of the body (church) for the building up (wisdom, piety, holiness, peace) of itself in love.

In reference to verse 16, MacKnight stated: The apostle's meaning is, that as the human body is formed by the union of all the members to each other under the head, and by the fitness of each member for its own office and place in the body, so the church is formed by the union of its members under Christ the head. Further, as the human body increases, till it arrives at maturity, by the energy of every part in performing its proper function, and by the sympathy of every part with the whole; so the body, or church of Christ, grows to maturity, by the proper exercise of the gifts and graces of individuals for the benefits of the whole" (*Apostolical Epistles*, p. 336).

Hendriksen commented: "There is a work to be done, as verse 12 clearly shows. And in order to accomplish the tasks assigned, believers should cooperate, each contributing his share to the inner growth of the church" (*Ephesians*, p. 182). Obviously, there cannot be growth to the body of Christ without unity and harmony among those who compose the body, viz., individual Christians. To make this a reality, there must be the following:

A Unifying Attitude (4:1-3)

1. Walk worthy of the vocation. God says in essence in chapters 1-3, "I have made you a saint," and in chapters 4-6, "Now, live a saintly life." The apostle begins this section with an exhortation to "walk worthy" or "conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of our calling." We have been called by the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14) to be saints (1 Cor. 1:2). Let's live accordingly. Practice what

we preach!

2. With all lowliness. Attending or accompanying the Christian's behavior is *lowliness* or *humility*. Expositors say: "the lowliness of mind which springs from a true estimate of ourselves ... a deep sense of our moral smallness and demerit" (Vol. 3, p. 320). We must be humble enough to confess, "I have sinned," both to God and our brethren when we have trespassed against them. Also, we must "in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3).

3. Meekness. A meek man is one who has equanimity of spirit, an inner-control of the mind that reacts properly under all circumstances. In relationship to God, it is a temper that accepts His dealings with us as good, and, therefore, without disputing (cf Jas. 1:21). In regard to man, it is an inward virtue that shows no resentment when wronged, nor seeks revenge when threatened. It is the opposite of bitterness, violence and vehemence.

4. Longsuffering. W. E. Vine describes this word well when he wrote: "Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger, and is associated with mercy..." We must preach the gospel with longsuffering (2 Tim. 4:2). Some preachers do not always keep their "cool," and I have seen a few of the members "blow their fuse" at the slightest provocation.

5. Forbearing one another in love. Although we have different personalities, come from different backgrounds, have different educational and social levels, we are to "hold up, sustain, bear with, endure" one another. Love provides this. When misunderstandings, cutting words are spoken or unkind deeds done, love restrains us and leads us to forgive.

6. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The "unity of the Spirit" is the same as the "unity of the faith" in v. 13. "Unity" is "unanimity, agreement" of what the Spirit reveals through the faith (gospel). "Endeavoring" means "to take care, do one's best, being diligent." "Keep" is to "guard by exercising watchful care." The binding factor which will preserve the unity that the Spirit produces is peace. Peace is the bond by which we walk together.

The emergent need of the hour is a cultivation of an unifying spirit and disposition among us. Churches are dividing, brethren are alienated and the Cause of Christ is thwarted. It seems the favorite past-time of some cantankerous, irascible brethren is to tear up churches that required years of sacrifice to build up. How sad!

Unifying Facts (4:4-6)

Following in orderly sequence is the basis or ground for unity. Expositors states: "It is a positive statement—giving the objective ground or basis in fact on which the walk in lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, and loving forbearance is urged, and of which it should be the result" (Vol. 3, p. 321).

1. One body. Here is unity of relationship to the Head, Christ, and to each other as brethren. There is not a church for the Jew and another one for the Gentile. There is not a church for the rich and one for the poor, one for this race and another church for a different race. We

are all one in Christ. "For us the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body: so also is Christ (1 Cor. 12:12).

2. One Spirit. This suggests unity of revelation. Only the Bible came from God through the Holy Spirit to guide and lead us. Jesus said to the apostles, "How be it when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (Jn. 16:13). The Bible is a product of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Eph. 3:3-5; 2 Pet. 1:3). The Lord does not lead us by dreams, visions, intuition, conscience or disciplines of men, but by His unalterable, infallible and inspired word, the Bible.

3. One hope. This is unity of aspiration. Our hope is a hope that goes beyond anything and everything that is mortal. It is the blessed hope of the appearing and glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Tit. 2:13). It is a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3), sure and stedfast (Heb. 6:18-19), of the resurrection (Acts 23:6), and of eternal life (Tit. 1:2). The hope of a seven-year rapture, and a hope of a millennial reign of Christ on earth are false hopes. May we "hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope (one hope) firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6).

4. One Lord. This is unity of authority. There are gods many and Lords many (1 Cor. 8:5), but to us there is "one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things ..." (1 Cor. 8:6). Jesus as Lord is our Owner and our Ruler (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Acts 2:36). All authority has been given Him (Matt. 28:18). We are to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17).

We recognize a standard of authority in the various transactions of life. We have scales to weigh, yardsticks to measure and clocks to keep time. We accept these with uniformity. Only in religion do we use different measuring sticks for doctrine and practice. Consequently, we are divided. Let's turn back to Jesus and confess Him as Lord (Jn. 20:28).

5. One faith. We are to have unity of message. The one faith is "the faith," that is, the gospel. There is an objective faith (that which is believed) as well as a subjective faith (the act of believing). The "one faith" is objective faith. It is the faith that the priests were obedient to (Acts 6:7) and the faith for which we are to contend (Jude 3).

There are different gospels (Gal. 1:6-9, 2 Cor. 11:4), but only one genuine, certified gospel. If we preach the gospel of Christ, we will be united in our message and proclamation. The "social gospel" that is so widely embraced and enthusiastically espoused is nothing more than a perverted gospel, a corruption of the pure gospel that is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

6. One baptism. Here is unity of access into Christ and the one body. There is not a variety of ways to get into a spiritual relationship with Christ. All gain access to the blessings in Christ by baptism, preceded, of course, by faith and repentance (cf. Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13).

The one baptism of Eph. 4:5 is the same as the "washing of water" in Eph. 5:26. It is the baptism in water of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:16) and the baptism Peter preached on Pentecost (Acts

2:38). It is immersion (Acts 8:38; Jn. 3:23; Matt. 3:16) and not sprinkling or pouring.

7. One God and Father. This is unity of homage and worship. "For though there be that are called gods... as there are gods many... But to us there is but one God, the Father ... (1 Cor. 8:5-6). Our heavenly Father, the only true and living God, is the object of our worship (Matt. 4:10), and we must worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). Worship based on the doctrines of men is vain and worthless (Matt. 15:9), and such is responsible for a great deal of the division that has come about in the church of the Lord through the years.

All of these seven facts work together to provide heaven's "one-derful" plan for unity among the people of God. May all of us have the resolve to stand upon them.

Unifying Gifts (4:8-14)

As a result of Jesus' obedience and suffering, he conquered sin and death, redeemed His people, and obtained the right to bestow gifts upon them (vv. 8-10). These gifts are not miraculous in nature, but they are functions or works that Jesus gave to different men. Verse 11 informs us what the gifts are — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

The purpose of these offices or gifts was toward perfecting or equipping the saints (v. 12), unto the work of ministry, unto the edifying (building up by conversion of lost souls) of the body of Christ. Hendriksen discerned, "The important lesson taught here is not only apostles, prophets, evangelists, and those who are called 'pastors and teachers,' but the entire church should be engaged in spiritual labor" (*Ephesians*, p. 198). Apostles and prophets *revealed* the truth, evangelists *proclaim* the truth, and pastors (elders) *oversee* the flock and as teachers, *teach* the truth. All work together for the unity, growth and maturity of the church.

Expositors says: "The statement of the great object of Christ's gifts and provision made by Him for its fulfillment is now followed by a statement of the *time* the provision and the consequent service are to last, or the point at which the great end in view is to be realized. It is when the members of the Church have all come to their proper unity and maturity in their Head" (Vol. 3, p. 332). The provision and service through the gifts are to last "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (v. 13). Here is an ongoing process as new converts are constantly being added to the body and must be brought to an agreement of what the faith teaches, to a knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect (mature) person, unto a measure of the stature of Christ (His qualities are to be imaged through us).

With growth and stability, we no longer will be as children, vacillating in conviction, easily persuaded by the deceit and craftiness of false teachers (v. 14). Charles Erdman wrote: "Unity, moreover, is a condition of maturity. A divided Church is an immature Church ... Individual Christians who are factious and contentious show themselves to be in a state of spiritual infancy" (*Ephesians*, pp. 82-83).

Threatened by the danger of being misled by false

achers, the apostle urges, "But speaking the truth in love ..." (v. 15). We must have a loyal adherence to truth for our spiritual security and protection from those who lie in wait to deceive. The motivation for speaking the truth is love.

May we grow up in Christ, doing our very best to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

CHRIST AND THE RENEWED MIND

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The underlying theme in Ephesians 1-3 is the meaning of the church. That in Ephesians 4-6 is the meaning of church membership. The latter shows that doctrine is not an end within itself, but is the basis of the worthy walk that adorns the church's spiritual blessings (Eph. 4:1-6). Knowledge of the church is worthless to one who does not translate it into practice. Ephesians 4:17—5:21 portrays the church as the living expression of Christ. Paul anchors each facet of the believer's life in divine truth and centers the whole in a new attitude of mind (Eph. 4:23). Some important features of the renewed mind are given.

1. It is Not Filled with Futility (Eph. 4:17-19). Christians must not behave like those in the world who walk "in the futility of their mind." The phrase captures the essence of man without God. The pagans from whom the Ephesians were converted were exceedingly corrupt because they lived without true purpose governed by a morally bankrupt mind. Their understanding was darkened and they were separated from the spiritual life that comes from God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart (see Rom. 1:21).

In its futility of mind, the world lost its shame and stifled its conscience. This led to unblushing immorality in which people abandoned themselves to licentiousness. The word here may represent the range of immoral practices common to the pagan world. In lawless folly, they gave themselves over to every form of impurity that insatiable lusts could conceive. The person who abandons himself to licentiousness "does not care how much he shocks public opinion, how much he defies and insults all decency, so long as he can gratify his desires" (William Barclay).

Paul described the pagan world of ancient times, but he also describes the world that is alienated from God in any age. With all its collective intellect, wisdom, and achievement, the world's mind functions morally and spiritually in refined illusion and haughty deception. The present quality of enlightenment and entertainment in the mass media testifies to the agelessness of Paul's words. Every form of evil is condoned or excused,

if not advocated and practiced, by people of influence in all realms of society. But God's message is plain: "you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind." Church membership demands a radical separation from the world that begins with putting away the world's vain reasoning.

2. It is Renewed in the Image of God (Eph. 4:20-24). The Ephesians had experienced the wicked life Paul describes. But he states emphatically that none of this foolishness was learned from Christ. The efforts of false teachers to justify ungodly habits by the Bible is blasphemous, yet some attempt to defend fornication, homosexuality, and every other kind of immorality with pious perversions of the truth. The teaching we received from Christ forbids us to mess around philosophically with sin, either as promoter or practitioners. We are taught to put sin away altogether. Christ lays equal stress on knowing and doing what he says.

"Be renewed in the spirit of your mind" is the key to the life "which is created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness." But the renewed mind does not come by merely changing what is known. The renewal is of "the spirit" of the mind, the faculty that directs the mind's powers and energies toward doing God's will. "The mind is to be renovated; not only in its general complexion, but the very spirit of it; all its faculties and powers must be thoroughly, completely, and universally renewed" (Adam Clarke). The truth operates freely only in the mind that is fully surrendered to Christ. The renewed mind leads to the new life that blends perfectly with the will of God and that manifests itself in the right relationship with Christ and the church.

The mind is not renewed all at once, but renewal is a maturing process. It begins at baptism (Rom. 6:4-6) and continues "until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). The renewal progresses daily (2 Cor. 4:16) "in knowledge according to the image" of God (Col. 3:9,10). It puts off "the old man" that leads to destruction and puts on "the new man" that leads to everlasting life. In contrast with the spiritual wickedness and moral impurity of the world, we must strive each day to renew our mind by giving the truth unrestrained reign over its faculties and powers.

3. It Banishes Sinful Practices (Eph. 4:25-32). Paul's general command to put off the old life and to put on the new gives way here to specific features of the two ways. These exhortations concern Christians as "members of one another." The duties named are in view of this relationship. The writer shows in some detail what it means to put away the old man and to put on the new. Positive and negative qualities are placed in striking contrast: put away falsehood, speak truth; control anger, do not let it simmer till evil erupts; do not steal, work to make an honest living and to help the needy; avoid corrupt speech, use words that benefit others.

The right use of the tongue is especially important to the renewed mind for it is the most immediate index of the mind's true condition (Prov. 23:7). Corrupt speech is not just the use of filthy words, but embraces all foolish talking. Christians should shun any unprofitable speech and make their words always a channel of blessing. "And

do not grieve the Holy Spirit" seems to be tied here especially to the use of the tongue. Immoral speech not only injures our brethren, but it offends the Holy spirit by whom we are sealed "for the day of redemption." It is the Spirit's teaching that directs the renewal of the mind. To grieve him is to act contrary to his teaching, and whatever grieves him will cause God to remove from us the seal of redemption (see Eph. 5:6).

The sins named in verse 31 arise in the heart but are closely associated with the tongue: bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor (loud quarreling), and evil speaking. These things must be put away, together with malice, which is their root. In place of these evil attitudes and acts, the Christian's heart, words, and life must be filled with the fruits of the Spirit. We are to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, and forgiving, as forgiving of others as Christ is of us.

That early Christians, emerging from centuries of pagan darkness, needed warnings against immoral practices is not surprising. But that we still need some of the same is perhaps the saddest commentary one could write on the church today. Too many members are jealous of, and antagonistic toward one another, and all too often there is an aura of unconcern for the feelings and the needs of our brethren. The mind that is renewed in truth will make each of us "one heart and one soul" with other faithful members of the church. Many congregational problems would fade like a summer mist, if the members truly loved one another as they should.

4. It Gives True Light to Life (Eph. 5:1-14). The renewed mind is moved by love instead of malice. In every place where the church is pictured as the body of Christ emphasis is given to love among the members. If God is love (1 John 4:7, 8), how could we be his children without imitating his love? Christ is also our example. Love made him give himself for us and his gift was pleasing to God. If we are to please him, our service must be kindled by love.

There must be no twilight to those who are in Christ for his body is as distinct from the world as light from darkness. We cannot rest until any lingering shades of sin are expelled by truth. The sins of the world are too shameful to be discussed among things that befit the saints. Yet some of these sins are tolerated and even defended in the church. Is there a congregation where all members are free of adultery, covetousness, shameless conduct, buffoonery, or filthy talk? Paul is not condemning humor, but words that disgrace speech and exceed moral limits.

In contrast with things "not fitting," Paul says, "but rather giving of thanks." He implies that worship is a remedy for immorality. This should encourage us to praise God regularly, both privately and in the assemblies of the church. We are to walk in the light of the Lord and in so doing we become light in him. As children of light, we can have no fellowship with the works of darkness, but neither can we ignore them. We cannot adopt the philosophy of "live and let live." The works of darkness must be shunned, but they also must be condemned (2 Tim. 4:1, 2).

The children of God are set apart from the world.

However, their service to God is not performed in monastic isolation, but in the midst of society that is alien to him. Living as we do in this kind of environment, there is a constant need for us to guard our spiritual health from the sinful viruses that fill the air. Paul warns, "Let no one deceive you with empty words." The very sins the deceivers excuse are those that bring the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

5. It Walks in Wisdom (Eph. 5:15-21). Like one raised to life from the sleep of death, the child of God is raised from darkness to light. As a child of light, he walks wisely, weighing his days by the scale of his life in the light of God's will. Enlightened in the value and purpose of time, he uses it, not wastefully in pursuing things that perish, but wisely in sowing for eternity. He applies himself to learning the truth that he might be filled with the Spirit (see Col. 3:16,17). It is as much his duty to fill his heart with truth as it is to maintain self-control.

Wine, or anything else, that lifts the gate of moral restraint must be renounced. Being filled with wine demonstrates the pagan folly of those in darkness for it shows the futility of the mind that guided them. Being filled with the Spirit explains how the Christian's mind is continually renewed and why he finds joy in serving God and his children. An absence of these virtues indicates a lack of the Spirit's teaching as the controlling force of the heart. One who loses his love for God and the church is spiritually destitute.

The various exhortations in Ephesians 4:17—5:21 find their unity in Christian character. They bear directly on "righteousness and true holiness" in the community of believers. Our life must conform to divine truth, strengthened by a constantly renewed mind. But this makes us neither ascetics nor fanatics. Rather the tenor of the text is the humble walk of God's children in an evil society. They are surrounded by a world of darkness, but they live as light in the Lord. It is in this that they become and are the living expression of Christ.

ARMED IN CHRIST TO STAND

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(Eph. 6:10-20)

When one becomes a member of the church he is then a part of the Lord's army. He is a soldier; a Christian soldier. No, not a soldier in a carnal battle, but one who can "stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). It is a spiritual warfare. The apostle continues, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (v. 12). The same writer wrote in another book,

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, **but** mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:4). Though not a carnal battle that would receive attention on the evening news, our battle is just as real as any other.

This fight is not just for preachers to wage from the pulpit and on the printed page. This battle is for elders too. But, again, it is not just for the leaders in the church of our Lord. This is a war to be fought by every child of God. Our text will bear this out. Thus, we as soldiers must put our armour on and prepare to do battle for we can be sure that Satan will do all that he can to destroy the Christian and the church.

Eph. 6:10-20 reveals that those "in Christ" are armed to stand against the forces of Satan. To be effective we must focus our attention upon our adversary, our armour and our aim.

Our Adversary

Our adversary is the devil. Peter said, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). The church and Satan are on a collision course. One writer has said that the church has an enemy that is hell-bent on its destruction. However, we sometimes forget that there is a fight, that Satan is real and that he is seeking our destruction.

Our enemy is not the Lord. If we are not careful we can find ourselves contending with the Lord himself. There may be times that we want to argue with him over his requirements and commands. We may resist his guidance and correction thinking every restriction is too much or is some kind of punishment. We can easily forget that his commands (however pleasant, difficult or restrictive) are for our good (Deut. 6:24).

Our foe is not ourselves. Here again, we forget our real enemy and thus turn and fight with our own brethren. Sometimes it is nothing more than a personality clash or contention for the sake of just getting our way. I wonder if some brethren start a quarrel over some insignificant matter just to have a fight since no one else will fight with them. When such is the case we have obviously lost sight of our adversary. When unnecessary strife broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot, Abram said, "Let there be no strife ... for we be brethren" (Gen. 13:8). Brethren shouldn't be enemies. Yet, when they are they will destroy one another (Gal. 5:15).

We have a common adversary. The Lord's enemy and the church's enemy and mine and yours are all the same. So, let's not fight in different directions. The Devil is wise enough to know that if we have some weakness, cowards or gaps in the front line, he is winning the battle. Let us fight together. Let us present a fortified and united front and make our attack.

We must fight against any and all of his wiles. Satan uses many schemes and cunning devices. He will use anybody and anything he can to accomplish his purpose. He may use some of our own brethren or friends. If so, we must fight against them as they are being used of Satan. If what they practice or teach didn't originate with God, then it is of the Devil and we must oppose it. We can't sacrifice truth because they are

brethren or friends. Paul rebuked Peter as he had been influenced of Satan (Gal. 2:11-14). The prophets of old were found contending with the people of God. In the New Testament men of God fought every threat to the children of God. For Paul "it had been ... a fight between Satan-inspired Jewish and pagan vice and violence; against Judaism among the Galatians and others; against fanaticism among the Thessalonians; against contention, fornication, and litigation among the Corinthians; against incipient Gnosticism among the Ephesians and far more among the Colossians; against fightings without and fears within; and last but not least, against the law of sin and death operating within his own heart" (William Hendriksen, **New Testament Commentary, Exposition of Ephesians**, p. 274).

Our Armour

In our text Paul alludes to the armour of the ancient soldier which was necessary to defend himself and make his attack. More than once Paul says we must put on the "whole armour" (panoply) of God. We are not prepared until we are completely armed. Should we be lacking just one piece of the armour the Devil is sure to win at least over that soldier.

Paul's picture in Eph. 6:10-20 of the Christian's life is not that of mere enjoyment or ease. It is one of work and hard conflict. Let's consider the pieces of the armour.

1. "**Stand therefore, having your lions girt about with truth**" (v. 14). The soldier wore a girdle (sash or belt) that served to tie up his garment or long flowing robe so he could travel and run. It was also used to carry his sword, money, pipe and writing instrument. Thus in parallel, the truth holds all things in place and preserves the soldier.

2. "... and having on the breastplate of righteousness" (v. 14). The breastplate was a coat made of metal rings, plates or scales that covered the soldier, front and back from neck to the thighs. Obviously, it was a protective piece of armour. Our breastplate is "righteousness" or right living. When we are moral, holy, devout and pure we have on our breastplate. "Words are no defence against accusations, but a good life is" (William Barclay, **The Letters To The Galatians And Ephesians**, p. 217).

3. "**And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace**" (v. 15). To be ready for battle the soldier must have his sandals on and greaves strapped below the knee to protect his legs from danger. A soldier whose feet were not shod was not ready at any time for battle. This I take to refer to our readiness to carry the gospel to others. Paul himself was ready to preach the gospel (Rom. 1:15). In Rom. 10:14-15 attention was focused upon the feet of those that preach the gospel indicating that they are messengers who are eager and ready to take the gospel message to others. With his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace the soldier is borne safely through the obstacles in his way.

4. "**Above all, taking the shield of faith...**" (v. 16). The shield was a must for the ancient soldier. He would strap a shield (about 2 1/2 feet wide by 4 feet long) to his left arm to protect himself from the spears and darts that were hurled at him. Some of the darts were dipped in tar and set on fire and then thrown at the enemy. Without

the shield the soldier was sure to suffer. Our faith serves as our shield to protect us from the "fiery darts of the wicked" (v. 16). When we lose our faith or it becomes weak, we are like the soldier who becomes a coward and throws down his shield and runs back (Heb. 10:35).

5. **"And take the helmet of salvation ..."** (v. 17). The helmet was a defensive part of the armour worn to protect the head of the soldier. The hope of eternal salvation protects and preserves us through all the battles of life. Were it not for that assurance we would have no reason to endure the hardships of the soldier (2 Tim. 2:3).

6. **"... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"** (v. 17). The soldier carried a short sword much like a dagger. It was an offensive part of his armour. He used it to make his attack on his enemy. The word of God is our sword. The Bible is not compared to a soft feather that is to be used to tickle the ears of men. It is a **sword!** Its purpose is to prick the hearts of men. It must be used to destroy error and slice sin to pieces. We must bring the sword out of its sheath and put it to use cutting away at the efforts of Satan. To be strong is our duty, to be weak is our sin" (**Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 20, p. 258.**)

7. **"Praying always with all prayers and supplication ..."** (v. 18). Many commentators and other writers only list six parts of the armour from our text. However, prayer is very much a part of the armour of those in Christ. While Paul does not continue his use of the metaphors in v. 18, it is still a very important part of the armour. Without prayer we have not put on the panoply of God. Prayer strengthens our faith and calls for the help of God. We have access to the greatest power of all through prayer.

The bottom line of the armour of God is faithful adherence to the plan of God. Those who are diligent in their efforts to serve the Lord are armed in Christ to stand.

Our Aim

1. To abide ("to stand"). Our text says that we are to put on the whole armour of God in order "to stand against the wiles of the devil" (v. 11). Two verses later the writer says "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (v. 13). To stand means to hold your ground. In battle the army tries to hold its ground and not lose any territory. In our war with Satan we must not allow him to make any advances. So, we stand our ground. But, we can't stand and compromise at all. We cannot compromise on morals, sin, innovations or the doctrines and sounds of men. We can't be indifferent toward the Lord's work and still hold our ground. The apathetic army always loses ground.

2. To attack ("to speak"). In the last verse of our text Paul asked that brethren pray for him that he may "speak... as I ought to speak" (v. 20). We cannot sit idle. We must attack. It is impossible that "not only in this or that particular battle but the entire war will be lost unless we exert ourselves" (William Hendriksen, **New Testament Commentary Exposition of Ephesians**, p. 271). As we use our sword to make our attack we must remember to speak as we ought to speak. We must speak

(a) **as the oracles of God** (1 Pet. 4:11). First and foremost our message must be true. We must speak "according as it is written" (2 Cor. 4:13). (b) **The whole counsel of God** (Acts 20:27). No part of God's revelation should be held back, (c) **Using great plainness of speech** (2 Cor. 3:12). Hints and vague generalities will not do. If something needs to be said, we need to say it plainly. John the Baptist was such a spokesman (Mark 6:14-18). Neither should the gospel be clouded by our feeble efforts to make it sound deeper or more impressive. May our listeners be impressed, not with the messenger, but with the simplicity of the message, (d) **Boldly** (Eph. 6:20). We must present God's message without apology or great concern about how it will be received. Amos was just that kind of messenger in the Old Testament (Amos. 7:10-17). He refused to bow to the pressures of the people. His intent was to preach God's message whether Amaziah, the king or anyone else liked it or not. Paul and the other apostles had the same attitude (1 Thess. 2:2). When we shy away from some area of the gospel because we think it will not be well received we are unfit for the Lord's army (Gal. 1:10). (e) **Fearfully** (Jas. 3:1). We should realize the tremendous responsibility we have to handle the word properly and those we teach (2 Tim. 2:15; Eph. 4:15).

Only those "in Christ" are so armed to stand and speak. "Soldiers of Christ arise and put your armour on..."

THE UNBLEMISHED BRIDE — EPH. 5: 27

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The Holy Spirit presents an analogous relationship of Christ and the church with the husband—wife relationship in Ephesians 5. The comparison is strong and beautiful. The church stands in the analogy as a bride and Christ as the husband. Christ died to purchase the church and purify it for his own possession. I want to embellish the figure of a beautiful bride, presented to the loving bridegroom. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

What Is The Church?

The word "church" refers to PEOPLE, "a called out" people, "an holy nation" (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9-10). It also refers to a functional unit of the "called out" people in a local sense (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1). These individuals are called out of darkness into light (1 Pet. 2:9; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13-14). They are called by the gospel (2

Thess. 2:13-14); an holy calling (1 Thess. 4:7; 2 Tim. 1:9, 1 Pet. 1:15-16); the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1); called to be saints (1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 1:7). The church is the "house" of God (1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6). It is the "body" of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24); and only ONE body (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:20). It is called the "temple" of God (1 Cor. 3:9-11,16-17; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:5,6,9-10). It is also the "kingdom" of God (Col. 1:13-14; Acts 8:12; Matt. 16:18-19). The church is pictured as the "bride" of Christ (Eph. 5:23-33; Rev. 21:2, 9). These figures signify God's PEOPLE as they are related to Him through Christ.

In order for Christ to present a glorious church to himself as an unblemished bride, he sanctified and cleansed it. The merit cause in sanctification is the cross of Christ: he "gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). Christ died to reconcile both Jew and Gentile unto God in one body (Eph. 2:16). We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). The death of Christ is the power to obtain forgiveness of sins.

But the conditional cause is "with the washing of water by the word." Simply stated, this is baptism for remission of sins by faith in Christ and his word. Almost all commentaries concede that this expression refers to baptism in water. Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Ananias told Paul to "... arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). All these passages refer to the same conditions for the remission of sins. In harmony with all these is Ephesians 5:26: "... that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

The ultimate purpose for which Christ sanctified and cleansed the church is to make her a suitable bride for himself. In the figure this illustrious "wife hath made herself ready" for her husband. She is arrayed in "fine linen, clean and white;" which is the righteousness of saints (Rev. 19:7-8). This indicates an effort on the part of each saved person to maintain the purity and righteousness which he obtained when he obeyed the gospel of Christ.

The baptized believer is described in the figure of marriage to Christ (Rom. 7:4). Paul said, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). "Espoused" means, "To join, to fit together ... or betrothed, to give one in marriage to any one." (Thayer). That describes the union of a baptized believer to Christ. When one is baptized into Christ, he becomes married to Christ.

The Glorious Church

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

The church is glorious because Christ built it (Matt. 16:18-20), purchased it (Acts 20:28), died for it (Eph. 5:25), is the head of it (Eph. 1:22-23), and God is glorified in it (Eph. 3:21). Christ paid the ultimate price for it: he "gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). "Who gave himself for our sins ..." (Gal. 1:4). "... who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify

unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

The Unblemished Bride Prepared

By the cross Christ sanctified and cleansed the church that it might be a glorious church. Keep in mind that we are talking about PEOPLE who have been redeemed from their sins and added to this body of saved (Acts 2:47).

A glorious church must be sanctified. "Sanctify" means to set apart for sacred use, to anoint. The church is composed of saved people (Acts 2:47), who are sanctified. They are called saints (Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2). The saints at Philippi constituted a local church with the bishops and deacons (Phil. 1:1). Jesus said people are sanctified through the truth (John 17:17; John 17:19). Jesus sanctified the people with his own blood (Heb. 13:12). He accomplished this "with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5). Concerning sinners, Paul said to the Corinthians: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11).

Sanctification produces holiness, which describes a devout, saintly, righteous person. The opposite of holiness is profane, sinful. Holiness is essential to see the Lord: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

The glorious church must be holy (Eph. 5:27). "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4). "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprovable in his sight" (Col. 1:22). "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling..." (2 Tim. 1:9). "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation"; "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16). The church is "an holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5), and "an holy nation" (1 Pet. 2:9).

A glorious church must be cleansed. "Cleanse" is to bathe, wash, absolve, purify. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:11). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Christ cleansed the church so that it must be without SPOT. Each Christian must "keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:" (1 Tim. 6:14). "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14).

"Wrinkle" means to fold, corrugate, pleat, crease, crumple, crinkle. It is the opposite of what is ironed:

smooth and straight. It signifies a flaw, that which is marred. The attire of the bride of the Lamb is to be brilliant: smooth, beautiful and clean. Every spot and flaw is to be removed. Cloth that has been washed and cleaned is often wrinkled before it is ironed or pressed. The church has been cleansed by Christ to be presented to himself, and it must be without spot or wrinkle.

"... or any such thing, i.e. any thing akin to being spotted or wrinkled. To be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, is to be free from any and all defects of beauty and morality.

Christ died to sanctify the church, thus to make it holy; and he cleansed it to make it free of every blemish. "Blemish" means a defect, flaw, imperfection, to disfigure. The church must be like Christ: "But with the

precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19).

The glorious church that Christ sanctified and cleansed must maintain its holiness and purity. It must be zealous of good works (Titus 2:14); be of one accord, have the same love, unity (Acts 2:46; 4:32; Phil. 2:2-3; 1 Cor. 1:10); follow peace with holiness (Heb. 12:14). It must be the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:14-15); submissive to Christ (Eph. 5:24); and glorify God by Christ (Eph. 3:21). Each member must be "a new creature" with all that it implies (2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:1-25). I admonish each of you to "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" to inherit "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:10-11).

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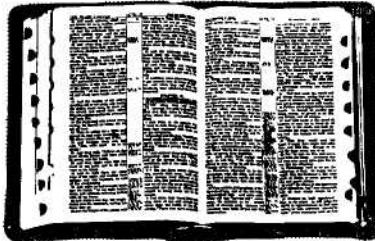
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"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"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 XXIX

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WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE

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TAKING IT BACK

Some time back I purchased a product from a local department store only to find out later that they had inadvertently given me their "top of the line" model rather than the cheaper one I had actually paid for. Now this thing was heavy, bulky and half put together before I recognized the mistake. There was no way I could disassemble the thing and get all of those pieces back in that little box that it came in (not and keep a respectable amount of sanity anyway). So there I sat. What would you do?

I refused to call them. I don't like calling department stores. They seem to delight in playing the "holding" and "passing" games as they pass the buck and transfer you to eighteen different departments before accidentally (?) cutting you off and handing you back your dial tone (**you've been there, right?**)

I wrote them instead — a nice letter, mind you, to explain the complexities of the problem. In a few days I received a most congenial call from the store manager who thanked me for my honesty while implying that most people are not truthful (**that's a bit discouraging!**) Anyway, I was to bring \$27.50 to the store on my next trip in and he would consider us square. That meant keeping the more expensive model at half the cost had I bought it in the first place. Fair enough.

Have you ever tried going to a department store and handing them \$27.50? It's not an easy thing to do. They didn't want it. In fact, in the confusion, the cashier gave "me" \$27.50! (This honesty thing can really get to you

sometimes). I persevered and squared the account and left the store with a dozen people thinking I was more than a little loony. Oh well. ...

Sometimes **people** can be like that department store. For example, you sin against someone and seek to rectify the relationship by asking for forgiveness and all you get is the old "**I'll forgive but not forget**" disposition of bitterness. The Bible says plainly to "**to forgive each other as God in Christ has forgiven you**" (Eph. 4:32). We need to understand that forgiveness is not an **elective** in Christian living but is, in fact, a **required course!**

"But I just can't forgive..." — then **you** had better not sin! Read and reread Matthew 18:21 -35 (the parable of the unmerciful servant). Note verse 34 — "**and his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers...**" We usually read that and make reference to the coming day of Judgment but I would like to suggest for your consideration that the individual who refuses to forgive while harboring grudges and bitter feelings towards another will, indeed, be handed over to the torturers not only then but NOW! To see a life that should be devoted to God and good eaten away with the cancer of resentment and bitterness in the gall of hatred and envy is the most pitiable sight of all. An unforgiving spirit will do a number on you NOW! And do you know what is the truth? It's not worth the misery! You show me a contented person and I'll show you someone who knows the merits of mercy and the joy of forgiveness.

Can the mind ever forget? Technically the answer is no. But the mind can **OVERLOOK "Love does not take into account a wrong suffered"** (1 Cor. 13:5). "**I forget what lies behind ...**" (Phil. 3:13). Think of all the people Paul could have included on his "hate list." But he had no list. He refused to dwell on that. He intentionally disregarded all wrongs against him and refused to be embittered.

Do you know that some try to excuse their bitterness with — "**It's too late for me to change ... I've been injured and wronged more than you will ever know... It's too great to forget... Maybe Paul could but not me ...**" Do you know what that is? That is ARROGANCE GONE TO SEED! That person sees

himself/herself as the exception to the rule of forgiveness and is defiantly determined not to change because life has dealt them a bad deal. Let me ask you something—Do you perceive that you are the only one who has ever been hurt or short-changed or ripped off or wronged? You are no different and I'm not either. How badly do you want to go to heaven? Badly enough to forgive your brother? I hope so.

What you and I forgive is small compared to what God erases. How can we begin to compare the debt? The next time you are tempted to give one his "**just due**" just remember what God would give you if He gave you what you deserved. "**But ____ does not deserve my mercy ...**" If he deserved it, it wouldn't be mercy! "**Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy ...**"

While people may disappoint you in their application of Christianity regarding forgiveness, God doesn't work that way. In the first place, He doesn't make mistakes—**BUT WE DO**. We mess up. We give in to wrong. We sin. And, yet, through Jesus we can have forgiveness conditioned upon our confession and repentance: "**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**" (1 John 1:9). Now isn't that easy? Of course confession of sins implies **repentance** of sins. Obviously God will not forgive the sins of one intending to keep on sinning (Acts 8:22). There must be a change of heart and course of conduct.

If we would only take our troubles to God. He doesn't give you the run-around. He doesn't pass the buck. He simply forgives. And when God has forgiven we must learn to forgive ourselves. I heard of a man who said — "**I don't know what's wrong. I've prayed 100 times that God would forgive me and I still feel guilty.**" Do you know what his problem was? He prayed for forgiveness 99 times too many. He should have prayed once for forgiveness and 99 times to thank the Lord that he had been forgiven.

We need to **WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE** that Christianity is the only way to live. It is the only lifestyle that merits recommendation. And why? Because only the Christian can have the forgiveness of sins. What greater blessing can there possibly be?

**"Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget none of His blessings;
Who pardons all your iniquities ..."**

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EDITOR PREACHING IN ITALY

Connie and Bobby Adams left May 12 for a three week preaching trip in Italy. This will be Connie's third trip to that country. He and H. E. Phillips made a trip in 1977 and another in 1980. By the time you receive this issue of STS Connie and Bobby will already be back in the States and continuing their meeting work. Connie will have more to say about his work in Italy in the August or September issue. Since Connie will be out of the U.S. for a while I am editing this issue.

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Guest
Editorial
Donnie V. Rader

4724 E. Manslick Road
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CONVERTED, BUT NOT TO THE LORD

There is a noticeable difference in some who claim to be Christians. Some will say and do things that others will not. The conviction of some is quite different from others. The problem may be that they have not truly been converted. Oh, they have been converted, but not to the Lord. They are like Israel of old who returned, "but not to the most High" (Hosea 7:16). They have been converted to a preacher, a doctrine, religion or a local church rather than the Lord. If they were converted at some time, they have now changed their allegiance.

Don't misunderstand. One cannot be converted to Christ without doctrine and the church. The problem is when we are converted to anything other than Jesus Christ himself. Let us each examine ourselves to see if we are converted to the Lord or to someone or something else (2 Cor. 13:5).

To The Preacher

It is very easy for someone to be overly impressed with the preacher, his knowledge and abilities. Thus they become attached to the man rather than the Lord. The preacher becomes more important than the message. Nobody can preach like their man. A great danger develops in that they will accept anything that preacher says because of their respect for him. Though he may teach something that is clearly contradictory to a plain statement of the Lord, the tendency is to accept what the preacher says. Evidence of this problem is seen when the preacher moves. Those that are "converted" to him will leave or just plain quit.

There were some at Corinth that were attached to a particular man rather than Jesus Christ. They were saying, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ" (1 Cor. 1:12). Paul rebuked them for that and urged that no one follow him. Since Paul was not crucified for you nor were you baptized in the name of Paul there is no reason to be followers of Paul. He was also glad that he had baptized none but Crispus and Gaius lest anyone say he baptized in his own name (1 Cor. 1:14-15). He stated in the next chapter that the gospel that he and other faithful men of God preached was the wisdom of God and not the wisdom of men. He did not preach to them with "enticing words of man's wisdom" or with "excellency of speech," but merely preached "Christ and him crucified" that their faith "should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:1-5). In chapter three he emphasizes

that preachers are mere "ministers by whom ye believed" (1 Cor. 3:5). Then in the fourth chapter he warns about thinking "of men above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6).

In the Old Testament there were many who turned from their idolatry out of respect for the reforms of the king, rather than a true conversion to Jehovah (Jer. 3:10). When men today go through the form of obedience and worship, out of respect and devotion to the preacher, they are not converted to the Lord.

To A Doctrine

Some are converted to a system of doctrine or a way of thinking, rather than to the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't misunderstand. I didn't say doctrine is not important. It is! You can't separate the Lord from his doctrine ("the man from the plan"). My concern is that, rather than being converted to the Lord and then accepting anything the Lord teaches, some are devoted to a way of thinking without real service to the Lord.

This has happened to some second and third generation Christians. They merely follow the family tradition and thinking. Real service and devotion to the Lord is taken for granted. About all they know about the truth is what one must do to be saved and that there are some teachings different from denominationalism and that's it! They may think that since Mom and Dad believe this system of teachings and were faithful Christians they will be too if they merely hold to the same basic belief. Again, there is not real conviction. Their faith is not their own, but has been inherited. When they leave home they may not even attend anymore.

The same is true of some who claim to be gospel preachers. They may be merely devoted to teaching a certain doctrine rather than serving Jesus Christ. They are set to defend "baptism" vs "faith only" or deny Catholicism and Calvinism and instruct people in the laws of God. Preaching becomes a profession or just a job rather than presenting a message with a heart of conviction. It is easy to forget to make application of the truths to yourself. Or maybe it's that some think they are above the law. I suppose that is one reason why we have had so many preachers in recent years to destroy their lives and influence with sin (to say nothing of their souls). They know what the Bible teaches and can capably tell others the message while they themselves are committing adultery, lying or living contrary to the message they preach. If they were truly converted to Christ they would not continue to practice sin (1 Jno. 3:6, 9; 5:18). They have failed to take heed to themselves as well as the doctrine as Paul instructed young Timothy (1 Tim. 4:16). Those sincerely serving the Lord are interested in saving themselves as well as those that hear. A man who is merely converted to a doctrine or a particular idea, rather than Christ, has no place in the pulpit. His "preaching" is doing more harm than good.

To The Church

Others are converted to a particular local congregation rather than to the Lord. Evidence of that could be seen when they move into another area. Rather than searching out and identifying with a faithful congregation, they may not attend anywhere. Others will attend

liberal churches. Evidence could also be seen when they are on vacation. Time is not taken to find places to worship while they travel.

For many their concept of the church is not that it is the body of Christ. They think of the church in social terms. To them it is nothing more than a civic club. It is an enjoyable and beneficial experience, but stops at that. They have not come to realize that the church is the people of God (Acts 2:47; 1 Tim. 3:15). Any local congregation is a group of God's people who have a purpose and function.

Some in Jeremiah's day trusted in the pretense of service unto Jehovah. They cried out "Temple of the Lord ... temple of the Lord... temple of the Lord..." (Jer. 7:4). They trusted in that and thought it was enough. Study that in context with the chapter and the rest of the book and you will see that they were not devoted at all. Today many cry out saying "I'm a member of the church of Christ... the church of Christ" thinking that is sufficient without true devotion to God. These may be converted, but not to the Lord.

To Jesus Christ

True conversion is to the Lord Jesus Christ. When one becomes fully persuaded that indeed Jesus is the Son of God, he submits his life in service and devotion. He becomes subject unto Christ in everything (Eph. 5:24). The apostle Paul is a classic example of conversion. The very one who was determined to destroy Christianity was convinced of the Deity of Christ and later said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Now that's true devotion!

The same apostle in writing to the Colossians spoke of this as a life "hid with Christ" (3:3). That is, a life so dedicated to the service of Christ and being Christ-like that it is as if we were wrapping Christ around us so that when looked upon only Christ could be seen.

When we are truly converted to the Lord we will take heed to the message spoken by faithful servants of God, not because of our devotion to the man, but because it is the message of Christ (1 Thess. 2:13). We will be set for the defense in truth, not because it happens to be opposed to some prominent belief, but because it is the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:17). We will want to be an active part of a local congregation, not because of the social benefit, but because it pleases Jesus Christ. We will continue to serve the Lord, whether we be on vacation or move. This and more we will do if we first give ourselves to the Lord. (2 Cor. 8:5).

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CHRIST, THE SAVIOR OF THE BODY

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23).

In this verse, and those which follow, the apostle uses the marriage relationship to emphasize the relationship between Christ and his spiritual body, the church (v. 32). When the inspired writer states that Christ "is the savior of the body," this declaration harmonizes with every other truth concerning Christ and his church.

To advocate salvation outside the church not only contradicts a plain declaration of the Holy Spirit, but such a position immediately comes into conflict with every other inspired statement concerning Christ, the church, and salvation.

The entire mystery of salvation hinges on, and is revealed through, Christ and his church (Eph. 3:6-11; 1 Tim. 3:15,16). To promise salvation outside the church is to frustrate the grace of God concerning our own salvation, and that of others as well.

Metaphors

First, in order to offset the confusing doctrines of pre-millennialists and others (including any brethren in these categories), let it be emphasized again that the spiritual body of Christ, the church, and the kingdom are one and the same thing.

Different metaphors are used to portray God's "called out" people. The church is compared to a kingdom (Heb. 12:23,28), a sheepfold (Jno. 10:16), a bride (Jno. 3:29,30; Rom. 7:4), a house (1 Tim. 3:15), and a body (Col. 1:18). There are other metaphors and parables pertaining to the church, but these are sufficient to show that what is essentially true of one is true of the other. An attempt to separate the church from the kingdom is an attempt to "put asunder" what God has "joined together."

"In The Place"

God reserves the right to determine where salvation or deliverance shall be (Ex. 3:5; 20:24). The Israelites were told that they could not offer "in every place that thou seest: but in the place which the Lord shall choose ..." (Deut. 12:13,14).

Let us notice some examples of God's prerogative to choose the place of salvation, or safety.

1. In The Ark—The place of deliverance for Noah and his family was in the ark (Gen. 7:7; 1 Pet. 30:20,21).

2. In the Houses — At the institution of the passover feast when God destroyed the firstborn of every creature, salvation was in the houses of the Israelites,

identified by the blood of the passover lamb (Ex. 12:22). Not one Israelite questioned God's arrangement. After God passed over Egypt, the Egyptians also knew where deliverance was to be found.

3. In The Cities Of Refuge — Under certain conditions, the six cities of refuge served as the place of salvation for those seeking safety within their gates (Num. 35:26-28).

4. In The House — When, by God's help Joshua and the Israelites conquered Jericho, there was only one place of safety for the inhabitants of that city — in the house of Rahab (Josh. 2:19).

5. In The Vine—In order to survive and bear fruit, the branch must abide in the vine (Jno. 15:1-6).

6. In The Ship — "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31). Not one soul contested Paul's plan for salvation on this occasion, and all were saved. This same Paul tells us that salvation is in the church.

7. In The Church—As the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9), Christ has determined that salvation is in the church. Further, it should be no surprise that Christ has promised to be the savior of his body, the church. From the beginning of the church, "... the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

8. In Heaven — The place of eternal salvation, after this life is over, will be in heaven (Jno. 14:1-6; Rev. 22:14).

At the end, Christ shall deliver up the church, the kingdom, to God (1 Cor. 15:24). The bride of Christ, the church, "that great city, the holy Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:9, 10), shall be delivered to dwell eternally in heaven.

Not "In The Place"

After John gives us a picture of those who dwell in the eternal city of God, he also gives a picture of those without (Rev. 22:14,15).

When God designated the acceptable place of service and worship in ancient times, he likewise stressed the futility (and danger), of attempting to serve him elsewhere (Deut. 12: 2, 3,13). Once God has revealed to us that salvation is in Christ's church, we need to reach the inescapable conclusion that there is no salvation outside that church.

That conclusion cannot be successfully avoided, contradicted, or assailed. To attempt such is to "fight against God." Let us notice where salvation is **not** to be found.

1. Salvation is not "in the world" — We are either in the world or in the church. There is no other spiritual location. "In the world" we are without God, without Christ, and without hope (Eph. 2:12), just as Gentiles were at one time "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." To claim that salvation is outside the church is to claim salvation "in the world."

2. Not In The Home — While a godly family may be conducive to serving God, the home was not designed as the place of salvation. The home existed for centuries and dispensations before Christ built his church.

This is a truth which some brethren attempt to set before the world, while at the same time corrupting the spiritual purpose of the church by trying to involve it in

activities which belong in the realm of the home, e.g., recreation and entertainment.

The denominations of men have, for the most part, ceased to emphasize spiritual matters. To the extent that the Lord's church gets involved in purely social matters, to that extent we neutralize our claim that salvation is to be found only in the body of Christ.

3. Not In The Churches Of Men — Most denominations readily admit that salvation is not to be found within their borders.

Ironically, at the same time, some brethren are determined to promise salvation to those identified with human religious organizations. Many Baptists concede that "in the apostolic age ... the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church." But, they go on to say, "Now it is different..." (Standard Manual for Baptist Churches, Hiscox, p. 22).

The religious "plants" of men can lay no valid claim to salvation within their borders, and can only anticipate their own overthrow at the coming of the Lord (Ps. 127:1; Mt. 15:9-14).

The sectarian movements of our time have no more to offer than did the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' time.

4. Not in Civil Government, Society, The Community —While civil government, like the home, is designed for a specific purpose, it was never intended to be a haven for the souls of men.

Sometimes at funerals the deceased is eulogized because he or she was a member of some civic or fraternal organization, a "good citizen," or a "staunch resident of the community." Such eulogies may well describe the social life of an individual, while having nothing whatever to do with salvation.

Indirect Evidence

Such passages as Acts 2:47 and Eph. 5:23 plainly declare that salvation is in the church. There are many other passages which imply the same thing. Given certain facts, certain conclusions are elementary and inescapable. Jesus often used this method of teaching (Mt. 12:26-29; Lk. 10:25-32).

1. The devil and the "gates of hades" exerted all their efforts to keep Jesus from building the church ((Mt. 16:18; Rev. 1:18; 12:1-17). If the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), and "spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12), oppose the church with such zeal, it must be essential to salvation.

2. The blood of Christ purchased the church (Acts 20:28). Since the blood of Christ is essential to salvation (Rev. 1:5), so is the purchased possession.

3. "All spiritual blessings" are in Christ. Since Christ and the church are inseparable (Eph. 3:10,11), then one must be in the church in order to partake of those blessings.

4. Reconciliation — Both Jew and Gentile are reconciled unto God in the one body, the church (Eph. 2:15, 16). There is no reconciliation outside the church.

5. "The Habitation of God" — The church in this dispensation of time is the temple, the habitation of God, the acceptable place of service and worship (Eph. 2:20-22). We must be where God is.

This list could be lengthened considerably, but as we have already observed, the fact that salvation is in the church harmonizes with every other statement pertaining to Christ, the church, and salvation.

Conclusion

Every prophecy concerning the church, the kingdom, fortifies the conclusion that salvation would accompany the establishment of "the mountain of the Lord's house" (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 2:2,3). Salvation was "in Zion" for fleshly Israel (Isa. 46:13), and the same is true of spiritual Israel (Heb. 12:22-28).

God is able, through the "blood of the new testament" (Heb. 9:15-17), to include all in the church who need to be in it (Lk. 13:28; Heb. 12:22,23). In this dispensation of time, baptism is the door into the church (Jno. 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13).

The fact that the devil and his ministers persistently claim that baptism and the church are not necessary to salvation should make the seeker of truth suspicious. Whatever the devil tries to discourage us from doing, we should do.

God planned and designed the church for our salvation; Christ built the church according to God's design; and, the Holy Spirit revealed the church as designed and built.

The least that you and I can do in view of these revealed truths is to believe, receive, and teach them. The most that we can do is to work out our salvation in the church and be saved eternally as part of the glorified body of Christ.

No, salvation is not outside the church, not somewhere "in the vicinity of the church, and not on some Mt. Nebo of desire or prospect on the part of some just close enough to look over into the church.

If we know and accept the difference in definition between the terms "in" and "out," we can find salvation. If we refuse to acknowledge that Christ placed salvation in his spiritual body, the church, then all of the rhetoric in all of the languages known to man would not convince us. It's that simple.

Jesus "gave himself for the church (Eph. 5:25). What will you give?

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THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

GOD'S MESSAGE: "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13).

GOD GAVE THE BIBLE TO US! The Bible is not the result of human reasoning. It is Divine in origin. Jehovah had several reasons for causing this Book to be written: a) to reveal Himself to man; b) to explain His plan for our salvation in His Son; and c) to make known His will for our lives.

God gave the Scriptures (the Bible) by "inspiration." Our purpose is to consider some basic truths about the inspiration of the Scriptures.

A. IT IS INSPIRED

"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 complete thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Several words used by Paul in this passage are very important to our study:

"All" (every) scripture is given by inspiration of God. The Scriptures are fully inspired ... that is, all Biblical statements are inspired including those dealing with scientific, historical, geographical, and chronological data. The inspiration of the Bible is "plenary" in scope or extent. "Plenary inspiration" is a technical phrase used to express the idea that God revealed every section, passage, and statement in the Bible (see Mark 7:8-13; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Rom. 15:4).

"Scripture." This word comes from the Greek word *graphe* which means, a "writing." Our word "graphics" comes from this Greek word. In the New Testament, the word is used 51 times to refer to the authoritative, written statements of God in the Bible (see 1 Tim 5:18 for example).

"Inspiration." Literally the original word meant "breathed by God." Inspiration is the extraordinary, supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit which He used when He guided the human authors to write the Bible. The Holy Spirit used their personalities and styles of writing in choosing the words for writing without error the exact revelation of God to man.

"Profitable." The Scriptures provide all things spiritually necessary to our salvation and all of it is good for

us. God's word is stated clearly enough that with proper study we can understand it sufficiently to do what God wants us to do to be saved (Psa. 119:105,130; Eph. 3:1-5).

"Complete." The Scriptures make possible our being spiritually complete and whole. If something makes one complete or perfect, it must also be complete and perfect. If the Bible makes us "perfect," the Bible must be perfect itself.

B. THE WRITERS OF SCRIPTURE SPOKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). Peter's phrases are also important:

"Private interpretation." The writers of Scripture did not interpret their religious thoughts and then write them according to their own reasoning. They received prophecy from God.

Not by the will of man. The men who penned Scripture did not write according to "devised fables" (vs. 16) or in keeping with their own wishes. The origin of Scripture is the divine Holy Spirit, not man.

"Spake from God"—What they said was divine, not human. The Divine source (the Holy Spirit) used human beings to write the words on paper, but the words are God's words.

"Moved by the Holy Spirit" The word "moved" is sometimes translated "borne" or "driven." Benjamin Warfield has said, "What is 'borne' is taken up by the 'bearer,' and conveyed by the 'bearer's' power, not its own, to the 'bearer's' goal, not its own. The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Spirit were therefore His things, not theirs. And that is the reason which is assigned why 'the prophetic word' is so sure" (Warfield, "Inspiration," International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, III, p. 1475).

C. THE VERY WORDS WERE GIVEN BY GOD (1 Cor. 2:10-13)

"But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:10-13).

The word "revealed" means "brought to light," or "uncovered" God exposed His thinking to man by sending the Holy Spirit to communicate with the apostles and prophets.

Here is the important part to our study. Paul said that this communication was "**not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth.**"

The Spirit provided not only the ideas but the expression of those ideas ... controlling both thoughts and words. Paul wrote down God's revelation in words taught by the power of the Spirit (vs. 1-4).

We sometimes use the phrase "**verbal inspiration.**" That means that, "God so guided in the writing of the books of the Bible that the words are His words in the style of the writers. Verbal Inspiration is the opposite of Inspired Concepts" (H. S. Miller, GENERAL BIBLICAL INTRODUCTION, p. 24).

Never forget this one truth: **THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD IN GOD'S WORDS** (Matt. 4:4; 2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Thes. 2:13; John 3:34; 17:8). To the extent one allows for man's choosing the words of Scripture, he allows for error in the Biblical text because man is fallible in his choices.

James Orr has said, "Thought, of necessity, takes shape and is expressed in words. If there is inspiration at all, it must penetrate words as well as thought, must mold the expression and make the language employed the living medium of the idea to be conveyed" (Orr, REVELATION AND INSPIRATION, p. 209).

D. EVERY DETAIL IS PERFECT

Jesus said, "*Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled*" (Matthew 5:18). A "jot" was the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet (pronounced "yod" by the Jews). A "tittle" was a distinguishing extension of a letter, as the crossing of a "t". Every detail of what He originally said to the inspired writers, down to the smallest letter, is perfect and held sacred by God.

We, therefore, speak of the "**infallibility of scripture.**" The Bible is without error. There is no deception or mistake in the facts it affirms. It is reliable in every way and certain in all details (Isa. 45:19; Prov. 30:5-6).

E. GOD HAS MADE IT BINDING AND AUTHORITATIVE

Scripture cannot be "**broken**" (John 10:35; see also Isa. 6:9-10; Hos. 4:1-11). To try to "break" Scripture would be to attempt to rob it of binding authority by saying that it is not necessary to do what it says. (The men to which the word of God came were called "gods;" that is, they spoke with authority as God speaks with authority. That being true they could not say that Christ was blaspheming to call Himself the Son of God.)

The Word spoken by Christ will judge in the last day (John 12:48). We are, therefore, not free to decide for ourselves what we will believe and do. Neither are we free to interpret the Bible just any way we choose. We must seek to know what God wants us to do and then do that. Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

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SOME PEOPLE ARE TRULY DIFFERENT

Plutarch, the ancient Greek historian and philosopher, relates a telling incident: "Alexander the Great, seeing Diogenes looking attentively at a parcel of human bones, asked the philosopher what he was looking for. Diogenes' reply: That which I cannot find — the difference between your father's bones and those of his slaves." No man would deny that Philip II of Macedonia, Alexander the Great's father, was different than his slaves. But neither could any man discover the truly significant differences by examining their physical remains. The only important thing that distinguishes one life from another is **spiritual**. Whatever other differences there may be, death levels out every last one of them.

Solomon came to the point where he understood this, after making a prodigious search for what it is in life that has any "profit" to it. He was in the unique position of having available to him every possible avenue of pleasure and accomplishment in this world. And having literally tried it all — sensual pleasure, wealth, science, the arts, philosophy and wisdom — this was his disappointing verdict: "I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and **there was no profit under the sun**" (Eccl. 2:11).

Why so? Simply because — no matter what the circumstances of a person's birth, no matter what his natural endowments, no matter what he enjoys in life, and no matter what he accomplishes — earth-bound advantages come to an end that is exactly the same for every man. Solomon led a worldly life that was far, far beyond that the common run of mankind will ever know. But even so, he was honest enough to say, "As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me" (2:15). A man may think he has found something "under the sun" that gives him a significant advantage, one that is his to keep — but he will learn the truth that death equalizes **every** difference except one.

We can even go one step further. If a man never pays attention to the difference that spiritual concerns make, then he may as well have been a beast. At death, the lowliest creature in the animal kingdom will have as much to show for his effort as the human being who has only distinguished himself in worldly ways. "That which befallleth the sons of men befallleth beasts; even one thing

befallleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity" (3:19).

At the end of Ecclesiastes, Solomon pointed to the thing that truly makes one human life different from another. His words are, of course, familiar to many who have not even read the Book of Ecclesiastes: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (12:13,14). One's spiritual relationship to his Creator determines whether life contains any "profit" at all. This is the factor that counts. Everything else is secondary.

Now, it might be taken for granted that the Christian understands this and builds his life accordingly. We might assume that the disciple grasps the significance of having been "buried with him by baptism into death" that he might "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). But Paul, writing to saints, had to put it in the form of a question: "Know ye not ...?" We might be confident that members of the Lord's body, because they are different from other human beings, are consistently spiritual-minded. But Paul had to put this point in the form of a command: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

The truth is, we sometimes do slip back into the old, worldly way of thinking about "profit" in life. We strenuously spend the bulk of our time pursuing objects that, relatively speaking, ought not to be any more than "dung" (Phil. 3:8) to us now. Our values and priorities, as our children and our friends know them, are little different than those of the poor soul who is still caught up in the race for "under the sun" advantages. The things that interest us and excite us most are often the things that are purely temporal. We live and work and play as if there were no radical difference that elevates us above the fool, or even the beast. Many of us are in desperate need of the Lord's forgiveness for failing to be much different inwardly from those who think worldly distinctions are what it is all about.

But I am thankful for having known some individuals in life—brothers and sisters in Christ — who **are** truly different from other human beings. They see with clear-sighted wisdom and love for the Lord what it is in life that matters. They are men and women whose outward lives are in most cases not extraordinary. They know that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. 1:26). Nevertheless, they are **truly** in a category apart from all other human beings. They are different because they have actually been "born" a second time. They have genuinely put on the "new man." And they rejoice in knowing that, whatever else life may hold, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). They have found the single advantage in life that is a man's to keep. The only one.

**"INDIVIDUALLY-SUPPORTED
INSTITUTIONALISM"
(A Response To Weldon Warnock)**

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE: This article is a response to Weldon Warnock's article in the Feb., 1988 issue of this paper. Please read his article again. I greatly appreciate the opportunity for this exchange and Weldon's willingness to reply.

My motive in responding to Weldon is in the interest of truth with malice toward none. To my knowledge Weldon is a well-meaning man. I do not suspicion him to be wrong in his motives or intentions. I believe he loves the truth as I do. The extreme importance of this study is seen in the fact that the differences to be discussed concern some of the most basic concepts of Bible teaching with very important Bible doctrines at issue. Weldon teaches a **limited application** as to whom or **to what work** the uniqueness and all sufficiency of the local church applies. The result being, that he affirms the right of **individually** - supported organizations (missionary societies) which faithful brethren have rightly opposed for so long. Please read closely and carefully this entire exchange.

(1) **Weldon misunderstands how FULLY (as TO WHOM or TO WHAT WORK) the uniqueness and all-sufficiency of the local church APPLIES.** He said, The local church, designed by God and completely and sufficiently equipped to execute **its mission** in the world, is the only authorized organizational arrangement to carry out **the work of the church**" (Emp. mine - W. R.). Weldon correctly states the uniqueness and all-sufficiency of the local church of Christ when he says it is "sufficiently equipped" for "its" religious "mission" and is therefore the only authorized organizational arrangement ... "designed by God." But notice that he **limits** the **application** of the local church being the only authorized organizational arrangement designed by God to the carrying out of "**the work of the [local]** - See his verses. W. R.] church." He does not make the same application in regard to the **WORK OF** (assigned to) **INDIVIDUALS**. He therefore incorrectly reasons that **individual saints may join themselves together in religious human organizations** like Charles Holt's Truth and Freedom Ministry, Inc. when doing **the religious work** God assigned to **individuals**. Holt's organization is a **missionary society** though, even though Weldon incorrectly calls it a "service organization" (meaning a **business** organization-See point #3.). Weldon, the unique and all-sufficient nature of the local church **applies to everyone's** religious work- both to local churches **and** individual saints. Therefore neither local churches nor individual saints may form or support religious organizations **other than** the local church of

Christ. Anyway, work assigned to us as **individuals** cannot be fulfilled by an **organization**. Thus we come to another mistake made by Weldon.

(2) **Weldon misunderstands the difference between INDIVIDUAL and ORGANIZATIONAL action.** He said, "Christians may join themselves together (or function) **individually**) in SERVICE organizations ..." (Emp. mine - W. R.). His claim is that individual duty can be fulfilled in or by an organization. He therefore incorrectly reasons that when individuals function in religious work by forming, and functioning through, an organization such as Holt's missionary society, then they are still only functioning as **individuals** and concludes that, "This in no way intrudes upon or usurps the local church's mission." Of course his reasoning here is based on his erroneous limitation of the local church, by applying it to be the only authorized organizational arrangement designed by God **only** in the case of carrying out **the work of the local church** (see point #1). But Weldon is wrong on these matters also. The difference in individual and organizational action was clearly distinguished in past institutionalism battles. **Individual** duties cannot be discharged in **organizational** (collective) action. And vice versa. For **individual action** is directed or overseen by one's own **individual oversight**. **Organizational** (collective) action has all individuals in the organization relinquishing individual oversight to (submitting to) the common oversight of the organization. We cannot therefore act as individuals when serving in an organizational capacity. Neither can we act as an organization when serving in an individual capacity. They are not the same. **Franklin Puckett, in "The Arlington Meeting," pages 156-157:** "Since all action in the kingdom is either distributive or collective, and since neither the individual Christian nor the church universal can function collectively, and since the only units of activity in the kingdom are the individual and the local congregation, it follows that all collective or group action belongs to the local congregation." **James Cope, in his booklet, "Where Is The Scripture?", p. 59:** "Everybody should know that the only 'organization' or 'arrangement' of Christians to which the Lord had addressed commands [gave authority - W. R.] for collective or joint activity is what is generally referred to as a 'local church'."

(3) **Weldon misunderstands the difference between a BUSINESS (service) organization and a MISSIONARY SOCIETY.** He correctly identifies and states that service (business) organizations "charge for SERVICES RENDERED to cover the costs, and even to make a profit." (Emp. mine - W. R.) The **business** (service) realm is authorized (II Thess. 3:10; Eph. 4:28). And "electric and gas companies, lumber yards, mercantile stores and printing companies" are examples of business organizations. But Weldon also listed Searching the Scriptures, Guardian of Truth Foundation, Christianity Magazine and Truth and Freedom Ministry, Inc. as **all** being lawful businesses (service organizations), which is not true. To my knowledge, out of these four, only Searching the Scriptures and Christianity

does function as a lawful business which publishes religious materials by charging a purchase price "to cover the costs and make a profit." But it also functions in a **second role** as a **missionary society**. In which role, it **solicits, collects**, and becomes the **overseer** of monies contributed by **individuals** to enable G.O.T. Foundation to then **oversee and distribute** at **its own will** "Bible teaching." Truth and Freedom Ministries, Inc. functions solely this way. It is this missionary society arrangement which Weldon endorses that violates the Scriptures. Weldon is simply affirming in 1988 what J. B. Briney, Christian church preacher, did back in 1908 in his debate with W. W. Otey. In that debate, Briney affirmed the individually-supported missionary society (pages 165-167), as Weldon does now, besides the church-supported ones (pages 167-169). Briney said the **societies** sent the **Bible teacher** in fulfilling a "mission" (p. 166), and called the organizations "missionary societies;" whereas Weldon says G.O.T. Foundation and Truth and Freedom Ministries, Inc. send the "Bible teaching" in fulfilling a "service" and calls these organizations "service organizations." I fail to see a difference. But isn't "service" what all the unlawful organizations of the past and present claim as justification for their existence? Of course, their "service" is **not** a business function. Instead, it is religious work accomplished through donations to a human collecting and overseeing agency, **whatever its name**. "Good works" and "services" have never been proof for **unlawful organizations**. And nothing can substitute for Bible authority (Mt. 7:22,23). This is Weldon's problem. He offered us not one verse in proof of his society arrangement. There is none.

(4) **Weldon misunderstands the difference between BUYING A SERVICE and GIVING A DONATION.** He claims a "brother or sister may send a check [donate money - W.R.]" to a publishing company of religious materials without the nature of the organization being changed in that role. We have already shown that this is false. This arrangement constitutes a missionary society. For in **this role**, the company becomes the overseeing agency of the donations, and the religious teaching accomplished thereby becomes its own. On the other hand, individuals may **purchase** religious materials for themselves or others and publishing companies may print these for sale. This is simply **lawful business action** with the individual being in control of the use of his money and in control of the teaching materials purchased thereby.

(5) **Weldon misunderstands the difference between DONATING MONEY and DONATING ARTICLES.** He said, "I do not see any difference between sending [donating - W. R.] my money and sending [donating - W.R.] my articles,... My time and energy are as much a contribution (probably more so) than my money." Is it true that donating a religious article (teaching) to a publishing company of religious materials is equal to donating money to the same company? Let's see. Does anyone deny my right to speak to a Baptist lectureship as long as I teach the truth they need? If it was a Baptist magazine, could I not in parallel

send my teaching just like I could send myself to their lectureship? Now, could I in either case just send them the **money** that was of equal value to my time and energy spent in producing the teaching? The answer in this case is "No!". Why? Because my teaching is **my** words constituting **work of my labor** and **oversight**. I would not in this case be donating anything for the Baptists to oversee. I would just be fulfilling my role as a **teacher** using available opportunities to teach people. But money has to be overseen and converted by someone in order to be of use. In donating money in such cases, I would be relinquishing my oversight of it for another to oversee. We have no Bible authority for such actions.

(6) **Weldon misunderstands the difference between a PREACHER RECEIVING SUPPORT and a preacher ACTING AS A COLLECTING and OVERSEEING BOARD of individuals' monies for religious work.** He said a "preacher may be publishing a paper to teach the word of God among the multitudes and use ... individual support to help pay for printing and postage." I am amazed at Weldon's misunderstanding of basic Bible teaching. For even though preachers may be financially supported, nowhere does the Bible authorize a preacher to act as a one-man missionary society, which in this case he would be. (See the Willis-Inman Debate, p. 95.)

Much more needs saying but our space is up for this article. Brethren, Weldon et al. have drifted far from the Truth on these matters. We cannot with a wave of the hand dismiss them as unimportant. We know better. Let corrections about these matters be made. And let all of us promise to be zealous and jealous for God, the Truth, and the local church of Christ!

THE DISCIPLING MOVEMENT

(A study of the Neo-Crossroads Philosophy among churches of Christ)

by Maurice Barnett

This is a powerful assault on the discipling movement which includes what is called Crossroadism and what has gone far beyond that movement. Evidences of the influence of this movement are being seen among conservative churches.

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WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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1021 Welford Dr.
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THE CHURCH, THE INDIVIDUAL, AND RELIGIOUS JOURNALS

Brother Ramsey thinks I misunderstand a lot of things. He begins every subdivision with, "Weldon misunderstands." We will allow the readers to judge who misunderstands.

Definitions

In the very outset certain words need to be defined. We will use *Black's Law Dictionary*, 5th edition.

1. Society. "An association or company of persons (generally unincorporated) united together by mutual consent in order to deliberate, determine, and act jointly for some common purpose."

2. Corporation. "An artificial person or legal entity created by or under the authority of the laws of a state or nation, composed, in some instances, of a SINGLE PERSON (emphasis mine, WEW) and his successor, being the incumbents of a particular office, but ordinarily consisting of an association of numerous individuals. ... Private corporations are those founded by and composed of private individuals for private purposes."

3. Organization. "Organization includes a corporation, government or governmental subdivision or agency, business trust, estate, trust, partnership or association, two or more persons having a joint interest, or any other legal or commercial entity."

4. Incorporate. "To create a corporation."

From the above definitions we can readily see that the words "society," "corporation," or "organization" may be applied to the religious journals that brother Ramsey would endorse. For example, brother Robert Craig wrote in Bible Banner, July 30, 1974 about the nature of the journal: "It is simply a medium through which Kent Ellis and/or I can make known what we personally believe the Bible teaches. WE HAVE ALSO INVITED OTHERS to submit articles...." (*The Willis-Jenkins Debate*, p. 293). Sounds like a society to me, Willie! Here was a human society or organization, by our definitions teaching the Scriptures. Did brethren Ellis and Craig sin, Willie? Was their paper competing with the church or supplanting it?

The Missionary Society and Religious Publications

When I spoke of a missionary society in the Feb., 1988 issue of Searching the Scriptures I was referring to one that takes over a part of the local church's work, to whom the church sends funds, and to whom it surrenders part of its autonomy; an organization that has as motive and

purpose to control the churches and to act as a coordinating agency for local congregations. If Charles Holt's Truth and Freedom Ministry is doing this, then I have no quarrel with brother Ramsey about Charles Holt's organization. We will shake hands on that.

On the other hand, I see nothing wrong, in principle, for individuals to send money to a journal (whether incorporated or not) to pay for the cost of sending the paper to interested brethren that want it. What is the difference between sending names and paying for the subscriptions (as many of us do) and in sending the money without the names to pay for those who request it? Seems to me there is about as much difference as there is between Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Willie misrepresents Guardian of Truth Foundation. He charges that the Foundation solicits money from individuals for the printing of religious material in order to distribute it at will. WHERE DID YOU LEARN THIS, WILLIE? The Foundation did ask some interested people if they would like to give toward the printing of *The Gospel Plan of Salvation* by T. W. Brents, which GOT is now SELLING, and other bookstores, such as Religious Supply. This is the best Willie has on GOT. For this he opposes it and classifies it as a missionary society.

But let's suppose that GOT decided to give away 100 books of *The Gospel Plan of Salvation* by Brents. So what? It seems unreasonable to me that it is virtuous for a company to sell the word of God, but sinful to give it away. Willie has no trouble SELLING the word —just do not give it away. I suppose he would allow religious material that will not sell to be burned or buried in a garbage dump, but sinful to give it to some honest and sincere brethren.

If GOT is doing the work of the church in printing a book for sale with the help of some private donations, may a local church do what the GOT is doing? If not, why not? If a church began doing what GOT is doing, Willie would be one of the first ones to voice his objection.

Answering Ramsey's Assumptions

Now then, let's get down to the particulars of brother Ramsey's article. We will cover his response in the sequence he gave it.

1. Willie's first point ASSUMES I don't understand the all-sufficiency of the church. He thinks if individuals work through human organizations or collectivities in teaching the Bible, the all-sufficiency of the church is compromised. He says, "Therefore neither local churches nor individual saints may form or support religious organizations *other than* the local church of Christ. Anyway, work assigned to us as *individuals* cannot be fulfilled by an *organization*." But I have already shown that religious journals are organizations, yet, Willie endorses many of them. Thou that teachest another, teachest not thyself? Too, the home is an institution and it is to teach the Bible (Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 1:5; Deut. 6:7).

Yes, the church is totally sufficient to do what God assigned to it, whether it be evangelism, edifying its members, benevolent work or worship, but that does not mean that ALL teaching of the Bible is to be done

exclusively by a local church, or benevolent work, or even worship. If so, then all religious papers must come to a halt, as well as Bible departments of schools, home training of children, and worship conducted in group settings, such as singings outside the church assembly. Methinks that Willie also limits the scope of the local church. Too, how about a home (institution) for widows, some of whom are widows in deed? Does it limit the church?

Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke traveled together (Acts 16, group action). What if they would have pooled their money with Silas for travel expenses, and some optional decisions were made by group consensus? Would they have sinned, Willie?

2. Willie ASSUMES that I misunderstand the difference between individual and organizational action. He affirms, "Individual duties cannot be discharged in organizational (collective) actions." He quotes brethren Frank Puckett and James Cope to try to prop up his case.

Frank Puckett said in the same speech to which Willie refers, "Distributive is defined grammatically as 'separation among or into individuals or individual groups'. ... Distributive action is performed by separate individuals or separate GROUPS (emphasis mine, WEW) of individuals" (p. 156). So, brother Puckett taught that individual action could be "group action." It would have been nice if Willie had put Puckett's statement he quotes in context. By the way, brother Puckett taught Bible at Florida College for a couple years or so.

You need to read brother Cope's tract to which Willie refers. He was answering Batsell Baxter who was trying to justify putting the college in the church's budget. Brother Baxter was defining the church to mean just anything he wanted it to mean. Brother Cope replied in that context. I also refer you to brother Cope's response to Ralph Williams (*Truth Magazine*, Sept. 16, 1971). Brother Williams tried to parallel Florida College to a society. Brother Cope clearly and explicitly showed the dissimilarity. Some brethren are rather loose with their use of the phrase, "missionary society."

The *Willis-Jenkins Debate* in Pasadena, Texas in Sept., 1974 was a collectivity, and organizational arrangement of individuals. No local church had anything to do with it. Cecil Willis sent 200 dollars to Dr. Curtis Torno and that money was pooled with 200 more dollars for rental of the high school auditorium. Group decisions were made and money was pooled. From our definitions, it sounds like a society or organization to me! Why has not Willie, and those of his persuasion, "jumped on that with both feet?" Why is he zeroing in on GOT for receiving some money from individuals to help print a book to sell, but is as "silent as a tomb" about that individual collectivity in Texas?

In that debate brethren were arranging and forming a collectivity to argue that it is sinful for individuals to function religiously through a collectivity, other than the local church. That is about like a mini-debate I had with a woman in a lectureship assembly (I was on a panel) wherein she vehemently contended it is wrong for a woman to speak in the assembly. I recommend the

Willis-Jenkins Debate for your perusal. I concur wholeheartedly with brother Willis.

3. Willie ASSUMES I don't know the difference between a business organization and a missionary society. I have already covered much of this section in preceding remarks. However, I wonder if Willie understands what a missionary society is? It would be interesting for him to properly and accurately define a missionary society that included GOT, perhaps Florida College, Holt's organization, but excluded the religious papers that he endorses.

Willie's endeavor to tie me to J.B. Briney is in vain. Wonder why he tried to connect me with Briney, unless it was to discredit my position by association? I do not remember (and Willie does not either) making the arguments that Briney made. He had better take another peek at what I wrote and what Briney said.

Briney spoke of a school, a religious journal and brethren building and operating a railroad for profit in order to have funds to advance the kingdom. He incorrectly reasoned that if individuals may operate a Bible school, publish a religious journal and own a railroad, then churches may have their missionary societies through which to work. What individuals may or may not do proves nothing as to what churches may do or not do.

Is a school wrong that has a Bible department? Of course not? A school can get out of line, but that is not the issue. May brethren collectively publish a paper, as Briney said, "upon business principles?" Such is being done with Willie's endorsement. Looks like Willie has some things in common with Briney. What about a railroad? Well, let's say the railroad prints religious books and SELLS them for a profit? Is it doing the work of the church?

The proposition that Briney was affirming in the debate with Otey was dealing with churches using such organizations as the Illinois Missionary Society and the Foreign Christian Missionary Society. Do not try to yoke me to Briney, Willie. Brother Otey had the truth in that debate.

4. Willie ASSUMES I don't know the difference between buying a service and giving a donation. He only surmises this. The problem with Willie is that he thinks sending a donation to GOT to print a book to sell, or I suppose to help blacktop the parking lot, makes it a missionary society, doing the work of the church. Actually, Willie needs to chastise some of the brethren that are in the same camp he is in. One of them has received funds from individuals to print his own religious material to sell (Reliable testimony is in my files). It is all right for them to do what they claim we sin in doing. Consistency, thou art a jewel!

5. Willie ASSUMES I don't know the difference between donating money and donating an article. He introduces a Baptist magazine, insisting there is a difference between sending articles and donating money because he may send an article over which he has control, but not money over which he has no control. Well, what about sending money if the Baptist paper consented to publish all articles in an issue by gospel

preachers on "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" and the money was going totally for the printing and mailing of the articles to 25,000 Baptists? This will never happen, but neither will an article by brother Ramsey appear in a Baptist paper if he writes the truth. Wonder if Willie would send an article to a Baptist paper praising the Baptists? Of course not, and neither would we send a donation to help them promote error.

Brother Ramsey thinks if he sends an article to a Baptist paper (and other papers) that he has complete control over it, hence, acceptable. But he overlooks the "big blue pen" of the editor. He also spoke of a Baptist lectureship on which he could speak if invited. Would he speak at a Baptist church lectureship on "The Scientific Accuracy of the Bible?" What if it were a debate in Pasadena, Texas by members of the church, with the pooling of money? Were those brethren sinning when they donated their money?

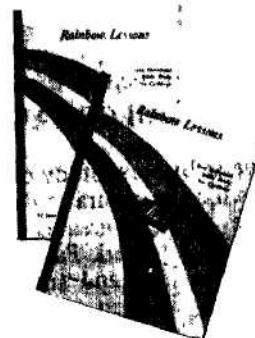
6. Willie ASSUMES I don't know the difference between a preacher receiving support and a preacher acting as a collecting and overseeing board of individuals' monies for religious work. Again, it is a case of Willie seeing a missionary society nearly everywhere he looks. He has "society-itis." How in the world a brother or two sending to a preacher a few dollars to help defray the printing cost of a little paper constitutes a missionary society, rivaling the church, is beyond me. Brethren may help the preacher print his paper, fold it, address it, mail it, and even write some articles for it, but they cannot pay the postage at the post office. So, it is the money with Willie and not the collectivity of time, work and energy. Strange logic!

Willie asked us to see the *Willis-Inman Debate*, p. 95. There, brother Willis said, "if you were to send it (money churches send to Herald of Truth, WEW) to a preacher and make him the agency through whom 2000 churches were going to act, then you would have a one-man missionary society." What does this (CHURCHES sending money to a man) have to do with two or three brethren helping a preacher publish a little paper? Such convoluted reasoning as reflected by brother Ramsey does not even permit a brother buying a preacher a typewriter on which to type his articles. I suppose he could put a sticker on the typewriter, labeled "salary."

In conclusion, let us understand that the Lord has given individuals responsibilities, and those may be fulfilled by just one person, or sometimes in group action, providing the work of the local church is not encroached upon. Too, Christians may operate businesses.

(*EDITOR'S NOTE: For those who wish to study this question at greater length, we suggest the WILLIS-JEN-KINS DEBATE which is still in print and available from the book store. Also, there was an exchange of three articles on the subject between Darwin Chandler and Marshall E. Patton in SEARCHING THE SCRIP-TURES in August, September and October, 1975, Bound Volume 15-16. CWA*)

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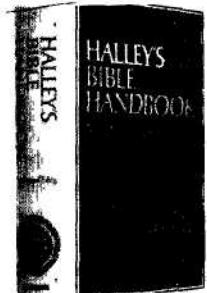
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THINGS THAT LAST

James E. Cooper
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Sometimes it seems that we live in a throw-away society; yet, things that endure still command our attention and appreciation. Most of us try to obtain the most enduring items we can afford when it comes to major purchases like housing, automobiles and furniture. We take pride in enduring institutions. I once heard the president of a college say he wanted to build an institution that would "last a thousand years."

However, such material possessions and earthly institutions will one day come to an end. Jesus spoke on the "end of this world" (Matt. 13:40), and John said, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof..." (1 Jno. 2:17). Peter writes of the day of the Lord, "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10). Those who think only of things material will never lay hold on things that are really enduring. Consider the following things that will last.

1. THE WORD OF GOD. Although men have mistakenly called it a "dead letter," the Word of God is "living and active" (Heb. 4:12). Jesus said, "heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Peter speaks of the "word of God which liveth and abideth for ever," and then quotes Isa. 40:6,8, which contrasts the passing nature of "all flesh" with the enduring nature of the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

Jesus said, "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jno. 12:48). His Word will still endure when the world is on fire. For this reason many scholars believe that "the books" to be opened on the last day are the books of the Bible, the revealed Word of God: "...and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12).

2. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. The church exists because it was purchased "before the worlds" (1 Cor. 2:7; Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 1:10; Eph. 3:9-11). Daniel prophesied that the kingdom would "stand forever" (Dan. 2:44-45). Jesus identified the kingdom of Daniel's prophecy with the kingdom of Christ, the church (cf. Mk. 1:15; Matt. 16:19; Eph. 5:5; Jno. 18:36). Further evidence of the identity of the church and the kingdom is seen in Col. 1:18, where Paul observes that we Christians have been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son" (v. 13). Yet that body over which Christ rules as head is called "the church" (v. 18). No mistake about it; they are the same, and Jesus

said, "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

The writer of Hebrews says, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (12:28). The only institution that will survive this world is the church of Christ. **ARE YOU A MEMBER OF IT?**

3. THE OBEDIENT CHRISTIAN. While the world and all that is in it will "pass away," John says "he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 Jno. 2:17). Jesus said only "he that doeth the will of My Father in heaven shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 7:21). This includes being "born of the water and of the Spirit" (Jno. 3:5), as well as "always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Like Abraham, we look for "a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). We sing:

"Time is filled with swift transition,
Naught of earth unmoved can stand.
Build your hopes on things eternal Hold
to God's unchanging hand!"



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Please Renew Promptly

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

DONNIE V. RADER, 4724 E. Manslick Rd., Louisville, KY 40219 — The work here at Manslick Road for 1988 looks real good. We just finished a meeting (March 6-11) with Dee Bowman. The kind of preaching he did would make any church stronger. It was filled with scripture and forcefully presented. We had numbers close to 300 the last two nights. Non-members were present nearly every night and heard the kind of message they needed to hear. We trust that other efforts in the Lord's work will go well for this year.

WAYNE GOFORTH, 25th and Hawaii, Alamogordo, NM 88310 — I have lost \$300 of support this month, coupled with the \$1251 had been unable to raise, brings it to \$425 per month short. There are only three self-supporting works in the whole state. Texas is hit by the oil crunch. This is a good work. This is the only sound work in a 70 mile radius. There are 75,000 people in a 30 mile area. We get over 100 calls per newspaper ad for our Dial-A-Mesaage phone and the local TV station has given me free air time. I would be glad to furnish references.

KEITH WARD, Rt. 3, Box 1559, Lake Butler, FL 32054 — For the past three and a half years I have supported myself while preaching by appointment and serving as a deacon at Northeast in Gainsville, FL. I am interested in returning to full time work. My articles exposing the misuse of scripture by Science-Foreknew-the-Bible type lectures are still available. They will be sent free upon request for a self addressed stamped envelope. I am available for occasional weekend meetings.

PAUL BROCK, Box 3555, DeLand, FL 32723 — After 6 1/2 years with the North Blvd. church in DeLand, it is our purpose to retire from local work. Though small, DeLand is a fine congregation standing solidly for the truth. The Lord willing, we will move back to Ridge Manor, FL by May 1st. This is where our house is located. The address there will be 5416 Tall Pines Dr., Ridge Manor, FL 33525. It is our prayer to continue to preach as brethren may see fit to use me. in meetings, week-end series and as needed on the Lord's day.

KEITH E. CLAYTON, 7 Buttolph Drive, Middlebury, VT 05753 — R. David Brewer and his family have agreed to move to Vermont to help evangelize the Ruthland, VT area. Dave left a good position with Exxon 10 years ago to devote his life to preaching the gospel. The Tomlinson Run Road church, where he currently labors, will be having some fellowship with him after he moves (I think \$400 a month). Dave still needs more support so he can move to Vermont. There is no sound church there currently. Dave's address is Rt. 2, Box 117, Georgetown, PA 15043. His phone: (412) 573-4862.

LARRY R. DEVORE, P.O. Box 313, Medina, OH 44258 — We are having good interest and attendance at Medina. Since my last report, one young lady has been baptized, and two have confessed sins. The ladies began having a Bible class on Monday evenings at the home of one of the members. We have several who are taking our Bible Correspondence Course.

DON POTTS, 417 East Groesbeck Ave., Lufkin, TX 75901 — I am now in my seventh year with the good church at Fourth and Groesbeck. Such men as Roy Cogdill, Cled Wallace, Luther Blackmon, Robert Farish, Hoyt Houchen, Jim Everett, J. B. Jordan, Kent Ellis, Clyde Strickland and Don Martin have laboured here as local preachers. Out of this church has come at least three other churches in the

city: Timberland Drive, Central and Union Road.

Those familiar with the work will be happy to know that it is now to be a part of a merger to take place March 6, 1988. In 1980 a number of brethren started a work in the Hudson community, west of Lufkin. These brethren asked Dean Bullock to work with them and he has for the past few years. Because a number have moved and the work has been slow in growth it was necessary to think of a merger with another congregation. These brethren will become a part of the Fourth and Groesbeck church on March 6, 1988. Dean Bullock will be working with us and continue his meeting work. When he is at home the two of us will share the pulpit. If you visit the area, stop and worship with us.

CARL McMURRAY, 826 Arlene Ave., Papillion, NE 68046 — We have been in the Omaha area for about 10 months. The La Vista congregation has about 60-65 in attendance and the brethren seem sincerely interested in accomplishing the Lord's work. My work with another preacher, Mike Divis, has proven to be encouraging and valuable.

Since April 1987 we have had 28 responses, 14 of which were baptisms. In spite of about 10 members moving from the area and one being marked as unfaithful, we have seen an increase in both attendance and contribution. Both Mike and I are holding home Bible studies almost daily. We are excited about a mass mail-out for a correspondence course as well as non-members asking for studies and visiting our services. I believe we broke a record last Lord's day when 81 were present. Many of these were non-members. If you visit the Omaha area or know of someone here, or even stationed at Offut Air Force Base, that we could contact, please give us a call or drop us a note.

Lord willing, I will be with the Jordan Park church in Huntsville, AL, April 3-8, in Alexandria, IN, April 10-15, and with the church in Pittsfield, ME, June 19-24.

TOM MOODY, 4001 Taylor Blvd., Louisville, KY 40215 — In 5 1/2 weeks in India, brother Gerry Sandusky and I preached or taught publicly about 45 times each. Our conservative estimate is that we preached to 2000 different people and over 1000 different adults who are not Christians (most of them Hindu). Eighty-one were baptized. At least two congregations were established. About 20 in one congregation took a stand for the truth. 10,000 copies each of four different tracts were printed in the Telugu Language and about 325 Bibles were purchased to be distributed. Several dozen tapes of sermons and the Bible classes and dozens of English tracts and outlines were left with the brethren.

The tracts, Bibles and benevolence rendered to a number of people was made possible by the generous gifts of 30 or more individuals. Our necessary expenses were paid in their entirety by the congregations with which we work. We are so grateful to the Christians at South End (Louisville) and at Madison (Indiana) for their love of the Gospel and sacrificial spirit which made this work possible. —From the **South End Expounder**

MICHAEL GARRISON, P.O. Box 1261, Franklin, NC 28734 — Report of preaching trip to Australia: I arrived at the Birsband airport on Feb. 27 and was met by my pen-pal of over 12 years, David Bennett and his wife and their four children. It was so good to have Christians awaiting me and to welcome me to Australia. This was our first meeting.

I was asked to preach with the church in Bundaberg on Wednesday night. Afterward, they agreed to have me preach in what they call a "mission" (we call them gospel-meetings) on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. All went well in this meeting with a few visitors present on Friday and Sunday. I was well received and enjoyed my work with this congregation. I was also asked to preach the next Wednesday night and Sunday morning.

On March 13th, after the AM worship, my host, David Bennett and I left to drive three and a half hours or so to meet with the church in Rockhampton. It was arranged that I speak with the church in Gympie on Wednesday on my way back to Brisband. I was well received here. I was taken to Ipswich by brother Bennett on Friday, March 18th. David and I said our farewells here as he needed to go back to Bundaberg to return to work. I preached at Ipswich on Sunday night (March 20) and Tuesday night. They are but a few in number here and were glad to have a visiting preacher come by and encourage them in the faith. On Wednesday the 23rd, I preached with the Rockedale church. There is much to do in the gospel in Australia. I arrived at the San Francisco airport on March 28th. I thank the individuals who helped me in a financial way to ease the burden. I borrowed money from my life insurance policy to finance my trip and the help received was much appreciated.

FROM FOREIGN FIELDS

EDMUNDO M. CIPRIANO, 220 Int. 14 Dayao St., Bulut, Tondo, Manila, Philippines 1012 — Last July (1987), while brother Diosado P. Menor had his eye surgery and recuperating he planted a new congregation at 13th Ave. Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines. I moved to Manila last August and was requested to stay and edify the new church. This congregation has no less than 20 adult members. While the church is still very infant, the members are zealous to search the scriptures. We lack Bible lessons materials and other Bible study aids.

RECENT DEATH

FORREST HURST passed away on March 2. Brother Hurst was a member of the Oak Grove church in Louisville and had been the preacher there as well as a number of other churches in Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky. Perhaps the words "zeal" and "conviction" best sum up the life of Forrest Hurst as many of us knew him. Brother Hurst never left doubt as to his stand on important issues. He practiced his faith with manifest joy and enthusiasm. This was most evident by his and sister Hurst's frequent attendance at Gospel meetings. Our sympathy and prayers go with his widow, sister Laura Hurst and son, Boyd. —Adapted from the **South End Expositor**

CHURCH IN NEW BUILDING

JAMES L. ZACHARY, 3474 Winchester Rd., Memphis, TN 38118—The Winchester Rd. Church of Christ has met at its present location, 3474 Winchester Rd. for the past thirty years. We will soon be moving to our new building located at 6590 Statline Road near the "Hunter's Run" subdivision. From I-240 take the Poplar exit east to Ridgeway. Follow Ridgeway (which becomes Hickory Hill) to the intersection of Winchester Rd. Take Winchester Road East to Germantown Extended. Take Germantown Ext. to Stateline Rd. turn right (west) and the new building is located less than 1 mile down on the north side of the road. For further information contact James L. Zachary (901) 794-5258.

A NEW SUBSCRIPTION QUARTERLY

W. Bruce Tooley and Eddie R. Littrell, publishers of "Know The Truth," began publication of **EDIFICATION QUARTERLY** in April. This will be the concerted effort of a great variety of writers of differing ages, experiences, and abilities. The topics of consideration will be intended to foster strength and courage. This will be available for \$3.00 per year (4 issues). To subscribe, write to **EDIFICATION QUARTERLY**, P.O. Box 776, Red Bay, AL 35582-0776.

PREACHERS AVAILABLE

CARTHEL THOMAS, 5327 S. Tryon St., Charlotte, NC 28217 — Carthel Thomas has completed his work at Florida College and at the University of South Florida in Tampa, FL. During the time he was here in college he attended Fletcher Ave. Church of Christ and did

some preaching here. He has filled preaching appointments over the past three years at several places in the central Florida area. He is a very devout young man with a determination to proclaim the gospel of Christ. He is a serious student of the Bible. I commend him to any church who is looking for a faithful young preacher. He may be reached at the above address. For further information you may contact me: H. E. Phillips, P.O. Box 1631, Lutz, FL 33549, phone: (813) 949-3257.

BEN RODRIGUEZ, 1420 West Main St., Lewisville, TX 75067 — I know of a mature, experienced preacher looking for a work in the Tennessee — Kentucky area, or some where in the South East. If interested, please contact me at the above address or call (214) 221-7744.

PREACHERS NEEDED

DUNDEE, FLORIDA — The Dundee Church of Christ is in need of a full time preacher. We have 25 regular members, and in the winter months we have around 40. We can supply about \$1,000 of the support needed and will help to get the rest. We are located in central FL on highway 27.8 miles from Winter Haven. We prefer a man 35 or older with children. Anyone interested can contact us at P.O. Box 1156, Dundee, FL 33838 or call (813) 439-3254.

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA — I have acquired what the doctors call "End-stage Kidney Failure" and have been advised to leave Fairbanks. So I am moving back to East Texas to begin work with my home congregation. I will begin work in Groveton no later than September 1st.

The church in Fairbanks is in dire need of someone to come here. Most of the money needed to support a man is arranged, but would need to raise a little more. We want to secure someone as soon as possible. If you are interested in the work here, call me or write immediately. — Cecil Willis, 3010 David Road, Apt. B-37, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709.

LECTURES

VIVION ROAD LECTURES, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI — The Vivion Rd. Church of Christ, 2026 N.E. Vivion Road, Kansas City, MO 64118, will have its fourth annual lectureship on June 20-23, 1988. The speakers will be Homer Hailey, Robert Harkrider and Randy Harshbarger. The theme will be "Premises For Godly Living." For more information write to the church at P. O. Box 28478, Kansas City, MO 64118 or call (816) 452-3684.

BROADVIEW HEIGHTS BIBLE STUDIES, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA — The Broadview Heights Church of Christ, N.W. 38th and St. Clair, Oklahoma City, OK 73157, will have an intensive series of Bible studies on July 10-15, 1988. The speakers will be Dee Bowman, Leon Goff and Homer Hailey. R. J. Stevens will lead congregational singing. The theme will be "The Gospel — The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (a study of Galatians). There will be panel discussion every night. For more information write to the church at P.O. Box 12654, Oklahoma City, OK 73157.

DEBATE

JACK HOLT of Standley, LA will debate **F. I. STANLEY** of Sunray, TX on the June 27, 28, 30 and July 1, 1988 at the building owned by the Bossier Church of Christ (2917 Foster Street, Bossier City, LA). Brother Stanley will affirm that a person divorced because he was guilty of fornication may marry another while his former wife is still living, while brother Holt will affirm that such an one may only remain unmarried or be reconciled to his former mate. The Bossier church has endorsed Holt's proposition. Olan Hicks will moderate for Stanley. Elmer Moore will moderate for Holt. For more information call Jack Holt at (318) 697-2847 or write him at Rt. 1, Box 409, Logansport, LA 71049.

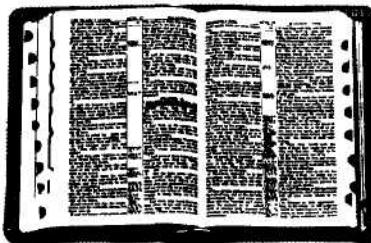
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXIX

JULY, 1988

NUMBER 7

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE

Doctrine, disciple and discipline are related terms. Doctrine means "something taught; teachings ... something taught as the principles or creed of a religion, political party, etc.; tenet or tenets; belief, dogma." Disciple means "to teach, to learn, comprehend, ... a pupil, a follower, or adherent of any teacher or school of religion ..." Discipline means "A branch of knowledge or learning ... training that develops self-control, character, or orderliness and efficiency ... the result of such training; self-control; orderly conduct... acceptance of or submission to authority or control... a system of rules or methods ... treatment that corrects or punishes." (Webster's New World Dictionary).

Simply stated, Doctrine is teaching something; disciple is the learner or follower of the teacher: he receives the doctrine; and discipline is training or developing in the doctrine, which requires instruction and correcting. The doctrine is the gospel of Christ: that which Jesus and his apostles taught. Those who hear and obey the gospel of Christ are disciples or followers. The disciples who are reproved, corrected and instructed in righteousness are disciplined in the Lord. The sum of this is stated in Matthew 28: 18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Here

we have doctrine, disciples and discipline: teaching, making followers, and instruction (discipline).

We have many people in the church today who despise both doctrine and discipline. It is increasingly difficult to get an audience of people to listen to sound doctrine for more than 20 or 30 minutes on Lord's day morning. Usually a much smaller number is in attendance at the evening services. A watered down version of Bible teaching that is calculated to tickle the ears of hearers rather than convict and convert has taken the place of sound gospel preaching. Some of these preachers lay awake at night dreaming up new ideas, catch phrases and programs designed to win large crowds of mostly young people and enthusiastic followers, who are uneducated in the truth of the gospel. Scriptural discipline would clear up this dilemma in many congregations.

When the time comes to administer corrective discipline, there are some who angrily defend the sinful disciple with excuses and untrue charges against the elders and the church. They do not want to discipline anyone. The American Civil Liberties Union is dedicated to liberating criminals and avoiding the just and legal penalties of the most vicious and senseless crimes against humanity. Most of these criminals forfeit their civil rights to be free to prey again and again upon society by their crimes. The attitude exists in the church to defend all sorts of spiritual crime against Christ and his church.

We know that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost. Sinners are the object of the love of God that gave Christ to die for sin (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8, 9). One who had sinned after obeying the gospel of Christ was told to "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22, 23). His sin was grievous: He was "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." The one who repents of sins and turns again to the Lord is being disciplined. That is exactly what rebuke and reproof is intended to do. That is discipline.

God's word teaches the church to discipline disobedient disciples even to the point to "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6).

And also To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5). That is what the New Testament plainly teaches. How can one be a faithful disciple of the great Teacher and ignore or reject this significant doctrine? A skillfully devised attack upon corrective discipline by misusing and misapplying scriptures should be exposed. The best of them will not eliminate one single passage from the verbally inspired body of truth from heaven. God has spoken! His words shall not pass away! Any one who preaches another gospel besides the one preached by the apostles is preaching a perverted gospel and is accursed, because there is but one gospel (Gal. 1:6-8).

Suppose the elders and brethren should simply pass by and cover up cases of needed corrective or punitive discipline (withdrawing ourselves from such), in order to appease the weak defenders of impenitent sinners, what would be the results? It would not be a stronger church, because Paul said "... a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). The fact is that the sinner would continue in his sin and be lost, other weak disciples would drift away because there is no deterrent to them, and the church would be weaker and less able to support the gospel in its purity in a wicked world. Nobody would gain in this situation.

But suppose the elders and brethren insisted that sin be dealt with just as Jesus Christ directed in the gospel, and put the disobedient disciple away from the faithful, what would be the result? The sinner would most likely repent and return to the Lord. At least, he would know faithful brethren do not approve of his sinful life. That is what the Lord wants, and that is what we should strive for. That is the purpose of such discipline. In addition the church would be stronger and in better position to defend and support the gospel. The elders and brethren would be faithful to the Lord, and the preachers would be encouraged to proclaim the unadulterated gospel, the power of God to save. By practicing corrective discipline the church has every thing to gain and nothing to lose, but by ignoring scriptural discipline the church and the sinner have every thing to lose and nothing to gain. Brethren, think on these things!

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KIDS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Whatever happened to uncluttered and simple lives? It seems like only yesterday life was slower and more relaxed in our *Little House on the Prairie*. Welcome to the brink of the twenty-first century! Pa Ingalls wouldn't believe his eyes. Walnut Grove has changed a lot since they added the Pizza Hut, the 7-Eleven, multi-lane interchanges, automatic teller machines, personal computers and Big Macs. Life will never again be like it once was.

We enjoy the benefits and conveniences of modern living to be sure, but we also suffer the inevitable consequences of fast-paced lifestyles and haggard schedules. Help for the hurried home is a priority need for modern families. And who doesn't need it? We are always in a rush, always on the move, always out of breath, always exhausted and overly stressed. Ours is a love affair with haste and hurry. We live for the immediate and sacrifice the permanent. And our families suffer.

SLOW DOWN! Life is too short to rush through like a mad-man on a fast-laned freeway. Have some fun with your family. Relax. Learn to love your kids — I said: **LEARN TO LOVE YOUR KIDS!**

One thing that impresses me about Jesus was that He was always busy. In fact, there never was anyone any busier than He. But one never gets the feeling when studying the life of Christ that He ever hurried, that He ever had to play "catch up ball," or that He was ever taken by surprise. He maximized His time, managed it well and left Himself adequate amounts for prayer, meditation and private teachings. And he never got so busy that He didn't have time for the little ones ...

"Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these'" (Matt. 19:13-14).

Moms and Dads — we have got to do a better job raisin' our kids! Materialism, crowded schedules, working mothers, power hungry yuppie fathers are all factors that are killing our kids. Look around ... WE'RE LOSING OUR CHILDREN! That has got to be the major issue before us.

May I speak frankly with you fathers? Do you feel adequate as a father? I readily confess that I don't.

Sometimes I feel so inadequate, so insufficient, so filled with failure. But one thing I am sure of and that is the need to communicate daily my love to my children. *Love demands communication and communication demands expression.* You pick up that child in your arms and tell him that your greatest claim to fame in all the world is that you're his daddy. And if you do that, he'll forgive your stupid blunders, he'll overlook your imperfections and see past your mistakes because you have communicated your love through expression. Dads, are you communicating love to your kids? Are you expressing it DAILY?

Another area where we fathers (and mother, too) blow it is that we expect too much out of our kids too soon. We demand perfection and practice the fine art of constant fault-finding. I came across the following piece not long ago and it touched my heart as I hope it will yours. I do not know who wrote it. But it tells a story that many of us fathers are too familiar with. Read it carefully and I think you may find someone in it you know.

Listen Son!

"Listen, son; I am saying this to you as you lie asleep, one little paw crumpled under your cheek and the blond curls sticking on your damp forehead. I have stolen into your room alone. Just a few minutes ago, as I sat reading my newspaper, a hot stifling wave of remorse swept over me. I could not resist. Guiltily I came to your bedside.

These are the things I was thinking, son. I have been cross to you. I scolded you as you were dressing for school because you gave your face merely a dab with the towel. I took you to task for not cleaning your shoes. I called out angrily when I found you had thrown some of your things on the floor.

At breakfast I found fault, too. You spilled things. You gulped down your food. You put your elbows on the table. You spread butter too thick on your bread. And as you started off to play and I made for the office, you turned and waved a little hand and called, "Good-bye, Daddy," and I frowned and said in reply, "Hold your shoulders back!"

Then it all began all over again in the afternoon. As I came up the hill I spied you, down on your hands and knees playing marbles. There were holes in your trousers knees. I humiliated you before your friends by making you march ahead of me into the house. Clothes are expensive and if you had to buy them you would be more careful. What wise logic from your father!

Do you remember, later, when I was reading how you came in softly, timidly with a sort of hurt, haunted look in your eyes? When I glanced up over the paper, impatient at the interruption, you hesitated at the door. "What is it you want?" I snapped.

You said nothing, but ran across the room and in one tempestuous plunge threw your arms around my neck and kissed me again and again, and your small arms tightened with affection that God had set blooming in your heart and which even neglect could not wither. And then you were gone. Patterin' up the stairs.

Well son, it was shortly afterwards that my paper slipped from my hands and a terrible, sickening fear came over me. Suddenly I saw myself as I really was and

in my horrible selfishness I felt sick at my heart.

What had habit been doing to me? The habit of complaining, finding fault and reprimanding — all of these were my rewards to you for being a boy. It was not that I did not love you; it was just that I expected so much of youth. I was measuring you by the yardstick of my own years.

And there was so much that was good, and fine and true in your character. You did not deserve my treatment of you, son. The little heart in you was as big as the dawn itself over the wide hills. All of this was shown by your spontaneous impulse to rush in and kiss me goodnight. Nothing else matters tonight, son. I have come to your beside in the darkness, and I have knelt there, choking with emotion and so ashamed.

It is a feeble atonement, for I know you would not understand these things if I told them to you in your waking hours, yet I must say what I am saying. I must burn sacrificial fires alone here at your bedside and make full confession.

And I have prayed for God to strengthen me in my new resolve. Tomorrow I will be a real daddy! I will chum with you and suffer when you suffer and laugh when you laugh. I will bit my tongue when impatient words come. I will keep saying as if it were a ritual: He is just a boy — a little boy.

I am afraid I have visualized you as a man. Yet, I see you now, son, crumpled and weary in your bed. I see that you are still a baby. Yesterday you were in your mother's arms; your head on her shoulder. I have asked too much, too much.

Dear boy! Dear little son! A penitent kneels at your infant shrine here in the moonlight. I kiss the little fingers and the damp forehead; and if it were not for waking you up, I would snatch you up and crush you to my breast. I love you son, I really do love you.

* * * * *

God help me to slow down; to take a renewed look at my priorities; to not expect too much too soon; to not be a constant fault-finder and impatient perfectionist and most of all, GOD HELP ME TO LOVE MY KIDS!

ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

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Louisville, KY 40219



LETTING UP ON THE ACCELERATION

We all must continually evaluate ourselves to see if our faith is as it ought to be (2 Cor. 13:5). We should constantly ask "Is my faith sound" (Tit. 1:13)? Faith is like the human body — it has a bill of health. It can be healthy and strong or it can be sick and weak.

I think I see a problem (to say the least it is a danger) of some of the older Christians loosing some of their conviction. Rest assured, that this could happen to anyone (Heb. 3:12). It could develop to the point that we loose all our faith. The problem I see is not true of all or even most of those who have slightly passed the middle-age bracket. While we are addressing the older members of the church in this article, let this alarm serve as a warning to the younger to strive to avoid the same pitfalls.

It is sad anytime one's faith is not what it ought to be. When I see a younger person whose faith is not strong, I am saddened, yet, I think that there is hope for some growth. It is sadder when I see an older person whose faith is weak and has never been strong at all. It is sad because it is getting a little late for him to grow to the point that he could have. It is even sadder when I see an older person whose faith was once strong, but now has weakened and mellowed with time. He now tolerates things that he didn't before.

The real danger is when we don't see it happening to us. Let us not forget that apostasy is gradual. It doesn't come overnight. It could happen to us before we ever realize we have moved at all. The Hebrew writer urged that we "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1). The KJV footnote suggest that "let them slip" could be translated "run out as leaking vessels." We could loose our faith drop by drop. It is very possible that many of the ones being addressed will read and think that it doesn't apply to them.

The problem we are describing is when those older in the faith begin to let up on the acceleration of their faith.

Some Reminders About Faith

1. What faith is. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). "Substance" suggest that which stands under and supports our hope. "Evidence" suggest the assurance of Divine reality. Thus, faith gives us our standing ground. The problem we are discussing is when that ground begins to break and soften beneath us and it is no longer firm.

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2. The source of faith. Our faith is gained by feeding upon the word of God. Paul said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The same writer begins his great essay on being "sound in the faith" (the book of Titus) by telling us that the source of sound faith is the sound doctrine that was revealed to and preached by the apostles (Tit. 1:1-4). Faith must be founded upon that which is written in the revelation of God (2 Cor. 4:13).

3. There are varying degrees of faith. The Bible speaks of *great* faith (Matt. 8:10), *little* faith (Matt. 6:30; 8:26), *weak* faith (Rom. 4:19), *dead* faith (Jas. 2:20, 26) and *working* faith (Gal. 5:6). Even the devils and the children of the devil believe (Jas. 2:19; John 8:31, 44). This simply shows that I could have faith and still not necessarily be what I ought to be. In connection with the problem we have described, one could easily say that he still has his faith, but it could be a weaker and smaller faith.

Faith Must Grow

When we obey the gospel we are then babes in Christ and our faith is weak. The rest of our lives is a process of growing and maturing in the faith.

1. Growth is a continual process. We do not grow for a little while and then stop at a state of maturity. No matter how long you have been a Christian or how strong your faith may be, God expects you to continue to grow. Peter said that we are to grow *as* newborn babes (1 Pet. 2:1). It is not just babes that need to grow, but we must continually grow as babes do. Paul thanked God for the Thessalonians because "your faith groweth exceedingly" (2 Thess. 1:3).

2. Faith doesn't stand still—it is always moving. Your faith is either increasing or decreasing. You cannot reach a point and stop growing and expect your faith to remain the same. The Hebrews were rebuked for letting their faith fall back. They needed to be taught *again* the very things they had known before (Heb. 5:11-14). When they stopped growing, their faith decreased. It is like driving your car uphill. If you let up on the acceleration, you will finally start rolling back down the hill.

Causes

1. A general resisting of change. When people are young they realize that their situations are not permanent, therefore, there will be many changes. Not only does he accept that fact, but he works toward improvement. He works toward the day he will be married, have children, have a better job, be able to buy a house of his own and drive a much nicer car. He expects his whole life to be changing. So, it is no problem for him to see that his faith must be growing and increasing as well.

When he gets older he begins to get comfortable with the way things are. With some who are older, *any* type of change is hard. The older they get, the less they like the idea of change. So, their faith receives the same kind of treatment. Some of the Israelites had become so accustomed to Egypt that the idea of the journey in the wilderness wasn't so welcomed. Some thought it might have been better to have remained in Egypt.

2. Focusing on the immediate life rather than the real objective. Moses instructed the Israelites to

make the knowledge of God and service unto him the very foundation of life. (Deut. 6:6-9). God placed man on earth to serve and worship him (Ecc. 12:13). It is sad indeed when one reaches the very years that ought to be the most useful in the kingdom, that he or she sets back to merely enjoy life with ease and get involved in other activities besides the work of the Lord. It is in the older years that one should have the maturity of knowledge, wisdom and respect. All of that coupled with retirement should provide the best opportunities of their life.

3. Living in the glow of yesterday, rather than in the challenge of tomorrow. Again, when one is young he is reaching and pushing for greater things (more money, a better house, a better career and a greater faith). The young ever sees the challenge before him. However, as one reaches the senior citizen years the challenge is not as great. He has now attained to a level of stability. He is retired. The job of raising the kids is over. He finds himself looking back over what he has done, rather than what he can do. The tendency is to view faith and service to God the same way. He takes pride in all the great things he has accomplished in the service to God in years past. He has fought the battles and he thinks they are over. Some view the institutional battle as *the* battle of the church. So, they think, we've fought it — we won — let's relax — there's nothing else to do.

After the death of Moses God told Joshua that there was no time to relax, but that the people need to pull together and press on. It's not over yet (Josh. 1:6-11)!

4. Letting up in Bible study and search for answers. When he was a babe, he studied constantly. He searched diligently for answers to difficult passages and questions that others would raise. He wanted to know the answers. Now, in his older years he lets up just a little in serious Bible study. He is not quite as eager as he once was to find those answers. Let us not forget that we all must continually grow in knowledge (2 Pet. 1:5; 3:18).

(To be continued)

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REINCARNATION (NO. 1) (BORN AGAIN AND AGAIN)

Doris V. Rader
729 Westside Dr.
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Some months ago I was asked to present a lesson on Reincarnation. My first thoughts were "why here in America?" If I were going to India, China or anywhere in the East, I could see the need. I had not the faintest idea how successfully Eastern religions had invaded Western thinking. The result of a little research was a matter of great astonishment to me. I soon learned that the saying, "East is East and West is West and Never the Twain Shall Meet," is long out of date. Eastern religions are a definite part of Western thinking.

How Widespread?

Just how widespread and popular is the teaching of reincarnation? According to a 1982 Gallop poll, 23 percent of Americans or about one in four accept reincarnation as fact. More alarming is the fact that among young Americans 30 and under, 30 percent believe this doctrine. About 17 percent of those who claim to attend church regularly believe in reincarnation. Statistics reveal that 21 percent of the "Protestant" population and 25 percent of the Catholic population accept reincarnation.

In view of these alarming figures, it seems to me that our work is cut out for us. We can not afford to try to brush this aside as too ridiculous to bother with it. While we try to laugh it off, thousands are daily being made converts to this and other phases of Eastern religions.

Why the Sudden Popularity?

Since World War II, there has been a growing interest in Eastern religions in this country. The so-called "sacred writings" of Buddhism, and Hinduism have been translated and distributed widely in paperback form here in America. In many instances they are placed in motel rooms as well as other public places. So the textbooks of Eastern religions are in the hands of the reading public. They are there in many forms other than those official books. Many of the best sellers are promoters of various forms of Eastern religion.

We have had several generations of glorification of materialism, with the resultant failure to find any real satisfaction from such. This along with the religious, social, and secular revolts against authority have laid the groundwork for acceptance of anything that strips away authority from the proper source, and places it within the individual himself. These movements which deify man and make a god of self, are finding ready acceptance in the Western world.

When men turn from the truth, they invariably turn

to fables (2 Tim. 4:4). Our society is obsessed with occultism and anything that is supposed to be hidden knowledge. The psychics, modern self-proclaimed prophets, Graphologists, Numerologists, etc. never had a more fertile field in which to do their deceptive work. No person in the past 25 years has done so much to spread the doctrine of reincarnation, as has Shirley Mac Lain. Two books written by her, **Out On A Limb**, and **Dancing In The Light**, have enjoyed enormous popularity. These books along with her television appearances and seminars have caused multitudes to come to believe reincarnation is a proven fact.

Reincarnation Defined

"Reincarnation" comes from the Latin *re*, which means again and *incarnere*, which comes from two other Latin words, *in* and *caro-* "in flesh." Hence, it literally means a coming again in the flesh. We keep recycling from one life to another. Whatever, and whenever the "soul" originates according to reincarnationist, it evolves generally from the lower to a higher state. However, one of the most down played features of the doctrine is that according to Hindu version of reincarnation one just may devolve and return here as a rock, mineral, tree, or cockroach. Now, that thought doesn't meet with too much appeal to Western audiences, and therefore this possibility is just not mentioned. Therefore, in the Western cultures, the advocates of reincarnation follow the general line of "Biological Evolution." They contend that the soul evolves through many, perhaps thousands of lives until it finally arrives at a union with Divine Essence. In other words, we keep coming back until we finally get it right. There will be no failures. Hell, in the Bible is just a hypothetical threat, it doesn't exist.²

Everyone will eventually, by living many lives, work off his "karmic" debt.

What is Karma?

"Karma" literally means "doing, deeds, action, work." Through the process of time the term had come to mean both the action and the fruit of the action. Simply stated, Karma is an impersonal force in the universe that causes one to build up credits and debits through his behavior. We therefore determine the quality and status in the next reincarnation by our actions in this incarnation. If we do bad this time, then the next time around we suffer for it. If we do excellent in this life, then we will be elevated in the next. So Karma, that impersonal judge sees to it that perfect God, overseeing creation, by some impersonal process that operates with the precision of a computer, never making a mistake. Reincarnationists often declare that this is exactly what the Bible teaches, "you reap what you sow." But, no, this is not to be confused with the Bible teaching. In Christ, we reap benefits far beyond what we deserve, Lk. 17:10. Forgiveness of sins is not a matter of our deserving, even though we receive it conditionally.

What is Nirva?

Just what this term embraces, the reincarnationists themselves are not in agreement. And yet this is what it is all about. With some it means reaching "external extinction", while with others it means attaining one-

ness **with** the universe. Still others define it as finally paying off your karmic debt to be liberated from this world purgatory, so as to reach the ultimate and go into non-existence. Some hope, I'd say. The Edgar Cayce model describes it as reaching "God conscientiousness." (More on Edgar Cayce later).

In our next installment, we will consider how reincarnationist misuse the Bible in an effort to bolster their position. We shall call attention to the fact that one cannot believe both the Bible and the doctrine of reincarnation. Those who embrace a false concept such as the one **under** review must face up to some inevitable consequences of the same. Some of these we will notice in the concluding article.

Footnotes

¹ Geisley and Amano, **The Reincarnation Sensation**, (Tyndall House Publishers, Inc., 1986), p. 7, 8.
²Ibid, p. 123.

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DISFELLOWSHEPING BRETHREN

QUESTION: Is it scriptural to disfellowship a brother or sister for leaving a local church of the Lord to join any denominational church or go back into the world?

ANSWER: Paul wrote, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6). When a brother or sister refuses to live right, he or she needs to be disfellowshipped. Of course, there are situations where good judgment, it seems to me, requires only a public statement by the elders to the church that so and so is no longer a member of this congregation, and give the reason(s) why.

Sometimes members quit the Lord and move out of town. Nobody knows where they are. (Parenthetically, if we had established a closer relationship with them, and had shown more interest in such brethren, some of them might have been influenced to live faithful wherever they were. Too many times, weeks, yea, months go by before any inquiry is made about their whereabouts. Then, a year later or longer, a congregation decides to withdraw. There is no longer any relationship with any member, or we don't even know where they are now living. To call such action Bible discipline is a sham!) From what is a church to withdraw? How can there be a disfellowshiping when there can be no fellowship?

When there is, or can be, social communication or association, even though the brother or sister has quit attending the services, the church must withdraw and keep no company with such individuals until there is repentance. This is true, even to those who have joined themselves to some denominational church (Cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Thess. 3:6,14,15; Rom. 16:17-18; Tit. 3:10).

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THE STATUS OF DIVORCED PERSONS

Leon Mauldin
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The Bible teaches that there are three classes of people who are eligible for marriage. One class would be those who have never been married. God's will from the beginning was, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh" (Matt. 19:4, 5). A second category would be those whose spouses have died. Paul said, "For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man" (Romans 7:3, 4). The third category is those who have put away their spouses for fornication. Jesus said, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matthew 19:9). These, and only these are eligible to marry. No other persons have the scriptural right to marry.

Just here we need to notice the binding nature of marriage. Sometimes people reason that divorce is not wrong, so long as one does not remarry. My friend, if one divorces his mate for any cause other than fornication, he has sinned whether he ever remarries or not. One is not cleaving to his spouse, he has put asunder what God joined together, one puts his divorced mate in the position of likely committing adultery (Matt. 5:32), one is not loving his spouse (Eph. 5:23-25), 1 Corinthians 7:3-4 regarding rendering due benevolence is violated, and one has disobeyed the charge the Lord gives unto the married that they not leave their spouse (1 Cor. 7:10-12). Now when one puts himself in that position, or when one is put away, what is his status?

In the first place, if one has put away his spouse for any cause other than fornication, he is not in a position to choose to marry. If one is the "put-away" party in a divorce, he is not scripturally qualified to select another companion. For these persons, another marriage with any one (with the exception of being reconciled to one's spouse, 1 Cor. 7:11), is simply not an option that they have!

But how do divorced (unscripturally) persons stand in regard to such activities as dating? Actually, an understanding of who is scripturally eligible to marry helps us to see who is eligible to date. Now it is obvious that those whom we saw are scripturally free to marry are also free

to date. But what of those who are not eligible to marry. The Bible's answer is that such are to "remain unmarried?" Of course this means that one cannot contract another marriage. But we are raising a practical question in asking, "Is one who is ineligible to marry in a position to date?" What if one reasons, "I know I can't remarry, but we're just friends." Or, "I don't ever plan to marry again, but I need companionship, and I just take her out to have some one to talk to?"

Actually, those who reason in this manner are usually just deceiving themselves. Have you ever noticed that we usually end up marrying someone whom we have dated? The dangers ought to be apparent. One who dates a person who is ineligible for marriage is truly "playing with fire." The chances are good that he will end up in an unscriptural marriage.

But what if they do not ever marry? Does the dating of divorced persons meet with God's approval? We again insist that when we see from the Scriptures who is eligible to marry, we have defined for us who is eligible to date. Persons eligible to marry are free to be together, talk, court and plan (of course with all activities conforming to God's standard of morals and purity, etc.) because they are in a position to follow through on the fruition of courtship; their relationship may culminate in marriage if they so choose. On the other hand, when we see defined from Scripture those who are not eligible to marry, we have also at the same time learned who is not eligible to date. If one is not free to marry, he is not eligible to date!

Sometimes one who is himself free to marry will be attached to one who is ineligible. Before long, the two may agree to go on outings of various kinds together. A man needs to recognize that when he is with a woman who has divorced her spouse for any cause other than fornication, or one who has been divorced, he is with another man's wife. The woman (who is free to marry) who accepts the invitation to go somewhere or do something with a divorced man (i.e. dating), needs to recognize that she is with someone else's husband.

This truth can be seen clearly enough if we are considering a married couple, two who are living in the marriage relationship and are not divorced. While one may have friends of the opposite gender, married Christians recognize that they are not in a position to date those friends (and of course do not want to). But why would that be wrong? Because they are married, they are not eligible to date. A Christian husband does not, for example, reason, "My wife cannot go with me to the Gospel Meeting tonight, so I will go by a friend's (female) house, and take her with me, for companionship, of course." The very same principle is involved when a divorced person is dating, and going on outings, etc. The one who accompanies him is with someone else's spouse. Therefore, an unscripturally divorced person may not date for the same reason that a married person may not date. Neither is free to do so; both are ineligible to do so!

While one hopefully has many friends, a spouse who seeks to please God recognizes that there are bounds which he must not cross. A Christian spouse does not take a friend of the opposite sex for an all-day trip to

Birmingham, and arrive back home late in the evening. The issue is not one of whether he may have friends, but one of that conduct in which he may properly (before God) engage. One who is himself free to marry cannot (with God's approval) put himself in the above type of situations with divorced persons, because **they** are **not** free.

If the idea persists, "I still don't see anything wrong with divorced persons dating," we would ask, "Is it possible for it to **become wrong** at any point short of an adulterous marriage, and if so, at what point?" Is it right if the relationship is "casual", but wrong if it is "serious"? If so, how serious does it have to become — would it be steady dating, or engagement, before it became wrong? I believe the relationship becomes wrong when it starts, just as the same relationship would be wrong for married persons.

It would perhaps be appropriate here to also give attention to the "singles" seminars, rallies, classes, etc. While nothing is intrinsically wrong with special studies for singles, we object to the church's providing opportunities for persons to find companions, with no regard as to whether or not they are eligible for marriage. Just this past week I received a brochure for a "Single Adult Rally" to be held in September in Atlanta. Topics listed included, "Laying Bricks or Throwing Stones", "Singles, Sex and Sanity", "Single Parenting—Building a Christian Foundation", "Single Again — Success or Survival", "Building Success as a Single Woman", and "The Body Beautiful." To be fair, the topics are not necessarily wrong in themselves. But one wonders just what would be taught in that setting on those subjects. But consider also what is not listed. Keep in mind that this "rally" will include those who are "single-again" without distinction as to why one is single again (i.e., regardless of whether or not one has a scriptural divorce). Yet the listing of topics does not include, "A Discussion of Matthew 19:9", or "What the Bible Teaches Regarding Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage", or "It Is Not Lawful For Thee To Have Her." To the extent that such programs for singles involve a compromise of truth regarding God's marriage law we stand opposed to them. To the extent that they provide opportunities for "companionship" and dating for those who are not scripturally free to marry, they are in violation of the Word of God.

If you are free to marry, you still have to make some choices regarding whom you will date. Restrict your dating to those who are eligible to marry. Don't date anybody that is not a proper subject for marriage. We would encourage you to be a faithful Christian and marry a faithful Christian. If you are divorced (unscripturally) you need to recognize your standing: If you are not free to marry, you are not free to date!

Using the

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

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



WHEN TO BE SILENT

Solomon advises us that there is "a time to keep silence; and a time to speak" (Eccl. 3:7).

The words we speak are of tremendous importance. They shall have momentous consequences in time and eternity. Our Lord tells us that they reflect the health of our souls. It is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34). Men shall give account for every idle word (verse 35). This does not condemn innocent humor or small talk. The idle words are portrayed in the context. The Pharisees who said, This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons" (verse 24), were guilty of such idle talk.

"For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (verse 37), concluded the Lord.

How very crucial then are the words we speak!

James speaks of the tongue as a fire: "See how great a forest a little fire kindles!" (5:5, 6). "Where there is smoke, there is fire," we are told. But sometimes the fire is on the end of someone's long tongue!

James continues to describe the tongue as a beast that cannot be completely tamed. Oh, don't turn that wild thing loose on me! What havoc this poisonous viper does render!

Is it any wonder that David vowed to restrain his mouth with a muzzle while the wicked were before him" (Psalm 39:1)?

There is a time to be silent. "Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive" (Prov. 17:18). Even when silence is not perceived as wisdom, it has been said that it is better to be silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt.

My Dad used to tell me to not argue with fools, for bystanders would not be able to tell who the fool was. I've violated that principle too many times.

A man met a friend whom he had not seen for a long while. "How is your wife?" he inquired.

"I thought you knew. She went to heaven," came the reply.

"Oh," he countered. "I'm sorry."

That didn't sound right, so after an awkward silence he said, "I mean I'm glad."

That was certainly no improvement and in desperation he tried again: "What I guess I really mean," he blurted, "is that I'm surprised!"

Often its better to be silent.

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Let's consider some of the times we should keep silence.

1. We should be silent when angry. "He who is quick-tempered acts foolishly" (Prov. 14:17). "Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:19, 20).

Some pride themselves on having a short fuse. They boast about "straightening so and so out"; "giving him a piece of their mind"; or "telling her off." If they were wise, they would be silent until they cooled off. Then if something must be said, they would speak prudently as a Christian ought to.

2. We should be silent when we do not know all the facts. "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him" (Prov. 18:13). "The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him" (Prov. 18:17).

Our judicial system is supposedly based on the concept of hearing all the evidence before a verdict is rendered. It often doesn't work that way because of loopholes and technicalities, but such is as it should be.

One prospective juror was asked if he believed in capital punishment.

"Generally, no," he replied. "But in this case, yes."

At the bottom of most gossip, whispering, and backbiting, is someone who does not have all the facts. One lady is reported to have said, "I didn't know if it was true or not, I just repeated it to be on the safe side."

3. We should be silent when it is none of our business. "The heart knows its own bitterness, and a stranger does not share its joy" (Prov. 14:10).

How often would the Lord say to us as He did to Peter, "What is that to you?" (John 21:22).

It may be that a matter is our business. Perhaps it is a problem within the church of which one is a part. If so, let him speak. But let him speak in the right way and to those who may help correct the situation.

The disciples in Jerusalem who were murmuring over the neglect of their widows (Acts 6:1) did not accomplish anything. I wonder how long the murmuring and grumbling went on before someone approached the apostles with the issue and it was corrected.

If someone is living in sin, such should be your business. But go and talk with him in the proper spirit (Gal. 6:1) If one is not willing to do this, he should be silent about it.

4. We should be silent when our words would destroy a friendship. "A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends" (Prov. 16:18).

One can easily think of exceptions when one ought to speak even if a friendship is at stake. But this passage is referring to words that ought never be spoken.

Most everybody says things, even about friends, that they would not want to get back to those friends. A good rule to follow: don't say such things. They will usually get back.

Another good rule is this: If you are advised of something that someone has said about you, don't take it too seriously. "Also do not take to heart everything people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you. For many

times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others" (Eccl. 7:21, 22).

Doesn't it make you feel good when someone has said something good about you and you are told about it? The "Golden Rule" would suggest then that we should so speak of others that if anything "gets back," it will be something good.

5. We should be silent when our words would destroy a reputation. "An ungodly man digs up evil, and it is on his lips like a burning fire" (Prov. 16:27).

Again, there are obvious times that we would be obligated to speak even if we ruined someone's reputation. But most of the time we should be silent.

Even if we know a matter to be true, this does not mean we should repeat it. We should ask: Is it kind? And then, is it necessary? And perhaps will it help?

6. We should be silent when we have said it many times before. "... the contentions of a wife are a continual dripping" (Prov. 19:13).

A constant drip, drip, drip, is impossible to get used to. You will grow accustomed to living next to a R R track, but a leaky roof, or faucet, is a constant irritation.

So it is with someone who nags. We can understand why Solomon would speak of a nagging wife. But many husbands are equally guilty of nagging. And many parents nag their children constantly.

Perhaps it is time to stop and ask: Is this getting the job done? Is it productive or counterproductive?

Nagging just makes the situation worse. It's better to be silent.

7. We should be silent when it is time to listen. "A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke" (Prov. 13:1).

We are to be swift to hear and slow to speak (Jas. 1:19). It has never occurred to some folks that God may have had a reason in giving us two ears and just one mouth. Furthermore, He gave a mouth that closes and ears that don't.

We can never be good counselors if we are not willing to be silent and listen. We cannot teach the gospel if we are unwilling to listen. Sometimes we may feel we have answered a religious argument when, in fact, we have not understood the argument because we failed to listen.

In meetings all over the country, I see young folks in the audience generally on the back row, who don't know that when it is a time to listen, it is a time to be silent. Surely we are doing our children a disservice if we do not teach them this from a very early age.

8. We should be silent when it is time to work. "In all labor there is profit, but idle chatter leads only to poverty" (Proverbs 14:23). There are many who talk a good game. They talk the Bible and religion. They talk up the need for good classes and more personal work.

But don't count on them when it comes to getting the job done. They are all talk and no work.

Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4).

There is a time when we need to quit talking and start working.

Indeed, there are many times when we need to keep

silent. Next time we shall consider some times when we ought to speak.

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"CUT OFF OCCASION"

"But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion." (2 Cor. 11:12).

The life and teachings of the apostle Paul are in harmony with the above principle. He was willing to forego personal privilege if it would help a weak brother (1 Cor. 8:13). He did not always exercise his power to "live of the gospel" when he thought that course was best for the gospel (1 Cor. 9:12). In the collection and distribution of funds for needy saints, he was "Avoiding this, that no man should blame us ..." (2 Cor. 8:20).

In spite of all this, and no matter how hard we try, we may not always succeed in keeping others from making accusations or doing wrong. Paul followed the advice of James and the elders at Jerusalem in order to "cut off occasion" from the Jews, but the effort was unsuccessful (Acts 21:20ff).

Yet, even when others are determined to pursue a contrary course, we should be more determined not to give them occasion, or excuse. Let them find their own excuse, and bear their own guilt.

If the foregoing principle is good in matters of personal liberty or judgment, how much more in matters which are legislated, and where there is no room for expediency?

Singing

The singing of "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" in worship to God is not a matter of personal liberty, for such is enjoined upon the saints not only as an act of worship, but as an act of edification (Col. 3:16).

When this singing is not the best thing that it could be, and even becomes downright deplorable, we start looking for occasion to improve it. One may suggest new books, another may suggest a new leader, or someone else may suggest a choir or the addition of some mechanical instrument.

In my forty-four years in the church, I have watched the gradual deterioration of singing in churches of Christ. When I began to preach, singing schools were common among the congregations. I have tried to encourage brethren to cultivate their singing, and a few congregations still place emphasis on this part of the worship, but many are negligent and careless. One brother who devoted much of his life to conducting singing schools finally ceased his efforts because brethren either quit scheduling such schools, or wouldn't attend them.

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Brethren, in order to take away occasion from those who would try to improve upon God's arrangement for music in the church, let us give singing the attention it deserves.

The Home

Churches are rapidly taking over the duties and privileges of the home. The home is a divine institution, and was fulfilling its mission long before the church was established. There is a difference between the work and mission of the church, and that of the home. Christ knew it, and any Bible student ought to know it.

Congregations have taken over hospitality, recreation, entertainment, and a lot of other functions which belong to the home. "Family Life Centers" and "Fellowship Halls" are the order of the day for many churches. It may be that we have given these social gospel advocates an occasion to peddle their wares.

We need to "use hospitality one to another" (1 Pet. 4:9), and not just once or twice a year when the visiting preacher comes. Even these remote occasions are being characterized by less and less hospitality.

We need to open up our homes to one another, to the elderly, the middle-aged, and to the young. We need more get-togethers, social functions which are properly home-related. Parents need to accept their God-given duties and privileges instead of looking for occasion to pass such off on society or the church.

Then maybe, just maybe, within a generation or two we can capitalize on the distinct advantages of individual and collective duties, and not only fit the home and the church for their respective roles, but reap the rewards of this divine arrangement.

At the least, we can "cut off occasion" from those who seem determined to supplant the home entirely, and weaken the spiritual mission of the church.

"Do Good"

While this next suggestion belongs in the realm of the home, or personal activity, it still needs to be emphasized by itself.

The practice of "doing good" is not confined to benevolence. We need to seek out opportunities to do good both toward those who are of "the household of faith" and those who are not (Gal. 6:10). Our reaping in this area will be in direct proportion to our sowing.

The Bible teaches that "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). One reason that this is true is because such giving often gets the giver personally involved.

One area of responsibility and opportunity has been virtually taken over by our "Bus Ministry" and its attendant ramifications of reward motivation and other appeals to the flesh.

We need to personally invite people to meetings (both saints and non-saints), offer to provide transportation, talk with them about the scriptures "by the way" (Lk. 24:32), take food to them or invite them into your home or to a restaurant for a meal. Look diligently for other ways to get personally involved in doing good to others, and thereby blessing yourself.

Like Paul, we may not stop some people from doing and saying things which they ought not, but they will

have to look elsewhere for excuses if we "cut off occasion from them which desire occasion."

An added reward is that we will stand justified before God, while those who seek such occasions will not.

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Rodney Miller

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Orlando, FL 32804

IN THE SHADOW OF THE TEMPLE

Emotionalism in Religion — Part 1

We are living in an emotional time. The well worn bumper sticker says "If it feels good do it." Eleven years ago Debbie Boone sang, "How can it be wrong, if it feels so right?" All of this is to say that we are a people that are governed by our emotions more than we are by our intellect all too often. The murder of six million Jews felt so right to many people. Joseph Stalin murdered 22 million human beings and it obviously felt right to him. Even our doctors of theology are now telling us that truth is relative so there is no absolute standard.

Society has taken different positions on emotions over the passing of time. American Gothic was significant of an era when one did not express any emotion. In the home the father was a marble statue and the mother could not smile because her corset was too tight. But if a past generation has been on one extreme our generation has been on the other. We have come to live by the vicissitudes of our feelings. Reason is now dominated by our feelings; rather than our feelings dominated by our reason. We are missing one basic premise that is causing homes to be destroyed, churches to slip and multitudes to go into religious error. That premise is, **EMOTIONS MUST ALWAYS BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE FACULTIES OF THE HUMAN WILL AND REASON.**

When our emotions tell us one thing it is almost impossible for the mind to accept a fact no matter how plain or obvious it might be. When feelings of inferiority cause a person to feel worthless and hopeless it is almost impossible to make that person believe that God loves him. No matter how many passages one might read if they have deep seated inferiority feelings the objective truth will mean little to them. Why? They FEEL unworthy of God's love. Emotions are like a strong river. They have the potential of overflowing their banks and it is our responsibility to keep them within their boundaries.

The desire for emotions in religion is not new. Paul speaking about a very emotional middle eastern people said in 1 Cor. 1:22. "The Jew sought for a SIGN..." What the Greek world wanted was wisdom for the intellectual side of man but what the Jew wanted was an EXPERI-

ENCE. Think of the experiences that the Jew had been a party to in his history. The parting of the Red Sea had to be a great emotional experience. Think what it must have been like to have been paralyzed with fear as the army of Pharaoh came pressing down on the people while they were hemmed in by the Red Sea. Then to see Moses' rod become the Rod of God and the sea opened and they walked through while Pharaoh drowned. That was an emotional experience! What about the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai? What about the day the sun stood still for Joshua? These and hundreds more created a history of bone chilling, spine tingling, and hair raising experiences for the nation of Israel. As the Hebrew writer talks about the giving of the Law in Heb. 12:21 you see emotional words like "full of fear and trembling." The Jew was looking for an emotional high in his religion.

How then are we to respond to the nature of our emotional society on one hand and the natural inclination of man to want an emotional religion on the other hand? To answer this question we must ask another question. How reliable are our emotions anyway? How good are we at deciphering the truth by our senses in the first place?

John tells us in 1 John 4:1 -4, "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits." Why? Because he tells us that there are many false spirits that are not from God. This is directly parallel to what Paul told the Corinthians in 2 Cor 11:13, about "false apostles who are deceitful workers." He said that there is no wonder that these false apostles deceive everyone so well because the devil himself is disguised as an angel of light. The real hard-ball issue of truth is that we do not do very well discerning truth from error. And when we only use part of our being, the emotional part, we do very poorly and Satan takes advantage of that everyday.

Look at one man who had a very emotional experience and did not do very well discerning the truth and it cost him a lifetime of grief. Gen. 37:33-35 finds the jealous brothers of Joseph selling their younger brother into slavery. They take his coat and dip it in blood and show it to their father and let him draw his own emotional conclusion. "My son is dead." "Surely Joseph has been torn to pieces ... so Jacob tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and mourned for many days." His grief was so bad that he refused to be comforted. "I will go down to sheol in mourning for my son."

The question we want to ask is this, "should Jacob have trusted his emotions?" For years he lived in grief feeling that his son was dead. He wept over a lie. Those feelings were not based on fact. Because Satan is so good at deceiving us and because we are so easily deceived it does not behoove us to be content to follow what we are feeling. For the sake of our soul in eternity we need to build what we believe on objective, verifiable scripture that we can see and know it comes from the mind of God.

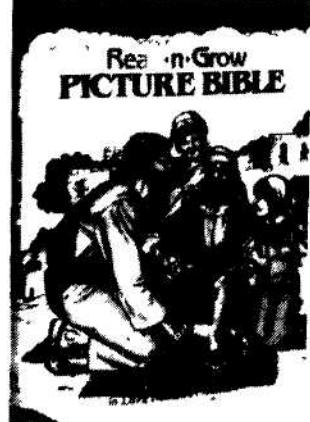
Notice the importance that the apostle Peter places on verifiable scripture from God as opposed to what he had witnessed first hand on the Mount of Transfiguration. In 2 Peter 1:16-18, Peter talks about an experience that no Pentecostal could match. He saw the Son of God trans-

figured into His glory right before his very eyes. It was such a life changing experience that he blurted out, "let us build three tabernacles..." What an experience! To be one of only three people in the history of mankind to see something like this certainly will mark you for life. But when Peter was making a defense that what he was writing to them was true he said, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, but ..." He did not hang the truth of his message on the experience of what he saw, but rather on the "more sure word of prophecy that took place when the prophets spoke as they were carried along by the power of the spirit. To most people what could be better evidence that what he had experienced? Peter argued in this text that what the prophets said was in fact better evidence than what he had seen and heard! If that experience which was a very emotional experience was not good enough for Peter how could we be satisfied with so much less in the weight of the experience itself?

One of the greatest dangers in the world of religion is that of emotional subjectivism. One person says, "the Lord told me this..." and another says "the Lord told me that..." And we don't know who to believe because they both conflict. Too many believe because of what they perceive as private inside information. If private inside information is our standard in religion then whose feelings do we trust? Whose feelings and experiences are dependable? Whose emotions are leading us correctly? This attitude toward religious authority had caused a world of religion anarchy? This is the message that needs to be preached to the Pentecostal world.

In our next article we will deal with the question of "Why is this emotionalism so much a part of the Pentecostal religion?"

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ALCOHOL, PARENTS, AND CHILDREN

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Recent surveys show that the number of teenagers using cocaine and similar drugs is declining. That is the good news. Here is the bad news. "Alcohol remains the drug of choice among today's high school students, and its popularity continues unabated" (Time Magazine, 15 Feb. 1988, p. 94). Many parents are asking, "Why can't we keep our children from drinking?" The Time article—"When Parents Just Say No"—says "the job of protecting teenagers would be far easier if no-booze attitudes were established early on, and if they were bolstered in the schools. But the primary responsibility will always lie with parents." Ah, we the parents! That is where the root of the problem is. Not every time, but very often.

How are parents the problem? 1. Parents who drink are hypocrites when they tell their children not to drink. There is no moral authority and no fitting example in such a stance. It will not do to argue that drinking alcohol is an "adult privilege." That argument obscures the fact that ALCOHOL IS A DRUG. Is it a moral privilege to drug the mind? If it is an adult privilege and a moral right for an adult to drug the mind with alcohol, why not with cocaine or any other drug? Is it a moral privilege to do one but not the other — and that one, the right of adulthood? Parents can deceive themselves with such double talk and nonsense, but young people are too perceptive to find any moral force in such an approach.

2. Parents are the problem when they pretend they can "teach their children how to drink responsibly." How does a person drug his mind "responsibly" and "safely" for the fun of it? Such an act is neither responsible nor safe — ever. "I know parents who think nothing of buying a keg and having a party with the kids in the backyard," says a high school principal. Fathers who "share a beer" with their sons had just as well share a joint of marijuana or a snort of cocaine with them.

There is no morally defensible way to "supervise" drugging the mind for social and recreational purposes. Is man with his mental and moral faculties a mere animal to be toyed with and experimented with in such a fashion?

3. Permissive parents are afraid to say, "No," even when they disapprove. They are looking for a compromise and are skirting the real duties of a parent. True love requires that we draw firm lines between right and wrong, that we take the time to give instruction and explanation as well as rules, and that we follow up with balanced discipline when necessary. Such duties can be hard and painful, but we brought these children into the world and they have a God-given right to parental

guidance. We drew firm lines, explained why, and exercised discipline to teach them to stay out of the traffic when playing. We can and must go through the same process to teach them not to drug their minds with alcohol. When parents just say, "No," to some things, they show how much they love their children. Down deep, the children know it. They also know when that degree of love is missing.

Parents, especially fathers, are responsible to raise their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). To teach our children the dangers of alcohol and other drugs, let us begin by explaining that God created us all. All that we have and are — body, mind, and soul — belong to God for His service. God is the origin of all love, wisdom, and blessings. We embrace Him as our ultimate guide in life. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7). Our children need to see that God is the source of all that is good, right, safe, and helpful in life.

Next, we need to patiently teach our children what God said to warn against using alcohol, intoxicants, or drugs as a social and recreational drink. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). Let's read to our children God's description of both the attraction and the folly of drinking (Prov. 23:29-35). Show them the progressive nature of the danger: from "**banquetings**" (social drinking or "drinking parties," N.A.S.), to "**revellings**" (intoxicated dancing, singing, shouting, etc.), to "**excess of wine**" (the drunken debauchery of alcoholics) — all mentioned in 1 Peter 4:3. Our children need to learn that God in His love has a good reason for warning us against intoxication: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

One of the greatest ways we can help our children is by being faithful Christians. If we have not obeyed the gospel, we need to start by believing the gospel enough to repent of our sins, to confess Christ as God's Son, and to be immersed in water for the remission of our sins through his blood (Matt. 26:28; Acts 2:38). Then we need to be stedfast in worshiping God as members of His church — we need to grow every day in His service (Acts 2:42; 2 Pet. 3:18). As our children share in Bible classes and worship services, they will develop the faith to better understand why we just say, "No," to alcohol.

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CHILDBEARING

**Dan Walters
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God in the beginning told our first parents to "Be fruitful and multiply in the earth" (Gen. 1:22). Children were recognized in the Bible history as blessings from God (Gen. 4:1; Ps. 127:3), and the inability to bear children was looked upon as a most unfortunate circumstance (11 Sam. 6:23; 1 Sam. 1:4-8), and was at times a punishment from God (Lev. 20:20). In the New Testament younger widows are told to marry and to bear children (1 Tim. 5:14). The Apostle Paul even teaches that women "shall be saved in child-bearing" (1 Tim. 2:15), not meaning that a woman must be able to bear a child in order to be saved, but that bearing children and rearing them is the most important work appointed to her by the Lord.

Most members of the Lord's church know that abortion is sinful, and they would not consider that alternative to child-bearing. But using artificial means of birth control to prevent having any children at all seems to have gained acceptance among us. It was not so in earlier days. Brother David Lipscomb wrote in his **Commentary on First Corinthians**: The habit of women preaching originated in the same hotbed with easy divorce, free love, birth control, repugnance to child-bearing and child rearing." (Comments on 1 Cor. 14:34).

I know of no Scriptural principle which would forbid the use of contraceptives for the sake of the mother's health or in order to prevent a family from having more children than they can support or care for. Roman Catholic doctrine, of course, forbids any use of them. But we must beware of going to the opposite extreme. One of the purposes of marriage, though not the sole one, is to bring children into the world. What right have healthy, young Christians to enjoy all other benefits of marriage and yet to refuse to accept the responsibility of bearing and rearing children? What motive, other than selfish-

ness, would compel normal, young married couples to make such a decision?

We might think that since the world is already well-populated it is now unnecessary to bring more children into the world. But there are Scriptural reasons why faithful Christians should desire children. One reason is that we will have the opportunity of molding their characters by bringing them up according to the teachings of Christ (Eph. 6:4; 11 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). We can usually have more influence over our own children than over any other human beings. If we help them to become strong Christians, we thus strengthen the church. Another reason why Christians should want children is in order that the men might someday become qualified to serve as elders in God's church (Titus 1:6). Yet another reason, perhaps not so important from a spiritual standpoint, is that one must have children in order to have grandchildren, and the Bible says that "Children's children are the crown of old men" (Pr. 17:6), and we might add that they are the crown of old women as well. A decision not to have children may be regretted most in old age.

There is such a thing as natural law in spite of Roman Catholic abuse of this principle (Rom. 1:26, 27; 2:14; 1 Cor. 11:14; Rom 1:31). When we deliberately choose to live our lives contrary to the course of nature, there is a penalty to be paid. At the very least, this involves a frustration and a dissatisfaction with life even when the real cause is unknown to the sufferer. To attempt to defeat or bypass nature's laws is to show contempt for God's grand design. And that design was drawn up with our own happiness in mind.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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SCOTT VIFQUIAN, Route 6, Ford Drive, Mt. Washington, KY 40047 — For the past several years I have had the pleasure of working with some of God's people in the Bluegrass State, preaching the gospel on a "full-time" basis. I started out working with the church in Danville, KY for a year. I am indebted to Royce Chandler and Kelly Ellis for helping ground me in the faith as a young preacher.

After a year in Danville, I worked with the Goochtown church in

Lincoln County near Waynesburg, KY. After a short stay there I moved to Versailles, KY to work with the Camden Ave. church for seven years. From Versailles I moved to Mt. Washington, KY in Bullitt County to work with that church. I am thankful for the four years I have worked with them. Recently, I accepted an offer to work with the church in Campbellsville, KY. Lord willing, I plan to move there sometime this summer. I anticipate a good work with them.

ROBERT H. WEST, 1050 Remington Drive, Sunnyvale, CA 94087 — On June 1st, after seven and a half years here in Sunnyvale, I will be moving across town to work with the little group in Milpitas, CA, which is sandwiched between the northeast part of San Jose and the city of Fremont. From its beginning many years ago, the Milpitas group has identified with institutional brethren. In the last few years, however, the elders have refused to support the many brotherhood projects and opposed the social gospel. Some of the more liberal element there departed. The elders initiated contact with non-institutional churches and brethren in the area, recognizing that there had come to be very little difference in our convictions and practices. In September of last year, brother Homer Hailey held a meeting for them, at which time the elders made it clear publicly that they wished to be involved only in preaching truth and working as a congregation after the New Testament pattern. Brother Clyde Wilson, an elder of Santa Clara congregation, preached for them for a few months. Presently, brother Rick Amick, from Santa Clara is preaching there on Sunday mornings. Other area preachers and elders, including myself have preached and taught classes there from time to time. Carroll O. Smith and G. Dudley Stout are the capable elders. They have an adequate building with several class rooms in an excellent location. Milpitas is a rapidly-growing area in "Silicon Valley" and opportunities for increase abound. Some members from various congregations who live in the area have already placed membership there and others are planning to go there to help. My support has been assured by Sunnydale and other area churches. F. David Moyer is now working with the Sunnydale congregation.

If you know of brethren or other folks in south Fremont, north San Jose or Milpitas whom we could contact, please let us know. The building address is 450 Wool Drive, Milpitas, CA 95035. Phone: (408) 262-4646.

ERNEST ROBERTS, c/o Central Post Office — General Delivery, Roseau, Dominica, W. Indies — We have just completed our fourth year in Dominica. We have preached in several villages and the Capital city. There are now two conservative congregations and a third one has just begun. When brother Ed Garraway moves to the Castle Bruce-Good Hope area on the east coast of the island in June, the new work will receive a boost.

Since January I have been working with the church at St. Joseph apart from my work with the church at Goodwill in the Capital city. The St. Joseph brethren left the liberal church last year after reading the **Dominican Exhorter** and after I had some discussions with their preacher. The Exhorter is a small bi-weekly paper published by Gary Henry and Steve Gwinn in the U.S. and sent to us for mailing to both liberal and conservative brethren in Dominica. Gary Henry preached our Gospel Meeting the second week of May. Mike Vickery of Ocean Springs, MS came with Gary.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

JERRY SAYRE, Rt 7 Box 100, Seymour, IN 47274 — I am 43 years old. I have been preaching for 23 years. I am married and have two children, one still at home. I have been at Seymour for six years and feel it is time to move on. I am available to move at anytime.

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Commerce and one of the ten best small cities for retirees in the U.S. by Rand McNally. Contact Wayne Stewart, Route 4, Box 280, Cookeville, TN 38501. Phone: (615) 528-2738.

FORT BRAGG, CALIFORNIA — The congregation of 20 members in Mendocino County on the north coast of California, seeks a sound preacher who has partial support. Interested parties may obtain more information by writing to Church of Christ, P. O. Box 2, Fort Bragg, CA 95437.

ROUND LAKE BEACH, ILLINOIS — The Hainesville Rd. Church of Christ (located approximately 45 miles north of Chicago) will be needing a full-time preacher as of August of this year. This is a self-supporting congregation of 80-90 members. At the present there is no eldership. Those interested may write to: Church of Christ, 1109 Hainesville Rd., Round Lake Beach, IL 60073. Call: Dick Anderson (312) 662-8621, Don Neave (312) 367-7113, Arne Paulsen (312) 356-7657 or Dale Sintd (312) 223-5102.

PORTLAND, MAINE — After two years I am returning to our home in Harrington, MB June 1st. Bruce Hudson is leaving Milbridge at the end of the school year. I will resume work with the church there. I came to Portland when the preacher for the only conservative church in this section defected to the institutional church in So. Portland, taking the majority of the church with him. We now have 8 members, with a few visitors who attend regularly.

Portland is the most strategic spot in the state. One fourth of the one million population of the state live in commuting distance of Portland. There is a sound church 1 1/4 hours to the north and another the same distance to the south. We need a man to move here to work with the small group. Support will have to come from outside, although we may be able to help raise it. Write to the church at P.O. Box 822, Portland, ME 04104 or call (207) 799-0720. — R. C. Smart, Sr., 18 Claries Rd., Elizabeth, ME 04107.

RADIO PROGRAM

Readers on the West Coast will be interested to know that **Tommy L. McClure** of Antioch, CA has a radio program called **BIBLE TRUTH**. He can be heard on KPLA Radio (770 on AM dial) on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. This is a 50,000 watt clear channel station.

PROJECT HELP

In the next few months PROJECT HELP will be conducting seminars in various cities throughout the U.S. PROJECT HELP is a company formed to help preachers learn how to better handle their finances. There is NO COST to anyone. The Seminar is not designed to sell anything nor to obligate you in any way. THE SEMINAR IS FREE.

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During the seminar the preacher will learn how to legally reduce his taxable income. If he desires to become exempt from Social Security, he will be advised of the requirements, benefits and deficits of such action and will be assisted in doing so if he so chooses. Also, the present and future status of the church in the eyes of the IRS will be discussed. Preachers will be told of the current laws affecting the church's tax status and will be assisted in filing, when necessary, for tax exempt status.

If you do not see a city near you, contact PROJECT HELP, Route 1 Box 293A, Houston, MS 38851 or call (601) 456-4624.

SEMINARS: Atlanta (June 7), Memphis (June 30) and Dallas (July 19).

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

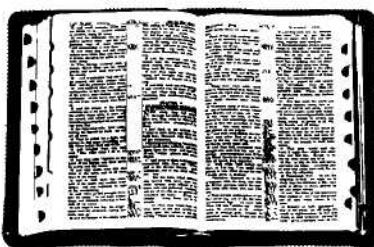
BAPTISMS
RESTORATIONS

196
35

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXIX

AUGUST, 1988

NUMBER 8

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



HYPOCRISY OF THE PHARISEES

Jesus pulled no punches when he addressed the duplicity of the scribes and Pharisees. The scribes were those who copied, studied and handled the law of Moses. The law of Moses had been divided into thousands of rules and regulations and strictly enforced by the scribes and Pharisees. The law required a man to keep the Sabbath day which would not permit him to work on that day. The scribes and Pharisees labored to define that commandment to detail exactly what works one could not do, how far a man could walk on the Sabbath, how many sticks he could carry, etc. They made sure that no good deeds may be done on that day. Such scrutinizing and interpretation of the law produced thousands of prohibitions, requirements and totally perverted the law and its purpose as given by Moses.

The name "Pharisee" means "The Separated Ones." The Pharisees composed a strict party of Judaism, that was dedicated to keeping every tiny detail of the law and every rule and regulation as defined by the scribes. The Pharisees were dedicated legalists: they determined to secure their salvation by complete obedience to the Law and all of the interpretations of the scribes. Synonyms for the term "Pharisee" are, "fraud," "hypocrite," "phony" and "tartuffe." Jesus forthrightly labeled them "hypocrites" (actors, pretenders) and the reasons were clearly revealed. If anyone has an idea that he can please Christ while preaching one thing and practicing another, let him read carefully Matthew 23.

The denunciation of the Lord came because of the

perverted and corrupt religious practice they had developed. Their sins produced a religion that:

Says But Does Not Do

The scribes and Pharisees occupied a position of authority in teaching the law and leading in obedience to God. Instead of doing as the law requires, they commanded others, and then would not even move one of their fingers to obey the law. The emphasis upon DOING the will of God is found in many places in the New Testament. Being doers of the word and not hearers only is the point made by James in 1:22-25. Only the man who looks into the law of liberty and does the work is blessed in his deed. Not those who call upon the Lord will be saved, but those who do the will of the Father in heaven (Matt. 7:21). The wise man who built his house upon the rock versus the foolish man who built his house upon the sand, is the difference between just hearing the word, and hearing it and doing what it teaches (Matt. 7:24-27).

They had built a religion based upon thousands of impossible rules and hardships which they rigorously imposed upon the people, but they shrank from doing all these things. Many people today impose such rules and restrictions upon others and try to bind burdens upon them, but they personally will not do what is required. They want, however, credit for their claim to righteousness while doing nothing, thus they become hypocrites.

All that the scribes and Pharisees did was for the glory of men. They appeared to be righteous, and dressed for the salutation and approval of men. They sought the dignified titles and the high places at every gathering which exalted them above others. They were bloated with pride and hardened with the arrogance that forged them into the hypocrites that Jesus condemned. Ostellatious hypocrites occupy conspicuous places in churches of Christ across the land today. Many of them very closely resemble the scribes and Pharisees condemned here by the Lord. Mostly their fault is saying and not doing. Some will preach long and loud about how we ought to be out converting the world to Christ, but they spend very little time doing it. Some will talk about how much we ought to give to the Lord, but they rob God every Lord's day. Others teach that we must live moral and holy lives, but they are among those who are guilty of adultery, theft, lying and greed.

The indispensable virtue of humility was totally lacking in the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus said just before this address to the scribes and Pharisees, "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (vs. 12). They sought the love for worldly acclaim, the applause of men, the disgusting show of empty piety, and intolerable dispositions. They were morally bankrupt. They were shamefully deceitful. Little wonder that Jesus proceeded to pronounce a series of "woes" upon them. "Woe" is a word of solemn denunciation, of punishment, of divine justice. Their religion

Closed The Entrance Into The Kingdom Of Heaven

The scribes and Pharisees stood in the way and kept people out of the kingdom of heaven. Their hate, envy, pride and arrogance toward Christ and his teaching compelled them to resist him with all their might. One must do the will of Christ to be in the kingdom; he must be "born again" (John 3:3, 5). The kingdom and the church refer to the same body of people in the same relationship to Christ. They did not accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and therefore rejected the kingdom of heaven. They used their cunning influence to turn men to themselves and away from Jesus Christ.

The same class of people were told that they had "taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered" (Luke 11:52). By keeping people from the knowledge of the truth, they are kept from the kingdom of heaven. Theirs was a religion of

Greed and Deceit

The King James Version has verse 14 which gives a woe for devouring widows' houses. It is found in footnote in the American Standard Version. This is in harmony with the things Jesus is saying in this chapter, and I want to include it here. They devoured widows' houses and tried to cover it with long prayers. Their greed and avarice made them insensitive to the poor and helpless. Their hypocrisy produced long prayers, no doubt to be seen of men (Matt. 6:5, 7-8), in an effort to cover their sins. Oh how empty and foolish was their farce at worshiping and serving God! — Continued.

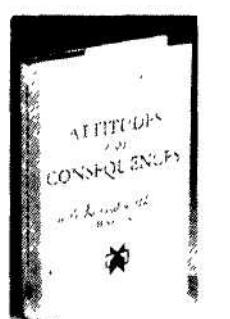
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Editorial

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PREACHING IN ITALY

We have recently completed our third trip to Italy to visit among the brethren. We were there in 1976 and again in 1980. In 1975 there were two congregations standing for the truth in a nation where liberalism has manifested itself as it has here and in many other places. Today there are ten congregations (some quite small) which are walking in the old paths. We were able to visit nine of these. The preaching among these churches is all being done by native Italian men. A great deal of hard work has been done and the results are evident. Progress is difficult in the face of Catholicism with all the ignorance and superstition it has bred into the people for centuries. In reaction to Catholicism, there is a rising tide of atheism among the younger generation. Business and industry are prospering in Italy and there are many signs of greater prosperity for many of the people. This adds materialism to the list of enemies of the truth. Yet, in spite of all of that, the work has grown. I think it would be of interest to the readers of this paper to know something of our impressions of the work in the places we visited. A number of American churches and individuals have helped support Italian preachers, or have assisted those of us who have gone to visit among them. Some of the younger preachers there came to this country to school and are known by many brethren here.

Via Sannio, Rome

The church here is one of only three which owns its own meeting place. It is perhaps the nicest of any of the rest. Sandro Corazza is the preacher here and has worked here for many years. He has spent literally years of his life in translating good material into the Italian language for use in spreading the truth in that country, including several books. These include INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH by George Salmon, CATHOLICISM AGAINST ITSELF (Vols. I and II) by O.C. Lambert, THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH by Roy E. Cogdill, WALKING BY FAITH by Roy E. Cogdill, and the entire TRUTH IN LIFE BIBLE class series. He has authored an extensive 26 lesson Bible correspondence course geared to the needs of the Italian work. For a number of years he has published a magazine called SENTIERI DIRITTI which has been circulated all over Italy. That helped to open doors for the work in Poggiomarino to be grounded in the truth, as well as in Alessandria, Udine and Trieste. In the last few years the church at Via Sannio has suffered greatly from a factious group

which caused trouble soon after coming there. They left, were disciplined, circulated among liberals and the Christian Church (causing some trouble among the liberals as well), then returned saying they had repented. In compassion and hopefulness Via Sannio took them back. They very soon caused trouble again, even attempting to gain a majority and take over the physical property. This failed and now they have gone and meet privately somewhere in Rome. Other brethren over Italy felt that these people had scandalized all faithful brethren in Italy through gossip and slander in widely circulated letters they sent out. We are praying that the damages caused by these unworthy people will heal in time and that the strain on relations among faithful brethren may be removed. A normal Sunday at Via Sannio has about 30 in attendance. We had 22 present on a Thursday night when I spoke there. **NOTE: Word has come that these problems have now been resolved.** We rejoice.

Aprilia

This city is located about 40 miles from Rome in the heart of a rich farming area. In many ways, the church there appears to manifest the most stability of any we saw. Rudolfo Berdini has been the preacher for many years. He is 65 years old and a man of great influence and ability. He is knowledgeable in the Bible and eloquent in the pulpit. He has written an excellent Bible study course on Bible characters and has completed commentaries on Galatians and I Thessalonians and will soon finish one on 2 Thessalonians. 55 were present on a Sunday and 50 also on a Tuesday night for a midweek service. Brethren from Aprilia well supported special meetings at Pomezia and Latina. They have a good mixture of older and younger people. We witnessed the baptism of a 50 year old man who was baptized by his son (who is fast developing into an able preacher). Since returning home, we received word from brother Berdini about the baptism of five more just after we left there. That answers many prayers and rewards faithful efforts of brethren there. Contribution at Aprilia runs about \$400 a week. They rent their meeting place and will soon be in need of larger facilities. This is very expensive in Italy. They provide some part of Brother Berdini's support both for local work and other preaching opportunities over Italy.

Pomezia

This industrial city is about 25 miles from Rome. There are 13 members and 20 in usual attendance. Roberto Tondelli is the able, energetic and well informed preacher. He is 36 years old. He worked tirelessly as my interpreter while we were in that area. Here also we saw signs of spiritual growth on the part of the members. They also have to rent their meeting place and it costs them \$500 a month for a store-front. One brother who was converted four years ago was an atheist. His wife was converted a year ago. I spoke more times here than anywhere else. The brethren insisted on paying me something for my work, the only place in Italy that has ever done that for me. They also provided expenses for Tondelli to take us to Poggiomarino, near Naples to visit with the church there.

Latina

There are five members meeting in this sea-coast city south of Rome (near Anzio). Francesco Fosci, trained at Aprilia under Rudolfo Berdini and the son of one of the elders there (his father passed away in 1981), is preaching at Latina. They have a small but attractive meeting place, which again, is a rented store-front. They had planned a two nights series in a larger hall. I spoke the first night and brother Berdini the second. The work here is slow and very difficult but a good effort is being made by a good man, faithfully assisted by his good wife and two fine children.

Poggiomarino

This city is east of Naples near Mt. Vesuvius and the ruins of the ancient city of Pompei. This is where the late Vincenzo Ruggiero preached. He died suddenly of heart failure two years ago. They have no full time preacher now, but three men take turns preaching. One of them is Elio Ruggiero, 19 year-old-son of Vincenzo. Elio is a student at the University of Naples majoring in English, Japanese and French. They own their own meeting place and have about 60 in attendance on Sunday. 40 were present on a Monday night when we were there. They have an impressive number of young people. We were well received and enjoyed our third visit with these brethren.

Alessandria

A few miles north of Genoa is this city of 100,000. Arrigo Corazza is the preacher for this congregation of 15 members. This church formerly was associated with liberal brethren but has taken a firm stand in opposition to the unscriptural practices with which they formerly were identified. They meet in rented facilities. We were only able to be there for one night but received a good hearing. Brother Corazza prints and circulates a very attractive and well written bulletin. They have had several gospel meetings with other Italian preachers coming to assist.

Udine

A great deal of progress has been made in this small city in northeastern Italy. Stefano Corazza is the preacher. He is working along with Valerio Marchi, a young lawyer who gave up that career to preach the gospel. They have much good work in progress. There are about 15 members now, many of them young converts of the last two or three years. In fact, they could use a few older members to give them balance. They also print and circulate a very fine bulletin for teaching work. When they have special meetings (as was true in other places in Italy) they prepare large posters which they place in prominent places in the city and then saturate a large area with handout materials. This is costly and time consuming. They are also using a telephone message to reach new people.

Trieste

One of the most impressive congregations we visited was in this city of 300,00 in northeast Italy (on the Yugoslavian border). Gianni Berdini is the preacher. The church owns its meeting place on the second floor of a building in the center of the city. We noted considerable progress since we visited there in 1980. They have

rearranged their space to provide extra classrooms. Attendance runs about 35. There are a few older, experienced brethren and some younger people as well. Rino Tommasi, one of the members, is a most impressive man. He conducted a two-night special series on the Bible and Science at Udine recently with 40 non-members present the first night and about 20 more new ones the second night. We were impressed with the spiritual progress in evidence at Trieste. Gianni Berdini also has a good bulletin used for teaching a growing mailing list.

Monfalcone

This small city about halfway between Udine and Trieste is the scene of an effort to plant a new work. Stefano Corazza is doing the preaching in a rented place, and is assisted by Valerio Marchi from Udine and by Gianni Berdini from Trieste. Other members of both places are helping in various ways. They have saturated the area a number of times with advertisements and teaching materials.

A great deal has been accomplished in Italy in the last few years against numerous obstacles. The preachers are well trained, dedicated, aggressive and on guard against any uncertain sound. They all need to move the churches toward self-sufficiency at the earliest possible date. What has been done in the last few years would not have been done without the support which good brethren here have supplied. There is much yet to be done. Many of the members are yet babes in Christ with the usual growing pains to overcome. They all need our prayers even as we need theirs.

It appears to me that there has been a waning of interest in gospel work around the word in recent years. This must be reversed. Only a small percentage of the world's population lives in this country. The gospel is for the whole world and we must do what we can to see that it is spread everywhere. We would remind our brethren in other countries that they bear responsibility also to stabilize their own work as soon as possible, do what they can in their own countries and then think in terms of sending men and supplies from among themselves to help reach the rest of the world. Brethren here should not have to support the work in any country indefinitely, if the Lord's plan is to be properly executed.

We thank the Italian brethren for their invitation and for their loving hospitality while we were in their midst and we thank the three congregations which made it possible for us to go.

* * * * *

SPECIAL THANKS

I am grateful to Donnie Rader and Wilson Adams for editing the June and July issues of STS. Each wrote a guest editorial and Donnie did the news column and the paste-up both months. This gave me some much needed relief. This was the first time since I became editor in 1973 that I did not personally get an issue of the paper in the mail and write an editorial. Their work was excellent and I join the readers in thanking them for a job well done.

MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

Rodney Miller

15 W. Par St.
Orlando, FL 32804



IN THE SHADOW OF THE TEMPLE

EMOTIONALISM IN RELIGION, (PART 2)

With the Calvary Assembly church of God, a 5,000 to 7,000 member church just around the corner from where we worship it is like "living in the shadow of the temple." One of the issues that Pentecostalism has brought to the fore front is that of emotionalism in religion. One young woman came to us on the rebound from the Pentecostal movement. While she could see many problems with the movement she was still hung on one issue that stood between her and truth. She wanted to "feel something" so she would know that she was saved. In reality she was still looking for a religious experience to direct her life. All too often this journey to "feel" or "experience" something has led people to turn their backs on what the scriptures say. The Pentecostals are not the only ones in religion using feelings or emotions and experiences to validate the truth of their position. The Mormons are perhaps the most subjective of all the religions. When you have been discussing a position with them they simply put their hand over their heart and say, "I feel in my heart that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God." Then it makes little difference what you say or what you show to them from the scriptures because the answer is always the same, 'This is what I feel.'

How then can we deal with emotions in our faith? For the Pentecostal the answer is easy. "Experience" has the primary role of the authority in their lives. As much as they want to give lip service to the authority of the scriptures, in reality the ultimate authority is what "I feel is right." The real reason this is true is found in the history of the reformation movement. Augustine developed the doctrine of original sin and the reformation movement had to figure out what to do with it. There were two lines of reasoning within the Protestant movement.

On one hand was the work of John Calvin and his 5 major points of Calvinism called the T-U-L-I-P. In Calvin's work the "T" stood for Total Depravity. This is seed of Augustine's original sin. Now, to deal with this sin, it was necessary for the direct operation of the Holy Spirit to take place on the heart of man. The sequence for Calvinism and salvation is this way:

First, by faith only a person is Justified and Regenerated.

Then, at death after a life time the person is Sanctified.

But during the formation of this theology there was another stream of thought. John Wesley was developing what was to become the Wesleyan school of Theology which would be the foundation of pentecostalism. John Wesley began with the same presupposition of original sin as did John Calvin. But his time table was different. First, one is saved by faith only and Justified. Then, by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit one is Sanctified at that point by burning out the original sin. This is called the "second blessing." Sanctification is called the 2nd blessing because Justification is called the first blessing.

But this act of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit that burns out the sin, is an emotional experience. An experience that "Is better felt than told." Therefore this emotional experience of Holy Spirit baptism is called the second blessing and is necessary for salvation. Once the Holy Spirit begins to move on you and you speak in tongues then the original sin of Adam is burned out of your soul.

Here are some quotations from Pentecostal leaders taken from brother Bruce Hudson's bulletin. His article is entitled, "Speaking in tongues." He quotes George Cornell who interviewed various Pentecostal preachers at an Assembly of God convention. The report was published in the Bangor Daily News. One quotation was from a Bill Williams of San Jose, California. "It is beyond emotion, beyond intellect. It transcends human understanding. It is the heart of man speaking to the heart of God ... We don't understand the verbiage, but we know we're in communication." In another, James Walter of Shawnee, Oklahoma says, "It's just a great exuberant feeling. The only way to understand it is to experience it." This is the experience of the Second Blessing.

What does the Bible have to say about this? First, let us begin with the doctrine of Original sin that came from Augustine. Paul in Rom. 7:9 tells us, "that there was a time apart from the law that I was free from sin but when the commandment came sin became alive and I died." As a child Paul was not responsible for the commandments. A baby can't do all the things written in the law but there comes a time when one is responsible to the commandments and when that happens and you fail then sin becomes alive. Another passage that shows that the heart of man can receive the word of God without the direct operation of the Holy Spirit is Luke 8:15, "where the honest and good receives the word." If the original sin of Adam scares the heart to the degree that it is dead then it would take a miraculous experience to open it to the truth of God. Such is not the case. The power is in the Gospel to save the heart and when that seed is planted in the right kind of heart, Jesus says that it "receives the word." Again in John 5:25 Jesus says the "dead shall hear the voice of God." In this context Jesus is speaking of those dead in sin. They will be able to hear the voice of God.

But what about passages like Psa. 51 and Isa. 48:8 that seem to say we are born in sin? In Psa. 51 David is confessing that he is a very wicked person, v. 5 "In sin my mother conceived me." A parallel statement would be "In drunkenness my mother conceived me" but that doesn't

make the child a drunkard. Or "in anger my father beat me: doesn't make the child violent. As David was pouring out his soul to God over his sin with Bathsheba he was stating how wicked he was. To illustrate this he turns to his past. David was the tenth in line from Pharas, who was the illegitimate son of Judah and Tamar. (Matt. 1:3,4 and Gen. 38:29). Deut. 23:2 tells us the offsprings were counted illegitimate for ten generations. So David may have been saying, I am so wicked that I am even illegitimate even to the roots of my family tree. This verse does not teach that David was born with the sin of Adam counted to his record.

Then in Isa. 48:8, Isaiah tells us that "you have been called a rebel from birth." This was not speaking of a person but of the nation of Israel. How true this has been concerning the Israelite nation. From the time Moses went up in Mt. Sinai to receive the law they were making the golden calf.

Notice Rom. 9:11 concerning Jacob or Esau the text says, "that they had done nothing good or ill." They were innocent at the time of their birth.

It is clear from the scriptures that the reason for the emotional experience of Pentecostalism is not valid. The child does not inherit the sin of the father and that the gospel is enough in the honest and good heart to be the power of God until salvation.

The real question is concerning the words Justification and Sanctification. Are these in fact two different processes? Calvin says that Justification occurs at salvation and then Sanctification occurs over a lifetime and culminates at death. John Wesley says that Justification occurs at salvation, but that sanctification is the Second Blessing and it occurs when the baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place. We need to ask Paul what he thinks about the process since he introduced the world to it in his epistles. In I Cor. 6:11 Paul says, "And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ ..." Notice these three terms, "Washed, Sanctified, and Justified." The verb washed is in middle voice meaning the subject did the act of washing. It is used in Acts 22:16 of baptism that washes away sins. Because it was middle voice it says that the Corinthians themselves desired and accepted this washing and cleansing. Next is the verb, "sanctified." This does not refer to the burn out of sin; rather to a specific action at which God set someone apart. It is in the Aroist tense meaning that it took place at one point in time. This is opposed to Calvin's concept of a lifetime culminating at death. The verb is in the passive voice meaning that the subject of the verb did not do the action of that verb. In other words the subject did not do the "setting apart." That was done by God. Finally the third verb is "justified." That means to be declared just. It too is in the passive voice and Aroist tense meaning that it was a one time action and it was not done by the subject of the verb. It is God who declares one just. What is the conclusion of all of this? When the subject, that is the Corinthians on their own were washed then God did two things on His own. He set them apart and declared them to be just. Therefore the theology of both Calvin and Wesley miss

the mark of the Apostle Paul.

In our next article we will investigate some legitimate use of emotions in our religion.

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In a former article on this subject, we have defined some terms involved in the doctrine of reincarnation. We also called attention to the alarming popularity of this system of self-deification and Universalism. We desperately need to sound an alarm and wake the public to the deadliness of this movement. It is not an innocent curiosity, but a deadly, devastating system that is completely and totally in opposition to the Bible.

Some Proof Texts Offered

Reincarnationists cannot agree whether the Bible teaches this doctrine, or whether it does not. Ms. MacLains' personal psychic, Keven Ryerson, who played a prominent role in her book, *Out on a Limb* as well as her television special, declared that it was once in the Bible but "the Council of Nicea voted to strike the teaching of reincarnation from the Bible."¹ David, a prominent character in her book also told her how it was common knowledge that "... proper interpretations were struck from it (Bible) during an Ecumenical Council meeting of the Catholic Church in Constantinople sometime around 553 A.D., called the Council of Nicea. The Council voted to strike those teachings from the Bible in order to solidify Church control." It would seem that her psychics and others in tune to the "psychic data bank of cosmic history" could do a better job of getting their facts straight. In the first place the council which met in 553 was not called the "Council of Nicea," but rather the Fifth Ecumenical Council, known as Constantinople II. Second, neither of the Councils mentioned dealt with the subject of reincarnation. One issue which was discussed was the belief in the preexistence of the soul. It was not that they had experienced previous incarnations but only that one had existed prior to birth. Origen had taught that humans had a prior existence as angelic creatures. But he wrote concerning the theory that John the Baptist was a reincarnation of the prophet Elijah and **denied** that he believed the doctrine of reincarnation. He said,

"In this place, it does not appear to me that by Elijah the soul is spoken of, lest I fall into the dogma of transmigration (reincarnation), which is foreign to the Church of God and not handed down by the Apostles, nor anywhere set forth in the Scriptures. For observe, (Matthew) did not say, in the "soul" of Elijah, in which case the doctrine of transmigration might have some ground, but "in the spirit and power of Elijah."² Thus, some 70 years before the Council of Nicea and some 300 years before Constantinople II, Origen denies

that reincarnation was either in the Bible itself, or in the teaching of the church at that time.

Space does not permit a consideration here of the number of passages which are twisted and perverted in an effort to show that there is some hint, or suggestion of reincarnation in the Bible. One passage often used by reincarnationists, and the last I would want to mention if I believed that doctrine, is John 9:1-3. Jesus' disciples asked the Master who sinned, this man or his parents that he Was born blind. Now, the Lord had the perfect opportunity to teach all about "karma." Instead, Jesus specifically denounces the idea that one's state in this life is dependent upon something in another's former life, or a former life of his own. Whose sin caused this blindness in this man, Lord? Jesus makes it clear that it was nobody's sin which caused this and that your belief in "cause and effect" is purely wrong. Each passage which they offer is easily disposed of as an inadequate text when carefully examined. The Hebrew writer declared, "It is appointed unto man once to die but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

It is impossible for one to believe the Bible teaching concerning the resurrection and accept the reincarnation concept. These are two radically opposing views! They cannot co-exist in the same viewpoint. The acceptance of the resurrection is the bedrock of Christianity (1 Cor. 15:1-23). The resurrected body will be imperishable, immortal, glorified, and a Heavenly body. None of this is claimed for reincarnation. Geisler and Amano in the book **The Reincarnation Sensation** (p. 151) summarizes the major differences in reincarnation and the resurrection as follows:

Reincarnation	Resurrection
Mortal body	Immortal body
Many-times event	One-time event
Intermediate state	Ultimate state
In process	Perfected

It will do the reincarnationist no good to argue that even if there is no specific passage affirming reincarnation, that the doctrine is in harmony with the Bible. Only those ignorant of the Bible could be led to believe this assertion.

The King of Karma

I must pay some attention to Edgar Cayce, the late American psychic who did more than any other contemporary figure to re-introduce and popularize the ancient doctrine of reincarnation into Western civilization.³ He is known as "The King of Karma", and "The Sleeping Prophet." During his lifetime he gave thousands of "readings" in which he claimed to be drawing his information from the "Memory of Nature," or the so-called omniscient Akashic Records. He claimed that he himself had lived many times prior to his present life. There was nothing modest about his claims, he and his were always big and important people in past life existences. He had been a famous Egyptian high priest who was instrumental in building the great pyramids of Egypt. At that same time Jesus was his associate living as Hermes. Then later Jesus lived another life as Zend, the father of Zoroaster whose own father was none other than Uhjltd (Cayce).⁴ Thus at one time Jesus was the "son of Cayce."

One of the most ludicrous claims in Cayce's readings concerns Jesus being reincarnated first as Adam and then as Enoch. Of course, the Bible student knows that the two men's lives overlapped 178 years. Adam was still living when Enoch was born. Wonder how Cayce's "Akashic Records" got so fouled up as to make a blunder like this? One of his readings went like this: "Q. When did the knowledge come to Jesus that He was to be the Savior of the world? A. When he fell, in Eden." (1092)⁵ While I do not claim to know all the answers to how Cayce did many of the things he did, let it be remembered that even Cayce wondered if the Devil might be using him.

"That's what I always thought, and against this I put the idea that the Devil might be tempting me to do his work by operating through me when I was conceited enough to think God had given me special power... If ever the Devil was going to play a trick on me, this would be it."⁶

F. LaGard Smith wrote: "Mediums are prohibited by Scripture not because there are no spirits who are able to invade the earth-plane, but because there are spirits out there who are more than willing to invade the earth-plane in order to deceive us about our origin, purpose and destiny. They are not spirits of our dearly departed. They are spirits who are in open rebellion to God. When we deal with Mediums, ancient or modern, we are not assured of getting the right spiritual formula for our happiness, growth and ultimate destiny. God wants us to come to him and to his revealed word so that we can be assured of knowing the Truth that sets us free."

Some Consequences

The doctrine of reincarnation in all its ramifications is simply a system of self-deification and Universalism. John Hick argues the very point that God lets none be lost. The system has no place for grace, or forgiveness for the "Karmic" law is one of strict full payment with no pardon or forgiveness.

The system of karma solves no problems, and offers no justice. It proposes to punish children for lives they never lived. A child is born horribly deformed, and mentally retarded. The terrible suffering and agony it will endure through life, may be payment of the karmic debt which Adolph Hitler incurred. Hitler went free, the child pays.

To attempt to alleviate any of the suffering, pain and heartache about us, would be to interfere with that soul paying off its karmic debt, and simply carry it over to another life. This would be improper interference! A man might be putting his wife through unbearable shame and heartache by his adulterous affairs. He could simply tell her that this is what she deserves because of actions of her own in a former life. This is her karma to be paid in this life. Thus, reincarnation besides being false, is the source of much that is evil, unjust and inhuman.

The mediums, and psychics may be interesting to a lot of people. But the real issue is what spirit moves them? What God has prepared for those who love Him is a matter of His revelation, not one of hidden mystery

(Eph. 1:9; Eph. 3:3-5). To His written revelation we must make our appeal. To reject it is to reject all hope. Do not count on there being a second chance, and much less that there will be many more such chances. **Footnotes**

¹ MacLain, Shirley, *Out On A Limb*, (Bantam Books, 1983), p. 181.

² Smith, F. LaGard, *Is Shirley MacLain Right Or Is She Out On A Broken Limb*, (Harvest House Publishers, 1986), p. 135.

³ Church, W.H., *Many Happy Returns*, (Harper and Row Publishers, 1984), Preface page.

⁴ Furst, Jeffrey, *Edgar Cayce's Story of Jesus*, (Berkley Publishing Corp., 1968), p. 107.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁶ Geisley and Amano, *The Reincarnation Sensation*, (Tyndall House Publishers, Inc., 1986), p. 79.

⁸ Smith, F. LaGard, *Is Shirley MacLain Right Or Is She Out On A Broken Limb*, (Harvest House Publishers, 1986), pp. 57, 58.

THE WORLDLY CHURCH

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In the late 1950's and early 1960's sharp differences in the understanding of the work of the church and the need for scriptural authority led to division among brethren. Will that schism ever be healed? How far "gone" are the institutional brethren? Will they ever see that they have departed from the "old paths?"

These questions were uppermost in my mind as I stepped through the doors of the Preston Road church of Christ (a large institutional congregation in Dallas, Texas) on May 15, 1988 to attend a forum discussing a controversial new book, **The Worldly Church**. What is this book about, and why are institutional brethren so concerned about it?

The Worldly Church was written by C. Leonard Allen, Richard T. Hughes, and Michael R. Weed. The book is a scathing rebuke of the social Gospel programs that non-institutional brethren have condemned for years. The book has stirred up much controversy because it was written from within the liberal camp, from men they know and trust (two are professors at Abilene Christian University). I daresay that if Elmer Moore or Connie Adams or Roy Cogdill had written the book there would have been no discussion at Preston Road that afternoon! Liberal brethren are so concerned about the indictments contained in the book that they are quite actively talking and questioning its message. Thus, Preston Road arranged for the authors to come and speak about this troublesome little book.

The schedule for the afternoon had each of the writers make a 30 minute presentation about one section of the book. Following a brief break there were responses from one of Preston Road's elders (Stanley Scott), their "pulpit minister" (Randy Mayeux), and one of the teachers at the Preston Road "school of preaching" (Ronnie Wig-

gins). Doug Foster, a "church historian" from David Lipscomb College, and Mike Armour, who preaches for the Skillman Avenue church, also made responses. This article will not discuss their responses, instead spending scarce time and space on what the authors had to say. The afternoon concluded with a very brief question and answer period. I would have given my left arm to address the large audience, but no non-institutional brethren were allowed to speak.

Summary of the Speeches

There was some concern that the authors would stand up and try to "whitewash" what they said in the book. They did not. They forthrightly and honestly explained that they meant what they said, and said exactly what they meant. The church, according to these men, has lost its "Christ-centered-ness" by allowing itself to be seduced into meeting the world's needs of recreation, entertainment, and bettering mankind. Instead of meeting THE ultimate need, the salvation of the soul, the church is rushing to be like the denominations, striving to better men. They illustrated this point by pointing to the practices of some liberal churches. One congregation was using the Sunday morning Bible class to teach high school students how to make better grades in school! The authors stressed that when the church becomes secular in its emphasis, God will lose His awesome majesty and power and be transferred to merely an "assistant" who helps US with what WE want. Although each author expressed trouble with knowing how to solve these problems they urged the development of a new "model" of Bible interpretation. A new hermeneutic is needed, they explained, because the "constitutional" or "pattern" approach to the Scriptures (although not without its merits) is of human origin and part of the secularization problem! Therefore a new way to interpret the Bible must be found. In what may seem like a complete contradiction, the writers also called for more Bible study, and being a "people of the Book" as solutions to the crisis at hand.

Questions and Answers

The question period that followed was, without a doubt, the most disturbing part of the whole afternoon. Several "anti" preachers (as they call us) were with me and we handed in several questions. Brother Bobby Holmes (preacher for the Dallas Avenue church in Lancaster, Texas) asked "if these churches with secular schools, gymnasiums, fellowship halls, etc. are not 'worldly churches' what will it take for them to become such?" Brother Hughes answered this question by saying that it was not a certain list of things that a church was doing that made it a worldly church but the MOTIVES behind the things it practiced. He said he had no problem with a gymnasium, unless it has been built so that the church could have its own exclusive "church of Christ club." If it was built to serve the community, he had no problem with it. How dismaying to see that he believes that we can do anything if our motive is right! By this thinking the church should build hospitals long before it builds gymnasiums! But in truth there is no "book, chapter, and verse" for either (see Colossians 3:17).

My question for the writers concerned their views on the Holy Spirit. **The Worldly Church** seems to teach that the Holy Spirit dwells in us apart from the Bible. I asked the authors to clarify this point, and they did. Brother Allen stated in no uncertain terms that the Holy Spirit **does** operate outside of the Word of God. He went on to say that the belief that He dwells in us only through the Scriptures was a "bizarre aberration" produced only in the last century, and was another of man's attempts to limit God and put Him in his pocket. Brother Weed also replied, indicating that he completely agreed with brother Allen, and stating that the Bible clearly taught that the Holy Spirit worked outside of the Word. He explained that while some insisted on calling this "providence" he preferred the more biblical term, "the work of the Spirit." This was the low moment of the afternoon. When brethren cannot see the difference between providence (God's care in arranging environment and circumstances for one's benefit) and the work of the Holy Spirit to guide one into all truth they are in deep, deep trouble! Brother Hughes also indicated that he completely agreed with the statements of his colleagues. They concluded that they were not talking about Pentecostalism in the least, and that they weren't headed down the pathway to interpreting indigestion as the leading of God's Spirit. They may sound good, but in reality it will not work. Once brethren decide the Spirit operates outside of the word of God, where will they draw the line, and on what basis will they draw it? How can they say, "God is leading me by this feeling" but turn around and tell a Pentecostal "God is NOT leading you by your feelings?" Where will it stop? With an ache in my heart I heard many, many brethren say "amen" to the things the authors said about the Holy Spirit.

Initially, my feeling is positive. We must commend these men for the courage to write **The Worldly Church**, even though we do not agree with many of their conclusions. For the first time in many years the institutional brethren are asking THEMSELVES (rather than us asking them) "have we erred somewhere?" Furthermore, I believe the book shows that there are still some sincere, honest brethren to be found in the liberal camp. Unfortunately, many have characterized all institutional brethren as being dishonest liars, but such is simply not the case. The authors all impressed me as being sincere men, who were genuinely concerned about what was going on among their brethren. I spoke at length with brother Hughes during one of the breaks and he listened attentively as I spoke of the non-institutional churches and how they already had what his book was crying for. He seemed interested and intrigued by what was said, not bitter or caustic. If we are writing off all liberal brethren as being unreachable or dishonest we are making a terrible mistake.

Secondly, **The Worldly Church** has opened an unprecedent door of opportunity for us. It shows us some liberal brethren are still interested in the Bible and being God's people. Far too often we've written them off, but I firmly believe many still want to be right with God, still yearn for the Jerusalem Gospel, and are becoming increasingly fed up with the social Gospel. The

furor this book caused proves it. Let us not be idle while the "fields are white unto harvest." This book provides a rich opportunity for us to talk to friends, relatives and neighbors who are members of institutional churches and point out that the "anti-churches" are still having Bible classes, still love God's word, still emphasize it in our preaching, and don't have problems with running to meet the world's every whim. This may be much more attractive to many people than one might think.

However, this optimism is tempered with severe disillusionment and disappointment. In many ways, liberal brethren have traveled far down the road of apostasy. If we couple their call for a new model of Bible interpretation with their doctrine concerning the guidance of the Holy Spirit it is obvious what is going to happen: **they will embrace charismatic and Pentecostal doctrine bit by bit.** It is as inevitable as two and two making four. To be certain it will not happen over night, but **it will happen** if they decide to leave the all-sufficiency of God's word.

It was also disappointing to see no discussion of Bible authority or any appeal to "book, chapter and verse." No one talked about going back to the old paths, instead there was the earnest desire to move FORWARD to new and better things (such as the personal guidance of the Holy Spirit). The writers seemed surprised that anyone would see the book as an indictment of the social Gospel, as they disavowed any attempt to end these "ministries." Instead they claimed they were merely trying to re-focus the church's attention to the Cross. There was no ringing call for repentance issued, and no one seemed to think there should be such. The idea of having Scripture behind all that we do is treated as an outdated anomaly, something that might be a nice idea but is certainly not workable in the framework of our society today. Indeed, the authors repeatedly ridiculed the idea that the New Testament was a pattern for our work and worship. Colossians 3:17 was read (because it was appended to Bobby Holmes' question) but the passage was not even commented on, nor did anyone seem to think it had anything to do with what was being discussed. What a shame! Is it not so that only a return to a "thus saith the Lord" for all that we do can restore these "worldly churches" to being "churches OF Christ?"

The Worldly Church is a highly recommended book. It will help us assess the state of our liberal brethren, and even guard us against the things that have ruined them. But is its call going to be heeded by institutional brethren? In many ways, especially in regard to work of the Holy Spirit, I fear that it will. Let us pray and work to "save some, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 1:22-23).

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LETTING UP ON THE ACCELERATION (No. 2)

In our last article in this column we described a problem among some of the older members of the church who begin to let up on the acceleration of their faith. Their faith begins to weakens; their convictions start to slip. This is not true of all older Christians or even most. However, it is a real problem with a few. In that article we saw that our faith must continually be growing. We discussed at least three causes of the problem. Let us now consider some of the results of letting up on the acceleration and then the cure.

Results

1. One's conviction is not as strong—his faith is weaker. Some will be found doing things in their older years that they wouldn't have done in their younger years. They may miss services for reasons that they wouldn't have allowed in themselves before. Their knowledge and understanding is not what it once was. They now disappoint those who once highly respected them.

2. One begins to mellow — not as firm as he once was. I see some older members (some preachers and elders) that are not as militant as they once were. In years past they were the very ones who stood up to be counted. They took their stand to defend the truth against sin and error. But, now they become tolerant of some things they wouldn't have tolerated before. They are now battle-weary. They no longer want to fight for the cause. They had as soon not make any waves, to let things be and rock on as they are would suit them fine.

3. One becomes inactive. How many times have you heard some older person excuse his/her inactivity on the basis that he/she has put their time in and it is time for the younger ones to do it now? It may be time for the younger ones to take on some responsibility, but it is never the time for the older ones to quit! We must be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). We must always abound in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

Some of the greatest accomplishments among God's people have been by those that were in their late years. The apostle Paul wrote 2 Timothy near the end of his life when he was an aged man. John wrote the book of John, 1,2,3 John and Revelation when he was a very old man. Many think that Zechariah wrote chapters 9-14 of his great book when he was an older man. Did you know that brother Homer Hailey wrote his commentaries on the

minor prophets, Isaiah, Revelation, his book on the scheme of redemption, Hailey's Comments volumes 1 and 2 and a book on Prayer and Providence all past the age of 60?

These golden years could be the best years of your life in service unto God. Why not do all that you can, rather than retiring from service in the kingdom?

The Cure

The cure is very simple. It is what we should be (or have been) doing all of our Christian lives.

1. Bible study. Remember that we must always be growing AS newborn babes (1 Pet. 2:1). We build, strengthen that faith by turning to the book of God (Rom. 10:17). We must grow in knowledge (2 Pet. 3:18), which will in turn cause growth in faith.

2. Prayer. We must always pray to God (1 Thess. 5:17). Anytime we begin to neglect prayer, our whole spiritual life will be affected. Prayer is the action of faith and at the same time will help strengthen our faith.

3. Realize that there is no retirement in the Lord's kingdom. A person has every right to retire from his job, slow down his pace of life and resign from his work in the community. But those rights are not to be confused with his work in the service to God. There is no retirement! Consider again 1 Cor. 15:58 and Rev. 2:10.

4. Be as active as you can be. There is plenty of work to be done. There are classes to be taught, people to be encouraged, odd jobs to be done, people to be visited and studying to be done. Why not see how much you can do?

Though your foot may be getting tired, and you have no cruise control, do not let up on the acceleration. Hold the pedal to the metal and press on full force ahead until death, or the Lord returns.

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"THE PRESENT DISTRESS"

"Distress — Under great stress or strain from any cause and in need of relief (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary).

The Corinthians were either under, or soon to be under, some form of distress. Regardless of the source, Paul enjoins certain measures upon the brethren in order to cope with that distress (1 Cor. 7:26). These measures were not to infringe upon the established laws of God, but on the contrary were to make certain that God's laws were not violated and that Christians could pursue their calling and duties unhindered.

The church today is facing distress in a number of areas, not the least of which is in the area of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. For the sake of brevity, we may refer to this area as M-D-R, or some combination of those letters.

In a recent issue of **The Chiefland Citizen** (8/6/87), there were listed marriage license applications (5), divorce actions (10), and obituaries (3). These may not be average statistics, but they do indicate a problem in our society. The problem in the church is emphasized by the increasing number of D-R members in many congregations. Even some of those involved in the D-R relationships are alarmed by the situation.

Preachers and elders especially need to take a look at their positions and practices with respect to M-D-R, and declare a moratorium on anything which would feed even a morsel to the appetite of this devouring monster. Even if a practice is lawful under normal circumstances, it may be best to pursue a more expedient course due to "the present distress."

No matter what the world around us is doing, the church needs to remain sanctified and cleansed, "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:26, 27). And, whether a practice be common in the world, or "not so much as named among the Gentiles," the church is neither obligated nor permitted to conform to the world (Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 5).

If a practice is not even once sanctioned by the world, that is one good reason for the church not to do it; if a practice is named 1000 times in the world, then we have 1000 reasons why the church shouldn't conform. Saints are to judge the world, not vice versa (1 Cor. 6:2).

While we are dealing with the D-R problem, let us not

make the same mistake we have made in the past, i.e., to emphasize one thing while ignoring other problem areas.

The soundness of a congregation, or the recognition of its candlestick by the Lord, is not determined by its position on one issue, e.g., institutionalism. If we take unto ourselves "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort" to help us in the battle against "liberalism," then we will have to either discharge them or put them on pension when the war is over.

Worldliness in any form, unscriptural marriages, lukewarm Laodiceans, the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans are "such like" things to be avoided just as much as institutionalism.

At any rate, our "present distress" will get worse before it gets better. "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry" (Lk. 23:31)?

"I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled" (Lk. 12:49)?

Amidst all of this purification and "trial by fire," a remnant of God's people will be delivered. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).

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IS MODESTY A LOST VIRTUE?

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That immodest attire, both men and women, is a commonplace thing surely none will deny. Nor is it confined to the bathing beaches and pool decks. It is to be observed lying on the blanket on the front lawn, mowing the lawn, parading in the shopping malls, pushing a grocery cart —just about any public place except in religious services — and in some instances it has been there. The extent of near nudity in public has reached such a degree that there is very little to be amazed at any more. Yet one cannot but marvel at the brazenness manifested by such peeling off. And the sad part of it is that not only are many members of the church guilty, but others of us are gradually being galvanized so that it is no longer a matter of serious concern.

My desire in this treatment of our subject will not be to try and spell out how short the shorts can be nor how high the cut of the bathing suit nor how broad the bareness of the midriff. Rather the objective will be to deal with the **principle of modesty**. That principle, when applied by the discerning, can help one determine whether a garment is modest and thus the kind of garment in which one who has proper self-respect and respect for others and for God would appear in public. It is my persuasion that when Christians, women and men, understand and apply the principle in their lives and that of their children, the perennial problem of immodest attire is solved. Of course, there are many who may understand it who just choose to ignore it in favor of what **they want to do** regardless of what the word of God teaches.

Please look with me to Paul's first letter to Timothy. Timothy, receiving a charge from the apostle (1:18), was himself to charge others regarding doctrine and practices (1:3-4). Among other things, Timothy was to instruct regarding prayer (2:1-8), the proper demeanor of women (2:9-15), qualities to be found in bishops and deacons and their wives (3:1-13), and other areas of concern which we shall not now touch upon. The ones we have noted set before us the context to be considered more carefully, and especially the immediate context of chapter two.

Note that prayer is to be offered "for all" (vs. 1-7), but verse eight sets forth a vital principle — the character of the men in prayer. They are to "lift up holy hands," a likely reference to the Jewish practice of praying with uplifted hands (Psa. 63:4) that had been washed clean to symbolize their inward purity. However, he is not speaking of a posture in prayer, but the emphasis should be upon the word "holy." Vine says it refers to "being

religiously right, holy, as opposed to what is unrighteous or polluted." It is to the character of the Christian that he refers. Attitude is also involved in that the person praying is to be free of "wrath and doubting"—bearing no resentment and sustaining no doubts. (There may be a lesson here as regards those who are put forward in the public services of worship.)

Attention is next turned to the demeanor of women—their apparel and their relationship to men. Our purpose here is to consider verses nine and ten. The phrase "in like manner" is noteworthy. Though considered a difficult phrase in this context, I suggest that it harks back to verse eight. And as the reference there was to the **character** of those praying, so here reference is to the character. That is, let the apparel of women who profess godliness reflect that profession. In lives that display and portray holiness and purity, let Christian women adorn themselves in modest attire.

Both "adorn" and "modest" derive from the same word. Adorn means "to arrange, to put in order (Eng. cosmetic) ... to ornament" (Vine). And of the word translated "modest," Thayer says, "Well-arranged, seemly, modest." Let her adornment, ornament, be seemly, harmonious with her profession of godliness. There is an attire seemly to one's station in life (Gen. 38:14-15; Mat. 11:8; 27:28-29; Lk. 16:19). An especially vivid illustration of this is the reference in Prov. 7:10, "the attire of a harlot."

Negatively, the Christian's adornment is not to be a lavish and gaudy display. It is rather to be with "shamefacedness and sobriety."

"Shamefacedness" (shamefastness, ASV) is that modesty which is deeply or fast rooted in the character, implying an established sense of self-respect. And Thayer reasons that it "is predominantly objective in its reference, having regard to others. It precedes and precludes the shameful act." Because of her sense of self-respect and her respect for others, she dresses accordingly. As one in more recent time has stated, "She doesn't dress to be chased, but to be chaste." And her sense of "sobriety" gives her a self-control which holds the reins over passions and desires.

The Christian woman, the woman professing godliness, possessed of a deep-seated sense of modesty which considers others and respects God's word, will therefore be adorned in apparel that befits the character. She will not be a slave to modern fashion and the pressures of a worldly, lustful and lust-inciting society. When she shops, she will purchase clothing which is seemly to her station.

As stated in the outset, if the principle of **modesty** is properly understood and practiced, neither Christian women nor men, will have difficulty with immodesty. And parents who want their children to grow up respecting the principle should begin early to develop that modesty that is deeply rooted.

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THE NEW MAN

Gary Henry

1603 Edgewood Place
Clinton, Mississippi 39056



LIFE INDEED

Basically, a man gets the quality of life that he seeks. The pity is we do not seek any higher life than we do. We content ourselves with the little pleasures of our temporal existence, and if we do think about something better or nobler, often it is only with the kind of wistfulness that a lazy man aspires to the rewards of work. The unsatisfying sort of life we get is the result of failing really and deeply to want anything more. But it does not have to be that way.

"Alienated from the Life of God." Outside of fellowship with God, the thing that a human lives cannot fully be called "life." Long ago, God said to Adam and Eve, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17). When they rebelled against their Creator, Adam and Eve did die. First, they stood under the penalty of eternal condemnation. Second, they forfeited physical immortality. But third, what was left to them in this world after they had sinned was only a faint shadow of the life God had intended when He created them in His image. All things considered, the actual loss of biological life many years later was as nothing compared to what Adam and Eve lost the day they separated themselves from their God.

Jesus taught that communion with God is required for true living. The man who only maintains himself physically is leaving out the thing he must have for real life: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). Similarly, Jesus said, "One's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses ... Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing" (Lk. 12:15, 23).

Add it all up honestly, and one has to admit that, apart from God, all this life amounts to is several years' of "the work of gathering and collecting" (Eccl. 2:26). One becomes merely a janitor to the "stuff" he has accumulated. It is no wonder Solomon called this kind of existence "vanity and grasping for the wind." It is also no wonder Paul could warn Christians against continuing to live like those outside of Christ: "in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:17,18). To be cut off from God is to be alienated from the life of God also. To have been reconciled to God and still live life on no higher plane than the unbeliever is a ruinous waste.

"Passed from Death into Life." A part of what it means to be a "new man" in Christ is to have been rescued from death and given a new kind of life. John quotes Jesus as saying, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (Jn. 5:24; cf. 1 Jn. 3:14). Certainly this involves the Christian's having been granted the promise of eternal life to come. But that should make a crucial difference in the quality of life in the here and now. Paul wrote, Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). In a quite important sense, the Christian has already been resurrected from the dead: "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord... present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead" (Rom. 6:11,13).

"Heirs of the Grace of Life." In one of the most beautiful phrases in the New Testament, Peter describes the Christian husband and wife as "heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Pet. 3:7). Life for the Christian, encompassing both eternal life to come and the spiritual life he now enjoys, is the gracious gift of God in Christ. And what a beautifully good gift it is! Peter says that the godly person can "love life and see good days: (1 Pet. 3:10).

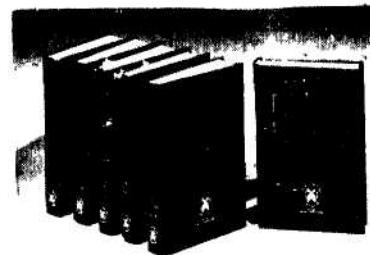
The enjoyment by the believer of life — authentic life — is, of course, not the result of anything external that isolates him from the unpleasant things in this world. As a suffering Christian, Paul could say, "We despaired even of life... we had the sentence of death in ourselves" (2 Cor. 1:8,9). Instead, the true life of the Christian is the result of a renewal of his **mind** that comes from his new relationship to God. Paul wrote, "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6). "Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by **faith** in the Son of God" (Eph. 2:20). Jesus prayed, "And this is eternal life, that they may **know** You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn. 17:3).

It comes down to this: to be in Christ is to again be fully human. To be reconciled to God is to have received already a down payment on the full restoration of all that was lost when we died in sin. The people of God are privileged to live "so that they may be sure of holding a share in **the life which is real and permanent**" (1 Tim. 6:19 Phillips).

But we must really **want** genuine life. Jesus, who said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Mt. 5:6), is the very source of true life and its abundance. He said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). But we shall never be deeply filled until we truly hunger. Jesus gives life only to those who are heartsick with sin and long with a passion that will not be denied for that which is life **indeed**. Without that, a person is "dead while (he) lives" (1 Tim. 5:6).

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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AN OPEN DOOR TO CHINA

JEFFERY KINGRY, P.O. Box 26, Milton, VT 05468—Years ago I was discussing evangelism with a fellow preacher, and the conversation went something like this:

"For years we have repudiated organizations of men like missionary societies, and argued that individual preachers, supported directly by churches is the best, only, and authorized manner of doing evangelism. Yet, the practice has proven to be difficult to implement."

"In what way," my friend asked?

"Well, look around. We have some men in Germany, England, Switzerland, Norway, and Italy, but nothing in the rest of western

Europe and certainly no sound presence in eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, or the People's Republic of China. There are churches in Central and South American, Africa, the Philippines, and Japan but with the exception of Nigeria and the Philippines they are few and far between. Who do you know who is preparing to go to those places in Asia, or south east Asia, where there is no church?"

"It would be nice if that was all there was to it. But you overlook the difficulties. In some cases it is impossible. You can't get into a Communist country to live, let alone preach. Even Canada restricts resident visas unless you have a job with an existing business or church. Assuming you could get in, then you have to overcome the language and culture barrier. And, what American would choose to

live in some of those countries? What about your kid's education. What about their growing up with the hardships of no Christians their age? It's easy enough to talk, but reality is something else!"

I nodded in agreement, but persisted, "I have to believe that God provides the means and opportunity when He gives us the responsibility. Maybe we just don't have the faith that Paul, Barnabas, Luke and others had. They met some of the same difficulties, but they overcame them with God's help."

"That was a different time. They had the gift of tongues and miraculous powers. Good intentions can't get you by a border guard."

In May 1988, the U.S. Consulate in Shenyang, China called my wife, Anna, long distance and asked her if she would be willing to come to China to teach elementary school to the consulate dependents. She explained that her family must come, as she was a "package deal."

"You don't understand, Mrs. Kingry," the consular officer said, "We want your whole family to come, and we know your husband's work, and the Chinese government does too, and it is not a problem. There are several believers in the mission here and we are looking forward to it."

Our prayers and preparation had finally borne fruit. The Shenyang University of Technology needed a native English-speaking teacher, and they offered me a small apartment on campus in exchange for teaching a few classes in English. We had accomplished access to China, residency, protection of the U.S. government (Anna's work provides us with diplomatic immunity), overcome the language barrier, and an automatic "entre" into the Chinese community. God's providence has worked with man's faith to produce a grand opportunity.

But, we need the help of the brethren. We leave July 15th for California. We leave for China August 5th. We need \$4,000 for plane fare and at least \$1,000/month support to replace what I am losing. Can you help? We will go, but we need the support, prayers, and continuing encouragement of the saints. Only I can make this trip. Only you can provide the means and prayers to sustain us.

(Editor's Note: Rare opportunity, indeed. This is a must. Who can help?)

J. DAVID POWLAS, 3430 Kay St., D-3, Columbia, SC 29210—The Lower Richlands church had a gospel meeting June 12-17 with Micky Galloway of Piggott, Arkansas as the preacher. We were encouraged by his presence, his preaching and his love for the word of God and for God's people. We had out-of-town visitors and visitors from the community each night. On June 5 I began work here as full-time preacher. My heart surgery in August, 1987 was successful and I am doing fine physically. The concerned brethren who sent money to help with my medical expenses have already been thanked privately, but I want to thank them in this note also. Because of their love and generosity and God's providence, the \$32,000 total has been reduced to a more manageable \$6,000 total. If you are in the area, please worship with us. If you have friends or relatives in the area who are not Christians, please let me know so we can contact them and teach them. My phone number is (803) 772-4371.

CORRECTION

The following omissions were made from an article by Willie Ramsey in the June issue of STS. We regret this and offer our apologies.

The author's preface should read "This article is a response to Weldon Warnock's article in the Feb., 1988 issue of this paper. Please read his article again. If the editor is willing, this article will be the first of three in an exchange with Weldon. If he is not willing, and this response with Weldon's reply is all that is printed in S.T.S., then this exchange with my second response will be submitted for printing in another subscription journal. I greatly appreciate the opportunity for this exchange and Weldon's willingness to reply."

At the bottom of page 9 and the top of page 10, it should read: "To my knowledge, out of these four, only SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES and CHRISTIANITY MAGAZINE function solely as lawful publishing companies (businesses). But G.O.T. Found, and Holt's Tr. and Fr. Min., Inc. do not function solely as businesses. In one role G.O.T. Found, does function as a lawful business which publishes religious materials by charging a purchase price to cover the costs and make a profit!"

MIKE HUGHES, P. O. Box 2481, Corinth, MS 38834—After two

years labor with the North Cleveland church in Cleveland, MS, we moved to work with the Central church located 6 miles east of Corinth, MS. We still need some outside support for the work here. The North Cleveland church is looking for a man to work with them. If you are interested, please contact: Allen Williams, 312 Shumate Dr., Cleveland, MS 38732. Phone (601) 843-1532. This congregation has 37 in attendance and most support will have to come from elsewhere.

ERNEST ROBERTS, Dominica—The St. Joseph church invited Gary Henry of Jackson, MS for a meeting of 6 nights. He spoke on the following topics: The Lordship of Christ, Scriptural Authority, The Work of the Church, The Organization of the Church, Church Support of Human Institutions, and Doing the Lord's Work in the Lord's Way. The liberal churches were invited to attend from throughout the island, but only one preacher and a few members where he preaches attended. Three were baptized here. Two stateside brothers came with brother Henry to Dominica: Mike Vickery of Ocean Springs, MS and Steve Gwin of Louisville, KY. I continue to preach for the Goodwill church but will assist the St. Joseph church on Sunday nights and for a mid-week service.

DAVID A. PADFIELD, 2612 S. Villa Dr., Evansville, IN 47714—My family and I moved to Evansville, Indiana in January, 1981 to work with the Northwest church. This is one of the few in the southwest boot of Indiana. Some members drive almost an hour each way to meetings. In July, 1986 we started a new congregation on the east side of Evansville and I went with the new work.

In May 1986, Harry Lewis came to work with the Northwest church. Harry and I both worked at Northwest for the six weeks prior to forming the new group. For the past two years, Northwest has paid for a live call-in radio program which brother Lewis and I have conducted. It has done much good and has resulted in several debates. Last summer I debated a Mormon elder on the radio. In December I had a debate with a Baptist preacher. He dropped out on the second night, stating that while he could not defend his doctrine, he still believed in "faith only" salvation.

The work on the east side of town has shown progress. We now number 45 and rent a small building. I have been involved in secular work the last two years to supplement my preaching income. The brethren here were only able to provide \$100 per week in salary. The past two years have been difficult, not only financially, but in regard to time. In February, I reached the conclusion that the church here would not grow without a full-time preacher. Since I had not been able to obtain the support needed, I had almost decided to leave Evansville. The brethren convinced me to stay in Evansville and preach full-time. I have resigned from the corporation where I worked. The church increased their support to \$150 per week. I am also receiving \$200 a month outside support and trying to locate additional support. I am married and have three children (ages 2, 4, and 9). My wife does not work outside the home since our nine year old is multiple handicapped and requires a great deal of special care at home. If you are passing this way, please stop and worship with us. Our meetinghouse is located at 2345 E. Riverside Dr., my home phone is (812) 477-9433.

(Editor's Note: Brother Padfield is a dedicated worker who has sacrificed much in the years he has been preaching. He is needed where he is and deserves adequate support.)

WILSON ADAMS, P. O. Box 185, Gambrills, MD 21054—The Wildcroft church has invited Phillip Mullins of Tampa, Florida to come and work with us in a two-preacher arrangement. Phillip is 26 years old and is married to the former Lori Comer (whose father, Harold, preaches in Columbia, TN). We are anxious for their coming and look forward to a good relationship together. The Washington, D.C. area is one of the fastest growing major metropolitan areas in the country. And just the Maryland suburbs of the city have a 1990 projected population of nearly 1.5 million. Most of the people coming in do not have roots here and as a result are not already entrenched in some religious denomination. We feel the opportunity for growth is tremendous. Seeing that, the elders have challenged the church to stretch itself and meet the urgent need before us. We have begun several new projects as well as new means to advertise and reach the people. We plan, with God's approval and help, to succeed.

When traveling to Washington, please come and visit with us. There are several reasonably priced motels nearby including two Red Roof Inns, two Knights Inns, two Days Inns, and a Motel 6. We would

be happy to provide you with any information we could if notified far enough in advance. In an area where brethren are few and far between it is a pleasure to report that the Wildercroft church is doing well. We pray that the Lord will continue to open doors for us.

TOMMY L. McCLURE, 3311 Longview Rd., Antioch, CA 94509—Harry Lewis will be meeting Jack Langford in debate here in Antioch in December of this year if all goes as planned. Langford says there is no such thing now as water baptism - all spiritual baptism. His position is akin to that of the Quakers. Last Sunday he said on his radio program that the position he advocates (baptism of the Great Commission is Holy Spirit baptism) was fully discussed and proven by the great scholar James W. Dale. This arouses my curiosity and I am doing all within my power to learn of this Dale and obtain his books. If any of your readers can obtain his source material we would appreciate hearing from you as it will help Harry and me to better prepare to meet him. We think Dale was a Quaker or closely akin to them. Some readers in the Pennsylvania area might be able to help.

WAYNE S. WALKER, 310 Hayes St., Dayton, OH 45410—The last four months here have been wonderful. Two have been baptized into Christ and one confessed faults. Had an excellent meeting with Wayne Chappell of Florence, Alabama. Craig Meyer of Madison, Wisconsin will speak to the adult class during our VBS. This fall I am to be at Mansfield, Ohio, Sumter, SC and Hamilton, OH.

RECENT DEATHS

FRANKIE WILLIS—We are saddened to report the death of Frankie Willis, beloved wife of Lewis Willis, preacher at Brown St. in Akron, Ohio and known to a host of brethren across the land for his preaching and writing. Several months ago she was found to have several advanced malignant tumors and was in and out of the hospital for treatment. She passed away at their home in Akron in the evening of June 9. Funeral services were conducted on June 15 at Brown St. with Don Willis, Cecil Willis, Bill Feist and George Lemasters conducting the service in which there was congregational singing. A large crowd was present. We join a large number of brethren in expressing our sympathies and best wishes to Lewis and their three children, both now and for the future.

W. A. GANN, JR.—This good brother of Wichita Falls, Texas passed away on March 11, 1988 at the age of 61. He did much preaching and greatly influenced five sons in their work of preaching the gospel. He was a singer and encouraged others to develop this ability. Their home was host to hundreds of guests, including those stationed at Sheppard Air Force Base, visiting preachers and brethren from across the country and members of the Floral Heights church in Wichita Falls where he was a member. Glen Seaton of Wichita Falls and David Bonner of Lawton, Oklahoma conducted services.

POETS CORNER

A DADDY'S PRAYER

Oh, Father, how we loved that little guy.
For such a little while we had him here.
We trust that in the great, glad by-and-by
We'll be with You, and him, too, over there.
Chorus:
We're thankful that, when he could stay no more,
You kindly sent for him and took him in.
He is with You. You love him, too.
Dear God, take care of him.

He was so innocent. Our Lord said he
And other youngsters are in sinlessness,
And such as all of us must come to be,
And imitate their blessed gentleness.

All children's angels always see your face.
The Saviour wants us, too, to share His joy.
In His eternal kingdom, by Your grace,
And be with You, and Jesus, and our boy.

Oliver Watts
Box 895
Craig, CO 81626

PREACHER NEEDED

VALPARAISO, INDIANA — The Vale Park church has 36 members and an attendance of 60. We need a full-time preacher. We can provide partial support. We plan to build soon. If interested call Robert Hewlett (219) 464-3413.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

Experienced evangelist desires to relocate with stable congregation. References furnished upon request. Keith Storment, Gibson City, Illinois. Phone (217) 784-5916.

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

ST. PAUL'S HAS A LARGE BAPTISTRY

While in Rome recently, we walked through the huge St. Paul's Outside the Walls, second only to St. Peter's at the Vatican City. We saw various tourist groups listening to guides who spoke in different languages. Roberto Tondelli was our guide and he took us into an area where the tourists were not going to see a baptistery as large as a swimming pool. This was a part of the old structure of the building which dates to the third century. It would have been possible for several people to be baptized at the same time with various ones administering it. Roberto asked a priest why they had such a large facility for baptisms since sprinkling is the usual practice of the Catholic Church. He said, "Well, you see, in the early church, they practiced immersion." When Roberto asked why that was not done now, he said "The church has to move with the times and it is not convenient now." So, now we know.

FORO APPIA

On Paul's trip to Rome he came to Appia Forum where he was met by brethren from Rome who came about 25 miles to wait for him at the site of this ancient market and public square. We saw the place recently. The area is still covered with the original stones (it was a large area) but now there is a building on part of the area which has been standing for 300 years and which houses a cheese factory. When I expressed my surprise that the Catholic Church had not erected a monastery or cathedral on the location, Rudolfo Berdini explained it. "That is something Biblical." Oh, I see!

THE DANVILLE SPECIAL TRAINING CLASSES

Steve Wolfgang, 385 E. Lexington Ave., Danville, KY 40422

The Danville church will begin the 13th year of classes the day after Labor Day, 1988. These classes are offered free of charge to anyone wishing to attend them. The classes meet Monday through Friday from 9 AM to noon and will continue until Memorial Day, 1989. The teachers are Kelly Ellis, a long-time elder in the Danville Church, and Steve Wolfgang, the local preacher.

Classes this year will include Old Testament Survey, Sermon Preparation and Delivery, Book of Acts, New Testament Epistles, Gospel of John, New Testament Church, Book of Revelation, and more.

Students who stay for the entire two-year curriculum receive instruction in every book of the Bible as well as other relevant studies such as Bible Geography, Church History, Denominational Doctrines, etc. Students are financially responsible only for their own living expense and textbooks; a church library is available to those unable to afford textbooks. Students are occasionally able to preach at various churches in the area.

More than 70 students have participated in these classes since the beginning in 1976, and most of them are now preaching in more than a dozen states and several foreign countries. Classes will begin this year on September 6 and continue through the end of May, 1989. If you are interested, know someone who is, or need further information, call or write the Danville church at 385 East Lexington, KY 40422; (606) 236-4204 or 236-8506.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS

RESTORATIONS

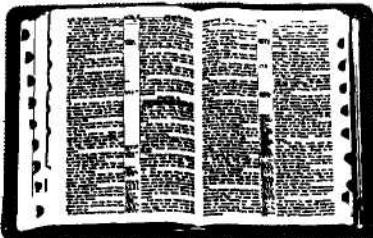
(Taken from bulletins and papers
received by the editor)

297

50

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 XXIX

SEPTEMBER, 1988

NUMBER 9

WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE



Wilson Adams

891 Autumn Valley Lane
Gambrills, MD 21054

DOCTRINE — DOES IT REALLY MATTER?

There are churches on every corner — hundreds of them in fact; each espousing different doctrines yet all claiming to be united with Christ. It's confusing to say the least.

Yes, every denomination has some doctrines peculiar to itself, the truth is—**these doctrines form the basis for the group's existence**; it is upon them that the denomination was founded. Without these doctrines the group would have no reason for it's existence.

In our day of easy-going ecumenicalism most churches make no effort to promulgate their doctrines. As a result, most members have little knowledge as to what their church really holds to. Here's a fact to think about: WHEN A CHURCH CEASES TO EMPHASIZE THE DOCTRINES UPON WHICH IT WAS FOUNDED, IT SURRENDERS ALL THE EXCUSES IT MIGHT HAVE HAD FOR IT'S EXISTENCE.

In deference to unity we are told by the clerical community that all churches agree on the essentials, differing only on the non-essentials. But understand this one thing — **different churches are NOT built upon points of agreement, but on points of disagreement**. Thus, what you have in our day is an admission that different denominations are built upon doctrines that they confess to be non-essential. Essential churches built upon non-essential doctrines! (Huh?) Question: **How can you build an essential church upon a non-essential foundation?** The answer is: you can't!

The church established by our Lord is built upon the rock-bed foundation of Jesus Himself. "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). And to lay a foundation upon Christ is to lay a foundation upon the teaching of Christ. And to lay a foundation upon the teaching of Christ is to lay a foundation upon the teaching of God-inspired men (Eph. 2:20).

There is no such thing as "church doctrine." It is the doctrine of Christ; it is the apostles' doctrine; it is the commands and examples of God-inspired men that form the foundational structure to the church of Christ. As a result, we should feel no need of apology to anyone for upholding the precious doctrine of the New Testament.

Meeting together on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper is **not** the result of church tradition or some council. Rather, it is based upon the clear example and observable teaching of New Testament inspired men (Acts 20:7). Having a plurality of elders or pastors in every church is not only wise it is commanded by way of example in Scripture (Acts 14:23; 20:17). Baptism for the forgiveness of sins is not optional but, rather, is the **ONLY** way of reaching the cleansing blood of Jesus (Acts 22:16). To warn that believers may fall from grace and be forever lost may contradict Calvinism but certainly not Christ (Heb. 6:4-6). To uphold a cappella singing in collective worship may not be popular but it certainly is right (Eph. 5:19). To declare that churches which send monies to private businesses in the form of contributions (whether said business operates in the benevolent field or educational field or in some other field is entirely beside the point!) do so NOT as an aid to its affectivity but, rather, as an addition to its all sufficiency, is to simply uphold the doctrine of Christ (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:16; 1 Tim. 5:16). To promote the restoration of New Testament attitudes as well as New Testament work and worship and to affirm that neither can exist exclusively without the other is to promote sound doctrine (Eph. 4:1-3). Emphasizing the permanency of marriage along with God's abhorrence for divorce may be out of sync with society but it's at home with the Book (Luke 16:18). **Faith only** may be indeed a doctrine "full of comfort" for the thousands who flock to the Graham crusades or who tune in to Falwell's **Old Time Gospel**

Hour or Schuller's Hour of Power but it stands in stark contradiction to the inspired writing of James (2:24). Yes, it's easy to lose our doctrinal distinctiveness in a sea filled with currents of conformity.

Yet the doctrine of Jesus Christ sits at the very foundation of the church of Jesus Christ and is not to be compromised. To brush away any aspect of it is to admit that it is non-essential; **and a church built upon non-essential doctrine is itself non-essential!**

I am reminded again of the charge issued by our Lord through Jude: "... contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." The very moment we hedge or hesitate to stand firm on the precious doctrine of Jesus Christ is the moment we step off the rock and onto the shifting sand of ecumenical peer pressure. God help me to be faithful!

Foy E. Wallace Jr. Publications

The Instrumental Music Question

This large volume contains not only debate notes on the subject by Wallace, a review of debates of significance on the issue, also by Wallace, but also includes material from M. C. Kurfees, Adam Clark, Don H. Morris, Moses E. Lard and John L. Girardeau. This is a monumental collection of material ever needed in the continuing battle to preserve pure worship.

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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"AND WASH AWAY THY WIVES"

For many years some have advocated that the alien sinner is not under law to Christ and therefore what the Lord taught on marriage, divorce and remarriage does not apply to such an alien. According to this view, the teaching of the Lord on this subject only becomes applicable to him when he enters the kingdom. How many wives he may have had and for what reason he put them away — none of that matters. The "blotting out of sin" forgives all of this and grants the right for the sinner to abide in his calling and keep whatever wife he has (whether number two, three, ten or fifteen). In other words, baptism washes away wives.

It is certainly true that when God forgives the sinner he does not hold him accountable any more for the wrong done. But does baptism sanctify an unholy relationship? The Colossians had "lived" in fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness prior to their conversion (Col. 3:5). That was their state of living. Question: When they repented of their sins and were buried with Christ, did he cut off their sins? Col. 2:11-13 says that he did. Did he sanctify a state of fornication and the other listed sins of Col. 3:5? Did not repentance require severance from all such practices? Did baptism sanctify covetousness?

But, it is argued, these alien sinners were not subject to the law of Christ on marriage, or any other subject. There are several things wrong with this position.

(1) If the alien sinner is not subject to the law of Christ, then why preach the gospel to him? Jesus required that the gospel be preached to every creature in all the world (Mk. 16:15-16). Why do that, if they are not amenable to it?

(2) If the alien sinner is not subject to the law of Christ, then how did he get to be a sinner in the first place? Does God have two different laws in operation at the same time? Sin is a transgression of the law. But what law?

(3) This position robs repentance of its fruit. Repentance requires a change of mind which results in a change in conduct. John preached "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Mt. 3:8). According to this idea, what was adultery before baptism is no longer adultery. One of the basic issues in this whole controversy is the nature of repentance.

(4) The notion under review assumes that marriage is a church ordinance; that is, the Lord's will on the subject does not affect one until he becomes a member of the

church. But God ordained marriage in the garden of Eden, not in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

(5) This position soothes the consciences of those in adulterous marriages, and makes them think all is well when they are still in adultery. It thus contributes to an already frightening disregard for the permanency of the marriage bond.

I made these specific objections to James D. Bales several years ago when he sent me a copy of his manuscript for the book "NOT UNDER BONDAGE" and requested a critique of the material. He thanked me for my comments, made some changes in his manuscript in an attempt to strengthen his argument, and published the book anyhow.

For a number of years, my esteemed brother, Homer Hailey, has taken essentially the same position on this subject as brother Bales. For the most part, he has been content to hold his view as a private opinion and not press it in his public teaching. But he told me personally that he thought Bales "has the truth on this." I told him I certainly did not think so. But now, our highly respected brother is openly preaching this. In a sermon of over two hours at Belen, New Mexico, he made the most definitive statement of his position to date. He also stated that he had preached on it not long before that in California, and that while he had been disposed not to say much about it in the past, that he intended to be more outspoken on the matter in the future.

That is cause for alarm. No man of this generation has been held in any higher regard than he. It was my good fortune to study under him in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Through the years since, our paths have crossed a number of times and we have spoken several times on the same meeting or lecture programs. He was a wise counselor to me at a very critical point in my life when the exciting call of show business put me in a temporary dilemma. It was he who excited my interest in the study of prophets. But he also taught me, and a host of others, not to think of men "above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6). It is now time to apply that in the case of our beloved brother. What he is saying is welcomed with open arms by some who are in unscriptural marriages. They will be lulled into a false sense of security. Souls are at stake. This position is already contributing to a weakening of the moral fiber of congregations where it is advocated. There are already signs that his increased militancy on the subject has emboldened some others to start circulating materials advancing this cause. The age, knowledge and experience, not to mention the fact that so many stand in awe of this good brother, only adds to the seriousness of the problem. I earnestly entreat my friend (I hope, as a father), to back off, take a good look at this position and its consequences and the potential for all-out war it portends.

It is a time to watch and pray, a time to keep our armor on and our swords sharpened and ready.

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

THINK ON THESE THINGS

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HYPOCRISY OF THE PHARISEES (NO. 2)

In a previous article the chicanery of the scribes and Pharisees was described in some measure. We continue a brief review of Jesus' exposition of the hypocritical religion of these religious zealots in Matthew 23. Their religion was a

Blind Evangelistic Zeal

They compassed land and sea to make a proselyte to their own traditions, and when they had done so they made him twice as much a child of hell as they were. A child of hell, of course, means a child of the Devil, a child destined for hell. Jesus told the Pharisees in John 8:44 that they were "of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father he will do." A proselyte is a new convert to some religion or religious sect, or to some particular opinion, system, or party. It was used in this passage to indicate the conversion of a Gentile to the religion of the Jews. In the case of the scribes and Pharisees they were making the proselyte twice as bad as they were by making him extremely zealous of their foolish perversions of the law of Moses, and in so doing caused them to despise and reject Jesus Christ and his doctrine.

Jesus did not condemn the evangelistic activity that leads to the obedience to the gospel of Christ, but he condemned converting one into a blind, legalistic, bigoted, ritualistic, hypocritical Pharisee: a devotee to the blind fanaticism of the scribes and Pharisees.

The burning zeal of some preachers and churches today remind one of the proselyte of the Pharisees. Such radical operations as Crossroads in Gainesville, the Boston Church and others of the same color are very zealous to recruit hundreds of proselytes, who are made more ardent for the cultists cause than their teachers. In fact, that partly explains why the system continues to grow in number and financial power. Instead of making the convert a child of God, he is made a servant and a supporter of his teacher. It is done in the name of religion. They held a religion that had

Foolish And Blind Reasoning

The Pharisees gave great detail to ridiculous pettiness of their own traditions and were fools and blind; they debated that by which they should swear in a most illogical fashion. They were trying to distinguish between oaths that were not binding and oaths that were binding. Matthew 5:33-37 gives the teaching of Jesus on this subject. They were elevating the gold of the temple above the temple, not understanding and accepting the greatness and significance of God who sanctified it. They

were portraying their stupidity and absurdity by saying that the temple did not amount to anything in an oath, but an oath by the gold of the temple makes one obligated to fulfill that oath. Such reasoning leads many to believe that unless they make an oath, they may say anything without charge of lying.

Their religion Evaded Responsibility

They separated some details of the law, which they should do, but ignored some important things and left them undone. Their sin was in stressing the tithe of insignificant plants and neglecting the condition of the heart. They were charged with paying tithe of small aromatic garden herbs, "mint, anise, cummin," and neglecting the more significant things of the law: "judgment, mercy, and faith." Jesus said they strained out the gnat, and swallowed the camel. They stressed outward appearance and purity of tiny detail, and were corrupt and sordid inside. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, neither can a vile and evil heart bring forth righteousness. The Pharisees with all their glamour and outward piety were blind spiritually and walked from an unbalanced bias of grace, law and righteousness. Their religion

Concealed Its Filth And Impurity

They cleansed the outside of the cup and platter, but left the inside full of extortion and excess. Again the Pharisees emphasized the external or ceremonial deeds of the law, as interpreted by their traditions, and ignored the real sense of the law upon the heart. It is clear that Jesus is talking about washing the dishes as a ceremonial duty, but filling them with moral and spiritual rot and filth. The food on the inside of the cup and platter was pictured as having been obtained by extortion and excess; stealing from widows and orphans, defrauding all with whom they had dealings, filled with moral corruption, and imbibing of their loot with excess. That was the real filth on the inside of their cup and platter. The conversion of the heart to honesty, truth, purity and righteousness would clean the inside of the cup and platter, and thus make the outside of the dishes clean in doing those things of ceremonial nature. Jesus orders them to "first cleanse that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." Their religion was

Dead and Rancid

With the next woe Jesus pictures the scribes and Pharisees as they really are in character. They are described as whitewashed tombs that appear beautiful and clean on the outside, but inwardly they are filled with dead men's bones and rotting flesh, a loathsome scene. Jesus plainly said this meant that they outwardly appeared righteous to men (that is what they really sought 6:1-6), but inwardly they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity: deceit and lawlessness. The veneer of their material glamour and glitter, with the beautiful deeds of their legal tradition, covered hard hearts of unbelief, void of love and compassion for any but themselves. Their religion was

Built Upon Murder And Deception

The last woe concerns their hypocrisy toward the prophets and the truth to which they prophesied. Before

the scribes and Pharisees, his disciples and all the people, Jesus used the most scathing denunciation and judgment against this zealous and outspoken religious sect of the Jewish religion ever recorded in the word of God. They were building beautiful and elaborate tombs for the dead prophets, which their fathers had murdered, and disclaiming their fathers for the evil deeds. They said if they had lived in the days of their fathers, they would not have been partakers with them in the blood of these prophets. At the time this was being said, they were plotting the death of Jesus. As Judas was told to do what he had planned to do, and Balaam was told to "Go with the men," Jesus told these despicable men to "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." They were soon to deliver him up to Pilate to have him put to death. Jesus used the strongest metaphors to describe the evil and danger of the scribes and Pharisees: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? They were guilty of the murder and severe punishment of the prophets, and were then planning the murder of Jesus. It is impossible for men to sink to a lower level than these religious hypocrites. We must take heed lest we fall into the same condemnation as these men. If we become like them and do their deeds, we will be under the same sentence as they were. The Lord of glory will say unto these, depart from me ye workers of iniquity into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

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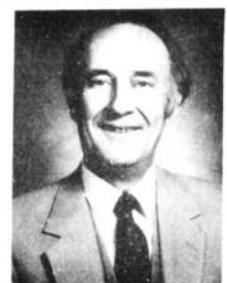
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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EATING BLOOD

QUESTION: What did James' statement mean in Acts 15:20 with reference to eating blood? The Old Testament prohibited the eating of blood, but do not Mk. 7:14-23 and Rom. 14:14 allow it under the New Covenant? Please help me more in understanding.

ANSWER: Acts 15:20 says: "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." This was a statement from the beloved James at the Jerusalem conference where the apostles, Jerusalem elders and brethren had gathered to consider the question of circumcision being imposed by the Judaizers upon the Gentile Christians. Forbidding to eat blood, as well as the other things enumerated in v. 20, was included in the letter sent out from Jerusalem to the Gentile churches (Acts 15:22-29).

The Holy Spirit had a hand in the contents of the letter as v. 28 states. "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us (apostles and brethren, WEW), to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things" (v. 28). The NECESSARY things, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are mentioned in v. 29, namely, one of them being "blood."

Of the four things listed from which a Christian is to abstain, why is it that we may eat blood, as some contend, but wrong to worship idol gods and to commit fornication? Why the difference? I fail to see any. The Holy Spirit said they are "necessary, essential, required."

Some teach that eating blood was just a temporary injunction, or perhaps nothing more than an expediency, for the Gentile churches so that they would not offend the Jewish brethren, and thereby bring about harmony and fellowship between the two groups. But this is mere supposition. Why would not idolatry and fornication be also temporary? Others make "blood" mean "murder," but there is nothing in the text that warrants such interpretation. It seems such efforts are simply to circumvent a plain declaration of Scripture.

In all dispensations God has forbidden the eating of blood. In the Patriarchal period, the Lord said to Noah, "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat" (Gen. 9:4). Under Moses God decreed: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood. ... Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood" (Lev. 17:12). This same prohibition

has been incorporated in the New Covenant under Christ (Acts 15:20,29). Whether it is rational or not from a human standpoint is beside the point. If God says it, we are to accept it.

Parenthetically, a blood transfusion from other humans is not within the scope of the restrictions of Acts 15:20,29, and, therefore, not disallowed. Eating blood of animals, as was widespread among the Gentiles in their idolatrous feasts, and to a more limited degree, eaten today, such as blood pudding, is altogether different than blood transfusion from our fellow-man.

In regard to Mk. 7:14-23 and Rom. 14:14, they have to be put in context. The argument is made from Mk. 7:15 that "nothing from without a man, that enters into him can defile him" (cf. Matt. 15:11). Taken at face value this would permit gluttony, consumption of liquor and wine, drugs, such as cocaine and heroin, and eating poison. However, the context shows Jesus was refuting the Pharisees' tradition of the ceremonial washing of the hands and eating utensils (Mk. 7:2-5). Jesus is saying that failing to ceremonially cleanse the hands, cups and table is not what defiles a person, but rather what comes from within the heart (Mk. 7:21-23). Mark 7:14-23 no more gives us the liberty to eat blood than it does to get drunk.

Romans 14:14 states, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself." This verse, some think, makes clean the eating of blood. What was prohibited in the Old Testament, such as blood, is now sanctioned in the New, it is argued. But the "nothing unclean" in the verse, as the context shows, is the MEAT (not blood) that was unclean under the law of Moses. God has cleansed the animals that He forbade to eat (Acts 10:9-16), but not the blood as Acts 15:20, 29 explicitly shows. When all passages are put together and placed in context, a perfect harmony can be realized.

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

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STUDIES IN 1ST & 2ND TIMOTHY

1 TIMOTHY 6 "THINGS A FAITHFUL MINISTER MUST TEACH AND DO"

The first two verses of this chapter deal with the slave/master relationship. From them we learn that a slave can be a Christian, and the same is true of a master or slave owner. A proper understanding and application of Christian principles will eradicate slavery, as it has in our day, but this is done as Christ and His truth comes to dwell in hearts, not by protests and violent overthrow. This is why neither Christ nor His apostles sought to revolutionize the society of their day by the overthrow of existing customs. Their efforts were to set forth principles of truth, which when received into honest and good hearts, would automatically cause the abandonment of those things contrary to principles of truth.

There are, however, principles of righteousness having to do with the treatment of slaves of his master, and the treatment of the master of his slave, that could not be disregarded and one remain a Christian. Christianity places great emphasis upon the value of man and the proper treatment of our fellowman, and such cannot be ignored without becoming unfaithful to the Lord.

The first verse shows that a Christian slave is under obligation to his master whether the master is a Christian or not. Thinking that since the Lord has become his master, he may shirk or abandon his obligation to his earthly master would lead the world to charge Christianity with teaching men to shirk their responsibilities. Thus, the Lord and His Cause would be blasphemed. Contrariwise, the Lord taught servants to treat their masters with honor and respect and to serve them faithfully. This principle of truth must be observed today with respect to labor and management.

Verse 2 shows that where the master is a Christian, there is added reason for honoring him. The reason is "they are brethren." Abraham recognized this principle long before the days of Christianity. He said to Lot, "Let there be no strife ... for we are brethren." David said, "Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. 133:1). This relationship forbids any mistreatment or withholding of faithful service. Such action against a fellow believer in Christ — a partaker of his benefits—is action against Christ. Every Christian is a member of the body of Christ and any action toward a member is also toward Christ. (See

Matt. 25:4; Acts 9:4). The apostle Paul says to Timothy, and every preacher of truth, "These things teach and exhort."

False Teachers (v. 3-6)

A false teacher is one who teaches "otherwise" than the wholesome words of the Lord and the doctrine which is according to godliness. Timothy, and every true evangelist, is under obligation to "preach the word," which is characterized by simplicity or singularity. It must be only the revealed truth-unmixed, undiluted, and not perverted in any way. The proclaimer of truth can back up all that he preaches with Scripture—with that which has been divinely revealed.

False teachers were rampant in the early days of the church. Preaching appointments were not nearly so formal as now. Then, most anyone, a resident or itinerant, who at an assembly, had something to say, was given the opportunity to speak. Among the saints there were many roving prophets (true or self-styled) who had opportunities to propagate false and cunningly devised messages. Among the heathen, especially the Greeks, oratory was a highly esteemed thing. Many with ability to speak made it their business to influence audiences with a great speaking demonstration, and to sell philosophy. They measured their success by the crowds they could draw, the applause they got, and the money they could make. Such an environment would certainly pose problems to the church. Every believer needed to be able to distinguish between truth and error; a true prophet or evangelist and the false.

Truth had been revealed, confirmed, and preached by the Lord, his apostles and prophets, and saints were urged to try every prophet... to measure his words by revealed truth. The Bereans were said to be noble for doing this (Acts 17:11).

There are some characteristics of a false teacher listed in these verses, a knowledge of which, will help in recognizing such. In the first place, they are said to be proud, or filled with conceit. Their aim is not to exalt Christ or truth, but themselves. How many preachers and teachers today, in their lessons, make manifest their own flickering light instead of the radiant Christ and His truth?

Secondly, the false teacher is described as "doting about questions and strifes of words" (disputes and arguments over words-NKJ). The interest is more in speculation and arguments over unrevealed matters than in simple revealed truth. Some brethren today spend a lot of time philosophizing on a passage and never get around to a clear exegesis. Some delight to speculate and argue about Paul's thorn in the flesh, the kind of bush Moses saw on fire, but not consumed, or the nature or true identity of gopher wood, etc.

These motives and actions result in the next characteristic of a false teacher: that of causing strife through railings and evil surmisings. He is suspicious and critical of those who would disagree with him, or even question what he teaches, hurling insults at his dissenters intelligence and character. "Speaking the truth in love" is not a part of his nature or actions.

The last characteristic of a false teacher in these

verses is his commercialization of religion. He acts on the supposition that "gain is godliness." If he can raise great sums of money by his speaking, live in a mansion, drive a Mercedes, wear big diamonds, etc., he feels that God is blessing him for who he is and what he is doing. He looks upon this as proof that he is godly and walking in the favor of God. This kind of thing has recently been illustrated by the scandals of radio and television evangelists Jim and Tammy Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart. They had great talent and ability to raise money, draw crowds, get the applause of many, and enjoyed basking in this, but they lacked truth and conviction, even acting contrary to what they preached. Evangelists today who like to boast of the salary they make, number of meetings they hold, great crowds they draw, and the applause they get need to "take heed, lest they fall;" lest they get to looking at these things as the main objectives, and recommendation of their work, rather than concern for preaching truth in love, regardless of the consequences.

"Gain Is Godliness" — A False Philosophy

(v. 6-11)

The apostle Paul here flatly denies and contradicts the false philosophy of "gain of godliness" and states what is divinely revealed, and human experience confirms that "godliness with contentment is great gain." The accumulation of "things," regardless of nature or amount, cannot be considered true gain because all must be left behind. "There are no pockets in a shroud" (Spanish proverb). "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither" (Job 1:21). The benefits of "things" end at the grave. They cannot be used to purchase clemency or security in eternity.

An abundance of "things" cannot guarantee contentment in this life. One only has to read the newspapers, look at news reports, and observe fellow humans to see that the rich and famous, as a rule, have more tragedies, heart-ache, physical and mental problems (less contentment) than others. Their fame and fortune, rather than eliminate, tend to intensify these things.

It is not the actual possession of "things" that bring on so much evil, but the "will to be rich"— "the love of money," this reveals a covetous, selfish spirit which is contrary to faith and godliness and causes one to "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition ... piercing themselves through with many sorrows."

Faith or godliness, on the other hand, has all the ingredients for bringing contentment. It promises sufficiency of "things," so that one need not worry about what he will eat, drink, or put on (Matt. 6:25-34; Ps. 37:25). Faith requires loving God supremely, which will keep Him from being supplanted by riches, fame, or persons. Loving one's neighbor as self (an agapae love that involves doing good toward) will eliminate envy, hatred, anger and violence. Faith requires family love and fidelity (Matt. 19: 5-9; Eph. 5:22-33; 6:1-4; Prov. 5:15-20), which enables us, when practiced, to avoid the tragedy and heartbreak of broken homes. Faith-godliness gives assurance of help in times of trouble (Psa. 46:1; Heb. 2:18; 4:16; 13:5; Rom. 8:35-39), which enables us to be

content in whatever state we may be. Faith gives hope for now and eternity, which enables us to patiently endure here and die without fear. (Heb. 6:18-20; Col. 1:27; Rom. 5:3-5; 15:13). There is nothing, apart from faith and godliness, that can bring real contentment into one's life. Solomon tried "things" in search of the greatest "gain" for man (Eccles. 2:3), but concluded that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit" and that the whole of man is to "fear God and keep His commandments" (Eccles. 12:13). Fame and fortune is not the road to contentment or a confirmation of God's favor. If you think it is, you are on the wrong road.

God's Servant Must Flee, Follow, Fight, Keep (v. 11-12)

God's minister must FLEE "these things" — the things mentioned in previous verses. It has been shown that pride in one's speaking ability, zeal and efficiency in argumentation, debate, and strife of words results in envy, strife, evil surmising, and railings. Too, the love of money (to be rich) is shown not to be godliness, but a road to numerous pit-falls. Pride, envy, fleshly desires, and the desire for affluence are not temptations from which God's ministers are exempt. The evangelist's best defense against such is to flee, not try to follow "afar off."

The things God's minister is to FOLLOW are (v. 11), righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. Here we have the very opposite of those things the servant of God is told to flee. Following after these things will keep one out of the path that is filled with pit-falls and snares.

The work of a true minister is militant in nature: He must, therefore, FIGHT. It is, however, a different kind of warfare than carnal. It is not a fight for carnal dominance or survival, but for spiritual cleansing and maturity, resulting in the eternal crown. Eph. 6:10-18 presents the contrast between the "fight of faith" and carnal warfare. The fight of faith is not against flesh and blood, but for the minds (hearts) of people. Spiritual wickedness abounds, even among the "high and mighty" — the rulers of darkness. The evil imaginations and the thoughts of men must be cast or wrestled down, captured and brought to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:4-5). Our offensive weapons in this fight are the sword of the spirit, the word of God, and prayer. Defensive weapons are those things we are told to follow after (v. 11) and having no closeness to the things we are told to flee.

The faith (whole Christian system) is something to which Timothy had been called, when he publicly confessed Jesus Christ and was baptized into Him, according to the glorious gospel of Christ. In this obedience Timothy was simply imitating his Lord, who confessed his deity before Pontius Pilate. Timothy's special appointment was that of being a good minister of Jesus Christ (4:6) through "fighting the good fight of faith" (6:12), "Taking heed to himself, and unto the doctrine" (4:16), "Keeping the commandment (fight the good fight of faith) without spot, unrebukable, until the coming of the Lord. Such faithfulness would result in Timothy "saving himself and them that heard him" (4:16). At that time, the majesty of the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and God in heaven will be clearly demonstrated, to whom

honor and power is to be ascribed everlasting.

Again Timothy is charged to warn the rich about the pride, highmindedness, and trust in riches that so often is man's downfall (see v. 9-10). He is to urge these to keep their trust in the living God, the giver of all things, and "to do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." In this way they will be laying up a good foundation for the judgment and eternity.

The letter ends with a final charge to Timothy to KEEP that committed to his trust — proclaiming and demonstrating the truth (faith) of God, that results in salvation for both the proclaimer and the hearers. He is warned again, and told to avoid, the false and vain babblings of men (see v. 3-5) which results in erring from the faith.

All need to realize that every duty or responsibility enjoined in this letter is essential to eternal salvation, and every thing forbidden and warned against is damning.

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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WATERGATE AND THE RESURRECTION

Apologists have long argued the validity of Christ's resurrection from the standpoint of human nature. A strong and logically attractive case can certainly be drawn from the fact that men do not normally find it easy to maintain the courage, even of their convictions; let alone to persevere in a course that they are not too sure about, in the face of consequent hardship.

Blaise Pascal, the mathematician, scientist, and logician of the seventeenth century, in his classic *Pensees*, wrote, "The human heart is singularly susceptible to fickleness, to change, to promises, to bribery. One (of the apostles) had only to deny his story under these inducements, or still more because of possible imprisonment, torture and death, and they would all have been lost."

I have never seen this more dramatically presented than it is by Charles Colson in his 1983 book, "Loving God." Colson, you will recall, was Special Counsel to President Nixon, and went to prison as a co-conspirator in the Watergate Cover-up.

In a chapter entitled, **Watergate and the Resurrection**, Colson gives a brief review of the events that led to the downfall of the Nixon administration.

He then observes that criticism of the historical truth of the resurrection and Christianity boils down to three things: either the disciples were mistaken; or they knowingly perpetrated a myth, intended as a symbol; or the

eleven disciples conceived a "Passover plot," stole the body of Jesus, hid it away, and then maintained their conspiracy until their very deaths.

The first two of these propositions are easily dismissed. The data cannot justifiably be so interpreted. The records of the event belie the possibility of a mistake. And Paul, who associated closely with the original disciples, discounted the possibility of the myth theory when he declared that if Jesus was not really raised up, the whole gospel package is a hoax and a sham (1 Cor. 15).

It is the third of these propositions that is the most plausible, and it is this one that is most effectively shattered by a consideration of human nature.

Colson is in a unique place to do the shattering because he was involved in a conspiracy. He occupied a front row seat in the theater of human response. In his review of the production, he observes:

"With the most powerful office in the world at stake, a small band of hand-picked loyalists, no more than ten of us, could not hold a conspiracy together for more than two weeks."

These men, Ehrlichman, Haldeman, Mitchell, Dean, Colson, believed in the President and his policies. They had made financial and private sacrifices to serve in his administration. They enjoyed the prestige and power that their offices provided. They bathed in the personal luxury by which they were surrounded.

Recall: they were not being threatened with torture or loss of life. Imprisonment was not considered more than a remote possibility at the time.

"Yet," observes Colson, "after just a few weeks the natural human instinct for self-preservation was so overwhelming that the conspirators, one by one, deserted their leader, walked away from their cause, and turned their backs on the power, prestige, and privileges."

Is it even rationally possible then to believe that the eleven apostles, with the complicity of at least five hundred others, were all willing to undergo the burden of being ostracized by friends; tortured and imprisoned by authorities; beaten, stoned, and placed in daily anticipation of death, to maintain a conspiratorial silence? Is it not probable that at least one of the apostles would have renounced Christ before being beheaded or stoned?"

I would think that if not, then that might constitute almost as great a miracle as the resurrection itself!

The proclamation of Peter and John come echoing down the centuries: **"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard"** (Acts 4:19,20).

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SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

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"INTO ALL THE WORLD," EXCEPT ...

From Jerusalem, the disciples were charged to "Go... into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15).

The disciples accepted this challenge, and "went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Within a generation or two, the gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven ..." (Col. 1:23). "Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth ..." (Rom. 10:18).

Many brethren are still trying to carry out this commission inherited by the Lord's church. They preach the gospel to the extent of their abilities and opportunities. No one can do more, and none should do less.

But, there is a false concept which has been planted in the minds of some brethren which I verily believe continues to hinder the spread of the gospel. Some believe the gospel should be preached everywhere except in Florida, the Hawaiian Islands, Bermuda, the Bahamas, South America, the Philippines, or any other place which may come under the heading of a vacation spot. Such a concept would practically rule out the "whole world" of the great commission.

Some brethren in all the continental United States still think of Florida only as a vacation spot. Some evidently think that all the preachers here are just on one big vacation. Maybe a few are.

The Florida of the vacation brochures and the real Florida are two different places. Some brethren who take vacations in Florida have seen more of the tourist attractions than I have. In the 200 or so miles of Florida coastline extending north from Weeki Wachee, you might find a total of two or three miles of sandy beach. Personally, I haven't seen that much.

The congregations and brethren in Florida face much the same problems and opportunities as faced by the Lord's church anywhere else in the nation.

Some brethren in Florida go to such exotic places as the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee for vacations. Some go to Colorado, the Bahamas, or to New England. I doubt that brethren who make up the small congregations in those places consider their territory "exotic."

For climate and scenery, Hawaii appeals to a lot of people. A lot of tourists frequent the more publicized vacation spots. But, there is only one sound congregation in this, our 50th state. I doubt that brother Don Givens

and the faithful few who comprise the congregation there consider themselves "on a vacation." And, just because the Lord's church is blessed (or cursed), by happening to be in Hawaii should have nothing to do with our attitude toward the great commission.

Washington, D.C. holds many attractions for tourists. Personally, the only thing which has ever influenced me to go there is the preaching of the gospel. When I was in a meeting with the Annandale church, brother Chappelear suggested that I wouldn't "last a month" due to conservative style of driving. I told him I only aimed to be there a week.

When circumstances forced me to go to D.C. to get my passport for the Philippines in 1984, brother Wilson Adams was kind enough to guide me through that maze of civilization. I would return again if duty called, but my hat's off to those who endure the hardships of our nation's capital in order to preach the gospel.

Personally, I'd prefer to face the Muslim and Communist obstacles in the Philippines, even if I have to travel 10,000 miles to do it.

If there are preachers who are on permanent vacation at the expense of the church, such an arrangement needs to be terminated. But I see no logical or scriptural reason why the cause of Christ should have to suffer in any part of the world because that place fits someone's notion of what a vacation spot is or is not.

I rather imagine that some of the places where Paul preached in his travels would have been considered vacation resorts even by some in his day. Certainly they are considered as such today, and few can boast a faithful congregation of the Lord's church as a part of the attraction.

There are enough local hindrances and hardships to overcome in our efforts to establish or strengthen the cause of Christ. Those who are willing to face those hardships need to be encouraged and supported by those not able or not willing to go.

Congregational autonomy is a fine thing, but let us not get so wrapped up in our own little corner of the world that we forget the gospel is for all.

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READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY

THE NASHVILLE MEETING
A Discussion of Issues Which Have
Divided Brethren

**Steve Wolfgang
385 East Lexington Avenue
Danville, KY 40422**

About a year ago, Alan Cloyd (editor of the **Restoration Leadership Quarterly** produced by the Vultee church in Nashville) made an announcement in that journal regarding a proposed discussion among brethren "divided over institutions and the cooperation question." He reported at that time that a discussion was tentatively planned for March, 1988, in Louisville, KY. A few months later, that same journal announced that Herman Alexander of the Preston Road Center for Christian Education in Dallas, and myself, had agreed to make arrangements for brethren of both persuasions to discuss these issues. In the January 7, 1988 issue of the **Guardian of Truth**, I published an article "On Meeting With Institutional Brethren," explaining my involvement in this endeavor, and seeking to inform brethren generally about this proposal. Obviously, March 1988 has come and gone and no meeting has yet occurred. Such a meeting is still in the active planning stage, but since several things have changed since the last published reports, I am sending this article explaining the current status of this endeavor to several journals circulated among brethren. The editors of those journals may publish it or decline to do so as they see fit. This report will probably be more informative if my January 7 article referred to above is read first.

January 7 article referred to above is read first.

While several others have had positive input into the process of formalizing the details, they have left me free to make whatever arrangements seemed best. Thus, should someone not be pleased with the plans I describe below, I am the one to be criticized. Although there are things which perhaps could be better arranged, I have done the best I could. Some brethren from both sides of this issues have been outspoken and critical, often before they knew enough to be critical about, and sometimes before most of the arrangements had been made! I hasten to add that many more brethren of both persuasions, while expressing cautious optimism toward such a meeting, have been decidedly favorable toward such a discussion of issues which have divided. I want to say personally that I appreciate the willingness of brethren, whatever position they may hold on any issue, to come together and discuss our differences. I have been preaching more than twenty years, and this is the first time that anyone from "the other side" has reached out to ask, "Can we talk?"

Plans have now been made for three days of discussion in Nashville, Tennessee, on December 1, 2, & 3, 1988. In order to provide a "neutral setting," the facilit-

ties of the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Nashville has been procured. This is a quality, business/convention-type hotel in downtown Nashville, and will be able to provide comfortable facilities for those who are coming from out-of-town. These dates will allow us to obtain a flat rate of \$45 per room per night, with a maximum of 4 persons per room. (Thus, two people staying in the same room would pay \$22.50 each per night; four persons per room would pay \$11.25 each; all prices subject to tax, of course) Occupying these rooms will also give us access to a large meeting room which can be arranged with theater style seating with a capacity of 480 seats which should be adequate for such a meeting.

Just as each one attending will bear his own expense, so each one comes representing only himself. This is not an attempt to formulate doctrine, issue some edict, or establish some "brotherhood position." Although only a certain number of brethren (about 21 from each persuasion) will be actively participating as speakers, respondents, or moderators, "whosoever will may come" to attend these meetings, to listen to what is said, and to question those who speak.

The topics to be discussed will include the following. I am listing also the brethren who at this date have agreed as of this date to serve as moderators (M), speakers (S), and respondents (R). (See below for a description of responsibilities of each of these tasks). I am also affixing TENTATIVE times for each session (note the stress on the word **tentative** in the arrangement of these and other details).

1. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2-5 PM

Suggested Topics: Are there "patterns" revealed in the Scriptures? etc. How Do We Establish/Ascertain Divine Authority? What is the role of Examples? of Inferences/Conclusions?

S: Clinton Hamilton
R: James W. Adams
M: Dale Smelser

2. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 7-10 PM

"Overview and Current Situation" — History; **How** Churches of Christ Separated and Grew Apart; The Current Situation; etc.

S: Steve Wolfgang
R: Marshall Patton
M: Colly Caldwell

3. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 9-12 AM

"Collective (Church) Activity and Individual Activity" — What are the Biblical Criteria for Distinguishing the Two? etc.

S: Ferrell Jenkins
R: Harold Comer
M: Karl Diestelkamp

4. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2-5 PM

"What Is The Work of the Church?" — Discussion will likely include fellowship halls, church kitchen/recreational facilities, and larger issues of "social gospelism," family life centers, etc.

S: Paul Earnhart
R: Robert Jackson
M: L. A. Stauffer

5. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 7-10 PM

"What Relationship Should Institutions Sustain to Churches?" — Discussion including orphanages, colleges, etc.

S: Mike Willis
R: Larry Hafley
M: Dick Blackford

6. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 8-11 AM

"Cooperation of Churches" — Definition: What Is Cooperation? How May Churches Cooperative? When & under what circumstances?

S: Ron Halbrook
R: Keith Sharp
M: Dan King

8. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 12-3 PM

"The Question of Fellowship" — What does the Bible mean by "fellowship"? What kind of unity can exist between separated brethren? On what basis? S: Harry Pickup, Jr. R: John Clark M: Jamie Sloan

Two speakers, one from each persuasion, will prepare in advance and present "main speeches" on each given topic, approximately 30 minutes in length. The respondents will be free to reply as they see fit, each one speaking only for himself. These "responses" will be allocated about 20 minutes. I realize that everyone will want more time than we can possibly allocate, but I believe that with care and precision, everyone can cover the main points of what has divided the churches over these issues.

Moderators will not only introduce speakers and respondents, but will fulfill an important function as a "questioner" of the speaker and respondent of the opposite persuasion. At some point (probably after the two main speeches and two responses), written questions will be collected from the audience. It will be the responsibility of the moderator/questioner to select from the written questions submitted the dozen or so which best focus the issue under discussion. Several brethren of the institutional persuasion are at work assembling a slate of speakers, respondents, and moderators from that perspective, but due to various hindrances and circumstances these have not been finalized at this date. Thus, I do not yet know who will be the speakers, respondents, and moderators from the other side, but felt it important to share what information I do have with brethren to forestall any further misinformation about the meeting. I plan to publish another report on the progress of these meetings as soon as those names are available to me.

Some brethren have expressed misgivings about this meeting. Some may think there has been enough discussion of these topics in the past. Many would see further discussion of these issues as futile; others, as irrelevant. In many ways, I can understand such feelings. Perhaps further discussion of divisive issues will do nothing to change anything. But I cannot help but feel that dispassionate discourse among alienated Christians must be attempted whenever the opportunity exists. New generations have arisen on either side of these issues who

know nothing whatsoever of why brethren have disagreed and divided over them. I do not know exactly what may result from such a meeting, but I am willing to put forth the effort necessary to attempt to talk to others, whether or not they may ultimately agree with my understanding. I am glad to learn that there are others of like mind.

* * * * *

TROY C. IRVIN

Troy C. Irvin of Birmingham, Alabama, died in the Veterans Hospital in that city on April 19, 1988. Born in the small community of Gattman, Mississippi, on May 30, 1908, he spent the major portion of his life in Alabama. On February 16, 1935, he was married to Agnes Hill, of Tuscumbia, Alabama, a niece of F. B. Srygley. The first ten years of their married life the Irvins lived in Nashville, where they attended the Waverly-Belmont congregation, forming a close friendship with W. E. Brightwell, preacher for the congregation, who was also News Editor of the **Gospel Advocate**. Brother Irvin was in military service during three years of their Nashville residence, being stationed in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands.

Moving to Birmingham at the close of the war in 1945, the Irvins, along with Agnes' two brothers, J. O. and Elliot Hill, took the lead in the establishment of a new congregation in the city — the Berney Points church. Brother John T. Lewis preached the first sermon for the new group. Fifteen years later (1961) the Irvins were again leaders in starting the Cahaba Heights congregations; and another five years later, they took an active role in starting the Vestavia congregation. In each of these congregations Brother Irvin served as deacon, treasurer, or Bible class teacher—and in one of them in all three capacities at the same time.

The Irvin home was always understood to be the place in residence for the many gospel preachers who came to hold meetings. They developed very close and enduring friendships with these men, among the number being Roy E. Cogdill, Harry W. Pickup, Sr., Homer Hailey, Fanning Yater Tant, Franklin T. Puckett, James R. Cope, Marshall Patton, Bob Owen, Robert Jackson, and many, many others.

Brother Irvin is survived by his wife, Agnes, one brother and two nephews. Funeral services were conducted at the Elmwood Chapel and burial was in Elmwood Cemetery. The service was conducted by David Claypool and Steve Patton (former and present ministers of Vestavia Church). They paid tribute to the memory of a truly dedicated and humble servant of God, citing his long record of service to the cause of Christ. All who knew him recognized Troy Irvin as a "gentle" man in the truest sense of that term. Friends of the family who wish to write may address their letters to Mrs. Agnes Irvin, 1717 Shadys Crest Coard, Birmingham, Alabama 35216.

Fanning Yater Tant
P. O. Box 737
Gardendale, AL 35071

"Great Faith"

Frank Himmel

723 15th Ave. W.
Palmetto, FL 33561



"And without faith it is impossible to please Him..." (Heb. 11:6). Yet not all faith is pleasing to God. The Bible speaks of dead faith (Jas. 2:17, 26), little faith (Mt. 8:26; 17:20), and shipwrecked faith (1 Tim. 1:19). Only twice did Jesus find what He called "great faith." What made it so?

The Centurion

The man who had great faith lived at Capernaum. He was a centurion, a Roman soldier. He was a Gentile, but one who had considerable contact with the Jews. In fact he had been so influenced by them that he built their synagogue. They testified of him, "He loves our nation" (Lk. 7:1-10).

When the centurion heard about Jesus he sent word to Him concerning his slave who was sick almost to the point of death. That word was sent by some Jewish elders, who recommended Jesus help him. As the Lord approached the centurions home, he requested Jesus come no further, for he was not worthy for the Lord to enter his house. "Just say the word and my servant will be healed." Jesus then turned to the multitude following Him and remarked, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." The servant was healed that very hour.

The Canaanite Woman

The woman who had great faith lived in the district near Tyre and Sidon. Mark says she was a Gentile, of the Syrophoenician race (7:26). She, too, had a loved one suffering: her daughter was possessed by a demon.

When this woman sought Jesus' help for her daughter He was silent. She persisted, and the disciples asked Jesus to send her and her bothersome shouting away. He merely responded, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The woman kept imploring, bowing down to Jesus. Finally He answered her, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." Undaunted, she replied, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from the master's table."

Jesus would no longer keep her waiting. "O woman, your faith is great; be it done for you as you wish." Matthew says the daughter was healed at once (15:21-28).

Great Faith

The first thing that impresses us about these two is they were both Gentiles. Neither had the kind of upbringing which would seemingly best prepare them for faith in the Messiah. Yet their faith surpassed that found among Jews. Therefore the conclusion must be that great faith is not a matter of heritage. Children must be taught the will of God (Eph. 6:4), but that is no guarantee

they will have great faith. The sad fact is some children of saints have made shipwreck of their faith or exhibited no faith at all.

A second common denominator in these cases is a concern for others — a highly regarded slave and a daughter. The centurion and the Canaanite woman asked not for themselves but for the benefit of loved ones. Great faith is not found in self-centered people.

A third likeness is the humility of each. The centurion did not even consider himself worthy to come to Jesus, much less have the Mater come to him. The woman cried out, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David." She did not hesitate to bow before Jesus. She was not insulted at His reference to dogs, but assumed the role and asked for crumbs. "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6). And great faith will be found only there. We must meekly recognize His infinite superiority and gladly submit to His will.

A fourth parallel is in the confidence these Gentiles had in Jesus' power and willingness. Luke, the physician, records the centurion's servant was at the point of death. The Canaanite woman's daughter was demon-possessed, a helpless situation. There were a few exorcists around, but these were ineffective in the fight against Satan (Acts 18:13-16). So in neither case was there hope apart from Jesus.

Could the Lord do something with these situations? They both thought so, though there is no proof either had ever seen a miracle. *Would* He do something? That they were less certain of. But neither was afraid to ask. And the woman asked again and again, discouraged neither by the disciples' complaints nor by Jesus' delay.

This gets to the heart of the matter. Great faith is a Roman soldier who knew Jesus could "just say the word"; a Gentile woman who thought surely God had a blessing for all. *Great faith does not limit God.* It faces no problem God cannot solve. It makes no predeterminations as to what God will or will not do, thereby limiting the asking. It is not disheartened by answers that take time.

This man and woman both asked in faith. Both received their requests and a great compliment from the Master. Do you believe God can grant your desires, even though the situation seems hopeless to you? Do you believe He is interested in you and willing to help you? Have you asked? Fervently? Persistently? If no, yours is not great faith.

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"AND IT WAS NIGHT"

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On the solemn occasion when Jesus ate the supper with His disciples and instituted that memorial feast which we faithfully observe today, we may be startled to discover that there were more than 13 individuals in the room that night. Yes, there was Jesus and the twelve. But there was another personality present, invisible but active.

That personality was Satan himself. In John 13: 2, we read that Satan had already put the betrayal idea into the willing heart of Judas; and in verse 27, we're told that "Satan entered him." Satan was present at the last Supper! And surely he does some of his "best" work in places where you'd think we'd be most insulated against him.

It was after Satan had done his job that Jesus told Judas, "What you do, do quickly." Judas, now transformed into an apostle of the devil, went out to keep his evil promise and John, with his penchant for detail, records, "And it was night" (v. 30).

"And it was night." Those words are chilling in their implications, given their historical setting. Judas, after over three years with our Savior and Lord, had taken a fatal leap into darkness, led there by the prince of night himself. His heart had turned to ice, there was no getting through to him. He said "leave me alone!" to God and not even the Son of God could change his mind. How can a person become so callous, so incredibly insensitive and cold?

In John's gospel, the contrasting concepts of darkness and light are common. For example, in the prologue (1:1-18), John introduces the idea in verses 4-5, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend (margin: 'overcome') it." There is a distinct difference between darkness and light. Everything about Jesus is light — He sheds light, He provides light, He is light (Jn. 8:12). The world (that is, all that is hostile to God) is darkness. Those who love evil never come to the light because they prefer, even love the darkness (see Jn. 3:16-21). Those who walk in the light are "sons of light" and walk in such a way that darkness cannot overtake them (Jn. 12:35-36). In his first letter, John makes the point that fellowship with God is conditional upon "walking in the light" (1 Jn. 1:5-7).

In considering these bible principles, we can make some brief observations about the characteristics of night, or "walking in the light" and about day, or "walking in darkness." Concerning night, we learn, first, that it is the

realm of Satan, the place where Judas spent his time, the street he chose to travel. We know, secondly, that walking in the darkness constitutes apostasy, a falling away from what is spiritually good and right. Thirdly, those who travel "by night" have enthroned the **self**, becoming self-righteous, self-seeking and arrogant. And lastly, and sadly, the outcome is death — eternal, never-ending death in a place not originally prepared for people made in the image of God, but a place prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:41). Judas chose to walk in this realm.

But we also learn some things about the "day" or "walking in the light." First, it is the realm of God, because He is light (1 Jn. 1:5). Secondly, those who walk in the realm of day possess within them a hatred of all sin. That doesn't mean they never sin (1 Jn. 1:8,10) but it does mean they never plan to sin, they never practice sin (1 Jn. 3:9), and they find the whole idea of sin repulsive. Thirdly, those who abide in the light enthrone Christ in their hearts; He has first position in their lives. Godly sorrow, confession and repentance come easily to those who have Christ on the throne of their hearts. Finally, those living by day look forward to eternal day — everlasting life in heaven, where God is the light, and where there is no night (Rev. 22:5).

Now, the question is, where do we live? Where are we walking — in darkness or in light? This is not just a question for the unbeliever — Judas was a disciple! As Christians, we need to think often about our ultimate reason for living. It goes back to the commitment we made when we were baptized. We promised God that we would live in such a way that He would get the glory in everything we do. We can properly define "walking in the light" as glorifying God in **the way we live**. Would you agree that Judas did not glorify God? Of course! But **every** apostasy fails to glorify God and, therefore, is just as bad as the falling away of Judas! That point is made in Heb. 6:4-6 where the writer says we crucify the Son of God afresh, when we fall away.

Furthermore, every act brings glory to **someone**. It may bring glory to **self**. Paul talks about that in 2 Tim.

3:1-5 where he predicts that in the last days people will be lovers of themselves. We may glorify **opponents of the cause of Christ**. In Rom. 2:24, Paul scolds the Jews, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." In their insistence on imposing the Law on Christians and the division resulting from that, they were glorifying those who opposed Christianity. An act of sin can even glorify the **killers of Christ** (Heb. 6:4-6) and, ultimately, **Satan** himself! Would you really, consciously, decide to glorify the devil?

Who are you glorifying? Before you take that next drink or seek out that next "new love" or place that next wager, think about who will get the glory. Satan is anxiously waiting because he loves those who walk with him in darkness. He loves the spiritually blind and those who slip around the corners and carve the secret places. But God wants you to know that such behavior brings a sickening state of mind. 1 Pet. 2:20-22 says it's like a dog returning to his vomit or a swine, after being washed, to wallowing in the mire. Who truly desires to walk in the footsteps of Satan and the killers of Christ and the opponents of the church? Don't you want to glorify the only One who can impart eternal life?

Judas stepped out of Christ's life nearly 2,000 years ago and "it was night." He never came back, though he regretted what he had done. Where are you headed? Christ wants you back in the light of His presence, if you've strayed. And if you've stayed until now, think about that night into which Judas irretrievably slipped and then meditate upon the benefits of living in the light. Then, ask yourself the question, whom will I glorify today?

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

NORMAN E. FULTZ, Rt. 29 Box 37, Kansas City, MO 64166 — On June 1, I began my third year of work with the Nashua church and anticipate a pleasant continuance. We have recently baptized three, and two were identified with us. One of those baptized, a 72-year old lady died less than three weeks after her birth into the kingdom. In June, we conducted a gospel meeting and vacation Bible school concurrently with Bill Fairchild teaching the adult class mornings and preaching in the meeting in the evenings. It was a busy and exhilarating week with the largest crowds the church here has experienced. Chairs had to be set out to accommodate the overflow. We continue to write a 24 column-inch monthly newspaper article

which is carried in a paper distributed free through the mail to every home in a large area surrounding our meeting place. We also continue to distribute to the members copies of **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES**. Don Trux will be with us in a meeting in September. It was my good pleasure to be with the Westside church in Aurora, IL in April and I look forward excitedly to meetings with New Hope near Big Clifty, KY (Aug.), Albuquerque, NM (Sept.), Christian Home near Morgantown, KY and Demott, IN (Oct.). Our meeting place is one of the closest to KCI Airport and less than a mile from the north loop of (I-435. In traveling this area, visit us.

STATEMENT FROM ITALIAN PREACHERS

To Whom It May Concern Among Brethren in the U.S.A. — On June 26 we met together trying to find, through common agreement, the solution to certain fellowship problems which we had, and about which many of you had knowledge. Well, we have talked, discussed and also clarified the aspects of the problem, solving also all the misunderstandings. We suffered because of that problem, as you all did and we hope to rejoice now in the hope of preparing a future which (will) be ever stronger and trusting in the Lord. We have prayed together, admitting our responsibilities with consequent repentance asking God and each other the right forgiveness. We are sure that our unity and our difficult work can only improve. We ask for your prayers and continuing concern in our work. Rome, June 25, 1988 (signed)

Gianni Berdini, Rudolfo Berdini, Stefano Corazza, Roberto Tondelli, Valerio Marchi, Alessandro Corazza, Arrigo Corazza, Francesco Fosci.

RAY G. PILLION, 2188 Martens St. RR #7, Abbotsford, B.C., Canada V2S5W6 — We are presently conducting Lord's Day services in the Davy Crocket Motel in southeast Abbotsford. The opportunity is good here and we believe there is a harvest ready.

ALAN YEATER, 290 Warfield Blvd., Clarksville, TN 37043 — We have been encouraged by the spiritual development of the saints here. Last fall two elders were appointed. Now, two deacons are serving. We were known as the "University" congregation but have changed the name to Warfield Blvd. church to better identify with our new meeting place. Clarksville is the home of Fort Campbell and Austin Peay State University. Because of the transient nature of a considerable portion of the population, we are again requesting your help in encouraging saints and reaching the lost. Please notify us of any prospective students (or present ones) at APSU. The social and recreational enticements of institutional churches in Clarksville ensnare many young Christians. We want to contact these students and have them in our homes as soon as possible. Members of this congregation serve as faculty and staff at the university. Some of our young people are students there.

We are also reaching out to military personnel. Five military

families presently worship with us. The military officers in the congregation are developing a letter to be distributed, along with our information packet, to all incoming personnel who list a preference for the church of Christ. We need your help with their address and needs as soon as they arrive. Phone (615) 647-4007 or 647-1324.

CONNIE W. ADAMS, P.O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109 — I thought it would be of general interest to make it known that James R. Cope, 301 Greencastle, Temple Terrace, FL 33617, is now in a position to hold several more weekend meetings (Friday night, two sessions on Saturday and three on Sunday). In addition to his much needed family series, he had excellent materials for series on "Bible Characters," "Studies in Acts," "A Look at New Testament Churches" and other needed studies. Brother Cope has always been a superior teacher of the Bible and brethren need the benefits of his years of study and experience. Many have been taught by him who have never seen or heard him personally. His tract "The One True Church" has been most popular with between 2 and 3 million copies circulated in three languages in the last 30 years. Some of the richest studies this writer ever had were in classes taught by James R. Cope.

UDEGE C. BAMALLI, P.O. Box 164 Nbwasi, Imo State, Nigeria, West Africa — On Saturday, June 11, 1988, four elders and three deacons were appointed at Njimbeako Street church of Christ. People came from all parts of Nigeria for the occasion. E. J. Ebong and E. A. Akinyemi spoke to instruct the elders and the deacons as well as the church. At a nearby congregation, a six month training course for preachers is now in progress. Rejoice with us and pray for us.

LARRY R. DEVORE, P.O. Box 313, Medina, OH 44258 — On July 3rd, I began my second year with the good church in Medina. Since last report, three have been restored and one baptized (he was the grandson of a Baptist preacher). I am still short of needed support.

NEW WORK IN FLORENCE, SC

DON BRADY, 12780 Quail Roost Dr., Miami, FL 33177 — A new congregation began meeting in a private home in Florence, SC in mid-May, 1988. The nearest sound churches are at Sumter and Camden, both an hour or more away. Bill and Kathy Kaile recently moved to Florence from Ft. Lauderdale, joining spiritual forces with Kerry and Laura Gately (both doctors) who have spent much time the past two years teaching against the digressive practices in the area. Several in the area are showing an interest in the new work and are studying with these brethren. If you know anyone living in the area, please contact Billy Kaile, 2329 S. Clareview Dr., Florence, SC 29501, or Kerry Gately, 328 Chippenham Lane, Florence, SC 29501. Or phone (803) 662-6227 or 664-9567.

HUEY P. HARTSELL, P. O. Box 299, Burnet, TX 78611 — After three and a half very pleasant years with the Oaks-West church in Burnet, we will be moving near Cull man, AL July 1. I will follow Lynn Huggins in the work with the Beulah congregation. Brother Huggins is loved and appreciated for his seven years of faithful service there. He has moved to Lincoln, Nebraska to begin a new congregation. We are expecting an agreeable and profitable work at Beulah. Jack Holt will begin work at Oaks-West July 17. Please note our new address: Rt. 4, Box 2050, Vinemont, AL 35179.

BRETHREN DELIVERED FROM SENSELESS VIOLENCE

PAUL K. WILLIAMS, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — Nine Christians, five boys and four girls, paid \$8.50 bus fare each and joined their schoolmates for a trip to a rural school near Bulwer, a 3 hour drive by car from Eshowe. They enjoyed the Saturday when they watched soccer and netball. At 5 P.M. they boarded the two buses for the return trip when a small boy emptied a teargas canister into one of the buses. As the students piled out of the bus, stones started flying, and a pitched battle ensued which lasted from two to five hours. They were attacked by boys and men wielding knobkieries (walking sticks with heavy knobs on the ends), axes and bush knives. Stones were available for both sides. The individual stories told by the returning Christians were hair-raising. While this was going on, the church in Eshowe was having its regular Saturday evening service and we were praying for the safety of our brethren, little suspecting how much our prayers were needed. We are persuaded that God heard our prayers. After dark two taxis appeared on the scene of the violence. One

SERMON BOOKS

God Hath Spoken by Irven Lee. The writings of Irven Lee have been among the most popular of those writings published by brethren. His *Good Homes in A Wicked World* and *Preaching In A Changing World* have enjoyed good circulation. We anticipate the same with his book of sermons entitled *God Hath Spoken*. 192 pages.

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pretended to be a police car and escorted the bus away. One took a wounded teacher to a hospital, and ferried stranded Eshowe boys to the departing buses. No one was killed and the two wounded Eshowe people were not seriously hurt. When four of the boys were at services the following morning after arriving home at 4:30 that morning, we got the story and thanked God for his mercy. That night I gave a lesson on praying for our enemies, and I had the undivided attention of the audience! Later a teacher told me he was convinced that the violence was not political in origin.

But on June 3, our 50-year-old sister Sue Grabbelear was walking with her friend past the Standard Bank in Roodepoort (a municipality near Johannesburg) when a bomb exploded killing Sue's friend and three black men. Sue's right leg was blown off. She was taken to the Johannesburg Hospital trauma unit where the doctors battled until after midnight to save her. By then, brethren all over South Africa were praying for her. Probably no other event has so united us all in prayer. We praise God that her condition has steadily improved. Her leg was removed above the knee. There is fear that her other leg may be useless. She took a lot of shrapnel, but no vital organs were damaged. The prayers and concern of the church has sustained her and her three children and we have every hope for her eventual recovery.

Midst all of this drama our work of preaching the gospel has continued with good results. Four have been baptized.

JAMES H. BAKER, JR., P.O. Box 44012, Philadelphia, PA 19144 — The church here is now four years old, having started from scratch in July, 1984. I was fearful back then that I had made a mistake in leaving the Miami Shores church in Florida to come here. Thanks be given to God, for now I'm sure it was the right move. We are at present 13 adults and 5 children. Satan has taken 5 from us. We have been blessed with our own rented storefront on a major street in the heart of the city. We try to have 3 or 4 classes a week with interested persons. We have 20 taking the John Hurt Bible course. We have also had a number of traveling Christians from all over the nation stopping by. One of the recent visitors was Clinton Hamilton of Ft. Lauderdale, FL who did a great job preaching for us. We invite all of you to worship with us when on the east coast. Our address is listed in this magazine.

JOHN SHADOWENS, Grand Junction, Colorado—This hub city on the western slope, a place of good hunting, fishing and scenic grandeur, is an ideal place to retire, but not from the Lord! The church meets at 491 Spam Road. We have 14 members. I am working full-time with the church. We are striving to grow, preach the word and remain faithful to God. There are three liberal churches in this city of 30,000. If you would like a challenge plus a great place to retire or visit, then come to this frontier area for gospel work.

RECENT DEATHS

CLEO N. BLUE passed away at Springfield, MO on June 26 at one P.M. He had been a faithful gospel preacher for almost half a century. He was well known to many in Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas where most of his years as a gospel preacher were spent. He is survived by his wife Addie, his companion for fifty-six years and a niece, nephew and several cousins. Memorial services were conducted in Morriston, Arkansas by Tom Shiflett and Oscar Ellison.

It seemed especially appropriate that he was laid to rest in the cemetery at Morriston, Arkansas. He was born and grew up on the hill overlooking the area. The present meeting house had been a school house where his education began. When it became a meeting place for brethren he preached in their first gospel meeting. He was buried beside his father and mother. His father, Joe Blue, was a well known pioneer preacher for many years. His life as a preacher and that of Cleo spanned almost a century of gospel preaching. Their faithful work will live on in the hearts and lives of those who responded to the gospel they preached.

JAMES D. BEECH, JR. departed this life on June 19 at the age of 45 after a long period of suffering which he had borne with uncommon grace. Jimmy was born in Tampa and grew up in a Christian home. Early in life he took an interest in spiritual things which led to his decision to dedicate his life to preaching the gospel. He prepared himself as best he could and did his first regular work at Center, Texas. He later preached in Magnolia, Arkansas and Madisonville, Texas. He and Betty, with their son Greg, then decided to go to

Australia where they lived at Wagga Wagga for three years. They moved then to Wayne, Michigan. While there a recurring ailment was diagnosed as muscular sclerosis. He continued preaching as long as he could, even when he had to sit in a chair to give a lesson. He accepted his condition with fortitude. It did not rob him of his cheerfulness, nor did he complain about it, or feel sorry for himself. Jimmy and his family moved back to Brandon, FL in about 1980 to be near his parents. In addition to his wife and son, he is survived by a daughter, Rachel. Memorial services were conducted by Earl Kimbrough on June 21. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Psa. 116:15).

FRED MOTLEY of Warner Robins, Georgia died suddenly of a massive heart attack on July 29. He was one of the elders of the Westside church in Warner Robins having served in that capacity for many years. He was a tower of strength during critical years in that area. He is survived by a wife and daughter. Services were conducted on August 1 by J. Wiley Adams, Bob Tuten and James Shear.

PREACHER NEEDED

ARCHER, FLORIDA—The church in Archer is in need of a full-time preacher. Archer is located 12 miles southwest of Gainesville. We are a small group, numbering 30 to 42 on Sunday and can supply \$1,000 a month support. For more information please write to P.O. Box 405, Archer, FL 32618.

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS THE PASSING SCENE

A casual observation of the passing scene as we travel about this country gives reason for reflection as to the attitudes and ideals of many of our citizens. All semblance of decorum seems to have been lost with a good many people. Men and women nearly everywhere in public places appear in shorts. More and more men and women appear in what we used to call men's undershirts. Cut-off tee shirts exposing the waist and belly button are often seen, and some have appeared that way at pot lucks where Christians gather. And aren't punk haircuts something to see? And there is the wet wash look. Does anyone seriously think it is attractive? Or is the motive more to repel than attract? More and more women (including many Christians) are cutting their hair shorter than most men have worn theirs for a long time, including short side-burns and being shaved up the back. Am I wrong, or does it appear to you that some of the fashion designers are anti-women and have palmed off fashions (loosely speaking) which make the wearer appear grotesque? We have emphasized "modest apparel" from 1 Tim. 2:9, but we also need to camp out awhile on "with shamefastness and sobriety."

WORLD-CLASS GOSSIP

More harm is done by loose tongues than most of us will ever know. Relationships are severed (or badly damaged) by meddlesome tongue-waggers. Families are alienated, friendships shattered and churches divided by 14 carat, world-class gossips who carelessly elevate rumor to the rank of absolute fact. Before telling something it would be wise to get the facts straight, and then consider what would be the motive for passing on the information even if the facts are correct. Reputations which took years to build through faithfulness in teaching and practice in life can be severely crippled by rumor or innuendo. "Well, where there's smoke, there's bound to be fire." I wish whoever thought that up would try to build a fire with wet wood and without proper kindling in my fireplace! 111 tell you now it is possible to have a lot of smoke and absolutely no fire at all!

"He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears."

"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."

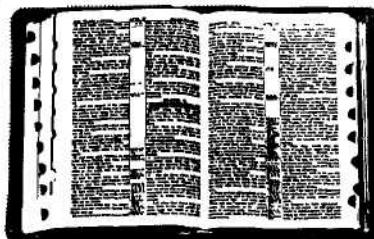
"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." (Prov. 26:17, 20, 22).

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXIX

OCTOBER, 1988

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THINK ON THESE THINGS



H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549

PROSELYTING DISCIPLES AWAY

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29, 30). The inspired apostle addressed the elders of the church in Ephesus whom he had called to Miletus (vs. 17). The warning involved the attempt of a false teacher who would come among them to deceive and mislead disciples, and even one or more of the elders would lure the disciples away after them.

There is a principle in this statement that has an application to some situations in the church today. That situation concerns the growing efforts to move Christians from one congregation to another in the pretense of building up the church. Some want to build a reputation as a great and powerful preacher who can command his place and financial reward. But this is a dishonorable and offensive way to try to build the membership of a congregation. Others have labored to increase the membership in the kingdom and the local church, and someone else persuades these disciples to leave that work and join another for no reason but to increase that membership at the expense of others. This process converts no one to Christ.

Several years ago James P. Miller wrote an article on "Sheep Stealing," in which he took to task those who were seducing members from the congregation where he was then preaching. That problem is still around and it

is not localized either in time or place.

The practice has a sinister motive: to reduce the membership of other congregations and pocket the proceeds for self-praise and glory. It has the same motive as one who lies and gossips about another; he hopes to reduce as much as possible the name and reputation of the other, and at the same time gain favor and position with his hearers. In my judgment, one who steals members from other congregations in the general area where he preaches, is an insensitive, self centered promoter who does not scruple to boast at the expense of others. One who secretly calls, writes and visits members of other congregations, with the express purpose of soliciting members for the congregation where he labors, is not building up the kingdom of Christ.

Of course, if a congregation supports and endorses false doctrine and practice, those members ought to be taught the truth, and they will leave when they are convinced that they cannot continue to serve God where they are. But efforts should be made to teach ALL members of congregations promoting false doctrines. Are not their souls as important as any other?

The work of an evangelist does not include interference in the affairs and work of congregations all over a given area. An evangelist is to edify the church, not move around members from one congregation to another. The work of an evangelist is to: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. ... but watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:2-5).

We have come to expect the business corporations of the world to use disreputable tactics to destroy one another and gain by base methods, but who would have thought that preachers of the gospel could conscientiously use such tactics to entice members of one congregation to the one where they labor and claim that they are causing the church to grow?

On the other hand, any Christian has the scriptural right to move from one place to another, and he may move his congregational membership from one place to another, if he thinks he is increasing his opportunities to learn and contribute to the work of the body of Christ.

But that is a far cry from a preacher or some zealous member seducing one away from the congregation where he is serving the Lord scripturally.

Some of the highly motivated "personal work" enthusiasts have a reputation for their ability to teach and direct their disciples to use any method to increase the membership of the congregation where they are. Some of it is high pressure sales, and some of it involves an unscriptural organization. "Personal work" that stresses converting sinners to Christ by the gospel of Christ, and only that, in leading them out of darkness into the light of truth, is important and essential and should be a part of every Christian's life. This is sound Bible study in homes and wherever people will listen. But transferring members from one congregation to another is not converting anyone to Christ, and is not increasing the church of Christ. Jesus said to teach, baptize, and teach (Matt. 28:18-20).

If it is a righteous thing to lure members from one congregation to another, by all means let all of us do it. Let us open the door for teaching and exhorting all evangelists to use all their efforts to persuade members of other congregations to leave and become a part of the congregation where they work. I will assure you of one thing: the material and social side of life will be emphasized far above all other interests. The large, beautiful church buildings will be promoted because they are an enticement to members of other congregations. Socials, food and frolic will be held forth as an encouragement for members to move from one place to another. Young people with the dating format and possible mate matching will be advertised as a means of encouraging the youth and parents of young people to leave one congregation to go to another.

One of the sad consequences of this operation is that the old, weak, poor, uncommitted, small talented and lazy members are not wanted. These are encouraged to go to other congregations. The only disciples they proselyte are those they believe will enhance their group, their reputation and glory. What a shame! Think on these things!

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Searching The Scriptures

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Guest
Editorial
Wilson Adams

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WHO ARE THE SOUND?

To be sound is to be healthy. In the New Testament there are two Greek words (an adjective and a verb) translated "sound" and both have to do with bodily health. W.E. Vine renders the term **HUGIAINO** as — "to be healthy, sound in health." It is used in its **literal** sense in several passages including Luke 5:31 — "They that are in health have no need of a physician ..." But it is also used **metaphorically** to represent the condition of a man's character and teaching.

It is not difficult to know when the body is sound. Soundness occurs when every part is working according to its purpose and in harmony with every other **part**. Soundness is the absence of abnormalities; the absence of disease. However, it is entirely possible for one to think he is sound (in good health) when, in actuality, he is suffering from a hidden disease. To boast of soundness doesn't necessarily make it so. There's more to it than mere verbalization.

If I seek to be sound spiritually then my whole being must be brought into harmony with God's will **and** purpose. There must be a certain symmetry and balance to my spiritual development. At the same time, **there** must be an absence of any abnormal growths which threaten my spiritual health. For example, if I were to strengthen my right arm through years of weight-lifting and muscular conditioning to the point that I could crush the skull of a man with one glancing blow, while at the same time allowing my left arm to grow weak through non-use, it would not be soundness that I have experienced but abnormal growth.

It is easy to fall into the trap of abnormal growth. It is easy to develop strength in one area and neglect another. It is easy to gain the name of being very sound because of toughness along certain lines while allowing such things as character and personal integrity to remain undeveloped. Such is not soundness but abnormal growth.

There are some who excel in the arena of courage, boldness and the ability to defend the truth. Thank God for very one! We would all do well to keep our swords sharpened. And, yet, is it possible that some excel in boldness but are deficient in kindness and brotherly consideration? Can it be that some seek earnestly to contend for the faith but often fail to forbear?

The person in good spiritual-health knows the need for balanced development in every area. The "sound"

man is brave and firm but also meek **and** merciful. He never compromises God's truth, but seeks to yield in the **arena** of opinions and preferences for the sake of peace. If he fails in **any** of these areas he fails to be sound.

One of my favorite writers is R.L. Whiteside. About this subject, he said:

"More than fifty years ago persistent effort was begun to lead churches away from the New Testament way of work and worship, and much harm was done. Those who fell in love with the move — instrumental music in the worship, the various societies, etc., — called themselves Progressives. Many brethren opposed them on the ground that they had departed from sound doctrine; and so we began to hear such expressions as 'sound brethren,' 'sound preachers,' 'sound churches.' Too many took it for granted that opposition to innovations constituted soundness. **To be sound you must oppose many things, but you may oppose all innovations and still be unsound.**"

"... I would like to impress upon all that the requirement to be sound in the faith and doctrine is not fulfilled by simply opposing. A man may oppose every departure from the truth and still be unsound, simply because he fails to come up to the standard of his duty. The requirement covers the whole of life." (**Doctrinal Discourses**, pg. 273-274)

Good point! How often are we guilty of limiting "soundness" to selected points of doctrine? A church is viewed as "sound" if they oppose institutionalism and the social gospel, all the while making no effort towards corrective discipline (1 Cor. 5), loving one another (1 Thess. 4:9-10), and reaching the lost in the local area (Acts 11:19-26). A preacher is seen as "sound" because of his courage to defend against outside error while, at the same time, he fails in his duties at home or in his ability to mirror the attitudes and attributes of Jesus in his personal character. Could it be that we often (collectively and individually) boast of our "soundness" when in fact we show signs of ill-health and sickness?

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ..." (2 Tim. 4:3). Such is a potent warning that needs to remain fresh upon our minds. That's why Paul said to "retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13).

In his letter to Titus, Paul declared, "But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Read on. Under the above heading are then listed several personal duties and responsibilities which cover the whole spectrum of Christian conduct and behavior. If one is given to gossip, he is not sound but unsound. A woman who is not in subjection to her husband is not sound but is unsound. A man who fails to be temperate fails to be sound.

"... realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and **whatever else**

is contrary to sound teaching" (1 Tim. 1:9-10 — emphasis mine).

It should be our aim to be "sound." Let us seek to be sound congregationally as we pattern ourselves after the New Testament order. To fail to do so renders us unsound. But let us also pursue soundness in our personal lives and character. Am I really walking close to the example of Jesus? Do I know how to forbear, love and exclude bitterness from my life? Am I unusually suspicious and cynical of others and prone to blow things out of proportion? Do I render to another the benefit of the doubt or am I prone to harsh and unfair judgmentalism? Do I traffic in gossip and half-truths in order to prove a point or do I always seek to be fair and ethical? Strong questions. But the man in pursuit of soundness is not bothered by such confrontations.

It's so easy to label someone "sound" or "unsound" (and I'm not opposed at all to that designation!). Let's just realize that soundness involves spiritual growth and maturity in **all** areas of a Christian's responsibility before God. To fail in understanding this point will result in abnormal growths leading to an unhealthy spiritual condition. **Strive to be sound!**

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AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR READERS

Dear Readers:

The time has come to place some facts before you and appeal for your understanding and help. It is becoming increasingly difficult to operate this paper financially. Increased postal charges within recent months have added greatly to the problem. Printing cost have also increased since the last rate increase and we are expecting another increase. Just within the last five months, it has cost us nearly \$1,000 more JUST TO MAIL the paper than it did in the same time period last year. This does not take into account the increase in first class postage from 22 c to 25 c. All our statements are sent first class mail. Other costs have gradually risen.

We have done our best to hold prices down. We have not raised subscription rates since January, 1985. We have not raised advertising rates for the church ads since January, 1984. But while our costs of operation have mounted, our subscription list has gradually declined. Some of our readers are aging and many have passed away in recent years. Some who paid for lists of friends have had to discontinue that good work. We **add** new subscribers every month, but within the last year, we have lost more than we have gained.

We do not intend to operate the paper in the red. If there is not sufficient interest in what we are trying to do to sustain it, then we will let the paper die with as much dignity as possible.

As much as we regret to do it, as of January 1, 1989, the following rates will be in effect: Single subscriptions will be \$11 a year. The club rate will be \$9 per year for four or more. Bundles to one address and group subscriptions will be 12 for \$7.50 per month, or 24 for \$15.00 per month. Church ads will cost \$80 a year.

If we are to remain in business, we need present subscribers to remain with us and to help us increase our circulation. Everywhere we go, we meet people who tell us how much they appreciate the paper. We receive much mail to the same effect. While all of that encourages us, we really need your help in circulating the paper. Could you subscribe for your children who are away in college, or in military service? What about that young couple where you worship whom you would like to encourage? Could you afford to send it to a list of 12 friends for \$7.50 a month? We can bill you quarterly, or however you prefer.

Friends are valuable assets and this paper has **made** many friends over the years. We have made some enemies too. But if we ever needed our friends to stand with us, we need you NOW. If you appreciate **what** we are trying to do, then please stay with us and help us with new subscriptions if you can.

Sincerely,



Connie W. Adams, Editor

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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SIGN-LANGUAGE

QUESTION: *Is it scriptural for a church to hire a brother to translate the sermons of the preacher into sign-language for the deaf? A member opposes this because he says we cannot be sure whether the truth is being translated. Too, what about a woman sitting in the pew and translating the sermon by sign-language to a member of her family?*

ANSWER: The querist has two questions for consideration. The answer to both is: Yes, it is scriptural! The deaf need edification from the word of God as much as any other member. What if we attended a church comprised mainly of deaf people, and the preacher spoke exclusively in sign-language? Would not we need, and want, an interpreter? How would we like it if one of the deaf brethren opposed an interpreter for us on the basis that he wasn't sure the truth was being translated?

When preachers move to non-English speaking countries to evangelize, most of the time they need interpreters until they learn the language. Is not this the same in principle as having an interpreter for the deaf? How do we know the truth is being translated by a foreign interpreter, except by the competence of and the trust we have in the translator? Churches put their confidence in the evangelists they support in foreign fields that truth will be preached, and we ought to do the same with translators.

How do we who are not deaf know truth is being taught when the preacher speaks in plain English? By using our Bibles and proving all things (Acts 17:11; I Thess. 5:21; 1 Jn. 4:1). Why can't the deaf do the same thing? To oppose sign-language for the deaf for the reason given in the question above is to project all deaf people as being somewhat stupid; that those who hear have to decide whether the deaf are receiving the truth or not. This is getting close to self-righteous snobbery.

As to a woman sitting in the pew, translating a sermon to one of her family by sign-language, she has violated no New Testament principle. She is not exercising authority over men which 1 Tim. 2:12 prohibits. Quietly and subordinately, she is enabling a son or daughter or grandchild to receive the word of God. I wonder if a few brethren wouldn't complain if the woman wrote it down on paper instead of translating it by sign-language. Certainly, such activity should be in an area of the building where it would not distract others, or done in a manner that would not disturb others.

Paul states, "... seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (1 Cor. 14:12).

BREAD OF LIFE

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

Herschel E. Patton

7637 Fleming Hills Dr. S.W.
Huntsville, Ala. 35802



STUDIES IN FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY 2 Tim. 1

Second Timothy is evidently Paul's last letter, written from a Roman prison, shortly before his death. The letter begins with some **Personal Facts About Paul and Timothy (v. 1-5)**

Paul, as he often did, begins this letter with an affirmation of his apostleship. There were those who questioned his having the authority of an apostle, so he frequently affirmed and defended it (See 1 Cor. 9:1-2; 1:1). It was not something he had assumed, or even sought after, but a position for which he was selected and appointed by God. (See Acts 26:12-18; Gal. 1:11-20; 2:6). The mission God had for Paul was to make men see and understand "the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus."

The letter is written to Timothy, one highly commended, loved, and appreciated by the apostle. He is addressed as "my dearly beloved son." Timothy's natural parents had given him physical life, but it was Paul, on his first missionary tour, who converted Timothy, enabling him to experience life (spiritual) in Christ Jesus. In 1 Tim. 1:2 Paul refers to him as "my own son in the faith." The Corinthians, who had been begotten by Paul through the gospel (converted) had Paul as their father in this sense (1 Cor. 4:15).

Paul's great love for Timothy is declared as he prays for the grace, mercy, and peace of God and Christ to be with him. Every remembrance of Timothy called forth sincere prayers of thanksgiving to God for him night and day. Remembering, thinking about, or seeing Timothy gave Paul great joy, and the feeling was mutual. Timothy, evidently openly shed tears at their separation and in manifesting concern for Paul's plight, which was a touching remembrance for Paul. The basis for this affection was "the unfeigned faith" that was in Timothy, even going back to his mother and grandmother.

Exhortations to Endurance and Faithfulness (v. 6-14)

Let us remember that whatever is involved in endurance and faithfulness is essential to the preacher saving himself and those who hear (1 Tim. 4:16). Every saint engaged in trying to save self and others must look upon these exhortations as essentials to his success.

The first exhortation is to "stir up." With Timothy, it was "the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting **on** of my hands." In 1 Tim. 4:14 Timothy was told not **to** neglect "the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Some believe this "gift" in Timothy was a miraculous gift of the Spirit, bestowed by the laying on of an apostles hands. Timothy may have had such, but there is no record of such **a** bestowal, unless in these **two** passages, or of his using such **a** gift. This gift in Timothy had been given him "by prophecy" and the "laying on of Paul's hands and the presbytery." It could be neglected and stirred up. If you still have access to it, go back and read the previous article on 1 Timothy 4:14. There, I gave examples of being chosen and "put into the ministry" being spoken of as a gift, and of being sent out or appointed to an assigned task being accompanied by the laying on of hands. It is my belief that the "gift" of 1 Tim. 4:14 and 2 Tim. 1:6 is the position of Timothy as **a** minister of the gospel of Christ. He was given this charge (position) by prophecy. That is, the Holy Spirit authorized this appointment of Timothy. It was bestowed with great solemnity, by the laying on of Paul's hands and of the presbytery (Elders of Timothy's home congregation). It was a gift (position-responsibility) that he could neglect and stir up.

If this is the "gift" of these verses, then the charge to stir up and neglect not would not only apply to the young evangelist, Timothy, but to every saint engaged in teaching the word to save self and them that hear. Stirring up and neglecting not are essentials to success in this, the greatest of all works.

In discharging this responsibility, there will be occasions and circumstances that may cause fear, timidity, and doubts. God's ministers are to be men who will not succumb to such things. They, with strong faith, conviction, and love for souls must with clear minds (sound thinking) be unwavering (v. 7). We see this spirit manifested many times in the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 15:31-32; Gal. 2:4-5; Acts 17:16-17, 19-30). The true minister of **God** will not be deterred by little financial support, unpopularity, ridicule and slander, even the threat of severe persecution. If there is yielding, hesitation, or doubt manifested, the spirit of a faithful minister is absent.

Not only is Timothy told to stir up his gift and make manifest the faith, courage, and love of a faithful preacher of truth, but he is next told (v. 8) to "be **not** ashamed." Two things he is not to be ashamed of, **the** testimony of our Lord (gospel), and of Paul, a prisoner.

Paul, himself, is an example for Timothy, and all who preach the gospel, of not being ashamed of it. He plainly declared he was not ashamed of the gospel, and told why—"It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). There is nothing in the gospel to be ashamed of. Its aim is the salvation of lost men. The facts of the gospel make this possible and the preaching of it makes it available to all.

A brief synopsis of the power of the gospel to save and how it does is given in verses 9-10. God does save us through the gospel, and the preaching of it, by His grace.

The saving is by God, and the calling (holy because it is of God and calls men to righteousness) is through preaching it.

This salvation is not through, or the result of, our works (works which we have done — Tit. 3:5), but "according to his own purpose and grace." God's purpose and grace is something that was eternally purposed—"before the world began." Paul wrote to the Ephesians about this "mystery" that was divinely made known to the apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:9-11). It involved the appearing of Christ, his death, and resurrection, whereby he abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. Read Paul's description of the gospel he preached, and its effect in 1 Cor. 15:1-4.

Concerning this gospel, Paul says he was appointed a preacher and apostle, particularly a teacher of the Gentiles (v. 11). He was an example to Timothy, and to all, faithfully preaching the gospel in the midst of difficulty and persecution. It is something worth suffering for. Timothy, and every preacher of the gospel, needs to be exhorted to "be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel (v. 8). Paul's imprisonment at the time of his writing this letter, because of faithfulness to his appointment, was not something to be ashamed of, on his or Timothy's part, or anyone else. Faith in the Lord and the consequent hope is enough to banish all fear, timidity, and doubt so that the preacher of the gospel may faithfully persevere with confidence of reward in "that day" (v. 12).

The charge given to Timothy in verse 13 is to "hold fast." The thing he is to hold fast is "the form of sound words" which thou hast heard of me." Paul had delivered nothing but sound doctrine—the truth of God. He received it directly from the Lord and was divinely appointed an apostle of it (Gal. 1:11-16). The things Timothy had heard (learned) from Paul, he was assured of (2 Tim. 3:14), and could be nothing other than "sound words" (doctrine). Timothy, and every preacher of the word must make sure he holds fast this form of sound words if he is to be successful in saving himself and others. The good thing committed unto Timothy was sound doctrine and the privilege and responsibility to preach it (v. 14). The Holy Spirit in him would be a force or power in his keeping, holding fast, or being faithful to his work.

Present Situation (v. 15-18)

The remaining verses of this chapter reflects upon Paul's present situation. He was deserted by "all they which are in Asia," including two false teachers by the names of Phy�ellus and Hermogenes. Yet, there was one household — of Onesiphorus — that Paul says "oft refreshed me," being "not ashamed of my chains." This brother diligently sought out Paul, in Rome and ministered unto him, as he also did in Ephesus. When Paul prays that "he might find mercy of the Lord in that day" (v. 18), he was not indicating that, in spite of his ministering, he had sins for which God's mercy would be needed in the judgment. The context suggests that the mercy implored is the reward of the Christian's faith and works, available to all faithful Christians by God's mercy.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR YOUNG, FOLK?

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One doesn't have to read statistics from a professionally conducted census to know that many young people who are "raised in the church" are being lost to the cause of Christ. Often by the upper teen years, youth's spiritual interest is practically nil — some of the youth having at one time obeyed the gospel, others not so. If it hasn't happened where you're a member, visit other places and observe the make-up of the congregation. Then make inquiry of the members. It is alarming to see children brought up among Christians be completely lost to the cause of Christ by the time they have reached young adulthood, right at the time when they should really begin to mean so much to the work of the kingdom. It is of no small concern to preachers, to elders, and to godly saints in general. It has been a matter of great concern to me for several years, having seen many from congregations with which I was working "drop out," and feeling a sense of total helplessness to do anything to prevent it; all appeals having fallen on deaf ears. And that is to say nothing of the many among my own relation who either departed the faith or who never obeyed the gospel and who now seem untouchable.

What's happening to them? A bit later I want to offer a few, perhaps simplistic to some, thoughts as to what is happening to them.

Often the preacher or the elders, or both, catch a lot of "flack." "He's preaching way over their heads." "He doesn't make it interesting enough for young people." "They don't identify with him." The elders are not planning enough youth programs." Etc. And by "youth programs," they don't mean opportunities to study and learn and apply God's word, but occasions of fun and frolic.

Granted that it is possible that one's preaching may fall short in many areas, but it is not likely, I venture, to be the cause of the wholesale dropping out of a segment of people. Admittedly, there may be exceptions. **And** while agreeing that elders may not always adequately fulfill their responsibility as "shepherds of the flock of God," a failure to "provide programs for youth" so as to "keep them involved" should not be charged against them. At least, if we are really candid about it, these are not really what is happening to our young folk.

You have perhaps seen circulated the results of a survey reportedly made by several congregations. The results showed a definite relationship between **the** degree of active involvement of the parents in the local church and the percentage of their youth who remained

faithful. 93% of the children remained faithful where both parents were faithful and active in the local work. Where only one parent was faithful, 73% of the children remained faithful. And where both parents were irregular, only 6% of the children remain faithful. One may question whether the survey was "scientifically conducted" or otherwise find fault with it, but we must surely admit that such results as those reported reflect cause for concern. It certainly suggests that much rides on family relationships, attitudes, and responsibilities. A few passages of scripture impressing this truth are: Deut. 6:4-15; Psa. 78; Prov. 3:1-4,11-12; 13:1; 23:13-14; Eph. 6:1-4, etc. And these address only a few areas of those attitudes and responsibilities.

Some Suggestions as to What is Happening

Permissiveness is happening to youth. In many instances, parents have abdicated their God-given role. They set no firm guidelines, have no definite rules of the house, and often allow themselves to be manipulated. Parents are often literally afraid to have firm rules, afraid of the child rebelling. They don't know that love is not some kind of namby-pamby attitude, but that there must be a certain toughness to love, amply shown in the book of Proverbs. It doesn't mean being roguish, tyrannical, or unmerciful in the demands it makes. But youth need guidance. They need someone to tell them "how far," some "cans" and "can'ts" with good sound "whys." And in some instances the "why" may be simply "because I said so."

Work is happening to youth. In many instances young people are pushed and shoved into the "job market" without due consideration as to how the job will interfere with their worship, study, or influences they'll face. None of us want our children to grow up to be lazy-good-for-nothings. We want them to "learn the value of the dollar," to know that, at least for most of us, "money doesn't grow on trees." But often that part-time job, which may be taking far too much of their time, is during hours of worship on Lord's Day or during mid-week Bible study and every night of a gospel meeting. And then the parents, having allowed, maybe even encouraged it, or in some instances demanded it, wonder why their child no longer is interested in spiritual things.

Materialism is happening to youth. Not only are they being shoved into the work arena to make their "spending money" or to "buy some wheels," but they see parents who are often more committed to providing "things" than they are to living for the Lord. Frequently the parents are recreation crazed, and allow recreational activity to keep them from services of worship and periods of Bible study, or they often put their work ahead of worship, especially if "overtime pay" is involved.

Humanism is happening to youth. Like an octopus with its many tentacles, humanism is attacking from many directions, approaching from various sources. From very tender years, humanism's eroding influences bombard our young people incessantly; and often parents are unaware of it, and in many instances cannot be roused to a sense of concern when told of those influences. Evolution is only one of humanism's ten-

tacles, but it is a powerful one. How can one who is constantly told that he is but the higher form of lower life fail to ultimately act the part? It is bound to dilute or erode away spiritual influences unless strong teaching is given to the contrary. "Value clarification" advocates teach youth there are no absolutes, no real definitive standard of right or wrong. This being true, what is to be expected but that he should eventually cast aside the "old fogey" ideas of parents, preachers, Bible class teachers, and elders?

Hypocrisy is happening to youth. Children are very incisive, easily able to discern a sham. When they repeatedly see hypocritical behavior on the part of adults who are in some authority over them, it has its effect. Elders, preachers, parents, policemen, governmental officials advocating one thing while practicing another send forth uncertain sounds to youth. Especially in spiritual matters, if they see no real devotion, no depth of spiritual life, it affects them.

RESULTS OF LOSING OUR YOUNG FOLK

Their souls are being lost unless they can be regained (Lk. 13:3, 5). Salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10) — to those who get into (Gal. 3:26-27), live in (1 Jn. 2:6) and die in Him (Rev. 14:13).

Additionally, the church is being sapped of its vitality. Congregations that are composed almost entirely of "senior citizens" often are extremely difficult to stir up, to "provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). (This is not intended as any disrespect for those "seniors." I'm among the number.) But real zeal and spiritual activity often comes from those who are younger. Oh, how greatly, they are needed!

This perhaps only "touches the hem of the garment," but I believe these matters strike at some "tap root" causes. And I suggest that they are not unrelated to the "survey results" noted early in this article. The question must be continually explored and remedies sought.

"PREACH THE TEXT"

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My dad has often told the story of the time he, as a young preacher, was to preach a sermon during a meeting. In addition to a good crowd, sitting in the audience were about fifteen fellow preachers. He was "sweating bullets" and badly needed a word of encouragement. It wasn't long before Floyd Thompson, who was so important to my dad's development as a preacher (and, indirectly, my own), came and sat beside him and said simply, "just preach the text." My dad did, and got along fine. I sincerely believe that if brother Thompson were still with us he would be compelled to say the same thing to a lot of my fellow preachers, undoubtedly with even more urgency.

I'm concerned about the lack of open Bibles among Christians listening to preachers and among preachers who are preaching. While it is not my aim to judge anyone, I am very concerned with what I perceive to be an approach to preaching (and listening) which, more and more, seems to place the word of God in the background. I've heard some sermons recently which illustrate the point. In one, I was not required to open a Bible for the first 20 minutes; in another, one verse was referred to, sort of as a "launching pad," and then the Bible was closed from that point on. I heard another "sermon" in which the preacher (who had a degree in psychology) first expressed his opinion about certain problems in our relationship with God, then quoted psychological theories to validate his opinion, then threw in a little Bible, presumably to validate the psychology. If these are examples of "preaching the text," I must admit that I'm very worried about the future of preaching!

We need a fresh reminder of the lesson of Nehemiah 8, where Ezra stood in the pulpit (v. 4) and OPENED THE BOOK (v. 5), reading distinctly from it and helped them to understand what the BOOK said (v. 8). If that does not describe our function as "preachers of the word," then I'm at a loss as to what I'm supposed to be doing as a full-time gospel preacher and teacher.

Of course, I'm not at all sure the problem is all in the pulpit. In fact, I'm pretty well convinced it is not. I preached a meeting recently in which the majority of people did not have a Bible in their possession. Since I was attempting to present an exposition of one of the minor prophets, needless to say, I was at a disadvantage. I cannot pretend to understand why people of God would enter a building, presumably to hear the word of God preached, and not have a Bible with them. What is

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going through a person's mind? What are they expecting to hear? What do they **want** to hear? Platitudes? Maxims? Jokes?

God said through Amos, many years ago, that there would be a "famine in the land, not of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). Such a famine came and the people of Israel suffered the spiritual consequences. There is no such famine now, except when it is self-imposed. In too many places and in the sermons of too many preachers (one is too many), such a famine exists. It extends to the pew and people are beginning to get along quite well without the word of God... after all, if we hear only opinions, we have a choice to accept them or reject them, don't we? "My opinion is surely as good as his, though perhaps not as eloquent."

Perhaps I'm sounding an alarm which is not needed (though I know many others who share my concern). Jeremiah said to beware of those who cry "peace, **peace** when there is no peace" (4:10). These are just my observations—but if they ring true, in your experience, I'd like to make a couple of short suggestions. To those who occupy the pews each week and listen to preaching, **demand** (yes, **demand**) Bible preaching — accept no substitutes. In addition, bring your Bibles, open them up, take notes, listen. Challenge the preacher to present the word of God as the only solution to every problem he presents. We need to be challenged, checked and, sometimes, corrected. And, to my fellow preachers, let's "just preach the text" (2 Tim. 4:2).

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TACTICS

The outcome of many battles, even wars, has been determined by tactics, and not by sheer strength or the advantage of superior armament.

The church's mission to advance and defend the cause of truth is compared to a warfare. In fact, it is a warfare, though a spiritual one (2 Cor. 10:4).

I recall hearing brother Frank Puckett say one time concerning this warfare with digression, "We let them out-general us." Some brethren have been aware of the true issues in every conflict, but others don't realize they have been "out-generalized" until it is too late.

In the great digression of the late 1800's and the early 1900's, the main issue became instrumental music — not because it deserved to be, but because the advocates of error wanted it that way, and we allowed it.

Missionary societies were an issue, to be sure, but the main battle was pitched on the sentimental issue of the organ. Evidence of this is still seen today.

Some think that the only difference between the churches of Christ and the Christian Church is the instrument of music. Sadly, some churches of Christ have corrupted their identity to the point where this conclusion is valid. This condition is a result of tactics.

The instrument has been emphasized to the point where some brethren think that as long as we have the right name on the building and no piano inside, that it must be a true church of Christ. As a result, all some brethren need to do in order to be a full-fledge Christian Church is to change the name and put in a piano. They already have everything else.

The principles of establishing scriptural authority have long since been covered in the tactical dust created by digressive brethren.

Some brethren failed to see that the "orphan home" issue was only a red herring, a feint on the part of the college-in-the-budget advocates to divert our attention from the real issue. And, some well-meaning brethren on both sides of the issue were duped. The liberals did the advance work of the "ultra-liberals" by allowing orphans to become the sentimental issue.

Those who wanted the college in the budget of the church knew that brethren generally were not ready for that idea. But, the college advocates knew that the homes and schools would "stand or fall together," so they just sat back and waited.

Brethren finally found out that the church wasn't in Jas. 1:27, and that there were few, if any, orphans in the

"orphans homes" among us. They also learned (too late), that some homes and schools were included in the same operation, and truly did stand or fall together. Then, some homes changed their names and methods (the home wasn't a "method" after all), to emphasize "family-type" care instead of "institutional care."

Even the issue of whether a home should be under elders or a board of directors threw some off a trail for a while.

But, by this time, churches were supporting the preschool, the kindergarten, the grade school, the junior high, the high school, and the college.

Some of the "conservative liberals" or "neo-antis" (as the "ultra-liberals" call them), are still out there wandering around in the dust of battle waving their arms and pens and wondering what ran over them. Some day they may realize that the college express, the sponsoring church, the missionary society, the instrument of music and a host of other things went by them while they were preoccupied with "orphan" homes.

In my judgment, we are allowing the same sort of tactics to divert us from the real issues in other areas.

We have allowed the battle over general benevolence to be pitched at Gal. 6:10 and 2 Cor. 9:13, and especially on the italicized word "men" (KJV). It has not yet been proven that benevolence is even the main consideration of Gal. 6:10, much less corporate benevolence on the part of the church.

The theme of Gal. 6:1-10 is fulfilling the law of Christ by bearing one another's burdens (v. 2). The thought even originates back in Gal. 5:14ff. There are many times when we have opportunity to "do good" where benevolence is not even a consideration.

The term "unto all" in 2 Cor. 9:13 must be applied in the light of other passages which treat on the same class, kind, or group, i.e., believers. References to benevolence in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 2, 4, and 6), Judaea (Acts 11:27-30), and the seven references to the Jerusalem collection (Rom. 15; 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Cor. 16,1,2), must have pre-eminence over the italicized "men" of 2 Cor. 9:13.

Even such passages as Jas. 1:5 and other passages which treat on the alien sinner's relationship to God would pre-empt the conclusion that the church is obligated to engage in general benevolence toward those not saints.

Another area where we have been "out-generalized" concerns whether or not a thing is supported "out of the church treasury."

While this matter is important, and needs to be circumscribed by the scriptures, there are other ways in which the church can support a thing besides making a direct contribution from its treasury.

The church bus could go get the Methodist choir, let them perform and be fed in the "fellowship hall," and return them to the Methodist Church without ever making a direct contribution to the Methodist Church out of the treasury. After a thing has been directly supported in other ways, it is only a formality to then use the church treasury.

If you hear that the enemy without is attacking at a

certain point on the perimeter, or that subversives are operating within, check it out by all means. But let's not marshall all our forces in one area until we are certain that is where the battle needs to be pitched. It may be just a diversionary tactic on the part of an adversary to divert our attention from the real thrust.

And, when we are engaged in fighting "the good fight of faith" even at the right time and place, let us not be oblivious to danger in other areas. The Ephesians seemed to remember part of this advice (Acts 20:28-31), but forgot the rest of it (Rev. 2:1-6).

It is not only important that we have the right cause and the right armor, but let us watch that others do not "out-general" us.

DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE AND COURAGE: A Parallel Between Ezra and Us

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Ezra is a character we often overlook in our study of the Old Testament, but he deserves our attention as one who had great courage in doing a terribly hard job. Maybe he is overlooked because much the same job needs to be done in our time and we do not like to think about it. He had the unenviable job of telling many of the children of Israel that their marriages were not right in God's sight and ending them was demanded. I fear that all too many among our brethren today do not have the courage to fulfill such a task towards those who are living in adultery.

In Ezra 9, the situation is brought to the attention of Ezra. Those around him tell Ezra that the people had married foreigners thus violating the will of God. He mourns at the news and sits down confounded for a long time. It brought great agony of mind for him to know that his brethren had transgressed that law of God and stood in jeopardy for such.

In this state of mind, he prays fervently to God. His opening words are, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up unto the heavens" (Ezra 9:6). It was no small matter in Ezra's estimation that the people had unlawful marriages. It was seen as an enormous sin against God. Ezra even refers to it as "our great guilt" (Ezra 9:13). In concluding the prayer, Ezra acknowledges that the present condition would cause God to consume them without leaving a remnant (Ezra 9:14-15). Notice that he did not say God would only consume those in the unlawful marriages, but the whole nation who tolerated such! There was no doubt that someone needed to help correct the situation before terrible consequences ensued.

In Ezra 10, Shecaniah came with a message which was both hopeful and horrifying. The hope was found in convincing the people to admit their sin and put away the unlawful relationships as repentance would demand (Ezra 10:2-3). The horrifying part was the charge to Ezra, "Arise, for this matter belongeth unto thee ...; be of good courage and do it" (Ezra 10:4). Things could not change with the wave of a magic wand, a strong wish, or even a fervent prayer alone. Someone of courage would have to stand up and preach an unpopular and heartbreaking message which showed the sin and pointed the way of right. Ezra was the one suited to the task. Because of his influence as a leader of the people, the matter belonged to him. Shecaniah does not seem to be passing the buck, but is encouraging Ezra to act for the good of God's people as the one who could best do the job.

Ezra delivers the message to the people: "Ye have trespassed, and have married foreign women, to increase the guilt of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto Jehovah, the God of your fathers, and do his pleasure; and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the foreign women" (Ezra 10:10-11). The people did acknowledge their sin and acted as repentance has always demanded, **ceasing the sin**. It was not an easy task for "some of them had wives by whom they had children" (Ezra 10:44). Several times during the episode, Ezra shows the emotional turmoil this task brought, but he did it anyway. God's law demanded such and failure to preach the message assured punishment from God. He loved God and the people too much to shun his duty. Oh how we need men with the courage of Ezra!

The situation which presents itself today is not identical to that of Ezra's time. There is no prohibition on the nationality of those whom we may marry. But there is law regarding that which constitutes an acceptable marriage in God's sight today. Jesus sets forward the very clear ideal of one woman for one man in marriage for life in Matthew 19:3-8. The one exception is stated with equal clarity in verse 9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." That law is being violated by multitudes in our day and the violators are increasingly finding their way into churches across the land **without ceasing the sin**. They may be a different brand of unlawful marriages than Ezra saw, but the common factor is that both are unlawful. Would any dare to argue that God would look with greater favor on sexual impurity in our time than racial or cultural impurity in Ezra's time? Both violate God's commandments, both are sin, and both bring the punishment of God!

We have those who are named among our brethren who preach the guilty party may remarry and be acceptable to God without severing the unlawful union. We have some who say that God's law regarding divorce and remarriage does not apply until one is a Christian. Never mind the fact that Jesus said it had been in effect "**from the beginning**" (Mt. 19:4,8), they say it is only law

for the "kingdom." Some say that when you become a Christian the past unlawful marriages are cleansed along with your sins and you can stay with your present mate regardless of how many you have had before. Isn't it amazing how some try to get around the Bible teaching about repentance? Repentance says we must cease **the sinful practice**, not **change the definition** of sin. Some say 1 Corinthians 7:15 gives the deserted believer a right to divorce their unbelieving mate and remarry even though adultery has not occurred. If they can find an exception to the "except" of Matthew 19:9, how long will it take them to figure an exception to the "except" of John 3:3? With teaching like this being done, it is no wonder that people in these situations are found in churches throughout the country. We ought to hang our heads in shame and blush over these sins as did Ezra of old. We too should confess that our "iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up unto the heavens."

Instead, many today are excusing away such false teaching and sinful practices as matters of "private conscience." Among those of us who call ourselves "Gospel preachers" we see a hesitancy to label false teaching and sin in this area for what it is. Excuses and convenient reasoning do not change one thing — the teachers and practitioners of such error stand in jeopardy of eternal damnation while we refuse to face them with their error! Love for the Lord, His truth and the souls of people should constrain us to take a stand. May God help us to have the courage to face those in such jeopardy with the error of their ways regardless of who they are or the hardship it brings unto us. Oh how we need men with the courage of Ezra!

THE DISCIPLING MOVEMENT

(A study of the Neo-Crossroads Philosophy among churches of Christ)

by Maurice Barnett

This is a powerful assault on the discipling movement which includes what is called Crossroadsism and what has gone far beyond that movement. Evidences of the influence of this movement are being seen among conservative churches.

Maurice Barnett, author of definitive works on Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormonism, has turned his ability to exposing this dangerous movement. This book deserves a wide circulation.

Connie W. Adams

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Things Most Certainly Believed

Julian R. Snell

17 Mill Circle Drive
Shelbyville, Kentucky 40065



WORKMAN WORTHY OF HIRE

One of the most noticeable areas of change, for the better, to be sure, among the people of God over the past nearly forty years of my preaching life, is in preacher support. This is certainly understandable because monetary values, prices for goods and services, wages and resultant accumulations have all made for the affluent present. Recognizing our improvements in this area of preacher support is not to completely exonerate failures and shortcomings in many areas and among many congregations. While I recognize the sensitive nature of this area of study, even to the danger of being judged self-serving, let me offer what is hoped will be some profitable considerations.

Our premise is clearly scriptural, preachers are to be supported. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). Pay for the laborer in the work of the gospel is as logical and practical as payment for the soldier, planter of the vineyard, feeder of a flock, or oxen in the plowing of a field (cf. 1 Cor. 9:7-9). Some of the practical areas of support of the preacher (judgment calls, if you will) are variable and the variations where agreeable to the principles are justified. However, may I offer for consideration some of these overlooked practical facets of preacher support.

Surely, we are agreed that a stable relationship between the congregation and the preacher is vital to productivity. Communication is essential to understanding and discussion to this end ought to certainly precede every working relationship in the beginning. Wages, cost of living increase, fringe benefits including medical and hospitalization coverage, social security payments and various other things ought to be dealt with up front.

In regard to wages, consider this. A wage figure of \$600 per week in 1987 with a cost of living index of 5% becomes \$630 in 1988. This is not a \$30 raise in fact, but a keeping pace in buying power. What \$600 bought in 1987 it takes \$630 to buy in 1988. If these factors are not applied in an escalating economy it becomes plain to see that a couple of years can easily erode a respectable wage of \$600 to the buying power of \$540.

In the day of escalating medical and hospital costs with extended illness quite common, what is the responsibility of the congregation when the preacher is beset by a lengthy or even terminal illness? When he becomes non-functional or the function is limited, how long is the church obligated to pay his wages? **Or**, for

that matter, is there an obligation? One church with which I am acquainted had addressed this possibility up front with their preacher and has arrived at this commendable program. In the case of extended illness they are committed to pay the preacher for six months full wages. The next six months is to be at half wages making for some obligation for one year. Their reasoning for the time frame is that social security will take over by then and any future obligation on the part of the church, (they readily admitting they have a continuing responsibility) will be treated as the church's responsibility to a needy saint.

The congregation above has also had the wisdom and foresight to see that the outside preaching activities of their preacher are not a financial drain for him. At the end of the calendar year if his meeting or outside the congregation preaching work has left him in the "red" this is taken care of. That is an arrangement in addition to maintaining the regular wage on a weekly basis whether the preacher is doing local work or outside meeting and teaching work.

Fluctuating medical insurance premiums from one locality to another makes hospitalization insurance a variable. Major medical coverage is a must and congregations would do well to include this in their support package. After all, for them, it may be the most economical measure in the face of catastrophic illness on the part of the preacher. The importance of this facet of support for the preacher is obvious.

Preachers are staying longer in places of their chosen local work than in decades past. This is good and healthy in most cases. One of the reasons for this is home ownership. Rather than the church owning a residence, where the preacher must live and pay rent via salary decrease because he must consider the house in his wages, preachers are buying their own houses. Coming out of a period where living in the preacher house was a foregone conclusion, the first move into home ownership can be a struggle. But with an appreciation in real estate values, even with a static market, this allows for a cushion and a residence for old age among preachers that in the past were hard pressed. Congregations need to recognize the going practice among corporations as key personnel is moved and be aware of relocation expenses as well as the base cost of moving. It is not unheard of among some employers to guarantee no loss in the sale of real estate due to move.

Someone may be ready to conclude that I am working for a cushy situation for every preacher. For the most part, the good and faithful preacher deserves every good thing the brethren will provide. But what we intend in this article is to open the eyes of those who have for various reasons become oblivious to the practical. Allow this summarization. **Base wages** adequately provided with built in cost of living increases in keeping with national index figures. **Hospitalization insurance** either provided or allowance made in keeping with existing rates for locality of residence. **Extended illness** is a possibility better considered beforehand than after the need arises. I commend the provisions mentioned in the early part of the article as being workable, compassion-

ate and an understanding solution among brethren. **Social security** must enter the picture either as an addition or a decrease to base wages. Quite possibly I have overlooked something, but touching these areas is not usually done and is sorely needed.

Contractual formality is not necessary between brethren as they work together in the preacher-congregation relationship. However, a clear understanding of the expectations, monetary and otherwise, on both sides of the relationship is vital. Without entering into a discussion of semantics, whatever you want to call the arrangements made, it needs to be clear, specific and exact that minimal misunderstanding develop. Hopefully, we have succeeded in stimulating productive thinking and action in this sensitive area and that all will profit therefrom.

"GIVING GOLIATH HIS DUE": THE PHILISTINES IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND BIBLE HISTORY

Ron Halbrook
654 Gray Street
West Columbia, TX 77486

"Giving Goliath His Due" is a report on the Philistines in archaeology and Bible history, which appeared in the 29 August 1988 **Time Magazine** (pp. 52-53). It begins,

History has not been kind to the Philistines. Exemplified by such figures as the hulking Goliath and the treacherous Delilah, they are depicted in the Bible as thieves and warmongering aliens. The ancient Egyptians branded them pirates and marauders.

We are told that recent archaeological work at Philistine Ekron reveals "one of the most highly civilized peoples of their time. They were successful industrialists and merchants, skilled producers of pottery and metal tools, sophisticated architects and town planners." After commenting on the Philistines' religion, government, agricultural life, and diet, the author concludes,

As Hebrew University's Dothan puts it, "The Philistines need no longer bear the burden of biblical scorn." After 3,000 years, Goliath's people are vindicated at last.

The Philistines are mentioned in Genesis, Exodus, and Joshua, and are often discussed as having a significant role in the historical records of Judges through 2 Chronicles. The prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, and Zechariah condemn the Philistines for their pride and decadence. Biblical history shows the Philistines just as skilled, shrewd, and sophisticated as modern archaeologists say they were. Archaeology confirms and illuminates the biblical record on this matter, just as it has done over and over again on other matters of historical detail.

The Time article tries to peddle the ridiculous assumption that since archaeologists find evidence of skill and sophistication among the Philistines, the Bible account of Philistine violence and moral decay is in doubt. Modern man, like the Philistines before him, is deluded with the idea that if people are "smart" and "sophisticated" they are not sinful and shameful. Some of the shrewdest and most sophisticated people in history have been the most wicked and vile. "Moral progress" to some people is "progress" in beating the danger of disease while living a life of sexual immorality. Skill and industry to some people include the ability to lie, cheat, and steal, and to "get away with it." We are slow to learn that scientific advances do not guarantee moral and spiritual advances. Perhaps scholars will report in the year 5,000 sifting the remains of music, art, literature, industry, and science from Nazi Germany. The report will begin,

History has not been kind to the Nazis. Exemplified by such figures as the arrogant Adolf Hitler and his treacherous band of cronies, they are depicted in ancient annals as aggressors and warmongers. The ancient Americans branded them pirates and marauders.

Recent archaeological work at Berlin reveals "one of the most highly civilized peoples of their time." After a survey of the trappings of civilization and sophistication, the author may conclude,

As Dr. Top Scholar at Hebrew University puts it, "Nazi Germany need no longer bear the burden of Jewish and world scorn." After 3,000 years, Hitler's people are vindicated at last.

Yes, it is possible to be both skillful and sinful. Archaeology says the Philistines were skillful. The Bible says they were both skillful and sinful. Archaeology and Bible history are not at odds here. Archaeology confirms the Bible record without contradicting a single detail recorded in the Bible.

The Bible is accurate, right, and true when it addresses historical detail and when it addresses my sin and God's provision of a Savior. Those who love the truth are drawn to Christ by "the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:15). He forgives our sins by means of his own blood when we believe in him enough to repent of our sins, to confess his name, and to be immersed in water (Rom. 6:3-4; 10:8-10). Jesus invites you to come to him as he says with outstretched arms, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32).

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THE LIES OF THE DEVIL

Norman E. Sewell
1932 S. Weller
Springfield, MO 65804

Jesus told the Jews, "**Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it**" (John 8:44). Jesus said that these Jews were more like the devil than Abraham whom they claimed as their father. They obviously lived more like devil than like Abraham.

In a comedy routine years ago Flip Wilson said, "The devil made me do it," and most of us laughed at him. But what he said wasn't strictly true. There is no doubt that the devil wants us to sin; to serve him. Jesus told Peter, "**behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat**" (Luke 22:31). And it was Peter who later wrote at the direction of the Holy Spirit, "**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour**" (1 Peter 5:8). And while Satan cannot make us sin, he continues to tempt and to deceive and to use every way within his power to influence us for evil. In the beginning of our study we noted that Jesus identified Satan as "**a liar, and the father of it.**" Well, Satan is still telling lies that are deceiving men and leading them to destruction. Please look at a few of his lies with me.

YE SHALL NOT DIE — The first recorded lie of the devil occurred in the garden of Eden. God had already told Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "**for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die**" (Gen. 2:17). Along comes the devil and talks with Eve, and tells her, "**Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil**" (Gen. 3:4-5). Some have contended that Satan didn't really lie to Eve here, but I believe that he did. Though they did not die physically right on-the-spot, Adam and Eve died in their relationship to God, for sin always separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2; Ezek 18:4; Eph. 2:1; etc.). It made no difference that Eve believed Satan; the consequences were the same. She and Adam had disobeyed God, and they died. Don't be fooled by Satan into believing the same lie that a little sin won't hurt you, that such is just good clean fun.

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION — The theory of evolution says that man evolved from lower forms of life. Further, the theory of evolution has no answer for the origin of life itself. This is frequently explained away by

"the big bang theory" and like nonsense. The effect of the theory of evolution however is something quite different. If man is not made by God, and in the image of God, then there is no one who can judge us; no one to set standards for us to live by. Also, man cannot be regarded as any better than the animals except that he has evolved to a higher level. Satan would love for you to believe the theory of evolution rather than the statement of Genesis 1:27, "**So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.**" The theory of evolution is just another lie of the devil to deceive men and lead us to eternal destruction.

SECULAR HUMANISM — Very much akin to the theory of evolution is secular humanism. It sounds so good on its face, that we should seek only what is good for man, what lifts man up, etc. The problem with that is that secular humanism denies the existence of God, and the creation made by God. Again, the purpose is to deny accountability on the part of man to anyone higher than himself. Our children are being fed bits and pieces of this lie of the devil in our public schools. All of this is in spite of the fact that God said, "**Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness**" (Romans 6:16). We serve whomever we obey, and we will give an answer for that, for Paul also wrote: "**So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God**" (Romans 14:12). Somehow we must counteract this lie of the devil and be sure that we recognize, and that our children understand that we are answerable to God.

NO RIGHTS OR WRONGS IN SEX — Sex is not bad or dirty or wrong, when kept in the confines of God's arrangement, marriage. But one of the lies of the devil today is that all sex is good, and that there are no "rights" or "wrongs." This idea has been around for a long time, but Joseph Fletcher, in his book "Situation Ethics" told the whole world just to do the "loving thing" and not to be bound by some antiquated code of ethics. Our world is filled with "sex," and not just in the bedroom, but on television, in movies, in books and magazines. God gave us the sexual urge, but He regulated it to the marriage relationship. Can we really believe that God will not judge or condemn those who refuse His warnings to "flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18), or "**nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband**" (1 Cor. 7:2); or "**marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge**" (Heb. 13:4).

Don't listen to the lies of the devil. He will lead you to destruction if you will let him. Rather let's "**trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths**" (Prov. 3:5-6).

READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY

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

DON GIVENS, 555 University Ave. #3207, Honolulu, Hawaii 96826 — We have now completed three years in Hawaii working with the Leeward church in Waipahu on the island of Oahu. These years have been enjoyable, and the Lord willing, my wife and I desire to remain here working in the gospel. To those brethren planning to visit Hawaii, please be informed that the Leeward congregation is the **only** non-institutional church in this state. (The Moanalua church listed in some of the old directories, no longer exists.) Our building is located 17 miles west of the tourist district of Waikiki. Therefore, it is essential that all tourists make adequate plans to worship with us, taking this distance in consideration. The Honolulu city bus goes to Waipahu, but it will take you one and a half hours each way. The best way is to plan on renting a car to drive to Waipahu. A taxi is very expensive. We have from 13-18 visitors every Sunday, and it is therefore impossible for us to supply transportation. Our building is about 45 minutes from Waikiki by car. Directions to the building will be found in the yellow pages of your phone book in your hotel. Honolulu is a large city of 750,000 population. Our Bible class is at 9 A.M. with worship at 10 A.M. and 6 P.M. Come visit us in the Aloha state.

PATRICK ANDREWS, 1650 Paradise Hill Rd., Clarksville, TN 37043—The South Clarksville church has a mimeograph machine we need to sell. If you are interested, please call me for details at (615) 645-7723.

LEWIS-LANGFORD DEBATE

TOMMY L. McCLURE, 3311 Longview Rd., Antioch, CA 94509 — On December 12 and 13, 1988, beginning at 7:30 P.M., Jack W. Langford of Ft. Worth, Texas will affirm: "The Scriptures teach that baptism by, with or in the Holy Spirit to the penitent believer is for the remission of sins and placement into Christ and his body, the church, without any other acts of obedience." Harry L. Lewis, Evansville, IN will deny. Place: Placer High School Auditorium, 275 Orange Ave., Auburn, California.

On December 15 and 16, at 7:30 P.M., Harry L. Lewis will affirm: "The Scriptures teach that baptism (immersion) in water is in order to receive remission of past sins for the penitent, alien sinner." Jack W. Langford will deny. Place: Veteran's Memorial Building, 6th and E. Sts., Antioch, CA.

Langford's doctrine is not the usual denominational type. According to him, there is no such thing as water baptism for sinners today; cases of such in the Gospels and Acts were merely carry-overs from the law of Moses during "the period of transition" from the Old to the New; the "one baptism" for today is spiritual baptism, he avers. He is a "Quakerized" dispensationalist, a slick-tongued orator, an experienced debater, a "sarcastic nice guy," and loathes water baptism and the church of Christ. Harry L. Lewis is also an experienced debater, well prepared and highly qualified. This may well be the debate of the decade with sectarians.

Lodging in Auburn (area code 916), includes: **The Auburn Inn (800) 272-1444**, **Best Western Golden Key (800) 528-1234**, **The Auburn Hotel 885-8132**, **Elmwood Motel 885-5186**. Motels in Antioch (area code 415), descending price scale, are: **Heritage Inn 778-2000**, **All Seasons Inn 754-6600**, **Astro Motel 757-6100**; Motel « 427-1600.

Our radio program (A Program of Bible Truth) will be heard on Radio Station KPLA, 770 AM dial, at 7:45 A.M. each Sunday.

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

APPEAL FOR A FAMILY IN CRISIS

WARREN E. BERKLEY, P.O. Box 113, Highlands, TX 77562 — In the spring of 1985, brother Luther White was diagnosed as a victim of cancer (multiple myeloma). Despite pain, tremendous financial burdens, and periodic side effects from the treatment, brother White continued to operate his concrete construction business, maintaining his insurance but receiving little personal salary. In the fall of '87, his brethren at the Wallisville Rd. church of Christ began benevolent assistance for him and his family. This was started after all other (family) resources were exhausted. After taking that step, other churches in the Houston and southeast Texas area responded with extraordinary generosity. These funds have helped sustain the White family, and throughout the past 10 months, brother White has continued to work.

Now (August, '88), brother White is no longer able to work. He faces the threat of insurance cancellation. And, may I add, that during the past two years, his wife has had major surgery, and his teenage daughter wears a heart pacemaker. **Medical bills now owed are in excess of \$250,000.** It is time to broaden the appeal for help. All three members of the White family are faithful members of the Wallisville Rd. church. The relatives have done all they can; the local church is doing all it can; area churches have been helping; Sister White works full-time. Hence, the only other avenue of approach left is this appeal to churches and individuals throughout the nation.

Contributions may be sent to: Wallisville Rd. Church of Christ, P.O. Box 113, Highlands, TX 77562. (Mark checks: "White Benevolence"). All contributions will be acknowledged the same day they are received. For more information you may contact me at (713) 426-7760 or 426-8034.

OBITUARY

CHARLES L. MORTON of Ratcliff, Arkansas — "It is with deep sadness that I learned of the untimely death of Charles L. Morton, faithful and able gospel preacher, and a trusted, beloved personal friend of many years. His death resulted from an accident, which usually would not have been serious at all — he stumbled and fell, hitting his head and resulting in a blood clot, requiring brain surgery. Being a diabetic further complicated matters. From the time of the accident until his death, Charles never regained consciousness. Other blood clots and complications followed. He was in the intensive care unit for the entirety of his hospitalization at Fort Smith, AR." (Paul C. Keller in PAUSE -PONDER-PROFIT, Paragould, AR)

Funeral services were conducted by Harold Turner and Mike Pittman. His preaching carried him to Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, Minnesota, Alaska and Arkansas. Mike Pittman reported that between 1976 and 1983, over forty articles from brother Morton appeared in **THE PRECEPTOR**, though most of these were not submitted by him personally. As Pittman said "They were short, clear, and to the point."

Brother Keller's report also indicates that brother Morton had paid high insurance premiums for years, only to have the company declare itself insolvent, defaulting on payments owed, and forcing not only the loss of premiums paid but also the accumulation of high medical bills. His widow and children are left with medical bills in excess of \$50,000, according to brother Keller. Our sympathies are expressed to his wife, Sylvia and children. She may be addressed at Rt. 1, Box 233, Ratcliff, AR 72951.

PREACHERS NEEDED

VALPARAISO, FLORIDA — The Twin Cities church, 92 Eastview Ave. (32580) is looking for a preacher. We are a small congregation of 20 members. We own our building. Outside support may be needed. Phone 892-4736 or 678-4629.

KAHOKA, MISSOURI — The Westside church, which meets at 671 W. Thompson St. (63445) is seeking a second man to locate here in N.E. Missouri to work with Lonnie Garrison in preaching and teaching the gospel. There are 17 members, most of whom are women. But there is much to do. It is 100 miles in all directions to another faithful work. The work is challenging for either a younger or older man. Only serious inquiries need apply. Contact Lonnie Garrison at (816) 727-3285 or 727-3006.

POET'S CORNER
SONG OF THE LAWLESS
(For those Who Disdain Bible Authority)

Free! FREE from God's Law,
O Blessed condition,
I can sin all I want,
And still have remission!

OUT with rules and regulations!
OUT with laws and stipulations!
We want NO NEGATIVES, let us make clear,
Unless it be the ones WE like to hear.

Give us thrills, chills, and scratch our itching ears,
Watch us become more sectarian all through the years.
No more long and hard Bible study,
We think that is much too fuddy-duddy.

Give us fun, food, and frolic; over that we'll drool,
But give us Book, Chapter, Verse, and we'll call you a fool.
Give us church dinners, and over them we'll slobber,
But give us sound doctrine, and on it we'll clobber.

Give us emotional services, and well shout HALLELUJAH!
Ask for our Bible authority, and well say "What's it to ya?"
We are full of love, and of sweetness we boast
But tell us we're wrong, and YOU we will ROAST!

Shame, shame on those strict Christians,
Who follow God's commandments right through.
We want NONE of those old restrictions,
OUR HEROES ARE NADAB AND ABIHU! —
Don Givens

PREACHER AVAILABLE

DAVID JOYNER, 1655 Hwy 18, Medon, TN 38356 — I am 37 years old, married with two young children and have been preaching for 10 years. I have done evangelistic work in several states. References can be supplied. I would like a full-time, self-supporting work soon. Call (901) 427-8298.

NEWS ITEMS AND STS

The fact that an item appears as news in this paper does not mean that the **paper** or the **editor** knows all the details surrounding such a report, nor does it imply endorsement of any service mentioned, nor activity described. We have tried to avoid items which could be construed as commercials for business enterprises. At times we have carried items of general information which we felt would be of interest or use to readers. In the July, 1988 issue of this paper a news item appeared under the heading of "Project Help." Since that item appeared, planned seminars in both Louisville, KY and Tampa, FL have been advertised in letters to preachers in those areas, making reference to the news item in this paper in July. We have requested that no further reference be made to this paper in future advertisements and have been assured that this request will be respected.

One of the partners of "Project Help" is Glen Crowe. We quote here a news story which appeared in the Louisville, KY newspaper:

**CHURCH INVESTMENT PROMOTER
NAMED IN FRAUD INDICTMENT**

"For two years, Osybon Glen Crowe traveled to Churches of Christ around the country, promoting his 'Christian' investment business and quoting the Bible to underscore his claims, say those familiar with the now-defunct Ministers Investment Corp.

"Many — including Ruth Connell, who heard Crowe speak at a church in Conway, N.H. — invested money with Crowe — a Church

of Christ minister then based in Tompkinsville, KY.

"But Connell became one of about 300 investors who lost their money when Crowe's business collapsed in 1983, said her lawyer, Charles English Jr. of Bowling Green.

"She's devastated,' said English, whose client claims a loss of \$141,000. It's a very sad story — she lost her whole life savings.'

"Crowe, who now lives in Lebanon, Tenn., was indicted yesterday by a federal grand jury in Louisville and charged with fraud in connection with his business, which allegedly took in about \$1.4 million." (COURIER-JOURNAL, November 17, 1987, p. A1).

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS
HOW TO TREAT YOUR WIFE

An older sister in Port Arthur, Texas told us something which every married man needs to consider. She said "If a man has enough horse sense to treat his wife like a thoroughbred, she will never turn into a nag." Good advice. Are you listening, fellows?

CATHOLIC RELICS

Every time I go to Italy, I am astounded all over again at the absurdity of some of the legends which the Roman Catholic Church palms off on its adherents. For instance, in the city of Rome, there are two separate Catholic Churches each of which claims to have the skeletal head of John the Baptist among the relics. You did not know that John the Baptist had two heads?

While in Italy in May of this year, we visited the Church of Three Fountains, located on the outskirts of Rome. This is the legendary site of the execution of the apostle Paul. The story goes that when the axe fell and severed Paul's head from his body, that his head bounced three times and that at each place where his head struck the ground, a fountain burst forth, hence the Church of the Three Fountains. As my friends, Roberto Tondelli, is fond of saying, "Incredible"!

ELDERS AND FINANCIAL RECORDS

For sometime, the Sixth and Izzard church (a large institutional church) in Little Rock, Arkansas, has been in legal battle over the right of members to examine financial records of the congregation, including salaries of preachers and staff and a \$600,000 Polish Relief Fund and how it was distributed. One of the deacons, himself an attorney, took a leading part in the conflict against the elders. A lower court ruled that since the congregation is incorporated under the laws of the State of Arkansas, it was subject to the laws which involve financial disclosure to members of incorporations. The elders were ordered to make the records available. They refused to do so and the case was appealed to the Arkansas Supreme Court which has now ruled that it was a church matter and not subject to court action. One of the Justices issued a strong dissent in which he said the court had "mollycoddled the dominant faction" in this church dispute. The whole affair is sad. Elders have a God-given right to lead a flock, but not to "lord it over" the flock (1 Pet. 5:2-4). You would think that devout men would take care in "providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Cor. 8:21). People will not forever follow leaders whom they do not trust. A proper flow of information is essential to such trust. Elders everywhere would do well to remember this principle.

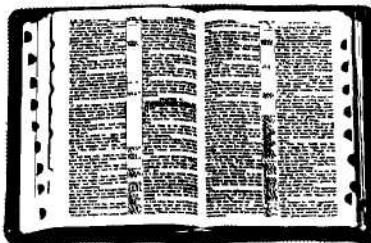
JUST TO WARM YOU HEART

The first Sunday we were in Italy in May, I preached at Aprilia, about 40 miles from Rome, where Rudolfo Berdini preaches. That afternoon we witnessed the baptism of a 50-year-old man who was baptized by his son (who is fast developing into a gospel preacher). The next night we saw this new Christian and his wife at a meeting in Latina. His wife said to my wife "Last night I was so happy I could not sleep. I kept looking at my husband and saying to myself I have a husband who is a Christian, I have a husband who is a Christian." I am sure there are some sisters who read these lines who can understand just how she felt.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	277
RESTORATIONS	65
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES



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

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

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

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MARCI DID RIGHT

DIVINE MESSAGE: "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Marci is a nine-year-old who played girls' softball in a "little league" near Indianapolis this past summer. Marci's mother had discussed her desire to have the girls in Bible study on Wednesday evenings with representatives of the league and had received a reluctant agreement to let them leave their games in time to be there. One Wednesday night, the coach did not put Marci into the game until almost 7 o'clock. Marci batted and got a base hit at a critical time in the game. The inning dragged on as Marci stood on first base. The mother approached the dugout and asked the coach to send in a substitute for Marci so they could get to services. The father agreed with the coach to leave her in the game. **What would you do? What should the mother do? What should Marci do?**

Recognizing the Problem

It was the "custom" of early Christians to assemble for worship. They were undeniably taught to do so (Heb. 10:25). By forsaking the assembling, brethren in the first century disclaimed their identity as Christians. Some of these, no doubt, did so because being identified as a Christian would subject them to persecution. Chris-

tians in our century also disclaim their identity as Christians by "forsaking the assembling." Some may not want enough association with Christians to commit the brethren to them or themselves to the others. We may by our "forsaking" simply deny to the Lord, to ourselves, and to the brethren, our true identity as Christians. The writer of Hebrews identifies their "forsaking the assembling" with "sinning willfully" (vs. 26). "Assembling" with saints is "the act of being gathered together" and the passage applies to any and all such occasions.

I would call your attention to the fact that any use of the word "church" in a context implying mutual activity is a passage which instructs Christians to come together. The word "ekklesia" implies togetherness, either in relationship or activity. I would add, however, that simply being in attendance does not guarantee that one is somehow sanctified for the week. Ritualistic "attendance" is not acceptable apart from true and heart-felt spiritual worship. The worship assembly is not a sacrament authenticating the persons place on God's roll apart from faithful living.

New Testament churches assembled regularly for worship:

1. Jerusalem continued steadfastly (Acts 2:42).
2. Troas on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
3. Corinth for the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34), and to lay by in store (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

The heart of the problem when brethren stay away from worship to God is a lack of spirituality. It may evidence a lukewarm attitude (cf. Laodicea, Rev. 3:14-22). It may go deeper than that. When the Christian forsakes the God-ordained plan for encouragement and mutual instruction, he is inviting spiritual disaster. Something other than simple disinterest may well be involved (immorality, materialism, the pursuit of selfish pleasure, inordinate concern for family, career, etc.).

Understanding the Need

Why do we need to attend the services?

1. To obey God (Heb. 10:25).
2. To worship and praise God.
3. To develop and strengthen oneself in spiritual growth (1 Cor. 11:23-26).
4. To commune with Christ (in Lord's Supper and

worship), "where two or three ..." (Matt. 18:20).

You may have seen the story which made the rounds in church bulletins several years ago. When Herbert Hoover was President, he, Mrs. Hoover, and an official group stopped one beautiful Sunday morning at a little church building in the mountains in Pennsylvania. Most of the members were out for a drive that day and did not even give passing thought to the importance of worshipping. Only thirteen persons were present. Afterward, the absent members complained, "If we had known that the President would be there, we would have gone to church. You should have let us know. The truth is, the King over the President, promised to be there and they did not come. Cornelius said, "We are all here present before God" (Acts 10:33).

5. To encourage others some of whom are not Christians who come into our assemblies to worship and learn (Eph. 5:19; etc.)

6. To support the church's efforts in all authorized practices.

Solving the Problem

We have too often tried to solve this problem by tricks and gimmicks. We have appealed to the flesh instead of cultivating a "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5:6). We have appealed to the aesthetic rather than the spiritual milk and meat of the word (1 Peter 2:2). Obviously the only meaningful solution is for every Christian to be interested in those spiritual purposes for which the assembly is provided and commit himself to it. And certainly we should prepare our hearts and minds for the worship so that it will mean what God intended it to mean for us.

Conclusion

Remember Marci? When her father supported the coach to leave her in the game, Marci's mother took the other girls and got in the car. As they pulled away, Marci in tears ran from the field, screaming after the car. Her sister, looking back, shouted for her mother to stop the car. Marci jumped in and her mother took off for the church building. When Marci stopped crying, she looked through blurred eyes and begged her mother, "Did I do the right thing?" The next day Marci's mother received a call from the coach belittling her and telling her that she was not a good mother because she had let her daughter run from the field causing a critical "out" for her team. Her reply was this: "I HAVE SPENT NINE YEARS TEACHING MARCI THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN LIFE IS HER RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITY FOR HER IS HER WORSHIP. I WAS NOT GOING TO LET A BALLGAME DESTROY ALL THAT TEACHING!"

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Editorial

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HATING EVERY FALSE WAY

The section begins with an exclamation — "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day." It closes with an explanation and a conclusion — "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." The understanding of God's precepts enabled the Psalmist to say "I have more understanding than all my teachers," and "I understand more than the ancients." Now take a moment and read Psalm 119:97-104.

This passage was not intended to foster an arrogant spirit. It simply speaks of the confidence which truth brings with it. To the one who has cultivated a taste for the word of the Lord, it is "sweeter than honey" to his mouth (verse 103). Further, the knowledge and practice of the law of the Lord exercises a restraining influence against sin. "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word" (verse 101).

It is impossible to "hate every false way" unless we can know the difference between what is true and what is false. This implies that there is a standard by which such judgments may be made, a standard which is intelligible. This is an age of uncertainty and accommodation. Few wish to appear so intolerant as to say that a certain practice is sinful, or that a certain doctrine is false. We are told that there are absolutely NO absolutes! Old fashioned sinners are rare specimens in this present age. It is thought intolerable to say that someone is a false teacher. That implies that the one who said it thinks he is right. Else, he could not say that a different teaching is wrong. But the Psalmist put his trust in God's "law," God's "commandments," God's "testimonies," God's "precepts," God's "word" God's "judgments." When the heart is saturated with that, then anything else will appear false. Then we can say with Paul "let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4).

Jesus warned of "false prophets" and the corrupt fruit they bear (Mt. 7:15-20). He spoke of plants which the Father did not plant and said they would be "rooted up" and warned of "blind guides" who lead souls into the "ditch" (Mt. 15:13-14). Paul warned of those who would "pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6). He also warned of those who would be "damned" because "they believed not the truth" (2 Thes. 2:12). Peter spoke of "false

teachers among you" who would bring in "damnable heresies" (2 Pet. 2:1). He went so far as to speak of their "pernicious ways" (verse 2). John wrote that we should "try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 Jno. 4:1).

Denominationalism Is a False Way

The "doctrines and commandments of men" have spawned the multitude of denominations of our day. Every one of them has grown out of human wisdom and differs in some way from the church revealed in the scriptures. While each one may hold to some truth, there is a mixture of error. It is entirely possible to be so taken by bold statements of truth on moral issues by skillful denominational preachers, that we forget the system of error which they promote and the dangerous delusion of souls who follow after them. You can listen to the popular media preachers from here on and you will not learn what to do to be saved, nor what the church is, how it is organized, what is its work, what constitutes true worship and a host of other things which the Bible teaches, but which they do not preach. Have you allowed its errors to fade into a pale gray? Don't hate the people caught up in it. Love them — enough to teach them the truth and oppose the error. But don't forget to "hate every false way."

Institutionalism Is a False Way

Our own brethren have erred greatly in inventing and fastening onto the churches human enterprises of various kinds. They have forgotten the nature, organization and true work which God gave the church in the scriptures. We have had a proliferation of institutions for benevolent purposes, for educational pursuits, for evangelistic activities to say nothing of the social gospel gimmicks. Intruding into the silence of the scriptures, they have acted without divine authority. They are wrong. These practices are not just gray — they are as black as sin can be. John said those who go beyond the doctrine of Christ "have not God" (2 Jno. 9-11). That same passage forbids giving aid and comfort to those who go about bearing a different gospel.

Moral Compromise Is a False Way

Sexual relations outside of a scriptural marriage are sinful and will doom one to Hell unless repentance is forthcoming. Homosexuality is an abomination to God. It is not just "an alternate life-style." Abortion involves the premeditated taking of a human life. It is a slaughter of the innocents. Mercy killing (euthanasia) falls into the same category. Both of the last two named practices indicate an irreverence for the right of human life. Among Christians, I have heard preachers who still speak out against immodest dress while mixed bathing, or working in the yard, or playing tennis, or anywhere else in public, or who preach against social drinking as "one of the black or white guys." Well, bless your heart, is everything gray? Is there no way of determining what is right conduct for the people of God? Are the secular humanists correct when they tell us "there are no right or wrong answers"? Defenders of unscriptural mar-

riages are coming out of the woodwork. Positions have been and are being taken which are contrary to the precepts of the Lord. They are false ways and need to be called that. We need to love the sinner and have compassion on him (or her), but we must detest the sin. If everyone decides to say nothing about it, then the sin will remain and souls will be lost.

We have had enough ambiguity. It is time for a certain sound which admits of no misunderstanding. All of us must guard our hearts against arrogance, self-righteousness and their kindred spirits, but we must, for the salvation of our own souls, maintain an absolute abhorrence for error in whatever form it takes. Do you "hate every false way"?

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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

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DINOSAURS ATTACK CHILDREN!

Today's children are being attacked by dinosaurs! From dinosaur dolls, balloons, T-shirts, beach toys, cookies, and even on the side of milk cartons, children are being bombarded with dinosaurs. Pictures and replicas of dinosaurs automatically conjure up a false concept of prehistoric creatures which supposedly evolved 175-200 million years ago and became extinct 65-70 million years ago, long before man came on the scene.

Here are some things you need to know:

1) DINOSAURS WERE REAL CREATURES THAT ONCE LIVED ON THE EARTH. A trip to Dinosaur National Park along the Colorado-Utah border will reveal dino skeletons still embedded in the earth's crust. Many were huge creatures, larger than any known animal today, and some were as small as a duck.

2) EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT MAN AND DINOSAURS LIVED AT THE SAME TIME. There are places in Arizona and Rhodesia where pictures of animals, including dinos, are drawn on cave walls and canyons by men who lived hundreds (not millions) of years ago. How could they have known how a dinosaur looked if they had never seen one? They couldn't go to a museum, a Time-Life Magazine, or a school textbook on evolution to find out. There have been several findings of human and dinosaur footprints showing them to be contemporaries. *"These tracks are widely distributed and are usually only exposed by flood erosion or bulldozers. They have been carefully studied and verified by reliable paleontologists and cannot be dismissed as frauds"* (Wysong, R.L., **THE CREATION-EVOLUTION CONTROVERSY**, Inquiry Press, Midland, MI, 1981, p. 455).

3) DINOSAURS DID NOT EVOLVE. Dinosaur fossils are strong evidence for creation, not evolution. If evolution were correct, one would expect to find the smaller dinos in the older and deeper stratas of the earth rather than the giant, more complex ones. The facts are quite different. The very largest (Apatosaurus, Diplodocus, and Brachiosaurus) are found in the supposedly older *Jurassic* strata, not in the later *Cretaceous* strata. No smaller, less-evolved ancestors have been found leading up to the giants. like many other creatures, the great dinos appear abruptly in the fossil record — without any hint they were coming!

If they slowly evolved, as evolutionists say, we ought to find transitional forms (in-between kinds) showing

gradual formation of the armor plate, spikes, etc., but none are found. All of a sudden in the fossil record there is a Triceratops, complete with armor plate, spikes, and all, just as we would expect the fossil record to look if God had created him! Nowhere do we find spikes starting out as little spikes which over million of years gradually got bigger and bigger. This is strong evidence for creation. The first time their fossils are found they are complete, with no intermediate forms leading up to them. That's because God created them that way.

4) THE BIBLE HOLDS THE KEY TO WHY DINOSAURS BECAME EXTINCT. Over 55 different theories advanced by evolutionists have come and gone in attempts to explain what happened to the dinos. But none offers as good an explanation as that of the worldwide flood in Noah's day. It was the greatest catastrophe in history. Nothing else compares! It rose above the mountains (Gen. 7:20), which explains why fossils of sea animals have been found on mountain tops. Every living thing "in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died" (7:22). The earth itself was brought to ruin. Not only did it rain for 40 days and nights, but fountains from the great deep came bursting forth (7:11). The water covered the earth for at least 150 days (7:24). It was almost that long again before the waters abated.

Quick flood burial would be the only way so many dinos could become fossilized in the way archaeologists have found them. (Not all dinos have completely fossilized. In some cases dinos are as much as 50% bone instead of stone, still containing protein and amino acids. This is a real problem for those who claim dinos have been extinct for 65 million years). Animals and plants fossilize only if buried quickly and deeply before predators, decay, and weather destroy them. In many cases the bones are crushed and piled atop each other.

There are two probabilities that would explain the extinction of dinos. After the flood the dinos which came off the ark would have become extinct because of the destruction caused by major changes to the earth's surface. Lush forests were destroyed and many forms of food would have been unavailable as a result of the world's greatest catastrophe. The post-flood climate would have been dramatically different than the pre-flood climate.

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Man, himself, could have killed off some of the survivors just as he has caused the extinction of many other creatures. In the last 350 years almost 400 species have disappeared, including the saber-toothed tiger and passenger pigeon. Because of his superior intelligence, man has been able to outsmart and dominate animals much larger than he. The history of the animal world has been a record of extinction. Dinosaur fossils have been found on every continent and creationists point to them as natural evidence of a worldwide flood.

5) WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT DINOSAURS. The word "dinosaur" (terrible lizard) does not appear in the Bible. But there are some biblical descriptions of such animals that would not describe any known creatures today.

The translators apparently did not know how to translate *behemoth* so they transliterated it. Webster's Dictionary says it was "a huge animal assumed to be a hippopotamus." But note that it had "a tail like a cedar." Did you ever see the tail of a hippo? A little curly-Q on the end of a 2 1/2 ton hippo! Not very impressive. No one ever wants to photograph a hippo from the back. Some commentaries say it was an elephant. Did you ever see an elephant's tail? This creature have a tail like a cedar? It was a massive creature called "chief of the ways of God."

Concerning the cedar, *DAVIS DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE* says it was *a famous tree of Lebanon (1 Kg. 5:6) tall and stately (Isa. 2:13; Ezek. 17:22; 31:3) It furnished a timber much prized in the construction of temples (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kg. 5:5,6; 7:1-12; Ezra 3:7). From its pillars, beams, and planks were cut (1 Kg. 6:9,10,18; 7:2,7); idols were hewn (Isa. 44:14); masts were made for ships (Ezek. 27:5) ... It is a large tree of dome-shaped form, with long spreading, contorted branches. ... "p. 129.*

See also the description of *leviathan* in Job 41. Since these passages do not describe any living creatures today, they must describe huge animals that lived in the past but are now extinct, such as dinosaurs. Nothing else fits this description.

6) THE EXTINCTION OF THE DINOSAURS ARGUES AGAINST DARWIN'S THEORY OF NATURAL SELECTION, OR "SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST." Dinosaurs as big, strong, ferocious, and impressive as they were, did not survive — though many small animals that dinosaurs could have killed, did survive. There were other more important factors involved than Darwinism, such as Noah's flood.

7) MUCH THAT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD ABOUT DINOSAURS HAS BEEN GUESSWORK. Scientists have not always been careful enough in their descriptions. Fossils were not found with labels and pictures. For example, *Bronosaurus* has been the most popular of all dinos. But it was recently discovered that he had the wrong head, for over 70 years! It is important to realize that when scientists dig up a number of bones, they rarely dig up the animal with flesh intact. They usually have less than 40% of the animal to tell them how it originally looked. Many assumptions have been made.

The next time your faith or the faith of your children is attacked by dinosaurs, it would be good to remember these things. Don't be afraid. They're harmless.

JOB 40

15 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.
16 Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.
17 He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.
18 His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.
19 He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. 41:33
20 Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. Ps. 104:14, 26
21 He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.
22 The shady trees cover him with their shadow: the willows of the brook compass him about.
23 Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. is confident
24 He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares. bars

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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IS JESUS THE SON OF GOD, ETERNALLY?

QUESTION: (1) In view of Phil. 2:5-8, Gen. 1:26, Jn. 1:1 and 1 Jn. 5:7, was the relationship of Father-Son an existing relationship before creation? (2) If not when did it become a Father-Son relationship? (3) Did this relationship lessen the glory, majesty, and authority of Jesus Christ as deity? (4) When Jesus ascended back to heaven, is there still a Father-Son relationship? (5) If so, will this continue on in eternity? (6) Please explain I Cor. 15:27-28.

ANSWER: As you can see there are several related questions asked by the querist. We will attempt to answer them in the order given.

1. It is my persuasion that Jesus is the *eternal* Son of God. Some believe Jesus became the Son of God at His physical birth. The designation, "Son of God," depicts Jesus' nature and not His incarnation. There are passages which indicate that He was the Son of God before He became flesh. John recorded, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son ... For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (Jn. 3:16-17). Jesus was the Son, seemingly, before God gave Him and sent Him. Compare Rom. 8:13; Heb. 1:2; 1 Jn. 4:14. Of course, there is a possibility that these passages are anachronistic, meaning the name "Son of God" is used out of chronological order. For example, we say, "President Reagan, when he was a boy..." He wasn't President then, but we carry back this honor to that time. This could be true of Jesus as "Son of God," but other Scriptures do not demand it, so we take the texts we mentioned at face value.

Jesus referred to Himself as the "Son of man." This stresses His manhood, a manhood of unique order in comparison with all other men. On the other hand, "Son of God" stresses His deity, yea, His uniqueness in His relationship to God. Angels are sons of God (Job 1:6; 2:1), Adam was a son of God (Lk. 3:38), Israel was God's son (Ex. 4:22) and those in Christ are sons of God (Gal. 3:26, ASV). But Jesus is THE Son of God in a special sense. What is this sense?

W. E. Vine wrote in regard to "Son of God" the following: "An eternal relationship subsisting between the Son and the Father in the Godhead is to be understood. That is to say, the Son of God, in His eternal relationship with the Father, is not so entitled because

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He at any time began to derive His being from the Father (in which case He could not be co-eternal with the Father), but because He is and ever has been the expression of what the Father is; cp. John 14:9, 'he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' The words of Heb. 1:3, 'Who being the effulgence of His (God's) glory, and the very image of His (God's) substance' are a definition of what is meant by 'Son of God.' Thus absolute Godhead, not Godhead in a secondary or derived sense, is intended in the title." No angel, nor man, is a son of God in that he is God.

2. This question is answered in number 1. However, some advocate that Jesus became the Son of God through, or as a result of, the Virgin Birth. But Albert Barnes reasons that "the certain of Adam, by the immediate power of God, without father or mother, would constitute him the Son of God in a sense equally or even more exalted than that in which the title is applied to Jesus if the miraculous conception were allowed to exhaust its meaning. ..."

"In the end, therefore, we must resolve the name into the divine nature. That it implies *equality* with God is clearly proved in this commentary. So the Jews understood, and the Saviour tacitly admitted that their construction was right" (Romans, pp. 22-23). Cf. Jn. 5:17-18; 10:30-36.

A few words just here are in order about "the only begotten" Son of God (Jn. 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18). Some interpret "only begotten" as meaning "generation," but W.E. Vine observes: "... the word 'begotten' does not imply a beginning of His Sonship. It suggest relationship indeed, but must be distinguished from generation as applied to man.

"We can only rightly understand the term 'the only begotten' when used of the Son, in the sense of unoriginated relationship." Vine then quotes Moule: "The begetting is not an event of time, however remote, but a fact irrespective of time. The Christ did not *become*, but necessarily and eternally *is* the Son. He, a Person, possesses every attribute of pure Godhood."

The statement, 'Thou art my Son, this day I begotten thee' (Psa. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5) is best understood as perhaps a poetic metaphor of the resurrection and enthronement of Jesus Christ. Read the context of Acts 13:33. In Rom. 1:4 Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power... by the resurrection from the dead." In His earthly ministry He claimed to be the Son of God, and His resurrection proved or established it.

3. The Father-Son relationship being eternal in nature and unchangeable (Heb. 13:8), there was nothing to lessen as far as essence or traits. However, Jesus did divest Himself of glory, majesty and authority when He came to earth. He emptied Himself (Phil. 2:7, ASV), not of deity, but of riches (2 Cor. 8:9), heavenly glory (Jn. 17:4) and independent exercise of authority (Jn. 5:19, 30; 14:24). These divestments had nothing to do with Jesus becoming the Son of God. They were necessary to His becoming the Son of man.

4. The Sonship of Jesus remains, being eternal. The redeemed wait for the Son of God from heaven (1 Thess. 1:10). Christ is now Son over His own house, the church

(Heb. 3:6). We confess that Jesus IS (not WAS) the Son of God (1 Jn. 4:15). To the church at Thyatira Jesus said, after He had gone back to heaven, 'These things saith the Son of God' (Rev. 2:18). In view of these texts, and others, we must conclude that Jesus is the Son of God in heaven.

5. When the end of time comes Jesus shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and Paul specifically states that the SON shall be subject to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Hence, in eternity, Jesus is spoken of as "the Son."

6. 1 Cor. 15:27-28 teaches that the Father delegated to Christ to rule and reign over all things, except the Father, Himself. Cf. Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-22; 1 Pet. 3:22. Having put down (destroyed) all rule, authority and power (v. 24), and conquering the last enemy, death (v. 25), Jesus will deliver up the kingdom to the Father and then become subordinate unto Him.

This subjection does not mean that Christ is not deity. Paul is not speaking of the essential nature, either of Christ or the Father. He is speaking of the work Christ has accomplished and will accomplish. In the culmination of this work Jesus will be subject, voluntarily, to the Father. Herein the absolute unity of the Trinity will become the more entirely, conspicuous, and God (most likely the Godhead, the Divinity, consisting of three persons) will be all in all.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

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"IT HATH BEEN SAID ... BUT I SAY"

Several times in Matthew, Chapter Five, Jesus uses the phrase "it hath been said" with reference to the law of Moses. But, he contrasts what "hath been said" with "But I say unto you ..."

The same distinction was made between what Moses "suffered" the Israelites to practice, and what God originally intended "from the beginning" (Mt. 19:7, 8). Jesus fortified God's position by saying, "And I say unto you..." (v. 9).

In our times, as we look down the long list of what "hath been said" by men on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, and look at all the resultant confusion, there is a need to get back to the words of Jesus when he said, "But I say unto you ..."

"It Hath Been Said"

1. "Put away his wife for every cause" (Mt. 19:3) — The Jews tried to make it appear that Moses sanctioned their practice. At least, they were "to give a writing of

divorcement" and state the reason for the putting away.

2. "No-fault divorce" — This is simply a generic term to cover "every cause" without stating the specific cause.

3. The adultery of Mt. 19:9 is not literal, but figurative" — What would these say about the woman "taken in adultery" (Jno. 8:3)?

4. "Mt. 19:9 under the law of Moses" — This position also causes some to eliminate the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and relegate their contents wholly to the Law of Moses. These have a hard time explaining the 400 yr. gap between Malachi and the four letters mentioned which were written around A.D. 60-70.

5. "Mt. 19:9 applies to the church but not the world" — If this part of the law of Christ does not apply to alien sinners, how does any part of Christ's law apply to those "not under the law of Christ"?

6. "When the **innocent** party remarries (having the cause of fornication), this gives the guilty party the right to remarry." — With this saying, all you would have to do to get out of a marriage is commit fornication, wait for the innocent party to remarry, then get married again. And, if you could do it with the first marriage, how about a second? A third?

7. The 'not under bondage' of 1 Cor. 7:15 gives the believer cause to remarry." If this be true, all would be better off to marry an unbeliever, then goad them into leaving the believer.

8. "You can be put away for causes other than fornication, but when the other party remarries, you can then 'put them away' retroactively, or 'after the fact.'" With this saying, the last part of Lk. 16:18 is meaningless; the Lord could have just omitted it.

No claim is made to have exhausted all that "hath been said" by man on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Neither has an attempt been made to debate or exhaust all that could be said on the various positions mentioned. I have attempted to show briefly how these positions either contradict the Bible or each other.

It is my hope that when we look at all these confusing positions, that we can readily see that "God is not the author of confusion ..." (1 Cor. 14:33). Further, we know that no **two** of those positions can be right at the same time, as long as they contradict each other. And, as with either of two contradictory positions, one **must** be wrong, and both **may** be wrong.

Some brethren use rules of interpretation and take positions with respect to divorce and remarriage that they wouldn't touch with the proverbial "ten foot pole" on other subjects.

Some authors (mostly preachers), of these "it hath been said" positions have reversed themselves, leaving confused and mis-taught "disciples" in their wake. I personally know of two preachers who did this.

Without exaggerating, or resorting to hyperbole, I think it would be safe to say that if a new position were taught on this subject today, you could find a situation by tomorrow that would fit the doctrine, or **vice versa**.

Given the present rate and direction, the church of

tomorrow will see the majority of pulpits and elderships filled with divorced/remarried men. And, when we reach that state, what shall be the fate of those **not** involved in divorce and remarriage, who will then be in the minority?

Again, at the present rate, if two people can have an adulterous marriage washed away by baptism without dissolving that relationship, why not a homosexual marriage or a "free love" relationship? Sectarian churches are already endorsing such practices, and given time and consistency, so shall we be.

When the church finds itself in such a sad condition, those same preachers who helped to bring it about will be the first to disclaim any responsibility, just as some are now attempting to do with liberalism. Each fellow will blame every other "it hath been said" position except his own. And, like the parents of the blind man, they may even deny their own "offspring."

Then, congregations will want to send for someone with the wisdom of Solomon, the courage of Daniel, and the power of Elisha to strike his hand over the malignancy, say a few magic words, and make everything clean and whole again.

Brethren, if you want me to preach on the subject, I would prefer to do it before the congregational ship gets so lopsided that there won't be a level place to stand.

"But I Say Unto You"

We need to spend more time preaching and teaching what God and Jesus have said on the subject of the marriage relationship, instead of spending so much time trying to **get around** what they said and thus giving birth to all the "it hath been said" philosophies among us.

And, we should have started back there with Timothy's grandmother, instead of waiting until Timothy's grandchildren have been divorced and remarried two or three times (2 Tim. 1:5). "The night is far spent..." (Rom. 13:12).

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GROW UP!

**Stan Adams
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The term is heard many times in many different circumstances. A youngster is told to "grow up" and do what he knows to be right. A teenager is informed that the things which once were cute and amusing as a child, are no longer becoming to him and he ought to grow up. Many an immature young Christian, who has not taken seriously his commitment to Christ, is appealed to to "grow up". It would appear that in many areas of this life, people are expected to "grow up".

Regretfully, often in the church, we tolerate constant immaturity on the part of many who should know better and should be spiritually mature. Hebrews 5 speaks of the time when we "ought to be teachers" but instead act like beginners, and are in need of the basics again. This is not the natural progression of a child of God. We are supposed to be growing up in Christ. We are to be developing a degree of maturity and dignity in the kingdom, which will gender in others a desire to look to us as leaders, in years to come.

Sadly, we have many in the church who are content to stay in a state of perpetual childhood, or adolescence, spiritually, and never do what it takes to grow up in Christ. Growing up in this life is often scary. Anything that is unfamiliar is complete with its' own set of fears. But once it is undertaken, we quickly see that our fears were not justified. Growing up in Christ is a natural thing and we should look forward to it. Can you remember the first time you were able to use a razor and come away with a little stubble? Do you remember how satisfied you felt? Do you remember the first time your folks trusted you enough to shoot a gun, or spend the night with a friend? Which one does not remember the first time that Dad trusted him with the car? All of these are standouts in our beloved memories and they are indelibly printed there for all our conscious lives.

What growing up memories do you have, as a Christian? Do you have any? How much have you grown since your initial obedience? Are you a better person, morally, socially, and spiritually, than when you first obeyed? Are you a little worse? Have you experienced growing pains, as a child of God? If not, then you have robbed yourself of some of the richest spiritual blessings we possess. If you have not experienced the joy of sitting with someone and studying with them from God's Word and answering questions they might be grappling with, from the Bible — then seeing them grasp what is being spoken of and become obedient to it, then brother you are missing out. If you have not visited the sick, helped the needy, given yourself to daily Bible study, and

enjoyed the blessings of worshiping with fellow saints, your life is lacking. If you have not given of your time to help encourage fellow brethren in different locations during gospel meetings or when traveling, or if you have not availed yourself of the privilege of hearing the gospel spoken by many capable speakers, perhaps you have never grown up spiritually and you are still a baby.

But alas, we live in a society which coddles cuteness and condones immaturity as a freewheeling lifestyle. We are a society which faints at commitments and runs scared at the thought of responsibility. These concepts strike fear in many a modern day Christian. Consequently, what many saints do is content themselves with mediocrity and slowly get into a rut. They find great company from many who have also grown comfortable with lukewarm, apathetic inactivity. Oh yes, there is a technical spark of life there, but it wavers and flickers and stands in constant danger of going out completely. On rare occasions one may feel a twinge of conscience. For a brief period he gets the brethren to "talk" about what we should be doing. Agreement may even be reached that everything is not being done which could be done in service to God. Plans are even unfolded as to how we can better ourselves. But time and lack of commitment and a fear of "who is to be responsible" for this action, slowly erodes the best laid plans, and a putrid malaise once again begins to permeate the congregation. Brethren go off and put their spiritual transmissions in neutral and again become "idlers" in the kingdom.

Then there is the other extreme. Many a zealous saint has seen this attitude prevail until he can stand it no more. He wants change and he wants it now. He falsely assumes that anything is what will work the magic that will get uncommitted saints to work. And so, a course is pursued by those in this caste, to try to be different for difference sake. Instead of putting their spiritual transmissions in gear and progress toward real growth, they literally "strip" their spiritual gears, in order to get those "lazy folks to work". Often one even borrows from the philosophies of the denominations in order to "do something". They walk on the cutting edge of the charismatics and have a flirtation with the doctrines of men, and they falsely assume that number in the assembly, are the sole determiners of growth. The appeal to the Word is supplanted for an appeal to emotion alone. Firmness and kindness in presenting God's Word is replaced with cuteness and honey-coated expressions which sound good, but when examined in light of the scripture, they leave much to be desired. They are like cotton candy, pretty and sweet from the outside, but full of nothing on the inside.

I am tired of brethren who will not grow up. I am also weary of preachers who spend much of their time, talking about what needs to be done by others, when they are not willing to do it themselves. I am incensed at the spiritual malaise which hangs over many congregations. Inactivity and stagnancy will kill as surely as anything. We all realize that one of the best ways to ruin a house is to leave it sitting, with no activity. We Christians must get to the task of preaching the gospel

to a lost and dying world. We must get after the business of reproofing, rebuking, and exhorting, those who are fellow saints. We must become more sensitive to sin in the lives of our brethren. We have to exercise more diligence in teaching and warning of false doctrines which threaten. We must become more sensitive and caring to those who want to preach the gospel on foreign soil. We must get as worked up over spreading the gospel as we do over spreading new paint. We must train and develop more leaders among us. We had better teach.

But, let us not sacrifice truth for numbers. Let us not assume that we have to do away with the establishment in order to grow. Let us demand of ourselves only the best, in service to God. In doing this let us also rely on the GOSPEL, as the Power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Let us all do some growing up in Christ, so we can all be with Him forever.

Things Most Certainly Believed

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ANOTHER VIEW OF THE THIEF

The crucifixion scene takes note of two thieves put to death with Jesus. One of these had an impressive conversation with the Lord while hanging on the cross (cf. Lk. 23:39-43). There is an obvious difference in the attitude of the two thieves, at least at this point. The similarities of their situation aside, it is apparent the attitude of one is hardened, resigned, completely without show of remorse. The bitterness in his tone is perceptive as we hear his, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us."

It is the other that is the more interesting and with whom we are more familiar. In him we detect a tender, sorrowful and penitent attitude reflected in the rebuke of his companion. "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: we hear his, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

This man by many is viewed as a typical convert, proving the case for conversion without being baptized. Certainly any misunderstanding needs to be clarified and due note must be taken to this being the exception and not the rule to conversion. It goes without saying, Jesus had the authority and power to make any exception during his ministry. This is not an illustration of gospel obedience as applicable to all today. Note must be taken of the fact that he lived prior to the age of the

gospel and its application. It is a different view, however, of this thief that I propose. An examination of him, somewhat psychological, to stimulate understanding of some basic facets of human nature and conduct. It is suggested we can see in him something of what is seen in all.

Nothing must be allowed to upstage the crucifixion of the Son of God. The agony, physical trauma, spiritual anguish and terrible death, can be accurately viewed and properly perceived only as the cause is envisioned. The cause is sin! The cross is the consummation of the plan of the ages, redemption. Here is epitomized the love of God. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). Our view of the thief is in complement to Christ, the cross and the love of God. Hopefully, we sharpen perception, enrich understanding and appreciation for this as we consider the thief.

WHO IS THIS MAN? He was a child of God generically just as you or I. The natural law of procreation makes us all the children of Adam, generally the children of God. This admits to origin, created in God's image, a living soul. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). He was endowed with all the inherent qualities of manhood.

The thief was also some mother's son, a fact admitting the natural process of life through mother and father. There is no reason to conclude, even suspect, that this man was an illegitimate cast off growing up with out love or guidance, or, that he in any way was deprived of his basic needs, emotional or physical. In all probability this thief had the same basic opportunities common to all including expression of love, provision of food, clothing, shelter, and even instruction. He may have even been nurtured in the admonition of the Lord. If a Jew, as some suppose, subject of the stringent instruction and discipline outlined under the law. There is no reason to doubt that he was loved by his mother who as she nursed him probably dreamed in hope of his maturing, being successful, above all of his being faithful to Jehovah. Surely, these things are not simply idle speculations, unfounded presumptions, but logical implications. Be this known, this man was not always a criminal. He started life at the same point we all do, in complete innocence.

This thief was unique in that he was the last to have intelligent conversation with the Lord. Obviously possessing insight above the other he recognized the innocence of Jesus and at the same time manifested an intelligent assessment of their situation. His was a free and undenied admission of his guilt. There can be no doubt of his comfort on hearing the words of Jesus to him.

Second question about this thief: WHAT MADE HIM WHAT HE BECAME? Keep in mind he was a criminal, tried and convicted, condemned to death by crucifixion. Upon whom is the blame to be placed for this? Is the society of his day, the political system, the culture, the legal system? Where is the blame?

While we recognize he was not always a criminal we

must keep in focus the fact that his parent's sin was not responsible. The overriding principle of personal accountability is clearly established in the scriptures. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" (Ezek. 18:20). Even if his parents were criminals before him this did not make him one. Parent's failures, as such, did not make this man a criminal. The failures of parents affect the lives of their children, certainly they do. We must correct as we can, repent of every sin. But, parents are not responsible for what their children become, good or bad. The capacity to rise above every parental failure is within the strength of will and character of every individual.

What made this man, what makes every man what he becomes is his own choice, attitude and conduct. The thief was what he was, guilty before God and man, due to this. In the final analysis this is the case with each, there is no other answer logically, intelligently or scripturally. Notwithstanding the tenderness of emotion and love which cries otherwise.

WHAT CAUSED THE THIEF TO TURN TO THE LORD? Surely what he had been taught had something to do with it. However, careful attention on the part of parents in this area is no guarantee. Parents may, "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), set the example of godliness as did the grandmother and mother of Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5), and while certainly stack the odds in favor of righteousness, still not guarantee it. Sometime after all is done there remains but the hope that the rebellious child will have time to repent and change course. "Train up the child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). Some must take comfort in this general rule and be content with the adage, "where there is life there is hope."

Maybe what he had seen and heard recently caused his turn to the Lord. The bruised body of the Lord, mockery of the mob, the cruelty of the soldiers. Perhaps the condescending love of Jesus, "Father, forgive them." An objective look at himself may have done the trick. Recognizing the innocence of Jesus and admitting his guilt, he saw himself as he truly was, a criminal before God, standing in need of pardon and forgiveness. Thus his plaintive cry, "Lord, remember me."

Finally, in this, another view of the thief, let us note the result of his turning to the Lord. He had immediate blessing for Jesus said, "Today." His was a relationship of security as promised by the Lord, "thou shalt be with me." Be with me where? Where I am, "paradise." What comfort to the oppressed spirit and guilt ridden soul of this man. What of you and me? When men turn to the Lord today in obedience to the gospel the results are identical. Immediate security and finally the presence of the Lord.

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STUDIES IN FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY 2 Tim. 2:1-13

This chapter begins with Paul affectionately reminding his son (in the gospel), evangelist and co-laborer, of things essential to saving self and them that hear.

Essentials To Fruitful And Rewarding Evangelism (v. 1-7)

The first charge given is "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The "grace" of this verse is the gospel of Christ — the "form of sound words" heard from Paul (1:13) — "That good thing given Timothy" (1:14) — "the gift in Timothy," given by prophecy and laying on of Paul's hands and the presbytery (1:6), involving the Scheme of Redemption. Without this being faithfully preached, salvation would be impossible. Success depended upon Timothy, and every other proclaimer of truth, being strong in their faith, zeal, and fearlessness. Selfishness, fear, doubts, hesitancy and compromise have no place in the life of a preacher of truth. Such things are signs of weakness and do not manifest the spirit of a true minister (1:7).

While "strength," itself, is an ingredient of fruitful and rewarding evangelism, the apostle goes on, in the verses that follow, to mention four other essentials. All five of the things mentioned may be looked upon as characteristics of (the how) being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

The second ingredient is "commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (v. 2). Unless this is done, successful evangelism ends when the evangelist leaves. Unless converts are nourished, urged and prepared to pass on the gospel to others, there is a flaw (weakness) in our evangelism. Please notice that the thing to be embraced and passed on to others was what Timothy had heard from the inspired apostle Paul—the truth. Without this ingredient, we can not be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

The third thing that makes for strength in the grace of Christ is "endure hardness (suffer hardship-NKJ) as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (v. 3). Jesus never promised that it would be easy to follow Him — be a good soldier of His, but forewarned of sacrifice, self-denial and persecution (Matt. 16:24; Acts 14:22; 1 Thes. 3:3; 2 Tim. 3:12; Lk. 10:3; Matt. 10:34-36). The evangelism of many has been a failure because of their self-interest, "fainting at the sight of blood," and love for this present

world. Some just do not have the strength to endure the slights and barbs of society, material scarcity, or actual infliction of pain, that often comes from "standing up for Jesus." This means they do not have the strength to save themselves and others. Good soldiers know that they will be facing many dangers, privations, and even death, but they endure, never give up or turn back. Otherwise, they would not be "good" (successful) soldiers. It is the same way with Christ's soldiers.

The fourth essential to strength in the service of Christ is "no entanglement in the affairs of this life" (v. 4). Soldiering is given as an illustration of the importance of this. A soldier, engaged in military service, knows that he will not be able to go home at nights and sleep in his own bed, spend a few days each week plowing, planting, harvesting his fields, or tending and managing some business enterprise. If he is going to be successful at soldiering, he will have to make arrangements concerning these interests so that he can separate himself from them and give full effort to soldiering. The same things is true of a successful evangelist. I am not saying that a dedicated man, engaged in secular work, cannot fill preaching appointments, hold meetings, or do local work and do a good work, nor am I saying that one dedicated to preaching can never "make tents" on the side when circumstances demand it in order to continue his preaching. I do believe, however, that one who has committed himself to the work of ministering the gospel and is being fairly supported by brethren, ought not become involved in other work and activities in order to have more and better of this world's goods. Becoming involved in other things so as to be successful in them, will take away time and effort from evangelism and jeopardize the goal of saving self and others. The successful evangelist, who pleases his Lord, must give undivided attention to being "a good minister." Any affairs of this life in which a good minister of Christ is involved, should be contributors to his prime objective — preaching the word, and not a hindrance.

A fifth essential to "being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" is striving lawfully (v. 5). The illustration given is that of a runner in a race who cannot be crowned "except he strive lawfully." Two things are listed here as essentials to being crowned. They are "striving" and "unlawful."

There are those who feel secure in their faith (or because of their faith) and see no need for abounding, striving, and sacrificing in the service of God. These are the kind James was warning when he wrote "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves (Jas. 1:22). He goes on to show that pure and undefiled religion is an active, doing thing (v. 27). He carries the theme even further, asking "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith (that faith-RSV) save him?" (Jas. 2:14). After further arguing and illustrating the matter, he concludes that "faith without works is dead" (v. 20) and says "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only" (v. 24). Those who believe and teach that once you have faith (are saved), the crown is always secure, whether you are

entangled with the world or not, strive lawfully or not, obey fully or not, labor or not, are, as James taught, "deceiving themselves." The matter of striving is an essential to obtaining the crown. The lukewarm and unprofitable servants are condemned (Rev. 3:16; Matt. 25:30).

Many religious leaders, including brethren in the Lord's church, spend a lot of time teaching that one really does not have to be "lawful" in all matters and deriding those whom they call legalists. They can understand how participants in a sports contest may be disqualified and denied the crown for any infraction of the rules, but refuse to accept this as true with soldiering or running for the Lord. It is, however, a truth clearly stated in the verses under study and throughout Paul's letter to Timothy, urging faithfulness to "doctrine" and the truth Timothy had received from him. (See Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Jno. 9; Col. 2:8; Matt. 15:9).

The importance of striving is further emphasized, and illustrated, in verse 6, where it is pointed out that the husbandman must first labor before partaking of the fruits. Not every soldier will have the praise of his commander, but those who give undivided attention to soldiering will. Not every contestant wins the prize, but there is this prospect for those who strive diligently and lawfully. Likewise, the husbandman must toil diligently, and according to the laws of nature, before he is entitled to the fruits and benefits of his labor. These three figures — the soldier, the contestant, the husbandman — all emphasize the importance of diligent, lawful, labors and blend with the exhortations previously give to Timothy to "stir up the gift that is in you" — "Hold fast the form of sound words" — "Keep that good thing which was committed unto thee" — "Be strong" and "endure hardness." All are essentials to "saving thyself and them that hear thee."

Help From The Lord

Christians are often under great temptation to become despondent and discouraged, therefore, need the Lord's help in facing duty and responsibilities. If Timothy, and we, would prayerfully consider what Paul says of the soldier, contestant, and husbandman about what is necessary to success or reward, we will, with God's help, clearly understand and appreciate our responsibilities (v. 7).

Paul and Christ As Examples

Something else to remember that will inspire and encourage is that Jesus Christ, the promised seed of David (the Messiah) came, was crucified, raised from the dead, and highly exalted, making possible salvation (v. 8). Christ is an example of faithfulness to duty resulting in salvation for others and reward (Phil. 2:5-11). This was the heart and soul of the gospel Paul preached (1 Cor. 15:1-4). No amount of suffering and persecution could turn him from preaching the word whereby he could save himself and others. Enemies could threaten, punish, and imprison him, but they could not bind the word of truth (v. 9). Paul not only endured all things in prospect of his own crown, but on behalf of all saints, that they too might receive the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (v. 10). Both Paul and Christ are examples for Timothy, and us, of the importance of faithful endur-

ance to obtaining success-salvation.

The whole matter (faithful saying) is summed up in verses 11-13. Living with Him eternally (spiritually) is conditioned on our dying with Him. Paul shows that this is done by our being baptized into Him (Rom. 6:3-5). Romans 6:8 is the same as v. 11 in our text. "Live with Him" in verse 11 is called "walking in newness of life" in Rom. 6:4.

Not only is that matter of "dying with Him" essential to salvation, but also the matter of suffering (patiently enduring) is essential to "reigning with Him" (the eternal crown) (v. 12; Rev. 2:10). If one who has "died with Him" (a saint) fails to suffer, shrinks back in the face of adversity, and denies his allegiance to Christ, he will be denied by Christ in the judgment. The doctrine of "once saved, always saved" (eternal security of the believer) contradicts this text, and many others, therefore, is a false doctrine.

Failure on the part of Christians to faithfully endure does not change the Lord's position or what He has done to affect salvation for man (v. 13). Christ cannot deny Himself. He will ever remain all he claimed to be, no matter how many who have professed Him prove faithless.

THE OUTS OF A PREACHER

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The little adverb "out" and the local preacher are almost inseparably connected. Please read along.

The Try Out. The custom of most local churches in search of a preacher is called "The Try Out." The preacher is invited, sometimes at his own expense, to preach a few lessons for a congregation, answer some questions in a business or elder's meeting, and then depending on the out — (there's the word again) — come of the try out, he is either hired or told, "we'll call you if we can work things out" (the word again). Whether the try out method is good or bad is a question everyone ought to consider. It is impossible to get acquainted with a preacher by such procedure, and equally, it is impossible for a preacher to learn much about the people whom he allegedly is to help and upon whom he has to depend for his livelihood. But the try out is just the beginning.

The Feel Out. After the preacher is moved in, begins his work, almost inevitably, there comes a feel out effort by some of the members. All those questions they either refused or forgot to ask during the try out now surface. A sample might include, "brother Newblood, how do you feel about an elder whose chil-

dren misbehave during the worship and Bible Study?" Or, "What do you think about a preacher who sold Scam-Way products? "How much time do you plan to spend at the building every day?" On and on the questions go, and brother Newblood has no idea what lurks in the background prompting such "feelers." Sometimes, such questions are asked by the same kind of people, and for an identical purpose, as asked Jesus questions, "testing Him." Every preacher must be on the alert to the Feel Out state of his work with a congregation.

The Work Out. This stage is one that should be enjoyable for the preacher, but could be detrimental to the local church. By work out is meant, providing the new man with a number of things to do. Sermons, publications, classes, and home studies begin structuring into a new preacher's routine. The work out of a local preacher, unfortunately, does not end with this procedure—it often embraces much more. Daily (or minimally a regular schedule of) trips to all the local hospitals, and some within "driving distance," transportation for various and sundry needs of members, baby sitting children and sometimes the aged, secretarial work such as ordering all the supplies for all local church activity, building maintenance, and social director for the brethren all gradually creep into the expected work of the local preacher. To say this work out is unrealistic is to be unrealistic, for in many places, the routine of the local preacher is this and more. And, the work out will work out the preacher. No matter if he has no time for his wife and children, his own leisure and solitude, if he doesn't "work out," he can "get out."

The Play Out. By play out is meant that the local preacher must provide all sorts of social activities in his home, at his expense, and such must be done regularly. After all, the local church is not authorized to have parties, get-to-gathers, social excursions, and picnics, is it? But, the preacher can and should do this. It is one of the best ways to keep people interested, to attract non-members, to keep our young people enthused, some opine. It is difficult to argue against the effectiveness of the activity. The religious world around us, against whom we compete for numbers, is offering everything from small puppet shows, to trips to Disney World, and if we are going to get our share, we have to do something. Since the funds of the church treasury cannot be used, use the preacher's salary, the preacher's home, and his time to accomplish the same purpose. The play out period is one of the most demanding times of a local preacher among brethren. The preacher can "play out" personally, trying to play out people into salvation. Spiritual goals are seldom actually realized by the use of carnal methods.

The "Cuss" Out. There comes a time with most preachers, when some (many times just one) of the brethren get unhappy with him. His sermons are either too long or short, too deep or plain, too pointed or too general, or just too (fill in the blank) for some members. Or, he may have called down some of their children who were guilty of misconduct during worship or Bible Study. He may not have invited them to one of the social activities he is expected to conduct, and therefore he is not what he ought to be. During a Bible class (where else but the auditorium) some good saint asked a question involving a pet hobby or

doctrine, the preacher took an opposite view, a discussion followed, and according to the good saint, the preacher taught heresy and ought to be fired. The "cuss" out begins. I don't mean "cuss" in the sense of filthy language, but in the sense of abusive speech, unjustified criticism, the preacher is lambasted, belittled, and verbally clobbered. He is expected to take it like a man, admit he is wrong on all counts, and begin calling around for another place in which to "serve the cause of Christ." He usually does.

The Kick Out. The kick out doesn't usually take much time. This is probably the shortest phase of a preacher's association with a local church. No matter that he has debts to pay, children to take out of school, ask his wife to quit her job, sell his house (if he is fortunate enough to own an equity in one), he must be on his way—way away. Sometimes it seems as if those who were so nice, so filled with hope and encouragement, so cooperative and friendly, when the preacher was "tried out" are the first in line with their kicking shoes on. And the preacher is expected just to bend over, assume the appropriate stance, and take the boot with meekness and fear, lest he cause a problem. And, he usually does.

What can one say in conclusion? No good preacher ever wants to do anything among the people of God but build them up, work with them in every legitimate way he can, and enjoy peace and harmony internally while defeating Satan's forces externally. If during the try out the brethren could determine they have found a man who can do that, and if the man can determine the brethren are like that, all ends well. But why is it that when the local preacher errs (and they all do) someone doesn't drop by and discuss it sensibly, and offer the man the opportunity to change for the better? Why is it that we have this little scenario of "outs" that has become more than a pattern for local churches to follow? This article provides no alternates to the pattern we are currently following. It does, hopefully, provide the opportunity for wiser and saintlier people than its author to begin working on it and come up with something that, in the days ahead, will create a situation where brethren truly work together for the good of the cause we all dedicate ourselves to.

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LESSONS LEARNED AT A FUNERAL

David E. Pratte
7021 Omaha Ct.
Ft. Wayne, IN 46804

About five years ago, Mike became a Christian. Today I preached a funeral for a friend Mike had where he worked at the time he was converted. What would you say at the funeral of this man?

*He had fought and been wounded in Viet Nam. There he killed so many people he could not count them.

*He was married and had two children. But he frequently had affairs with other women. His wife would find out, he would be sorry, and she would take him back again.

*He was extremely confused about life, and drowned his troubles in alcohol.

*Mike had often tried to talk to Him about the gospel of Jesus, but he finally told Mike to just keep quiet. He refused all counseling and help.

*Once a couple of years ago he tried to shoot and kill himself, but the wound was not fatal and he recovered.

*Finally he ran around on his wife once too often and she divorced him.

*A few days ago he got a bigger gun and tried to commit suicide again ... and this time he succeeded.

He left a wife, an 18-year-old son, and a 16-year-old daughter. Who would they ask to speak at his funeral? Neither they nor he were members of any religious group. I will tell you whom they did not ask: they did not ask his drinking buddies to speak at his funeral!

But they remembered Mike and they asked him to find someone to speak at the funeral because they recognized the big change the gospel had produced in him.

Mike said a few words at the funeral and made some excellent remarks. The son and daughter sobbed through most of it. Following the regular funeral at the cemetery, there was a military funeral. At the end, the soldiers fired their guns in salute. Apparently this reminded the daughter of how her father had died, and she literally screamed in anguish.

There are many lessons to be learned at a funeral like that. But one of the biggest lessons was the difference between our brother in Christ who had found God and was asked to speak at the funeral, compared to the man who never found God and was in the casket.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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JIM DEASON, Rt. 1, Box 153, Culleoka, TN 38451 — After six and a half years of work with the Jackson Heights church in Columbia, TN, on July 1, 1987 I began work with the College Vue church in the same city. The Lord has blessed us with progress. As we began here attendance was in the low 50's and now in the high 70's. This year we have had two gospel meetings and one VBS. The first meeting was with Wilson Adams in which 8 were baptized and 3 restored. We averaged over 100 each night in our VBS with the majority of these being children of non-members. Connie W. Adams preached in our second meeting for the year in which one was baptized. We had morning services for only the second time in the church's history and will probably continue this practice. Since the new General Motors Saturn Plant will be locating here there will perhaps be readers of STS who will be moving to our area. Come at any time and visit with us. Our building is located immediately across from Columbia State Community College.

MICHAEL GARRISON, P.O. Box 1281, Franklin, NC 28734 — We have had a good summer in the western North Carolina mountains. In June, Al Childers and Horace Gentry were appointed elders. This is the first time I have been able to work where there were elders qualified to oversee. We have also had many visitors this summer. Some of them spoke for us while here, including Don Brady, Ray Coneys, Harold Dowdy, Scott Love, Steve Dias and Mike Morris. Also, we have several men here who are able to teach and preach in my absence.

In June we had a good meeting with Gilbert Alexander and will hear Bill Simmons this fall. I was with churches in Richmond, IN and N. Jasper, AL and preached one sermon at the Leeward church en route to working among churches in Australia. We are always glad to have visitors. We meet at 156 Old Murphy Rd. in Franklin on Sundays at 10, 11 and 6, and on Wednesdays at 7 P.M. My phone number is (704) 369-5186. We are the closest faithful church to Western Carolina University. If you know of students to visit there, please let us know.

BOYCE F. BARGER, Rt. 7, box 6751, Benton, Arkansas 72015 — After 10 years in a small, rented building on Lillian Street, I am happy to announce that we have finished and occupied (as of second week of August) our new building on the opposite side of the freeway. Going west on I-30 from Little Rock, take Alcoa Rd, exit, right to Hwy. 5, left

until just past Salem Road. Building is on the left. Sundays we meet at 9:45, 10:45 and 6. Wed. night at 7 P.M. Eugene Britnell of Russellville, AL will preach here in a meeting Dec. 4-10. He was with us last year about this time and our small building scarcely contained the crowds. My home number is 794-2315.

A.C. GRIDER AND MORE MEETINGS

A. C. GRIDER, Rt. 4, 1671 Bill St., Shepherdsville, KY 40165 — I retired from "local" preaching a little over four years ago, but am now doing more than I did before I "quit" work! For over forty years I preached twice and taught a class on Sunday and taught on Wednesday night and held five or six meetings each year. Since "retirement" I am still preaching twice on Sunday, teach a class, have a radio program and teach a class on Wednesday night and hold about 10 meetings each year. I am now ready for more meetings. My health is good and, at least I think, my meeting preaching is doing better than ever. This year is full but I have some openings starting next year. I would like to schedule several three day meetings. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Brethren, this man will do you good. His preaching is so clear and plain, you CANNOT misunderstand it).

DON GIVENS, P. O. Box 75166, Honolulu, Hawaii 96836-0166 — About half of my preaching life of 27 years has been spent in areas where I needed outside support; such as Alberta and British Columbia, Canada and now in Hawaii. I have not found raising support to be difficult, but maintaining adequate support from year to year has been a constant hardship. But my brethren are good stewards of the Lord's money, and have certainly proven that they believe in spreading the gospel. Once again, I find myself in need of monthly support, beginning with January, 1989. I have just received word from the Honeysuckle Rd. church in Dothan, Alabama that they will have to discontinue my support of \$1,000 per month at the end of this year. I need to replace this \$1,000 (and whatever else I may lose at the end of this year). If necessary, I will find a part-time job to supplement my income so that I can remain in Hawaii working in the gospel. Ideally, I would love to hear from some congregation who would like to "stand behind" me with full support, so that I can continue preaching full-time in Hawaii and doing what I can on the islands of Oahu, Maui, Big Island, and Kauai, trying to establish faithful churches. The Lord willing, I desire to remain here for the rest of my

life. I am the only non-institutional preacher in the entire island state. Full details will be given if some eldership or church will contact me at the above address. Cannot some congregation help me remain working full-time in Hawaii. Please contact me soon, thank you.

DEATHS

TERM LYNN McDONALD, Bossier City, LA — (reported by her grandfather, Luther Bolenbarker, Houston, TX) — The February, 1988 STS carried a news item about Terri Lynn who was born with Spina-Bifida. Her valiant fight for life ended during a six hour skull reduction surgery. She lived 10 and a half months. Her medical bills were in excess of \$100,000. The family thanks all who sent to her medical fund. It is sufficient to cover all costs that Handicap Children and the Spina Bifida Association will not cover. Jim Vaughan and Jerry Fite spoke at a funeral service on September 5, 1988. Her parents' address is: Ken and Debi McDonald, 5128 Tara Lane, Bossier City, LA 71111.

JOHN HENRY PENCE, Viper, Kentucky passed away on August 29, 1988 in Hazard, KY, at the age of 72. The writer conducted final services, with a service the night before conducted by Clarence Howard and Willard Ackers, both converts from the work of brother Pence. He preached the gospel for 45 years in eastern Kentucky. He worked in the coal mines during the day, and often walked great distances in the late afternoon to preach where no one else was willing to go, often walking home late at night in all kinds of weather. He could be heard every Sunday morning on the radio from Hazard, KY, a program started in 1947, perhaps the longest running such program in the country. His last words to his wife were "Tell brother Clarence to handle the radio program this Sunday." He preached in yards, under trees, in schools, the court house or anywhere he could find people who would listen. Many congregations owe their beginning to his work. His good deeds for the sick and needy were many. Over 600 friends gathered for the final service. Our sympathies are expressed to his wife and three children. — Bobby W. Casey, Johnson City, TN.

CHURCH PEWS

We have 18 solid oak pews 13.5 ft. long with padded seats and backs. The fabric is in good condition but it would not be difficult to recover to change the color. The pews can be taken apart and cut shorter if necessary. We are asking \$12.00 a foot for the pews. Please write or call: Par St. church of Christ, 15 W. Par St., Orlando, FL 32804, or phone (407) 898-8601.

PREACHER NEEDED

FT. WHITE, FLORIDA, —The church meeting in this small, rural, North Florida town is searching for a full-time preacher. We are 37 in number and can provide a 3 BR-1B house and \$175 weekly. If interested, call Albert Sandlin (904) 935-3030 or Jerry Sikes (904) 935-0090, or write: P. O. Box 331, Ft. White, FL 32038.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS —The church at 1221 N. Long Ave., Chicago, IL 60651, is looking for a full-time preacher. We have about 45 members with attendance between 50-60. We are able to provide reasonable support. Those interested may call (312) 379-2271 (Dewey Celsor), or (312) 276-8109 (Willie Biles).

PREACHER AVAILABLE

ROGER D. WILLIAMS, 302 David Lane Apt. 6-B, Knoxville, TN 37922 — Phone (615) 690-6165 — I am 22 years old with a wife and no children. I studied at Florida College where I graduated in April of this year. I spent the summer of 1987 working with the church in East Columbus, MS and summer of 1988 with the Oak Ridge, TN church. I am ready to begin full-time preaching. For references contact David Riggs (615) 693-7805, Frank Butler (601) 328-6227, and Thomas G. Walsh (501) 636-3474

P.J. CASEBOLT, P.O. Box 1487, Chiefland, FL 32626 —Four years ago, our son-in-law, David Joy, had a heart transplant. He has his ups and downs, as all transplant patients do, but is doing as well as any, and maybe even better than most.

David continues to do as much preaching as he can do, which is more than some do who are considered to be "full time" preachers. He continues to teach school, as this helps him keep his hospital insurance. He can't quit preaching, because he feels that this is his

insurance to get into heaven. He simply holds down two jobs, and never complains, though once in a while he admits to feeling tired. It makes me tired to even think about his schedule, and I'm as "healthy as a horse."

Insurance pays most of David's medical bills, but what it doesn't pay would be a burden on many of us. His initial surgery cost \$100,000, and other medical bills would surpass even that figure. Now, the federal government wants him to pay back some \$8,000, because they construe some benevolence which he received while on partial disability as salary, and not as benevolence.

Initially, brethren and friends responded to his needs in a wonderful way. We have continued to help, and will continue to do so as we are able. Just knowing that you have to take expensive medicine every day for the rest of your life provides all the pressure one needs, but the added worry of how to pay for that medicine and regular hospital visits multiplies that burden. We are not talking about the part of his bills which insurance pays, but the part which he must pay.

David does not know that I am writing this, and he will be embarrassed when he finds it out. But I would be more embarrassed if I don't let brethren know that he could use some help. His address is 313 S. 45th Ave., Paden City, WV 26159.

No amount will be too small, and you can't send too much. If you do, he will return what he doesn't need. Thank you, and may God bless you "in that day."



DOWN MEMORY LANE

While in a meeting at Plant City, Florida in September, I had the happy experience of speaking to the students and faculty of Florida College in the chapel exercises. Ah, the bright, fresh faces of youth! They were a respectful, clean-cut, interesting and interested group. As I looked into their faces, two thoughts surged to the foreground: (1) Was I ever really that young? and (2) Boy, they sure start to college young looking these days! I spent some happy days on those grounds when the facilities were not so fine as they are today and the student body was much smaller. But it was people who made it memorable — good teachers who loved the Lord and cared about students, and fellow-students who became life-long friends. Friends like Hugh Davis, now one of the elders of the Mahoney Street church in Plant City where we worked in the meeting. Parents and students interested in education, would do well to consider this junior college which has provided a bridge between leaving the family nest and the continuation of academic pursuits or entry into the business world. This editor remembers and is grateful for that bridge.

ATTENTIVE YOUTH

We meet many fine young people around the country and none finer than those we saw in Plant City, Florida. They sat in a group at the front and occupied several rows. They had Bibles, many took notes and they all listened well. They did not wander in and out during the services. And they were clean and neat. They had a certain class about them which bespeaks good training at home. In several homes we noticed an especially good rapport between them and their parents and siblings. They had manners. They acted like they actually enjoyed sitting and listening to the older people talking and they laughed instead of looking totally bored when something was funny. What is wrong with them? Nothing is wrong with them. Something is right with them. They are getting good training under good elders, and they hear a good preacher in Gary Ogden, but above all, they have something at home which makes the difference — parents who are bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Oh, by the way, most of them have mothers who are full-time home makers.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS
RESTORATIONS

(Taken from bulletins and papers
received by the editor)

147
45

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 XXIX

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO?

The prophet Jeremiah prophesied to the house of Israel these words: "Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you. For among my people are found wicked men; they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men." "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5: 25, 26, 30, 31).

God's evaluation of His own people was by no means commendable. They had turned to evil among themselves instead of obeying the will of their God. They had no fear of God in their hearts. They had lost sight of their course in life and were seeking goals that were contrary to the purpose of God. They had turned back from God and were setting snares to entrap even their own countrymen for profit to themselves. The graphic picture of scheming with deceit to trap others duplicates the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees as they tried to entrap Jesus when he was upon earth. The prophets prophesied falsely, the priests ruled with their own means, and the people loved it! Such bold and despicable behavior has been duplicated again and again among those who claim to call upon the Lord. The same problem exists today among many of the people of God. It is time for us to review our reasons for being what we are and where we think we are going.

Why do we meet regularly on the Lord's day? Is there any point to it? Why do we preach and teach the gospel? Do we get anything out of this effort? Do we have any salt in ourselves? Are we really the light of the world? Perhaps to step back and take a good long look at ourselves would help us to see the need to change attitudes and conduct toward God and His word. It would help us to answer these questions.

It appears that some people come to the assembly on Lord's day to pay their weekly debt to God, to see and be seen, and to have occasion to find fault and complain. Some come to sell their merchandise of one kind or another. Some no doubt come to socialize and mate-match, and some to rest and sleep. It seems that some preaching and teaching is designed to please men, make members of a local church and to entertain them, rather than to worship God and teach and edify one another.

Why is there no real healthy growth in number and conversion to Christ today? Every preacher who remembers 40 or 50 years ago will tell you that in both local and meeting work the response to preaching the gospel is only a dribble now of what it was then. Most agree that lack of conviction, apathy and watered down preaching is responsible for this condition.

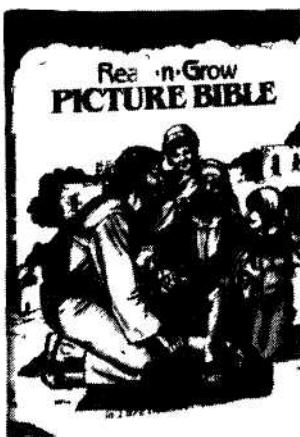
There are some reasons for this. One is too much love for the world, and not enough for God. Men are responsible for the object of their love. We are taught to love the brethren, and we can do so if we try (John 13:34, 35; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:14-17; 4:20, 21). Jesus told his disciples that by loving one another all men will know that you are my disciples. One problem with this is that many do not know what this love is. They think it is a soft, sentimental acceptance of one in sin with no rebuke and reproof. Actually the love required by the Holy Spirit is described as not being puffed up, not behaving unseemly, not selfish, or easily provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth (1 Cor. 13:4-6). We are to love our enemies who mistreat us with all manner of evil, and to do good to them and pray for them (Matt. 5:43,44). We are not to love the world (1 John 2:15). This shows that one can love or not love as he wills. We must direct our love to the right person or thing and not love what is wrong.

Satan is the ruler of this world. He is "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2); he is the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4). He appeals to humanity through the "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life..." (1 John 2:16). The majority of the population of this earth is under his control and he is gaining every day. Our only defense against him is obedience to the gospel of Christ and resisting him every time he approaches with one of his lures and snares (John 8:32; Rom. 1:16; James 4:7).

The wisdom of this world is a scheme of Satan to substitute the doctrines and commandments of men for the gospel of Christ. God has made foolish the wisdom of this world (1 Cor. 1:19-29), but the worldly wisdom has taken the lead in religious teaching and in the formulating of theological dogmas. This kind of teaching has come into the pulpits of the Lord's church all over this land. The preparation of new and modern translations of the Bible continue to be a tool to produce ignorance and division. The compromise with worldly standards is the cause of apathy and doctrinal error that hinders the progress of the gospel.

What are we trying to do? If we are trying to impress the world with our excellence, wealth and power, we are not making much impression, but we are making a miserable failure with the gospel. We are simply showing the world that we are as worldly and vulnerable to the truth as they are. If we try to save the lost by holding forth the word of truth, the gospel of Christ, we will succeed in saving those who have an honest and good heart. We will also save ourselves as we teach others the truth. May God help us to adhere to this commission.

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Editorial

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EDITORIAL STEW

It is nearly winter time in Kentucky as I write this. Time to rake leaves, gather firewood, stock up on sorghum, and relax an evening or two in front of the fireplace. For me, this means the nine months of meeting work is nearly over (at this writing there are still two more before Thanksgiving), and winter classes every other day for the next three months are about to begin. It is the right time to cook a pot of stew, let it simmer and, along with some corn bread, enjoy. It is also time for an editor's concoction which we plainly call "editorial stew."

LIGHTS ALONG THE EASTERN SHORE

During a September meeting at East Orange, New Jersey, we had dinner one evening with a family which had five sons (three of whom are still at home). Also living in that house were both grandmothers. Additionally, there was a 98 year old man who was related to none of them but who was there because "he had nowhere else to go." We all sat at the same large table. It was a beautiful gathering. With dignity and no fanfare these Christians were requiting their parents (1 Tim. 5:4) and showing hospitality to an aged man with no relatives left in the world and nowhere to go, and to us. No trumpets blaring, just everyday Christianity at work.

REACTIONS

We have been astonished at the amount of encouragement received from the September editorial "And Wash Away Thy Wives." Some of it came from sources we surely did not expect. A few (a very few, I might add), took exception, some in good spirit and some otherwise. I had a very nice note from James D. Bales which was much appreciated, though he surely did not agree with what I said. His tone was kind and conciliatory, which is what I would have expected from this gracious man. He told me his debate with Roy Deaver on whether the alien is under law to Christ will soon be in print. It will be 500 pages in hardback and may be ordered from brother Bales in Searcy, Arkansas.

One brother "wrote me up" in his bulletin and charged me with trying to impose a brotherhood censorship on those who take a different view from my own. If so, then I am too late, for those of the contrary persuasion have been saying **what** they wanted to say, **when** they wanted to say it, for a long time and many of us who do not agree with them have been screened out of preaching in a number of places for a long time. Another suggested that I was seeking to impose a "quarantine"

similar to that proposed by the Gospel Advocate in their December 9, 1954 issue with regard to the institutional issue. If there is any "quarantine," it has been in effect for sometime in areas where those who believe and preach what I do on this subject have not been welcomed and where we have been viewed as curiosities when we have ventured into areas where there were a few brethren who did not go along with the prevailing view on the subject. There is a possibility of a coming discussion on this subject in another paper, or possibly an oral debate or two. Should that materialize, we will inform the readers.

For those interested in more study on the subject, Maurice Barnett has just published an excellent booklet entitled **ALIEN SINNERS AND THE LAW OF CHRIST**. This is free but you should enclose \$1 for postage and handling. Write to: Maurice Barnett, Westside Church of Christ, 3736 W. Monte Cristo, Phoenix, AZ 85023.

DISMISSING THE ASSEMBLY

I don't know if more training classes are needed, or what, but it is apparent that many brethren, including not a few preachers, do not know how to "dismiss" a congregation. In service after service, at place after place, for night after night, there are those who pray five to ten minutes when the audience has stood through the invitation song, closing announcements, a closing song and now through a long "retention" rather than dismissal. Babies and small children are weary (not to mention the mothers), often crying or whimpering, and yet we hold on, and on and on. There are times for longer prayers. There are times for giving thanks (as at the Lord's table). And there is a time to dismiss an assembly with an earnest appeal for the Almighty to go with us where we go, abide with us where we stay and grant us another opportunity to assemble again, if not on earth, then in heaven. As much as possible, our preaching, singing and praying should be appropriate to the occasion. When our gatherings become endurance contests, somehow, the edge is taken off of edification.

SERMON STARTER

The first time I heard it was from Robert Jackson and I don't know where he got it: **Sin takes you farther than you meant to go, keeps you longer than you meant to stay, and costs much more than you intended to pay.** The Bible is brim full of illustrations and applications of each of these three points.

SERMON REALLY LATHERED

It was in M'Lang, Cotabato on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines in 1971 where J.T. Smith and I had gone to debate Eusebio Lacauta. We stayed in a small hotel which had one shower stall for the whole place. They caught rain water in a barrel on top of the house. The "shower" consisted of a half inch pipe up the wall which was bent at the top. There was no nozzle or spray and the "shower" was whatever water trickled from that pipe. I got the bright idea to beat everyone else one morning before the water ran out. I had just lathered myself from head to toe with Palm olive soap when the water ran out. There was nothing to do but take a towel and dry off the best I could. But I was left with a thin, sticky film of soap for all day. I managed fairly well

preaching that morning. But by afternoon services, with the tropical sun bearing down on a tin roof, and no cooling system except the breeze from the coconut grove, the sweat rolled down as I preached. I had a small towel to soak up some of it, but the more I wiped the perspiration, the more it lathered and foamed. Some of the Filipino brethren scarcely contained their amusement. After it was over, they teased me. One said "Brother Adams, that sermon really lathered." Well, yes, it did!

TYPHOONS STRIKE PHILIPPINES

The woes which our brethren in the Philippines are made to endure seem not to let up for very long. In addition to political turmoil, economic disaster, threats to peace and safety in some areas, that island nation has been hit by 18 typhoons in 1988, the worst of which was in October when the worst storm since 1970 roared across central Luzon with the eye passing a few miles north of Manila with winds of up to 140 miles per hour and flooding a wide area with over 9 inches of rain. There was heavy damage to property and the rice crops and many lives were lost. We have had no direct word from any of the brethren, but please keep them in your prayers and be prepared to help if necessary. It is my understanding that Dr. Harold Byers, one of the elders of the Expressway church in Louisville, is going to Manila in December for an international medical conference and he plans to spend some time teaching classes and preaching while there as he has done the past two years. He should be able to get a more accurate picture of the situation by that time.

VOLUME 30 TO BEGIN

The January issue will mark the beginning of our thirtieth year. H. E. Phillips edited the paper for 13 and 1/2 years and I have now served in that capacity for 15 and 1/2 years. They have been good years, in many ways, and yet demanding in others. We have enjoyed the faithful support of a large number of good brethren over these years. Many brethren have contributed time, talent and effort to provide copy month after month. A few men have given of themselves far beyond the call of duty, in this regard. While many have helped greatly, none have done more than H. E. Phillips, the lamented James P. Miller, and Marshall E. Patton. While many others have helped both early and late in our history, these men bore the brunt of the writing load during most critical times. Brother Miller has crossed to the other side to await the judgment. But H. E. Phillips and Marshall Patton are yet active in preaching and teaching. It would be a fine thing for some of our readers to take time to write these men a note of thanks for what they have contributed to our study of the word of God. Tell them now, while they can hear it.

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This book store in Louisville continues to be our only advertising client, except for the church ads. As we have explained many times, the paper and the book store are two separate businesses. But our relationship has been most pleasant from the first day until now. I am glad to personally tell people about their ample stock of books and supplies and their fast and friendly service. With their 800 number, an order goes out the same day you

call. The voices of Marie, Wimpy and Phyllis are known from coast to coast and customers from many parts of the country ask me about them and their families, even though they have never met. David Key, the manager, is expanding the facilities again. If your travel takes you through, or even near Louisville, please stop and meet these folks and browse. You'll likely find many things you need, and you will leave feeling as though you have visited with close kin.

RATES INCREASE

As we announced in the October issue, we are forced to raise our rates as of January 1, 1989. Single subscriptions will be \$11. The club rate will be \$9 per year for four or more. Bundles to one address and group subscriptions will be 12 for \$7.50 per month or 24 for \$15.00 per month. Foreign subscriptions will be \$14.00 annually. We need some friends who will provide and pay for a list of subscriptions. You will not only help us, but will greatly benefit those who are the objects of your kindness. Could you help with that?

TO OUR FAMILY OF READERS

Those of us who make SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES possible month after month wish for all readers a prosperous 1989. May you "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 Jno. 2).

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(Jer. 20:9)

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"A BURNING FIRE" — ABOUT THIS COLUMN

John is a good man having been a child of God for many years. He is much like a lot of you who are reading this article in that most of his life has been lived amidst some of God's greatest blessings. But there have been troubled times also. Times when he has been under such a bombardment of temptation and trial that he was tempted to lay the sword aside and leave the battle for right to others. This temptation was especially strong when he came under personal ridicule while trying his best to help others live faithfully. John has asked the same questions that you have on occasion, "What more can I do," and "Why not just sit back and rest for awhile and let someone else lead the fight?"

There was a prophet by the name of Jeremiah. He lived in a time in which Israel had forsaken the Lord and had turned to idolatry, even offering their children as burnt offerings in sacrifice to Baal. Jeremiah was commissioned to preach, "... thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Behold I am about to bring a calamity upon this place, at which the ears of everyone that hears of it will tingle'" (Jer. 19:3). This message was not well received. Pashur the priest, upon hearing these words, had Jeremiah publicly beaten and put in stocks to face the ridicule and derision of an ungodly society. This faithless priest released Jeremiah no doubt hoping that the prophet had been sufficiently intimidated that he would no longer preach his message of destruction. The sacred record reveals Jeremiah's response, "For each time I speak, I cry aloud; I proclaim violence and destruction, because for me the word of the Lord has resulted in reproach and derision all day long. But if I say, 'I will not remember Him or speak anymore in His name,' then in my heart it becomes like A BURNING FIRE shut up in my bones; and I am weary of holding it in, and I cannot endure it" (Jer. 20:8, 9).

The WORD OF THE LORD in the heart of the faithful is like A BURNING FIRE deep within that would not allow Jeremiah nor will it allow John and those of us like him to cease our work in the service of God.

I deeply appreciate brother Adams for allowing me the opportunity to contribute regularly to SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES under the column heading, "A BURNING FIRE." I also appreciate the confidence that he shows in me, however undeserved, by so asking. Writing is a privilege and a responsibility that I do not take lightly. Once something is on the printed page it

tends to have a life of its own and no one can ultimately know where it will go and by whom it will be read. Written words have the power to affect generations yet unborn and thus anyone who would use such a medium to air untested and untried ideas acts irresponsibly.

I hope and pray that the word of God will produce in each of us the same effect that it had upon Jeremiah. To place A BURNING FIRE or a burning desire deep within our hearts first to believe, then to do, then to teach the message of the Lord. It apparently had this effect upon two disciples to whom the Lord appeared on the way to Emmaus for they said, "Were not OUR HEARTS BURNING WITHIN US while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us" (Lk. 24:32). With hearts filled with the word of God which produced a deep burning zeal these disciples and others like them carried the message of the risen Savior, Jesus Christ, to every corner of the world. And this they did in spite of the forces of Satan that intimidated, imprisoned, and put to death those who served in the Lord's Cause. They were not to be silenced.

It is hoped that this column can do even a little to present the Scriptures in such a light that this same effect might be felt within the hearts of more of you, our dear readers. To accomplish this certain things will be necessary ...

SOME THINGS WILL HAVE TO BE SAID WHICH ARE NEGATIVE IN NATURE. The fact must be faced that sin is negative. It will separate man from his God and endanger one's soul of being lost eternally. We dare not ignore it and to whitewash it by calling it a disease or an alternate life style is but to deceive. Jeremiah's burning heart did not lead him to an all positive and no negative message. It led him to speak the truth revealed from Jehovah. But the truth can be presented in love (Eph. 4:15) and to teach with compassion should be the goal of every sower. One is not to be gladdened that souls are lost and any condemnation of sin should be offered with tears in the eyes rather than self-righteous hypocrisy.

SOME THINGS WILL BE SAID THAT ARE POSITIVE. This column will strive for balance. The kind of balance that is needed in any presentation of the gospel. There are a lot of good things going on in local churches around the country. Many are not dying on the vine but are active and growing. Just as the church at Thessalonica became an example to others. (1 Thess. 1:6-10) so also the success stories of these churches need to be told. First, because they are encouraging. And second, because we may be able to use their methods in our efforts to spread the gospel. The goal that should be constantly before us all is to reach as many people as possible with the soul saving message of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

When you have A BURNING FIRE within your heart, you will speak when there are others that would rather you keep quiet. The Jewish leaders commanded Peter and John "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18). But their reply was, "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" (Acts 4:19-20). They had

A BURNING FIRE within that compelled them to share their faith in Christ with others. I'm sure they became discouraged at times, for this is the disposition of every man, but their faith moved them to carry on even in the face of determined opposition. There are often people in the work place or in the community that do not want to hear the truth. The gospel is a life-changing message and they are indifferently satisfied with the way they live and, as a result, they don't want to hear a message that demands a change on their part. But preach it we must because the gospel compels us.

Sometimes the opposition we face comes from our brethren and perhaps this is the most difficult opposition of all. It brings us great pain to differ with those whom we love most, especially when those differences are significant enough to endanger the soul. No one likes to be alienated from his brethren. But when we have A BURNING FIRE in our hearts produced by the touch of the gospel upon our lives we dare not compromise a single principle of truth even for the sake of a friendship (Matt. 10:37, 38).

I solicit your prayers as I begin what I believe will be a labor of love. The views contained under this heading will be my own and should you find need to question its contents I encourage your correspondence. May God bless us every one as we diligently continue our search for all truth.

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DISTINCTIVE PREACHING

We're hearing a lot from some quarters about the need for "distinctive preaching." This phrase is used to describe preaching on Biblical truths which distinguish churches of Christ from other religious bodies.

This article is not written to take issue with that thought. Yes, we need distinctive preaching. Themes such as the one body, the church; immersion for the remission of sins; the need for Scriptural authority; and the nature of New Testament worship need to be preached with regularity. There is danger in failing to ground disciples in these "distinctive" areas.

But I have often noted another danger that may be even more problematic. This is the failure to stress truths that most all religious groups hold in common.

Shall we call this "common preaching?"

I have heard the statement with reference to different preachers any number of times: "Why he could have preached that sermon in any denomination in town!"

May I suggest that if one is declaring the whole counsel of God he will have to preach a lot of things that may be preached in any denomination in town.

The subject of love is the major doctrine of the New Testament. While there will be some applications to passages like 1 John 5:3 that would not be welcomed in the denominations, most of what a gospel preacher would have to say in expounding various passages on this subject would be welcomed anywhere.

The subjects of joy, peace, and kindness, and other attitudes of the Christian life are by no means distinctive. But these subjects are taught in the Scriptures fully as much or more than is baptism.

Lessons that deal with the family; and with our mutual responsibilities as husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and children are welcomed anywhere. I've never heard anyone say, "He could have preached that in any denomination," after a sermon or even a series of sermons on the family.

Sermons on the inspiration of the Bible, the deity and Lordship of Christ, the existence of God, and the theory of evolution might not all be acceptable in just any denomination, but they are certainly not distinctive doctrines.

I have been preaching a series of sermons on "Love, the More Excellent Way," in many gospel meetings. The lessons have been well received by most, but there have been some criticisms. One couple just couldn't imagine

why a gospel preacher would think churches need a week's preaching on love.

One can only shake his head in disbelief.

It may be that many of the schisms and splits churches have experienced in the past several years would have been averted had we majored on such major doctrines.

A brother told me that he was advised when the institutional issues arose to just watch the way things go for a few days and he would see the churches with "progressive" attitudes going further and further off the deep end. He did not know if he had the time to adopt a wait and see attitude, so he took his stand for truth on those questions without playing Gamaliel. But of course history has proved his counselor correct.

But I thought as I listened to those remarks that that process works two ways. When we view the condition of conservative churches in so many places where every trivial difference under the sun has further fragmented brethren, it becomes obvious that we made a wrong turn somewhere.

I think the words of Christ in Matt. 23:23,24 apply to our pathetic state: "**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.**"

Things Most Certainly Believed

Julian R. Snell

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Shelbyville, Kentucky 40065



ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD OF GOD

Attitude represents an important ingredient in any relationship. It is the key, second only to truth, in the God-man relationship. In people relationships it is the underlying factor in the quality of these. Attitude is: "Posture; position or bearing as indicating action, feeling, or mood; as, keep a firm attitude; hence the feeling or mood itself; as a kindly attitude" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). The word is comparable to disposition, outlook, or the approach that one shows toward a subject or principle with which he is confronted.

Significantly, the idea and not the word itself is common to the scriptures. In Philippians 2:5 there is a beautiful expression of this, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The mind within equates our attitude and represents a factor within every one of us that will determine our relationship to God, His word, our self, each other, and all things. Jesus

sought to impress the importance of attitude, particularly with respect to the teaching efforts of the disciples when he spoke the first parable. He taught them that as they went forth teaching the word they could expect to encounter various attitudes among their hearers. Remember, the seed is the word of God and the sower is of primary application to the disciples. Some hearing the word were likened to wayside soil, some rocky ground, some seed fell among the thorns and were choked, finally, some was presented as falling on the good ground and bringing forth fruit. What a graphic depiction of attitude among the hearers and how accurately it continues to present the dispositions of our own time toward the gospel. The issue is one of attitude (cf. Lk. 8).

Jesus involved the principle of attitude in the beatitudes introducing the sermon on the mount (Mt. 5:3-12). Within these passages he is presenting the nature and character of those who will be citizens of the kingdom of heaven when it is established. The good attitude, if you will, of those within the kingdom. The beatitudes are a focusing on the mind within as the fountain of activity. It has been said the law demanded adherence to the letter with little emphasis upon the spirit. While this may be subject to challenge, one cannot ignore the fact that in the kingdom, through its laws, there is a beautiful blending of the spirit and letter resulting in Christlikeness.

Jesus detected the proper attitude when he told the scribe, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mk. 12:34). Having asked Jesus, "Which is the first commandment of all?" he seemingly weighs the answer. "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, There is none other commandment greater than these" (v. 29-32). Accepting this truth and responding out of a sound mind, the scribe says, "well said." This scribe is represented by an attitude of submissiveness to truth which would make him a part of the kingdom of God.

The greatest factor in the action of those obeying or rejecting the gospel is attitude. Summing up the response on Pentecost, Acts 2:41 says, Then they that gladly received the word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." The attitude factor comes into play in the expression, "they that gladly received his word," without this there would have been no obedience to the "repent and be baptized everyone of you." Felix obviously did not have this kind of attitude and he stands to represent rejection of the same gospel. His disposition upon hearing the preaching of Paul was, "Go thy way for this time" (Acts 24:25).

The value we place on having the proper attitude is only as great as our appreciation of the fact that attitudes govern actions. Actions cannot be in harmony with God's will unless we maintain the right attitude. Our acceptance or rejection of the truth depends upon our attitude toward that truth. "And with all deceive-

bleness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thess. 1:10). In arguing in favor of the overpowering influence of truth and love for it, Paul treats us to the importance of attitude toward the truth. Where love for truth is prevalent unrighteousness is less likely to deceive and cause us to perish. Fact is, if that love is what *ii* ought to be, if that attitude toward truth is what it must be, we shall not be deceived, simply because we hold to it tenaciously.

The joy of the kingdom cannot be experienced without the right attitude. All too often we become party to or see evidenced dispositions clearly out of harmony with the gospel. What is responsible? It may be time for an attitude check. What causes the indifference often prevalent within most congregations? When we hear constant murmuring and griping that always seems to center in or around the same ones, what is responsible? To some, nothing seems to be right, dissatisfaction with classes, teachers, preacher, about everything. A surprising number of these things will smooth out and at least be tolerable if we will work on our attitude. It is the difference in attitude that explains the boredom of some and the enthusiasm of others within the kingdom. When we develop the proper attitude toward the profession of commitment to Christ, remembering that we are "Christ—ones" and are saved by the grace of God, then and only then will we thrill in serving our God.

What is the proper attitude? Everything, admittedly, depends on it. If it is not right toward God and his work, nothing else matters. In the first place, nothing must be allowed to take precedence over desire to know and practice the truth. Truth equates the word of God. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). One must place truth before everything and everyone. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt. 10:37). One must view scripture as it really is, as the last word in all matters of faith. His word to me is the answer to my problems, the guide to my life. It is real and practical. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3). Only where this attitude is prevalent can one be right with God, maintain a relation of confidence in his precious promises and be truly faithful as a Christian. Without the proper attitude all else is futile.

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GAMBLING (Part I)

As more and more states have adopted a state lottery there has been an increase in the interest in gambling. That is true for both sides of the question. In this article we shall attempt to answer such questions as: (1) What constitutes gambling? (2) Is it a sin? (3) Can it be proved to be a sin even though it is not mentioned in the Bible? (4) How can one say that betting two dollars on a race horse or buying a lottery ticket is a sin and also say that losing a thousand dollars in the stock market is not? (5) Is gambling justified in that it is legal and brings in revenue for the state?

The problem of gambling is widespread. The Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan made an extensive survey that revealed that in 1974 two out of three Americans made a bet and that more than 30 billion dollars was being gambled away every year in the United States. Paul Fino, a US congressman from New York estimated that 57% of American adults gamble. I'm told that the total taken in by gambling is greater than the combined profits of US Steel, General Motors and General Electric and more than 100 of the largest manufacturing companies. A 1983 issue of **US News and World Report** stated that a survey of 100,000 gamblers revealed that the total bets (most of which were illegal) totaled more than 1/3 of the Gross National Product — more than a trillion dollars annually. That comes to about \$4,500 for every person. The 30 billion mentioned earlier would just be legalized gambling. A 1982 Gallop Poll revealed that 60% of all adults gamble and 80% endorse legal gambling.

It is now legalized and state governments are involved. Twenty-six states now have a state lottery. Others will in time. As the problem increases so does our responsibility to deal with it (cf. 1 Thess. 5:22; 1 Pet. 4:1-ff; Rom. 12:1-ff; 2 Cor. 6:14-ff).

It is not a new problem by any means. The Greeks in Homer's time had knucklebones from sheep and goats that were marked to serve as dice. A gambling board was discovered in Crete that dates back to 1800-1900 B.C. In Babylon headless arrows were used for making wagers. Children in Rome played "heads or tails" with coins. Tertullian said, "If you say that you are a Christian when you are a dice player, you say what you are not, because you are a partner with the world."

Without a doubt there are and will be problems among brethren. As the states install their lotteries

and possibly some day a national lottery, some Christians will be tempted to participate. Others will not only be tempted, but will yield and buy the tickets as well as engage in other forms of gambling. Already the first million dollar winner in the Florida State lottery was a member of the church. There are others who may not buy a lottery ticket but would gamble in some small way like flipping for a coke or pitching pennies.

We will have (and already have) some Christians who will be asking what is wrong with gambling. Some will be sincere, for they know it is wrong, but they don't know why. Others will be merely seeking to justify what they want to do.

What Is Gambling?

1. Definitions: Webster says gambling is "to play a game for money or property — to bet on the uncertain outcome." The **World Book Dictionary** (1981) says, To play games of chance for money or other valuable stakes — to gamble at cards; to gamble on the result of a race." The **World Book Encyclopedia** (1979) states: "Gambling is betting on the outcome of a future event. Gamblers usually bet money or something else of value as a stake on the outcome they predict. When the outcome is settled, the winner collects the loser's stakes."

2. Elements: The above definitions indicate that there are three basic elements in gambling. There is (a) the **uncertain event** that is arbitrarily determined, and (b) the **stake** (wager or bet) that is deliberately chanced, and (c) a **winner and loser** (gambler #1 and #2). When these three elements exist you have gambling. If it doesn't fit this model, it is not gambling.

3. It is not: (a) **A risk.** The word "gamble" in one sense means "risk" and the dictionaries so define it. However, a mere risk is not gambling in the sense of the definitions given earlier. Many have tried to justify gambling on the basis that it is merely a risk, and after all, we all take risks every day like crossing the street. However, the risks involved in the crossing the street are not arbitrarily and deliberately determined as in the case of placing a wager on the outcome of some uncertain event. If you make it across the street you do not stand to gain at the loss of another. There has been no stake or wager placed. If you were to wager \$5.00 that you could cross the street without getting hit, you now have gambling. It fits the model given above.

Some have tried to compare gambling to farming and the risks involved there. Yet, the farmer is not seeking to gain at the loss of another. If he has a good year, all stand to benefit by that. If he doesn't, all stand to lose.

Buying and selling stock does not fit the model of gambling. When you buy stock you have bought something of value. It may increase or decrease in value. If that business thrives then all will benefit. You do not have the three essential elements of gambling. There is no stake, nor a winner and loser built in. However, one could gamble with reference to the stock market as he could on a ball game or horse race. If one bet \$50.00 that the stock in a certain company will go up tomorrow, he is now gambling. The three elements are there: (a) The uncertain event (the stock going up or down), (b) the stake (\$50.00) and (c) a winner and a loser.

Starting a business or making any kind of investment may involve some risks, but like all the things mentioned above, they are not gambling.

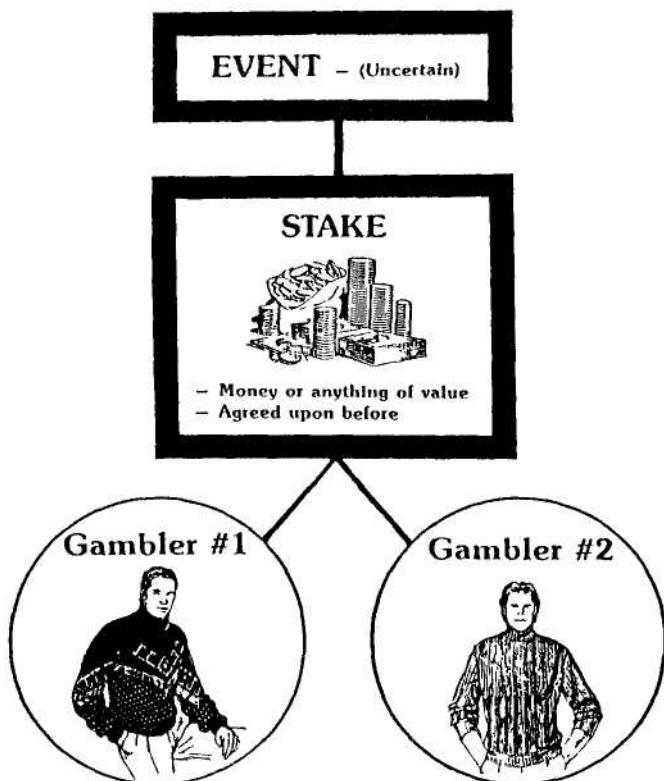
(b) **Insurance.** Believe it or not, a few have thought that there is no difference in gambling and buying insurance. When you buy insurance you are buying financial protection. The buyer and the company both gain by the purchase of the policy. The risk that is involved is not created by the buying of the insurance. Again, it does not fit the definition and model of gambling.

(c) Prizes. When one registers to win a prize at a store's grand opening or receives a prize that is given away for advertisement, he is not gambling. There is no stake or wager. There is no risk that is created. The prize is a gift.

4. Gambling is not determined by size or degree. Gambling is a matter of **kind** and not **degree**. It doesn't matter if it is \$50.00 or 50 c. If the three elements are there, it is gambling. So, matching pennies, pitching pennies and flipping for a coke or coffee is just as much gambling as buying a lottery ticket or placing \$2.00 on a horse at the Kentucky Derby. It is interesting that Gamblers Anonymous urges its members not to flip for who is going to buy the coffee.

Different Forms

Gambling comes in many different forms. There are the card games such as poker. (Don't confuse a mere card game with gambling). There is the lottery, horse races, dog races, slot machines, raffle tickets, bingo, pitching



pennies, flipping for a coke or coffee, roulette, dice games. The list goes on and on because gambling takes place anytime there is a wager made on an uncertain event. That uncertain event could be anything like a ball game, an election or shooting the ducks at the fair. If it fits the model given above, it is gambling!

When gambling is properly defined many of the arguments made to defend it have already been answered. In the next article we will see why gambling is a sin.

DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

C.G. "Cotty" Caldwell

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Temple Terrace, FL 33617



RAPTURE AND REVELATION OF CHRIST

THE DIVINE MESSAGE: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

Another effort in a long line of date-setting attempts has failed. September 12, 1988, was the day of speculation for Margaret Riedel (author of **The Blessed Hope and the Glorious Appearing**) and Edgar Whisenant (author of **88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988**). This time the prediction was based on Matthew 24:32-34 which Riedel and Whisenant interpreted as saying that Christ would return to receive all Christians in the rapture within a generation of the founding of the modern nation of Israel. "Israel" was founded in 1948. The speculators figure a generation is 40 years. They decided that the Rapture would take place during the Jewish New Year at the last trumpet blast signaling the end of Rosh Hashana.

Two problems are at issue: a) the fact of "rapture" as defined by premillennialists; and b) the determination by human calculation of the date of Christ's coming.

How Premillennialists Define the Terms

Rapture: The sudden and silent coming of Christ in the air to catch away from the earth the resurrected bodies of those who have died in the faith and with them the living saints.

Revelation of Christ: Christ's second coming to the earth in flaming fire to execute judgment and to establish His glorious reign upon the earth for a literal thousand years.

Tribulation: According to dispensational premillennialists, there is a seven year period between the rap-

ture and the revelation called the "Great Tribulation."

Two Resurrections: According to dispensational premillennialists, there are two resurrections. The first has two parts. The first **part** of the first resurrection will occur at the time of the rapture in order to bring forth the righteous dead. The second **part** of the first resurrection will occur at the time of the revelation of Christ to bring forth the "tribulation saints" who died during the seven years of trouble. The second (actually third) is designed to bring forth the wicked dead for judgment. It follows the millennium, a thousand years after the first resurrection.

When Will the Rapture Occur?

Post-Tribulation Rapture Theory: The position that Christians will have to endure the tribulation after they are raptured. This theory says that the rapture and the revelation of Christ take place at the same time ... there is no seven year interval.

Mid-Tribulation Rapture Theory: The position that the first part of the tribulation results from man's afflicting the saints and that the latter part of the tribulation results from God's pouring out His wrath upon the evil doers. The saints will have to endure man's evil but not the outpouring of the wrath of God; therefore, mid-way through the tribulation the rapture will take place before God executes his wrath.

Pre-Tribulation Rapture Theory: The position that the saints will be taken away before any part of the tribulation begins. This is the dispensational view and the most popular position. Major proof-texts for this position are Genesis 5:21-24; John 14:1-3; 1 Thes. 3:11-13; and 1 Thes. 4:13-17.

Some Terms Used to Refer to the Second Coming of Christ

Rapture: This word does not appear in the New Testament.

Coming: (**Gr. parousia**). Premillennialists say that this is the Bible word for the "rapture." The position also holds that the coming is secret and invisible. Therefore, it will not be an appearance, or revelation. Christ will come only part way to the earth (in the air) at this time and so will not be seen by unbelievers at all.

Parousia is used by Paul fourteen times, several of which refer to the second coming of Christ (cf. 1 Thes. 4:15; 2 Thes. 2:1; 1 Thes. 3:13).

Revelation: (**Gr. apocalypse**). Dispensational premillennialist say that this word refers to Christ's second coming at the end of the tribulation to set up His earthly kingdom in Jerusalem. This word is used by Paul thirteen times. Again several of these refer to the second coming of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Thes. 1:7-9).

Appearing: (**Gr. epiphany**). Premillennialists say that this word is synonymous with the word "revelation" (apocalypse) when used to refer to the second coming of Christ in the New Testament (1 Tim. 6:14; Titus 2:13).

The premillennial problem: the words are not used in the New Testament as they claim. ALL THREE GREEK WORDS REFER TO THE SAME TIME PERIOD WHEN SPEAKING OF THE EVENTS WE ARE DISCUSSING. The distinction between the "coming" and the "appearing" of Christ is artificial.

Notice 1 **Thes. 3:13:** To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coining of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." The "coming" (**parousia**, their word for "rapture") is "with all the saints." If "the saints" includes the church (which all premillennialists accept) and the "revelation" or "appearing" is when Christ returns to earth "with the saints," then the word "coming" and the "appearing" are used synonymously. According to their view, the coming is to "receive the saints" and the "appearing" or "revelation" is coining back "with the saints."

Look at 2 **Thes.** 2:8: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his **coming.**" All premillennialists believe that Paul is talking about the return of Christ to earth to take care of Anti-Christ. The word, however, is "coming" (**parousia**).

In several other passages, Christians do not receive **until** the "appearing" or "revelation" of Christ what millennialists claim for the "rapture" (cf. Matt. 25:31; 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:13; 5:4; 2 Thes. 1:7-9; 1 Tim. 6:14). There is no secret rapture when Christ will come to deliver His troubled saints ... and there will be **none** who escapes His "coming" (2 Thes. 1:7-9).

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WHEN YOU MARRY ONE WHO IS NOT A CHRISTIAN

Recently, a lady asked me for some advice for a friend. It was asked out of deep concern for the plight of another Christian. The friend had married a man who was not a Christian. He had a bitter disposition, verbally abused her and the children, and unfortunately, the only part of the Bible she had been able to teach him was Ephesians 5:22. That's the verse that says wives are to submit to their husbands. He took advantage of the situation and often required her to do meaningless tasks just to prove she was in subjection. This lady had problems.

I wish I could tell you that I had all the answers she needed and was able to give some very wise advice which brought the problem to an easy and complete solution. But I did not.

Some Warnings

I realize we are not living under the Law of Moses, but it was written for our learning (Rom. 15:4). Under the Law God strictly forbade his people intermarrying with the heathens (Deut. 7:3, 4). Solomon married heathen wives and they turned his heart away from God to serve idols. God punished Solomon for marrying those foreign women (1 Kgs. 11:1-13). Similar problems have been encountered by Christians who married those who were not. If they lose the faith it will be impossible for them to please God (Heb. 11:6).

Under the most favorable conditions the Christian life can be difficult. Then why embrace someone who will make it harder for you to be faithful to the one who died to save you and bring you eternal happiness? The problem is, that while courting, we often indicate that we love the fiancé more than the Lord. Too many of God's people have been led away by sectarian companions or companions who claimed nothing religiously. What a sad picture when you seriously consider the value of a soul (Mt. 16:26). Please consider some Bible truths that may relate to such a marriage:

1) "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

2) "A house divided against itself shall not stand" (Mt. 12:25).

3) "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

What May Happen

Please consider the following chart as we briefly discuss each point.



A Non-Christian Wife

1. May make It difficult for you to practice hospitality.
2. May nag and weaken your convictions.
3. May not help you with the children.
4. May Insist the children go with her.
5. May ridicule you.
6. May neglect positive teaching of the children.
7. May allow the children to do things you would not approve.
8. May set a bad example.
9. May threaten to leave.
10. May withhold sexual privileges.

1. **MAY MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO PRACTICE HOSPITALITY.** Though hospitality is not limited to having people over for a meal, that has always been one of the best ways to practice it. Without her cooperation your ability along this line will be greatly limited.

2. **MAY NAG AND WEAKEN YOUR CONVICTIONS.** This happened to Samson (Judg. 16:16). You may not notice it as it occurs over the years, but as the old saying goes, "Drops of water wear away the stone." You may become discouraged and compromise your beliefs.

3. **MAY NOT HELP YOU WITH THE CHILDREN.** If you, as a father, are trying to "bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," you may not have her cooperation in getting them ready for Bible school.

4. **MAY INSIST THE CHILDREN GO WITH HER.** Then what will you do?

5. **MAY RIDICULE YOU.** A person can only take so much of that. In your defense, you may say some things that will be used against you from that point on.

6. **MAY NEGLECT POSITIVE TEACHING OF THE CHILDREN.** Not being a Christian, she may not see the need to instill right values. I have known wives who double-crossed their husbands and worked against his values behind his back.

7. **MAY ALLOW THE CHILDREN TO DO THINGS YOU WOULD NOT APPROVE.** Generally, a mother is with the children more hours than the father. What if she allows this? You can't divorce her for it. That is not scriptural grounds (Mt. 19:9).

8. **MAY SET A BAD EXAMPLE.** How will you teach your children that their mother is wrong without friction and hostility developing?

9. **MAY THREATEN TO LEAVE.** If she leaves the children with you, you will have increased responsibilities that may be extremely difficult to handle. If she takes the children you may have difficulty getting to spend time with them and almost no opportunity to turn them in righteousness. In either case, if she leaves,

that of itself will not be just cause to divorce and remarry.

10. **MAY WITHHOLD SEXUAL PRIVILEGES.** If you are a normal male this can put you in an extremely dangerous and frustrating situation.

Now consider the situation in reverse.



A Non-Christian Husband

1. **May harass you for attending worship and putting God first.**
2. **May not cooperate in providing transportation to services.**
3. **May not help with the children.**
4. **May not allow you to contribute.**
5. **May say hurtful things to you about the people at church.**
6. **May use profane language/pornography/alcohol/drugs before you and the children.**
7. **May threaten to leave you.**
8. **May physically abuse you.**
9. **May force you to do demeaning things just to prove you are in subjection.**
10. **May make it difficult for you to practice hospitality.**

1. **MAY HARASS YOU FOR ATTENDING WORSHIP AND PUTTING GOD FIRST.** This can make attendance dreaded, difficult, and a drudgery. Worship can become meaningless as you become more and more discouraged.

2. **MAY NOT COOPERATE IN PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION TO SERVICES.** This can cause embarrassment as we hate to be dependent on others and for them to know our plight. You may be forced to miss.

3. **MAY NOT HELP YOU WITH THE CHILDREN.** You may become frantic and impatient with the little ones. You may lose your temper and say things that will be thrown up to you continually.

4. **MAY NOT ALLOW YOU TO CONTRIBUTE.** The Lord wants you to give as prospered and you should do all within your power to obey. You may have to put yourself on a tight budget, cut corners, etc.

5. **MAY SAY HURTFUL THINGS TO YOU ABOUT THE PEOPLE AT CHURCH.** A real discouragement. There may be some in the congregation who are not what they ought to be and you may be put in the predicament of trying to defend the indefensible to your husband.

6. **MAY USE PROFANE LANGUAGE, PORNOGRAPHY, ALCOHOL, AND DRUGS BEFORE YOU AND THE CHILDREN.** How can you stop it?

7. **MAY THREATEN TO LEAVE YOU,** forcing you to make a choice and then blaming you for the outcome.

8. **MAY PHYSICALLY ABUSE YOU.** There is no easy way to deal with this.

9. **MAY FORCE YOU TO DO DEMEANING THINGS JUST TO PROVE YOU ARE IN SUBJECTION.** This may cause you to lose respect for yourself.

10. **MAY MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO PRAC-**

natural for you to want to spend time with Christian friends and have them over or go out with them. But if he is against it, this will create misery for you.

I have painted the picture bleak because there are some real cases as described herein. My prayer for you is that none of these will happen. I would not wish them on my worst enemy. It is hard to believe such could ever happen when you are courting and in love. But if the prospective mate has not had the upbringing and background that the Christian has (and everybody deserves), then these are possible if not probable.

I rejoice for you if none of these happened, though you may have married a non-Christian. The non-Christian may be helpful to you in many ways and even attend the services with you, yet still be a hindrance to your faithfulness because refusal to obey the gospel is a discouragement. And that influence of refusal to obey often shows up in the children later. A lot of trouble, sorrow, and heartache can be avoided if Christians would marry Christians.

Conclusion

So where is a Christian young man or young lady going to find a potential mate who has wholesome values and respect for the word of God and will help you go to heaven? I will tell you where you will NOT find them. You won't find them at wild parties, horse races, bars or nightclubs. The faithful Christian will, in prayer and patience, stay away from places that could cause you to get hooked up with somebody that may bring you an eternity of misery. It makes sense to put yourself in an environment where Christians are. Visiting gospel meetings and other gatherings can do no harm and can certainly help.

Your choice of a mate can be so critical. Most don't realize it till too late. Always keep yourself faithful, and remember that when Mr. Right, or Miss Right, come along they will be looking for the same thing—a faithful Christian.

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PROCRASTINATION ON THE PLAINS

One of the oldest ploys among adversaries is to get the other party to cease effective progress or opposition.

Sanballat tried to persuade Nehemiah to procrastinate in rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, while they talked in the "plain of Ono" (Neh. 6:1-4). Sanballat considered this tactic so effective that he tried it not just once, but four times. Nehemiah was not deceived, neither did he yield to this proposed exercise in futility on the plain of Ono.

I'm all for dialogue with anyone who is sincerely interested in promoting brotherhood and unity among God's people. But such an effort must be circumscribed by "the wisdom that is from above," which "is first pure, then peaceable" (Jas. 3:17).

Also, it must be understood that those on the side of truth cannot agree to a "cease fire" in preaching the word (2 Tim. 4:1-4), while such dialogue takes place. Then, whether the effort turns into progress, or merely futile procrastination on the plains, nothing shall have been lost.

When Hezekiah invited all Israel, including the northern tribes headquartered in Samaria to the passover feast, there were no concessions to error. On the contrary, Hezekiah let them know they were welcome, but reminded them that they were the ones responsible for the division in Israel (2 Chron. 30:7-9). We may ignore the facts of history, but we can't erase them.

While the digressive "Christian Church" continues to fellowship the false religions of the world, we can have no fellowship with them, for they continue to uphold the works of darkness (1 Jno. 1:7; Eph. 5:11).

Likewise, as long as liberal brethren refuse to give up their "golden calves," to wit, their sponsoring church projects, human institutions and fellowship halls ministry, there can be no real progress made in dialogue or negotiations. There needs to be some overture of good faith on the part of those who have "trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers" before we can agree to what may be nothing more than procrastination on the plains.

If we allow ourselves to become preoccupied and obsessed with "unity in diversity" and similar ecumenical exercises in procrastination, we will soon have a generation wholly ignorant of what constitutes apostolic doctrine and practice (Phil. 4:9). That generation will not care what name they wear, what spiritual sacrifices they offer, or what God or gods they worship.

There are also individuals affiliated with liberal and digressive churches who have procrastinated on the plain too long. At the first, they vowed not to have fellowship with unscriptural practices, and claimed "not to go along" with the liberal tendencies and practices of the congregations where they worship.

But, after several years of procrastination, and becoming acclimated to the very things which they professed not to fellowship, they are now in no position to object to anything. And some "have even taken of the accursed thing" which should have been mortified along with other works of the flesh (Josh. 7:11).

We cannot afford to take off even one piece of the "whole armour of God," nor dare we make the fatal mistake of sheathing "the sword of the Spirit" while we procrastinate on the plain of Ono, "no not for an hour" (Gal. 2:5).

ABOUT MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

A. C. Grider

Rt. 4, 1671 Bill Street
Shepherdsville, Kentucky 40165



Let me have a word with you about marriage and divorce. First, let us see what the BIBLE says on the subject. In Matt. 19:4-6 we find that, 1. God made them male and female. (That rules our homosexualism and lesbianism, those things are sin!). 2. The man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. 3. The twain shall be one flesh. 4. God joins them together. And then God said, 5. What God hath joined' together, let not man put asunder. You can read the same thing almost word for word in Mark 10:6-9.

Then God tells us in Matt. 19:9 that, "Whosoever shall put away his wife **except it be for fornication**, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery. Thus the Lord has spoken on the subject and everybody can UNDERSTAND what he has said! Everybody can do what the Lord said do, and can refrain from doing what the Lord said for him not to do. Thus, everybody can avoid adultery! But not everybody avoids adultery. Why?

Because there are false teachers among us. Some say the people in general are not amenable to the law of Christ. This is about as "far-fetched" as one can get! Who, exactly does the law of Christ apply to? Does it just apply to members of the church of Christ? I say YES if it applies only to those who obey him. That would mean that only one in several thousand of the people are amenable to the law of Christ. Christ said WHOSO-

EVER puts away his wife except it be for fornication and marrieth another committeth adultery. Whereas our brethren say ONLY ONE IN EVERY SEVERAL THOUSAND who puts away his wife saving for the cause of fornication committeth adultery! Furthermore, exactly what portion of the law of Christ are the people not amenable to? Are they amenable to ANY of His law? If not, how would we preach it to him? How would he obey it? What good would it do him if he did obey it? Jesus said preach the gospel to EVERY CREATURE! Would we tell the people that though the Bible said whosoever shall put away his wife except for fornication committeth adultery, but that they could just DISREGARD THAT UNTIL THEY OBEYED THE GOSPEL?

Would not such a doctrine as I have expressed actually encourage people to stay out of the church and refrain from obeying the gospel until they were tired of playing around with women, even other men's wives! When we **repent** we make up our minds to QUIT doing things that are wrong in our lives. When we are forgiven we are forgiven only for the things that are wrong in our lives. If it isn't a sin to be married a dozen times, and if it isn't a sin to break up other men's homes, then those things are not forgiven! I can't believe that ANYBODY **really** believes that people in general are not amenable to the law of Christ.

Then there are those who say that even though Christ said whosoever marrieth one put away without fornication committeth adultery, such is not necessarily so, **provided** she didn't want the divorce and **provided** she waits around until her former companion commits fornication. Then she is free to marry again despite what Christ said.

Then there are some free-wheelers who say regardless of what Christ says when a marriage partner commits fornication the bond is broken and **BOTH** can marry again without peril to their souls.

We have, then, on the one hand those who say NOBODY is amenable to the law of Christ to start with, and on the other hand we have those who say that if one commits adultery both are free to marry again. In that case NOBODY is bound by what the Lord has said. So, if you have been married a thousand times, forget it, you were not amenable to Christ's law. And if either you or your partner has committed fornication, forget it, the bond is broken and you are both free to marry again. You can thus have it anyway you want it. But you had BETTER have it like the Lord gave it to you. Read again Matt. 19: 3-9 and Mark 10:5-9. Better be safe rather than sorry at the judgment.

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11:00 Preaching Three Individual Books		Haggai Bob Bolton	Habbakkuk Bob Owen	Malachi Gary Henry
12:00 Walking with the Prophets: Personal Profiles		Amos Brent Hunter	Hosea John Kilgore	Micah Colly Caldwell
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EFRAIN PEREZ TO SPAIN

EFRAIN F. PEREZ, 1317 Valparaiso, Chile, South America — We have decided to spend the next five years preaching in Spain. For several years Spanish speaking brethren have shown much interest in Spain. Phillip Morgan of Phoenix, AZ has just returned from Spain where he found a small group meeting in Badalona, near Barcelona City. They begged him to stay. Phil has written to a few preachers about the great opportunity. We will have to raise support for this work and plan to come to the States in December to spend 7 or 8 weeks reporting on the work in Chile and seeking support for the work in

Spain. I will be joined in Kentucky and Ohio by Phillip Morgan and by him and Wayne Partain in visiting congregations in Arizona, Texas and California. Phillip Morgan's phone number is: (602) 252-7916. Wayne Partain's number is: (512) 333-0595.

There are now 16 congregations in Chile and 20 gospel preachers, of which 8 are working full time. I will finish preacher training programs in Limache, Pudeto and Quilpué in December. These men are strong and sound in doctrine.

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla #122 C.C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America — I am happy to report two more baptized in our work here.

NEY RIEBER, 6413 Zion Church Rd., Sanford, NC 27330 — At Central Prison in Raleigh, NC, Robert A. Lillie was recently baptized. This resulted from a Bible correspondence course. On September 18, 10 inmates were baptized at the Polk Youth Center in Raleigh, and on Oct 16, 12 more inmates were baptized at the same place. At Polk I had 42 inmates at my last Thursday night study. At Blanch, I study with about 50 inmates each trip. I am losing \$500 a month support the first of the year and need to hear from any who can help.

DAVID R. TRIGG, P.O. Box 165, McMinnville, TN 37110 — The West End Ave. church here would be happy to give away a set of eight light fixtures to a congregation willing to pay the shipping charges. These fixtures are 300 Watt, 3-Ring reflector, hanging fixtures in good condition with bulbs. Contact me at the above address, or phone (615) 686-2919.

ROGER WILLIAMS recently began work as evangelist with the Greenwood Rd. church in Ft. Smith, AR, a city of 72,000. There is much potential for growth with honest effort. The church is unable to supply all his support. At present he lacks \$200 a month. He may be contacted at 4131 Kinkead Rd., Ft. Smith, AR 72903. Phone (501) 783-5004. A list of references is available.

BRUCE CRAWLEY, 2053 Heather Way, Lexington, KY 40503, Phone (606) 277-4380, **BRYAN CRAWLEY**, 2929 Brigadoon Parkway, Lexington, KY 40503, Phone (606) 272-2275 — Our father, Robert Crawley, was a gospel preacher for 41 years. In spite of the urgings of many who knew him, however, he did very little writing — no books or commentaries and very few articles. Most of the public fruit of his study was born in the pulpit. Our goal is to publish some of his sermons in book form. In order to do this we will be relying on tape recordings of his actual sermons and class lectures. Thanks to brethren and friends, we have assembled about 200 sermons on tape. But before we begin choosing which lessons to include for publication we want to be sure we have built as large a library of tapes as possible. We know that many of his gospel meetings were recorded, either by churches or by individuals attending those meetings. We know that some class lectures were recorded. Because of the wide geographical scope of his work, though, we don't know who might have such tapes. Could you help us in locating any recordings of Bob Crawley's lessons?

TOMMY L. McCLURE, 3311 Longview Rd., Antioch, CA 94509 — Thanks to those who sent material, books and suggestions to help in preparation for the debate with Jack W. Langford. I speak also for Harry L. Lewis who is to represent us in the discussion. We have now secured every book written by James W. Dale whom Langford hails as one of the greatest scholars of all time, and his evident source material. What seemed an impossible task is now a reality.

J. DAVID POWLAS, 3430 Kay St., #D-3, Columbia, SC 29210 — Jamie Sloan of Houston, TX was just with the Lower Richland congregation in a gospel meeting in which he did outstanding work in preaching the word of God in a bold and plain way. Several came from the local institutional churches as well as non-members from the community. We recommend brother Sloan to any church wishing to be edified and to reach out to the lost. If you have friends or relatives here whom you wish us to contact, please call me at (803) 772-4371.

STEFANO CORAZZA, Via Tagliamento 92, 33100 Udine, Italy — The past two months we have witnessed the baptisms of three: a young man 36 years old, a woman 60 years old and her son who is 31. We are growing not only in numbers but spiritually as well.

DAVID McCLISTER, 2805 Russell St., Portage, IN 46368, Phone [219] 762-7110 — I have some commentary sets I wish to sell and also an IBM computer with Epson Printer.

PREACHERS NEEDED

SPRUCE PINE, NORTH CAROLINA — The church here is looking for a full time preacher. We have about 30 members with Sunday morning attendance of 40-50. We have a new building, well located. Partial support is available. We are located in the beautiful vacation land of western North Carolina. If interested please call: (704) 688-3932, or write: Church of Christ, Rt. 3, Box 128E, Bakersville, NC 28705.

ROCKWOOD, TENNESSEE — The Highway 70 E church is in need of a preacher. It would be necessary to bring support with whomever might come. Anyone interested may contact: Conley Daugherty, 507 W. Rockwood St., Rockwood, TN 37854 or call (615) 354-1854.

IN MEMORIAM: L. B. CLAYTON

(1902-1988)

Brethren throughout the nation will be saddened by hearing of the passing of my father, L. B. Clayton. He died on Oct. 9th, his 86th birthday, in Tucson, Arizona, surrounded by loving family and brethren. He is survived by two sons, his second wife, Pearle (Mahan) Clayton of 5313 E. Lester PL, Tucson AZ 85710, nine grandchildren, and seventeen great-grandchildren.

Dad was born near Terrell, Texas, to Elam B. and Jennie J. Clayton. The family moved to a farm near Dill City, Okla., arriving there on the day of Oklahoma Statehood, in 1907. Dad's father served as an elder of the Dill City church in its infancy.

Growing up in that area, and graduating from high school, Dad used to joke people by saying he was the Valedictorian of his class (he was the only graduate that year!) He attended Chillicothe Business College in Missouri, and began working in a Bank in Wewoka, Okla., after leaving school. He was married to Era A. Shifflett of that city, and both were baptized into Christ at about the same time. Immediately, my parents employed themselves in the work of the Lord, Dad leading singing, and Mother teaching. They worked side by side for over forty years, until Mother died in Tucson in 1969.

Dad also regularly led singing in churches in Seminole, Shawnee, Oklahoma City, and Tucson, as well as in many Gospel meetings, for a period of over fifty years. He worked in this capacity with nearly a hundred Gospel preachers. He also served as a teacher, a deacon, and as an elder in two different congregations. He began his service as an elder in the 10th and Francis Sts. church in Oklahoma City, and helped to preserve the work there against the encroachments of institutionalism. He also served on the board of Central Christian College (now Oklahoma Christian College), until his views on church polity made him incompatible with other members of the board. He has written a memoir of his experiences and impressions of the times in which he lived, which I hope to publish in the near future.

Dad is well remembered for his song-leading ability, his sound teaching, his sober leadership, and his loyalty to the truth. He was a stabilizing and strengthening force in every congregation he served. He was an honored teacher, also, to myself, and my brother, Bob F. Clayton of Phoenix. One of his favorite songs is his fitting epitaph:

My hope is built on nothing less Than
Jesus blood and righteousness. I dare
not trust the sweetest frame, But
wholly lean on Jesus' name. On
Christ the solid rock, I stand; All
other ground is sinking sand!

Joe Neil Clayton
504 Elm
Dumas, Texas 79029

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS'
RESTORATIONS

(Taken from bulletins and papers
received by the editor)

345
68