

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

JANUARY, 1988

NUMBER 1

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 Undeclared. James wrote (ironically in a passage we have often dwelled on polemically, but not very often practically), "Pure religion and undeclared 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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VOLUME 29 JANUARY, 1988 NUMBER 1

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS—487—440

CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor

Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

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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.

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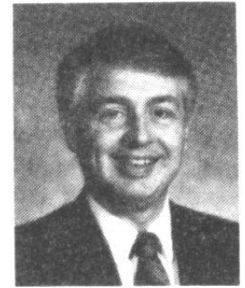
Josh McDowell was himself formerly a skeptic. He has thoroughly researched the basic evidences to support faith in God, Christ and the Bible and is a popular speaker on college and university campuses where lively discussions take place. The editor of this paper strongly recommends these books to our readers.

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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

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 Sulphur 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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Dick Blackford

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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 DON'T 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 DON'T 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 DON'T 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 DON'T 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 DON'T 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 DON'T 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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Herschel E. Patton
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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 acceptance. 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 and of 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? Boistrous? 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 set 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 that 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 thing 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 Diotrephes 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.