

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

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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 "Con-nery," 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 cliché, —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-rank-ing 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. It's 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 meetings ("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 meditational 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 communicate 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.

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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

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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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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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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. Unificanonists admits 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 feminity. 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

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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.'"

WHEN YOU MOVE—Please allow two months for change of address notices. We have a cut-off date for changes each month. *Thanks for your help.*

INDIA TRIP 1987

Jerry Parks
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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, Vijyawada, 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 way, 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 cleanness 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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IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	227
RESTORATIONS	46
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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

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 I 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 LOMOCOSO, 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