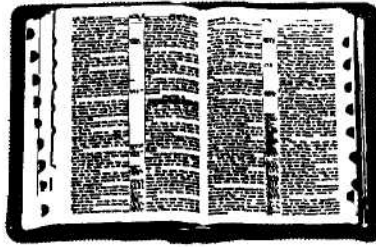


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

' DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH '

VOLUME XXIX

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WAKE THE WORLD
AND TELL THE
PEOPLE

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Gambrills, MD 21054



DOCTRINE — DOES IT REALLY MATTER?

There are churches on every corner — hundreds of them in fact; each espousing different doctrines yet all claiming to be united with Christ. It's confusing to say the least.

Yes, every denomination has some doctrines peculiar to itself, the truth is—**these doctrines form the basis for the group's existence**; it is upon them that the denomination was founded. Without these doctrines the group would have no reason for its existence.

In our day of easy-going ecumenicalism most churches make no effort to promulgate their doctrines. As a result, most members have little knowledge as to what their church really holds to. Here's a fact to think about: **WHEN A CHURCH CEASES TO EMPHASIZE THE DOCTRINES UPON WHICH IT WAS FOUNDED, IT SURRENDERS ALL THE EXCUSES IT MIGHT HAVE HAD FOR ITS EXISTENCE.**

In deference to unity we are told by the clerical community that all churches agree on the essentials, differing only on the non-essentials. But understand this one thing — **different churches are NOT built upon points of agreement, but on points of disagreement.** Thus, what you have in our day is an admission that different denominations are built upon doctrines that they confess to be non-essential. Essential churches built upon non-essential doctrines! (Huh?) Question: **How can you build an essential church upon a non-essential foundation?** The answer is: you can't!

The church established by our Lord is built upon the rock-bed foundation of Jesus Himself. "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). And to lay a foundation upon Christ is to lay a foundation upon the teaching of Christ. And to lay a foundation upon the teaching of Christ is to lay a foundation upon the teaching of God-inspired men (Eph. 2:20).

There is no such thing as "church doctrine." It is the doctrine of Christ; it is the apostles' doctrine; it is the commands and examples of God-inspired men that form the foundational structure to the church of Christ. As a result, we should feel no need of apology to anyone for upholding the precious doctrine of the New Testament.

Meeting together on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper is **not** the result of church tradition or some council. Rather, it is based upon the clear example and observable teaching of New Testament inspired men (Acts 20:7). Having a plurality of elders or pastors in every church is not only wise it is commanded by way of example in Scripture (Acts 14:23; 20:17). Baptism for the forgiveness of sins is not optional but, rather, is the **ONLY** way of reaching the cleansing blood of Jesus (Acts 22:16). To warn that believers may fall from grace and be forever lost may contradict Calvinism but certainly not Christ (Heb. 6:4-6). To uphold a cappella singing in collective worship may not be popular but it certainly is right (Eph. 5:19). To declare that churches which send monies to private businesses in the form of contributions (whether said business operates in the benevolent field or educational field or in some other field is entirely beside the point!) do so **NOT** as an aid to its affectivity but, rather, as an addition to its all sufficiency, is to simply uphold the doctrine of Christ (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:16; 1 Tim. 5:16). To promote the restoration of New Testament attitudes as well as New Testament work and worship and to affirm that neither can exist exclusively without the other is to promote sound doctrine (Eph. 4:1-3). Emphasizing the permanency of marriage along with God's abhorrence for divorce may be out of sync with society but it's at home with the Book (Luke 16:18). **Faith only** may be indeed a doctrine "full of comfort" for the thousands who flock to the Graham crusades or who tune in to Falwell's **Old Time Gospel**

Hour or Schuller's **Hour of Power** but it stands in stark contradiction to the inspired writing of James (2:24). Yes, it's easy to lose our doctrinal distinctiveness in a sea filled with currents of conformity.

Yet the doctrine of Jesus Christ sits at the very foundation of the church of Jesus Christ and is not to be compromised. To brush away any aspect of it is to admit that it is non-essential; **and a church built upon non-essential doctrine is itself non-essential!**

I am reminded again of the charge issued by our Lord through Jude: "... contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." The very moment we hedge or hesitate to stand firm on the precious doctrine of Jesus Christ is the moment we step off the rock and onto the shifting sand of ecumenical peer pressure. God help me to be faithful!

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Editorial

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"AND WASH AWAY THY WIVES"

For many years some have advocated that the alien sinner is not under law to Christ and therefore what the Lord taught on marriage, divorce and remarriage does not apply to such an alien. According to this view, the teaching of the Lord on this subject only becomes applicable to him when he enters the kingdom. How many wives he may have had and for what reason he put them away — none of that matters. The "blotting out of sin" forgives all of this and grants the right for the sinner to abide in his calling and keep whatever wife he has (whether number two, three, ten or fifteen). In other words, baptism washes away wives.

It is certainly true that when God forgives the sinner he does not hold him accountable any more for the wrong done. But does baptism sanctify an unholy relationship? The Colossians had "lived" in fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness prior to their conversion (Col. 3:5). That was their state of living. Question: When they repented of their sins and were buried with Christ, did he cut off their sins? Col. 2:11-13 says that he did. Did he sanctify a state of fornication and the other listed sins of Col. 3:5? Did not repentance require severance from all such practices? Did baptism sanctify covetousness?

But, it is argued, these alien sinners were not subject to the law of Christ on marriage, or any other subject. There are several things wrong with this position.

(1) If the alien sinner is not subject to the law of Christ, then why preach the gospel to him? Jesus required that the gospel be preached to every creature in all the world (Mk. 16:15-16). Why do that, if they are not amenable to it?

(2) If the alien sinner is not subject to the law of Christ, then how did he get to be a sinner in the first place? Does God have two different laws in operation at the same time? Sin is a transgression of the law. But what law?

(3) This position robs repentance of its fruit. Repentance requires a change of mind which results in a change in conduct. John preached "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Mt. 3:8). According to this idea, what was adultery before baptism is no longer adultery. One of the basic issues in this whole controversy is the nature of repentance.

(4) The notion under review assumes that marriage is a church ordinance; that is, the Lord's will on the subject does not affect one until he becomes a member of the

church. But God ordained marriage in the garden of Eden, not in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

(5) This position soothes the consciences of those in adulterous marriages, and makes them think all is well when they are still in adultery. It thus contributes to an already frightening disregard for the permanency of the marriage bond.

I made these specific objections to James D. Bales several years ago when he sent me a copy of his manuscript for the book "NOT UNDER BONDAGE" and requested a critique of the material. He thanked me for my comments, made some changes in his manuscript in an attempt to strengthen his argument, and published the book anyhow.

For a number of years, my esteemed brother, Homer Hailey, has taken essentially the same position on this subject as brother Bales. For the most part, he has been content to hold his view as a private opinion and not press it in his public teaching. But he told me personally that he thought Bales "has the truth on this." I told him I certainly did not think so. But now, our highly respected brother is openly preaching this. In a sermon of over two hours at Belen, New Mexico, he made the most definitive statement of his position to date. He also stated that he had preached on it not long before that in California, and that while he had been disposed not to say much about it in the past, that he intended to be more outspoken on the matter in the future.

That is cause for alarm. No man of this generation has been held in any higher regard than he. It was my good fortune to study under him in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Through the years since, our paths have crossed a number of times and we have spoken several times on the same meeting or lecture programs. He was a wise counselor to me at a very critical point in my life when the exciting call of show business put me in a temporary dilemma. It was he who excited my interest in the study of prophets. But he also taught me, and a host of others, not to think of men "above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6). It is now time to apply that in the case of our beloved brother. What he is saying is welcomed with open arms by some who are in unscriptural marriages. They will be lulled into a false sense of security. Souls are at stake. This position is already contributing to a weakening of the moral fiber of congregations where it is advocated. There are already signs that his increased militancy on the subject has emboldened some others to start circulating materials advancing this cause. The age, knowledge and experience, not to mention the fact that so many stand in awe of this good brother, only adds to the seriousness of the problem. I earnestly entreat my friend (I hope, as a father), to back off, take a good look at this position and its consequences and the potential for all-out war it portends.

It is a time to watch and pray, a time to keep our armor on and our swords sharpened and ready.

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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HYPOCRISY OF THE PHARISEES (NO. 2)

In a previous article the chicanery of the scribes and Pharisees was described in some measure. We continue a brief review of Jesus' exposition of the hypocritical religion of these religious zealots in Matthew 23. Their religion was a

Blind Evangelistic Zeal

They compassed land and sea to make a proselyte to their own traditions, and when they had done so they made him twice as much a child of hell as they were. A child of hell, of course, means a child of the Devil, a child destined for hell. Jesus told the Pharisees in John 8:44 that they were "of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father he will do." A proselyte is a new convert to some religion or religious sect, or to some particular opinion, system, or party. It was used in this passage to indicate the conversion of a Gentile to the religion of the Jews. In the case of the scribes and Pharisees they were making the proselyte twice as bad as they were by making him extremely zealous of their foolish perversions of the law of Moses, and in so doing caused them to despise and reject Jesus Christ and his doctrine.

Jesus did not condemn the evangelistic activity that leads to the obedience to the gospel of Christ, but he condemned converting one into a blind, legalistic, bigoted, ritualistic, hypocritical Pharisee: a devotee to the blind fanaticism of the scribes and Pharisees.

The burning zeal of some preachers and churches today remind one of the proselyte of the Pharisees. Such radical operations as Crossroads in Gainesville, the Boston Church and others of the same color are very zealous to recruit hundreds of proselytes, who are made more ardent for the cultists cause than their teachers. In fact, that partly explains why the system continues to grow in number and financial power. Instead of making the convert a child of God, he is made a servant and a supporter of his teacher. It is done in the name of religion. They held a religion that had

Foolish And Blind Reasoning

The Pharisees gave great detail to ridiculous pettiness of their own traditions and were fools and blind; they debated that by which they should swear in a most illogical fashion. They were trying to distinguish between oaths that were not binding and oaths that were binding. Matthew 5:33-37 gives the teaching of Jesus on this subject. They were elevating the gold of the temple above the temple, not understanding and accepting the greatness and significance of God who sanctified it. They

were portraying their stupidity and absurdity by saying that the temple did not amount to anything in an oath, but an oath by the gold of the temple makes one obligated to fulfill that oath. Such reasoning leads many to believe that unless they make an oath, they may say anything without charge of lying.

Their religion Evaded Responsibility

They separated some details of the law, which they should do, but ignored some important things and left them undone. Their sin was in stressing the tithe of insignificant plants and neglecting the condition of the heart. They were charged with paying tithe of small aromatic garden herbs, "mint, anise, cummin," and neglecting the more significant things of the law: "judgment, mercy, and faith." Jesus said they strained out the gnat, and swallowed the camel. They stressed outward appearance and purity of tiny detail, and were corrupt and sordid inside. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, neither can a vile and evil heart bring forth righteousness. The Pharisees with all their glamour and outward piety were blind spiritually and walked from an unbalanced bias of grace, law and righteousness. Their religion

Concealed Its Filth And Impurity

They cleansed the outside of the cup and platter, but left the inside full of extortion and excess. Again the Pharisees emphasized the external or ceremonial deeds of the law, as interpreted by their traditions, and ignored the real sense of the law upon the heart. It is clear that Jesus is talking about washing the dishes as a ceremonial duty, but filling them with moral and spiritual rot and filth. The food on the inside of the cup and platter was pictured as having been obtained by extortion and excess; stealing from widows and orphans, defrauding all with whom they had dealings, filled with moral corruption, and imbibing of their loot with excess. That was the real filth on the inside of their cup and platter. The conversion of the heart to honesty, truth, purity and righteousness would clean the inside of the cup and platter, and thus make the outside of the dishes clean in doing those things of ceremonial nature. Jesus orders them to "first cleanse that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." Their religion was

Dead and Rancid

With the next woe Jesus pictures the scribes and Pharisees as they really are in character. They are described as whitewashed tombs that appear beautiful and clean on the outside, but inwardly they are filled with dead men's bones and rotting flesh, a loathsome scene. Jesus plainly said this meant that they outwardly appeared righteous to men (that is what they really sought 6:1-6), but inwardly they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity: deceit and lawlessness. The veneer of their material glamour and glitter, with the beautiful deeds of their legal tradition, covered hard hearts of unbelief, void of love and compassion for any but themselves. Their religion was

Built Upon Murder And Deception

The last woe concerns their hypocrisy toward the prophets and the truth to which they prophesied. Before

the scribes and Pharisees, his disciples and all the people, Jesus used the most scathing denunciation and judgment against this zealous and outspoken religious sect of the Jewish religion ever recorded in the word of God. They were building beautiful and elaborate tombs for the dead prophets, which their fathers had murdered, and disclaiming their fathers for the evil deeds. They said if they had lived in the days of their fathers, they would not have been partakers with them in the blood of these prophets. At the time this was being said, they were plotting the death of Jesus. As Judas was told to do what he had planned to do, and Balaam was told to "Go with the men," Jesus told these despicable men to "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." They were soon to deliver him up to Pilate to have him put to death. Jesus used the strongest metaphors to describe the evil and danger of the scribes and Pharisees: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? They were guilty of the murder and severe punishment of the prophets, and were then planning the murder of Jesus. It is impossible for men to sink to a lower level than these religious hypocrites. We must take heed lest we fall into the same condemnation as these men. If we become like them and do their deeds, we will be under the same sentence as they were. The Lord of glory will say unto these, depart from me ye workers of iniquity into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

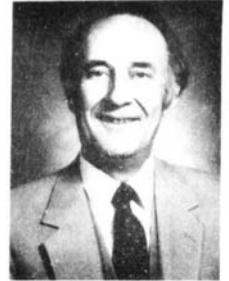
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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EATING BLOOD

QUESTION: What did James' statement mean in Acts 15:20 with reference to eating blood? The Old Testament prohibited the eating of blood, but do not Mk. 7:14-23 and Rom. 14:14 allow it under the New Covenant? Please help me more in understanding.

ANSWER: Acts 15:20 says: "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." This was a statement from the beloved James at the Jerusalem conference where the apostles, Jerusalem elders and brethren had gathered to consider the question of circumcision being imposed by the Judaizers upon the Gentile Christians. Forbidding to eat blood, as well as the other things enumerated in v. 20, was included in the letter sent out from Jerusalem to the Gentile churches (Acts 15:22-29).

The Holy Spirit had a hand in the contents of the letter as v. 28 states. "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us (apostles and brethren, WEW), to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things" (v. 28). The NECESSARY things, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are mentioned in v. 29, namely, one of them being "blood."

Of the four things listed from which a Christian is to abstain, why is it that we may eat blood, as some contend, but wrong to worship idol gods and to commit fornication? Why the difference? I fail to see any. The Holy Spirit said they are "necessary, essential, required."

Some teach that eating blood was just a temporary injunction, or perhaps nothing more than an expediency, for the Gentile churches so that they would not offend the Jewish brethren, and thereby bring about harmony and fellowship between the two groups. But this is mere supposition. Why would not idolatry and fornication be also temporary? Others make "blood" mean "murder," but there is nothing in the text that warrants such interpretation. It seems such efforts are simply to circumvent a plain declaration of Scripture.

In all dispensations God has forbidden the eating of blood. In the Patriarchal period, the Lord said to Noah, "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat" (Gen. 9:4). Under Moses God decreed: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood. ... Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood" (Lev. 17:12). This same prohibition

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has been incorporated in the New Covenant under Christ (Acts 15:20,29). Whether it is rational or not from a human standpoint is beside the point. If God says it, we are to accept it.

Parenthetically, a blood transfusion from other humans is not within the scope of the restrictions of Acts 15:20,29, and, therefore, not disallowed. Eating blood of animals, as was widespread among the Gentiles in their idolatrous feasts, and to a more limited degree, eaten today, such as blood pudding, is altogether different than blood transfusion from our fellow-man.

In regard to Mk. 7:14-23 and Rom. 14:14, they have to be put in context. The argument is made from Mk. 7:15 that "nothing from without a man, that enters into him can defile him" (cf. Matt. 15:11). Taken at face value this would permit gluttony, consumption of liquor and wine, drugs, such as cocaine and heroin, and eating poison. However, the context shows Jesus was refuting the Pharisees' tradition of the ceremonial washing of the hands and eating utensils (Mk. 7:2-5). Jesus is saying that failing to ceremonially cleanse the hands, cups and table is not what defiles a person, but rather what comes from within the heart (Mk. 7:21-23). Mark 7:14-23 no more gives us the liberty to eat blood than it does to get drunk.

Romans 14:14 states, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself." This verse, some think, makes clean the eating of blood. What was prohibited in the Old Testament, such as blood, is now sanctioned in the New, it is argued. But the "nothing unclean" in the verse, as the context shows, is the MEAT (not blood) that was unclean under the law of Moses. God has cleansed the animals that He forbade to eat (Acts 10:9-16), but not the blood as Acts 15:20, 29 explicitly shows. When all passages are put together and placed in context, a perfect harmony can be realized.

THINK ON THESE THINGS

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STUDIES IN 1ST & 2ND TIMOTHY

1 TIMOTHY 6

"THINGS A FAITHFUL MINISTER MUST TEACH AND DO"

The first two verses of this chapter deal with the slave/master relationship. From them we learn that a slave can be a Christian, and the same is true of a master or slave owner. A proper understanding and application of Christian principles will eradicate slavery, as it has in our day, but this is done as Christ and His truth comes to dwell in hearts, not by protests and violent overthrow. This is why neither Christ nor His apostles sought to revolutionize the society of their day by the overthrow of existing customs. Their efforts were to set forth principles of truth, which when received into honest and good hearts, would automatically cause the abandonment of those things contrary to principles of truth.

There are, however, principles of righteousness having to do with the treatment of slaves of his master, and the treatment of the master of his slave, that could not be disregarded and one remain a Christian. Christianity places great emphasis upon the value of man and the proper treatment of our fellowman, and such cannot be ignored without becoming unfaithful to the Lord.

The first verse shows that a Christian slave is under obligation to his master whether the master is a Christian or not. Thinking that since the Lord has become his master, he may shirk or abandon his obligation to his earthly master would lead the world to charge Christianity with teaching men to shirk their responsibilities. Thus, the Lord and His Cause would be blasphemed. Contrariwise, the Lord taught servants to treat their masters with honor and respect and to serve them faithfully. This principle of truth must be observed today with respect to labor and management.

Verse 2 shows that where the master is a Christian, there is added reason for honoring him. The reason is "they are brethren." Abraham recognized this principle long before the days of Christianity. He said to Lot, "Let there be no strife ... for we are brethren." David said, "Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. 133:1). This relationship forbids any mistreatment or withholding of faithful service. Such action against a fellow believer in Christ — a partaker of his benefits—is action against Christ. Every Christian is a member of the body of Christ and any action toward a member is also toward Christ. (See

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Matt. 25:4; Acts 9:4). The apostle Paul says to Timothy, and every preacher of truth, "These things teach and exhort."

False Teachers (v. 3-6)

A false teacher is one who teaches "otherwise" than the wholesome words of the Lord and the doctrine which is according to godliness. Timothy, and every true evangelist, is under obligation to "preach the word," which is characterized by simplicity or singularity. It must be only the revealed truth—unmixed, undiluted, and not perverted in any way. The proclaimer of truth can back up all that he preaches with Scripture—with that which has been divinely revealed.

False teachers were rampant in the early days of the church. Preaching appointments were not nearly so formal as now. Then, most anyone, a resident or itinerant, who at an assembly, had something to say, was given the opportunity to speak. Among the saints there were many roving prophets (true or self-styled) who had opportunities to propagate false and cunningly devised messages. Among the heathen, especially the Greeks, oratory was a highly esteemed thing. Many with ability to speak made it their business to influence audiences with a great speaking demonstration, and to sell philosophy. They measured their success by the crowds they could draw, the applause they got, and the money they could make. Such an environment would certainly pose problems to the church. Every believer needed to be able to distinguish between truth and error; a true prophet or evangelist and the false.

Truth had been revealed, confirmed, and preached by the Lord, his apostles and prophets, and saints were urged to try every prophet... to measure his words by revealed truth. The Bereans were said to be noble for doing this (Acts 17:11).

There are some characteristics of a false teacher listed in these verses, a knowledge of which, will help in recognizing such. In the first place, they are said to be proud, or filled with conceit. Their aim is not to exalt Christ or truth, but themselves. How many preachers and teachers today, in their lessons, make manifest their own flickering light instead of the radiant Christ and His truth?

Secondly, the false teacher is described as "doting about questions and strifes of words" (disputes and arguments over words-NKJ). The interest is more in speculation and arguments over unrevealed matters than in simple revealed truth. Some brethren today spend a lot of time philosophizing on a passage and never get around to a clear exegesis. Some delight to speculate and argue about Paul's thorn in the flesh, the kind of bush Moses saw on fire, but not consumed, or the nature or true identity of gopher wood, etc.

These motives and actions result in the next characteristic of a false teacher: that of causing strife through railings and evil surmisings. He is suspicious and critical of those who would disagree with him, or even question what he teaches, hurling insults at his dissenters intelligence and character. "Speaking the truth in love" is not a part of his nature or actions.

The last characteristic of a false teacher in these

verses is his commercialization of religion. He acts on the supposition that "gain is godliness." If he can raise great sums of money by his speaking, live in a mansion, drive a Mercedes, wear big diamonds, etc., he feels that God is blessing him for who he is and what he is doing. He looks upon this as proof that he is godly and walking in the favor of God. This kind of thing has recently been illustrated by the scandals of radio and television evangelists Jim and Tammy Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart. They had great talent and ability to raise money, draw crowds, get the applause of many, and enjoyed basking in this, but they lacked truth and conviction, even acting contrary to what they preached. Evangelists today who like to boast of the salary they make, number of meetings they hold, great crowds they draw, and the applause they get need to "take heed, lest they fall;" lest they get to looking at these things as the main objectives, and recommendation of their work, rather than concern for preaching truth in love, regardless of the consequences.

"Gain Is Godliness" — A False Philosophy (v. 6-11)

The apostle Paul here flatly denies and contradicts the false philosophy of "gain of godliness" and states what is divinely revealed, and human experience confirms that "godliness with contentment is great gain." The accumulation of "things," regardless of nature or amount, cannot be considered true gain because all must be left behind. "There are no pockets in a shroud" (Spanish proverb). "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither" (Job 1:21). The benefits of "things" end at the grave. They cannot be used to purchase clemency or security in eternity.

An abundance of "things" cannot guarantee contentment in this life. One only has to read the newspapers, look at news reports, and observe fellow humans to see that the rich and famous, as a rule, have more tragedies, heart-ache, physical and mental problems (less contentment) than others. Their fame and fortune, rather than eliminate, tend to intensify these things.

It is not the actual possession of "things" that bring on so much evil, but the "will to be rich" — "the love of money," this reveals a covetous, selfish spirit which is contrary to faith and godliness and causes one to "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition ... piercing themselves through with many sorrows."

Faith or godliness, on the other hand, has all the ingredients for bringing contentment. It promises sufficiency of "things," so that one need not worry about what he will eat, drink, or put on (Matt. 6:25-34; Ps. 37:25). Faith requires loving God supremely, which will keep Him from being supplanted by riches, fame, or persons. Loving one's neighbor as self (an agapae love that involves doing good toward) will eliminate envy, hatred, anger and violence. Faith requires family love and fidelity (Matt. 19: 5-9; Eph. 5:22-33; 6:1-4; Prov. 5:15-20), which enables us, when practiced, to avoid the tragedy and heartbreak of broken homes. Faith-godliness gives assurance of help in times of trouble (Psa. 46:1; Heb. 2:18; 4:16; 13:5; Rom. 8:35-39), which enables us to be

content in whatever state we may be. Faith gives hope for now and eternity, which enables us to patiently endure here and die without fear. (Heb. 6:18-20; Col. 1:27; Rom. 5:3-5; 15:13). There is nothing, apart from faith and godliness, that can bring real contentment into one's life. Solomon tried "things" in search of the greatest "gain" for man (Eccles. 2:3), but concluded that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit" and that the whole of man is to "fear God and keep His commandments" (Eccles. 12:13). Fame and fortune is not the road to contentment or a confirmation of God's favor. If you think it is, you are on the wrong road.

God's Servant Must Flee, Follow, Fight, Keep (v. 11-12)

God's minister must FLEE "these things" — the things mentioned in previous verses. It has been shown that pride in one's speaking ability, zeal and efficiency in argumentation, debate, and strife of words results in envy, strife, evil surmising, and railings. Too, the love of money (to be rich) is shown not to be godliness, but a road to numerous pit-falls. Pride, envy, fleshly desires, and the desire for affluence are not temptations from which God's ministers are exempt. The evangelist's best defense against such is to flee, not try to follow "afar off."

The things God's minister is to FOLLOW are (v. 11), righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. Here we have the very opposite of those things the servant of God is told to flee. Following after these things will keep one out of the path that is filled with pit-falls and snares.

The work of a true minister is militant in nature: He must, therefore, FIGHT. It is, however, a different kind of warfare than carnal. It is not a fight for carnal dominance or survival, but for spiritual cleansing and maturity, resulting in the eternal crown. Eph. 6:10-18 presents the contrast between the "fight of faith" and carnal warfare. The fight of faith is not against flesh and blood, but for the minds (hearts) of people. Spiritual wickedness abounds, even among the "high and mighty" — the rulers of darkness. The evil imaginations and the thoughts of men must be cast or wrestled down, captured and brought to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:4-5). Our offensive weapons in this fight are the sword of the spirit, the word of God, and prayer. Defensive weapons are those things we are told to follow after (v. 11) and having no closeness to the things we are told to flee.

The faith (whole Christian system) is something to which Timothy had been called, when he publicly confessed Jesus Christ and was baptized into Him, according to the glorious gospel of Christ. In this obedience Timothy was simply imitating his Lord, who confessed his deity before Pontius Pilate. Timothy's special appointment was that of being a good minister of Jesus Christ (4:6) through "fighting the good fight of faith" (6:12), "Taking heed to himself, and unto the doctrine" (4:16), "Keeping the commandment (fight the good fight of faith) without spot, unrebukable, until the coming of the Lord. Such faithfulness would result in Timothy "saving himself and them that heard him" (4:16). At that time, the majesty of the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and God in heaven will be clearly demonstrated, to whom

honor and power is to be ascribed everlastingly.

Again Timothy is charged to warn the rich about the pride, highmindedness, and trust in riches that so often is man's downfall (see v. 9-10). He is to urge these to keep their trust in the living God, the giver of all things, and "to do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." In this way they will be laying up a good foundation for the judgment and eternity.

The letter ends with a final charge to Timothy to KEEP that committed to his trust — proclaiming and demonstrating the truth (faith) of God, that results in salvation for both the proclaimer and the hearers. He is warned again, and told to avoid, the false and vain babblings of men (see v. 3-5) which results in erring from the faith.


All need to realize that every duty or responsibility enjoined in this letter is essential to eternal salvation, and every thing forbidden and warned against is damning.

Using the

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

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WATERGATE AND THE RESURRECTION

Apologists have long argued the validity of Christ's resurrection from the standpoint of human nature. A strong and logically attractive case can certainly be drawn from the fact that men do not normally find it easy to maintain the courage, even of their convictions; let alone to persevere in a course that they are not too sure about, in the face of consequent hardship.

Blaise Pascal, the mathematician, scientist, and logician of the seventeenth century, in his classic *Pensees*, wrote, "The human heart is singularly susceptible to fickleness, to change, to promises, to bribery. One (of the apostles) had only to deny his story under these inducements, or still more because of possible imprisonment, torture and death, and they would all have been lost."

I have never seen this more dramatically presented than it is by Charles Colson in his 1983 book, "Loving God." Colson, you will recall, was Special Counsel to President Nixon, and went to prison as a co-conspirator in the Watergate Cover-up.

In a chapter entitled, **Watergate and the Resurrection**, Colson gives a brief review of the events that led to the downfall of the Nixon administration.

He then observes that criticism of the historical truth of the resurrection and Christianity boils down to three things: either the disciples were mistaken; or they knowingly perpetrated a myth, intended as a symbol; or the

eleven disciples conceived a "Passover plot," stole the body of Jesus, hid it away, and then maintained their conspiracy until their very deaths.

The first two of these propositions are easily dismissed. The data cannot justifiably be so interpreted. The records of the event belie the possibility of a mistake. And Paul, who associated closely with the original disciples, discounted the possibility of the myth theory when he declared that if Jesus was not really raised up, the whole gospel package is a hoax and a sham (1 Cor. 15).

It is the third of these propositions that is the most plausible, and it is this one that is most effectively shattered by a consideration of human nature.

Colson is in a unique place to do the shattering because he was involved in a conspiracy. He occupied a front row seat in the theater of human response. In his review of the production, he observes:

"With the most powerful office in the world at stake, a small band of hand-picked loyalists, no more than ten of us, could not hold a conspiracy together for more than two weeks."

These men, Ehrlichman, Haldeman, Mitchell, Dean, Colson, believed in the President and his policies. They had made financial and private sacrifices to serve in his administration. They enjoyed the prestige and power that their offices provided. They bathed in the personal luxury by which they were surrounded.

Recall: they were not being threatened with torture or loss of life. Imprisonment was not considered more than a remote possibility at the time.

"Yet," observes Colson, "after just a few weeks the natural human instinct for self-preservation was so overwhelming that the conspirators, one by one, deserted their leader, walked away from their cause, and turned their backs on the power, prestige, and privileges."

Is it even rationally possible then to believe that the eleven apostles, with the complicity of at least five hundred others, were **all** willing to undergo the burden of being ostracized by friends; tortured and imprisoned by authorities; beaten, stoned, and placed in daily anticipation of death, to maintain a conspiratorial silence? "Is it not probable that at least one of the apostles would have renounced Christ before being beheaded or stoned?"

I would think that if not, then that might constitute almost as great a miracle as the resurrection itself!

The proclamation of Peter and John come echoing down the centuries: **"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard"** (Acts 4:19,20).

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SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

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"INTO ALL THE WORLD," EXCEPT ...

From Jerusalem, the disciples were charged to "Go... into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15).

The disciples accepted this challenge, and "went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Within a generation or two, the gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven ..." (Col. 1:23). "Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth ..." (Rom. 10:18).

Many brethren are still trying to carry out this commission inherited by the Lord's church. They preach the gospel to the extent of their abilities and opportunities. No one can do more, and none should do less.

But, there is a false concept which has been planted in the minds of some brethren which I verily believe continues to hinder the spread of the gospel. Some believe the gospel should be preached everywhere except in Florida, the Hawaiian Islands, Bermuda, the Bahamas, South America, the Philippines, or any other place which may come under the heading of a vacation spot. Such a concept would practically rule out the "whole world" of the great commission.

Some brethren in all the continental United States still think of Florida only as a vacation spot. Some evidently think that all the preachers here are just on one big vacation. Maybe a few are.

The Florida of the vacation brochures and the real Florida are two different places. Some brethren who take vacations in Florida have seen more of the tourist attractions than I have. In the 200 or so miles of Florida coastline extending north from Weeki Wachee, you might find a total of two or three miles of sandy beach. Personally, I haven't seen that much.

The congregations and brethren in Florida face much the same problems and opportunities as faced by the Lord's church anywhere else in the nation.

Some brethren in Florida go to such exotic places as the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee for vacations. Some go to Colorado, the Bahamas, or to New England. I doubt that brethren who make up the small congregations in those places consider their territory "exotic."

For climate and scenery, Hawaii appeals to a lot of people. A lot of tourists frequent the more publicized vacation spots. But, there is only one sound congregation in this, our 50th state. I doubt that brother Don Givens

and the faithful few who comprise the congregation there consider themselves "on a vacation." And, just because the Lord's church is blessed (or cursed), by happening to be in Hawaii should have nothing to do with our attitude toward the great commission.

Washington, D.C. holds many attractions for tourists. Personally, the only thing which has ever influenced me to go there is the preaching of the gospel. When I was in a meeting with the Annandale church, brother Chappel suggested that I wouldn't "last a month" due to conservative style of driving. I told him I only aimed to be there a week.

When circumstances forced me to go to D.C. to get my passport for the Philippines in 1984, brother Wilson Adams was kind enough to guide me through that maze of civilization. I would return again if duty called, but my hat's off to those who endure the hardships of our nation's capital in order to preach the gospel.

Personally, I'd prefer to face the Muslim and Communist obstacles in the Philippines, even if I have to travel 10,000 miles to do it.

If there are preachers who are on permanent vacation at the expense of the church, such an arrangement needs to be terminated. But I see no logical or scriptural reason why the cause of Christ should have to suffer in any part of the world because that place fits someone's notion of what a vacation spot is or is not.

I rather imagine that some of the places where Paul preached in his travels would have been considered vacation resorts even by some in his day. Certainly they are considered as such today, and few can boast a faithful congregation of the Lord's church as a part of the attraction.

There are enough local hindrances and hardships to overcome in our efforts to establish or strengthen the cause of Christ. Those who are willing to face those hardships need to be encouraged and supported by those not able or not willing to go.

Congregational autonomy is a fine thing, but let us not get so wrapped up in our own little corner of the world that we forget the gospel is for all.

**THE NASHVILLE MEETING
A Discussion of Issues Which Have
Divided Brethren**

**Steve Wolfgang
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About a year ago, Alan Cloyd (editor of the **Restoration Leadership Quarterly** produced by the Vultee church in Nashville) made an announcement in that journal regarding a proposed discussion among brethren "divided over institutions and the cooperation question." He reported at that time that a discussion was tentatively planned for March, 1988, in Louisville, KY. A few months later, that same journal announced that Herman Alexander of the Preston Road Center for Christian Education in Dallas, and myself, had agreed to make arrangements for brethren of both persuasions to discuss these issues. In the January 7, 1988 issue of the **Guardian of Truth**, I published an article "On Meeting With Institutional Brethren," explaining my involvement in this endeavor, and seeking to inform brethren generally about this proposal. Obviously, March 1988 has come and gone and no meeting has yet occurred. Such a meeting is still in the active planning stage, but since several things have changed since the last published reports, I am sending this article explaining the current status of this endeavor to several journals circulated among brethren. The editors of those journals may publish it or decline to do so as they see fit. This report will probably be more informative if my January 7 article referred to above is read first.

While several others have had positive input into the process of formalizing the details, they have left me free to make whatever arrangements seemed best. Thus, should someone not be pleased with the plans I describe below, I am the one to be criticized. Although there are things which perhaps could be better arranged, I have done the best I could. Some brethren from both sides of this issues have been outspoken and critical, often before they knew enough to be critical about, and sometimes before most of the arrangements had been made! I hasten to add that many more brethren of both persuasions, while expressing cautious optimism toward such a meeting, have been decidedly favorable toward such a discussion of issues which have divided. I want to say personally that I appreciate the willingness of brethren, whatever position they may hold on any issue, to come together and discuss our differences. I have been preaching more than twenty years, and this is the first time that anyone from "the other side" has reached out to ask, "Can we talk?"

Plans have now been made for three days of discussion in Nashville, Tennessee, on December 1, 2, & 3, 1988. In order to provide a "neutral setting," the facili-

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ties of the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Nashville has been procured. This is a quality, business/convention-type hotel in downtown Nashville, and will be able to provide comfortable facilities for those who are coming from out-of-town. These dates will allow us to obtain a flat rate of \$45 per room per night, with a maximum of 4 persons per room. (Thus, two people staying in the same room would pay \$22.50 each per night; four persons per room would pay \$11.25 each; all prices subject to tax, of course) Occupying these rooms will also give us access to a large meeting room which can be arranged with theater style seating with a capacity of 480 seats which should be adequate for such a meeting.

Just as each one attending will bear his own expense, so each one comes representing only himself. This is not an attempt to formulate doctrine, issue some edict, or establish some "brotherhood position." Although only a certain number of brethren (about 21 from each persuasion) will be actively participating as speakers, respondents, or moderators, "whosoever will may come" to attend these meetings, to listen to what is said, and to question those who speak.

The topics to be discussed will include the following. I am listing also the brethren who at this date have agreed as of this date to serve as moderators (M), speakers (S), and respondents (R). (See below for a description of responsibilities of each of these tasks). I am also affixing TENTATIVE times for each session (note the stress on the word **tentative** in the arrangement of these and other details).

1. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2-5 PM

Suggested Topics: Are there "patterns" revealed in the Scriptures? etc. How Do We Establish/Ascertain Divine Authority? What is the role of Examples? of Inferences/Conclusions?

S: Clinton Hamilton

R: James W. Adams

M: Dale Smelser

2. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 7-10 PM

"Overview and Current Situation" — History; **How** Churches of Christ Separated and Grew Apart; The Current Situation; etc.

S: Steve Wolfgang

R: Marshall Patton

M: Colly Caldwell

3. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 9-12 AM

"Collective (Church) Activity and Individual Activity" — What are the Biblical Criteria for Distinguishing the Two? etc.

S: Ferrell Jenkins

R: Harold Comer

M: Karl Diestelkamp

4. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2-5 PM

"What Is The Work of the Church?" — Discussion will likely include fellowship halls, church kitchen/recreational facilities, and larger issues of "social gospelism," family life centers, etc.

S: Paul Earnhart

R: Robert Jackson

M: L. A. Stauffer

5. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 7-10 PM

"What Relationship Should Institutions Sustain to Churches?" — Discussion including orphanages, colleges, etc.

S: Mike Willis

R: Larry Hafley

M: Dick Blackford

6. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 8-11 AM

"Cooperation of Churches" — Definition: What Is Cooperation? How May Churches Cooperative? When & under what circumstances?

S: Ron Halbrook

R: Keith Sharp

M: Dan King

8. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 12-3 PM

"The Question of Fellowship" — What does the Bible mean by "fellowship"? What kind of unity can exist between separated brethren? On what basis? S: Harry Pickup, Jr. R: John Clark M: Jamie Sloan

Two speakers, one from each persuasion, will prepare in advance and present "main speeches" on each given topic, approximately 30 minutes in length. The respondents will be free to reply as they see fit, each one speaking only for himself. These "responses" will be allocated about 20 minutes. I realize that everyone will want more time than we can possibly allocate, but I believe that with care and precision, everyone can cover the main points of what has divided the churches over these issues.

Moderators will not only introduce speakers and respondents, but will fulfill an important function as a "questioner" of the speaker and respondent of the opposite persuasion. At some point (probably after the two main speeches and two responses), written questions will be collected from the audience. It will be the responsibility of the moderator/questioner to select from the written questions submitted the dozen or so which best focus the issue under discussion. Several brethren of the institutional persuasion are at work assembling a slate of speakers, respondents, and moderators from that perspective, but due to various hindrances and circumstances these have not been finalized at this date. Thus, I do not yet know who will be the speakers, respondents, and moderators from the other side, but felt it important to share what information I do have with brethren to forestall any further misinformation about the meeting. I plan to publish another report on the progress of these meetings as soon as those names are available to me.

Some brethren have expressed misgivings about this meeting. Some may think there has been enough discussion of these topics in the past. Many would see further discussion of these issues as futile; others, as irrelevant. In many ways, I can understand such feelings. Perhaps further discussion of divisive issues will do nothing to change anything. But I cannot help but feel that dispassionate discourse among alienated Christians must be attempted whenever the opportunity exists. New generations have arisen on either side of these issues who

know nothing whatsoever of why brethren have disagreed and divided over them. I do not know exactly what may result from such a meeting, but I am willing to put forth the effort necessary to attempt to talk to others, whether or not they may ultimately agree with my understanding. I am glad to learn that there are others of like mind.

* * * * *

TROY C. IRVIN

Troy C. Irvin of Birmingham, Alabama, died in the Veterans Hospital in that city on April 19, 1988. Born in the small community of Gattman, Mississippi, on May 30, 1908, he spent the major portion of his life in Alabama. On February 16, 1935, he was married to Agnes Hill, of Tusculumbia, Alabama, a niece of F. B. Srygley. The first ten years of their married life the Irvins lived in Nashville, where they attended the Waverly-Belmont congregation, forming a close friendship with W. E. Brightwell, preacher for the congregation, who was also News Editor of the **Gospel Advocate**. Brother Irvin was in military service during three years of their Nashville residence, being stationed in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands.

Moving to Birmingham at the close of the war in 1945, the Irvins, along with Agnes' two brothers, J. O. and Elliot Hill, took the lead in the establishment of a new congregation in the city — the Berney Points church. Brother John T. Lewis preached the first sermon for the new group. Fifteen years later (1961) the Irvins were again leaders in starting the Cahaba Heights congregations; and another five years later, they took an active role in starting the Vestavia congregation. In each of these congregations Brother Irvin served as deacon, treasurer, or Bible class teacher—and in one of them in all three capacities at the same time.

The Irvin home was always understood to be the place in residence for the many gospel preachers who came to hold meetings. They developed very close and enduring friendships with these men, among the number being Roy E. Cogdill, Harry W. Pickup, Sr., Homer Hailey, Fanning Yater Tant, Franklin T. Puckett, James R. Cope, Marshall Patton, Bob Owen, Robert Jackson, and many, many others.

Brother Irvin is survived by his wife, Agnes, one brother and two nephews. Funeral services were conducted at the Elmwood Chapel and burial was in Elmwood Cemetery. The service was conducted by David Claypool and Steve Patton (former and present ministers of Vestavia Church). They paid tribute to the memory of a truly dedicated and humble servant of God, citing his long record of service to the cause of Christ. All who knew him recognized Troy Irvin as a "gentle" man in the truest sense of that term. Friends of the family who wish to write may address their letters to Mrs. Agnes Irvin, 1717 Shades Crest Coard, Birmingham, Alabama 35216.

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"Great Faith"

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"And without faith it is impossible to please Him..." (Heb. 11:6). Yet not all faith is pleasing to God. The Bible speaks of dead faith (Jas. 2:17, 26), little faith (Mt. 8:26; 17:20), and shipwrecked faith (1 Tim. 1:19). Only twice did Jesus find what He called "great faith." What made it so?

The Centurion

The man who had great faith lived at Capernaum. He was a centurion, a Roman soldier. He was a Gentile, but one who had considerable contact with the Jews. In fact he had been so influenced by them that he built their synagogue. They testified of him, "He loves our nation" (Lk. 7:1-10).

When the centurion heard about Jesus he sent word to Him concerning his slave who was sick almost to the point of death. That word was sent by some Jewish elders, who recommended Jesus help him. As the Lord approached the centurions home, he requested Jesus come no further, for he was not worthy for the Lord to enter his house. "Just say the word and my servant will be healed." Jesus then turned to the multitude following Him and remarked, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." The servant was healed that very hour.

The Canaanite Woman

The woman who had great faith lived in the district near Tyre and Sidon. Mark says she was a Gentile, of the Syrophonician race (7:26). She, too, had a loved one suffering: her daughter was possessed by a demon.

When this woman sought Jesus' help for her daughter He was silent. She persisted, and the disciples asked Jesus to send her and her bothersome shouting away. He merely responded, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The woman kept imploring, bowing down to Jesus. Finally He answered her, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." Undaunted, she replied, "Yes, Lord ; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from the master's table."

Jesus would no longer keep her waiting. "O woman, your faith is great; be it done for your as you wish." Matthew says the daughter was healed at once (15:21-28).

Great Faith

The first thing that impresses us about these two is they were both Gentiles. Neither had the kind of upbringing which would seemingly best prepare them for faith in the Messiah. Yet their faith surpassed that found among Jews. Therefore the conclusion must be that great faith is not a matter of heritage. Children must be taught the will of God (Eph. 6:4), but that is no guarantee

they will have great faith. The sad fact is some children of saints have made shipwreck of their faith or exhibited no faith at all.

A second common denominator in these cases is a concern for others — a highly regarded slave and a daughter. The centurion and the Canaanite woman asked not for themselves but for the benefit of loved ones. Great faith is not found in self-centered people.

A third likeness is the humility of each. The centurion did not even consider himself worthy to come to Jesus, much less have the Mater come to him. The woman cried out, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David." She did not hesitate to bow before Jesus. She was not insulted at His reference to dogs, but assumed the role and asked for crumbs. "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6). And great faith will be found only there. We must meekly recognize His infinite superiority and gladly submit to His will.

A fourth parallel is in the confidence these Gentiles had in Jesus' power and willingness. Luke, the physician, records the centurion's servant was at the point of death. The Canaanite woman's daughter was demon-possessed, a helpless situation. There were a few exorcists around, but these were ineffective in the fight against Satan (Acts 18:13-16). So in neither case was there hope apart from Jesus.

Could the Lord do something with these situations? They both thought so, though there is no proof either had ever seen a miracle. *Would* He do something? That they were less certain of. But neither was afraid to ask. And the woman asked again and again, discouraged neither by the disciples' complaints nor by Jesus' delay.

This gets to the heart of the matter. Great faith is a Roman soldier who knew Jesus could "just say the word"; a Gentile woman who thought surely God had a blessing for all. *Great faith does not limit God.* It faces no problem God cannot solve. It makes no predeterminations as to what God will or will not do, thereby limiting the asking. It is not disheartened by answers that take time.

This man and woman both asked in faith. Both received their requests and a great compliment from the Master. Do you believe God can grant your desires, even though the situation seems hopeless to you? Do you believe He is interested in you and willing to help you? Have you asked? Fervently? Persistently? If no, yours is not great faith.

"AND IT WAS NIGHT"

David Posey

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On the solemn occasion when Jesus ate the supper with His disciples and instituted that memorial feast which we faithfully observe today, we may be startled to discover that there were more than 13 individuals in the room that night. Yes, there was Jesus and the twelve. But there was another personality present, invisible but active.

That personality was Satan himself. In John 13: 2, we read that Satan had already put the betrayal idea into the willing heart of Judas; and in verse 27, we're told that "Satan entered him." Satan was present at the last Supper! And surely he does some of his "best" work in places where you'd think we'd be most insulated against him.

It was after Satan had done his job that Jesus told Judas, "What you do, do quickly." Judas, now transformed into an apostle of the devil, went out to keep his evil promise and John, with his penchant for detail, records, "And it was night" (v. 30).

"And it was night." Those words are chilling in their implications, given their historical setting. Judas, after over three years with our Savior and Lord, had taken a fatal leap into darkness, led there by the prince of night himself. His heart had turned to ice, there was no getting through to him. He said "leave me alone!" to God and not even the Son of God could change his mind. How can a person become so callous, so incredibly insensitive and cold?

In John's gospel, the contrasting concepts of darkness and light are common. For example, in the prologue (1:1-18), John introduces the idea in verses 4-5, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend (margin: 'overcome') it." There is a distinct difference between darkness and light. Everything about Jesus is light — He sheds light, He provides light, He is light (Jn. 8:12). The world (that is, all that is hostile to God) is darkness. Those who love evil never come to the light because they prefer, even love the darkness (see Jn. 3:16-21). Those who walk in the light are "sons of light" and walk in such a way that darkness cannot overtake them (Jn. 12:35-36). In his first letter, John makes the point that fellowship with God is conditional upon "walking in the light" (1 Jn. 1:5-7).

In considering these bible principles, we can make some brief observations about the characteristics of night, or "walking in the light" and about day, or "walking in darkness." Concerning night, we learn, first, that it is the

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realm of Satan, the place where Judas spent his time, the street he chose to travel. We know, secondly, that walking in the darkness constitutes apostasy, a falling away from what is spiritually good and right. Thirdly, those who travel "by night" have enthroned the **self**, becoming self-righteous, self-seeking and arrogant. **And** lastly, and sadly, the outcome is death — eternal, never-ending death in a place not originally prepared for people made in the image of God, but a place prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:41). Judas chose to walk in this realm.

But we also learn some things about the "day" or "walking in the light." First, it is the realm of God, because He is light (1 Jn. 1:5). Secondly, those who walk in the realm of day possess within them a hatred of all sin. That doesn't mean they never sin (1 Jn. 1:8,10) but it does mean they never plan to sin, they never practice sin (1 Jn. 3:9), and they find the whole idea of sin repulsive. Thirdly, those who abide in the light enthrone Christ in their hearts; He has first position in their lives. Godly sorrow, confession and repentance come easily to those who have Christ on the throne of their hearts. Finally, those living by day look forward to eternal day — everlasting life in heaven, where God is the light, and where there is no night (Rev. 22:5).

Now, the question is, where do we live? Where are we walking — in darkness or in light? This is not just a question for the unbeliever — Judas was a disciple! As Christians, we need to think often about our ultimate reason for living. It goes back to the commitment we made when we were baptized. We promised God that we would live in such a way that He would get the glory in everything we do. We can properly define "walking in the light" as glorifying God in **the way we live**. Would you agree that Judas did not glorify God? Of course! But **every** apostasy fails to glorify God and, therefore, is just as bad as the falling away of Judas! That point is made in Heb. 6:4-6 where the writer says we crucify the Son of God afresh, when we fall away.

Furthermore, every act brings glory to **someone**. It may bring glory to **self**. Paul talks about that in 2 Tim.

3:1-5 where he predicts that in the last days people will be lovers of themselves. We may glorify **opponents of the cause of Christ**. In Rom. 2:24, Paul scolds the Jews, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." In their insistence on imposing the Law on Christians and the division resulting from that, they were glorifying those who opposed Christianity. **An** act of sin can even glorify the **killers of Christ** (Heb. 6:4-6) and, ultimately, **Satan** himself! Would you really, consciously, decide to glorify the devil?

Who are you glorifying? Before you take that next drink or seek out that next "new love" or place that next wager, think about who will get the glory. Satan is anxiously waiting because he loves those who walk with him in darkness. He loves the spiritually blind and those who slip around the corners and carve the secret places. But God wants you to know that such behavior brings a sickening state of mind. 1 Pet. 2:20-22 says it's like a dog returning to his vomit or a swine, after being washed, to wallowing in the mire. Who truly desires to walk in the footsteps of Satan and the killers of Christ and the opponents of the church? Don't you want to glorify the only One who can impart eternal life?

Judas stepped out of Christ's life nearly 2,000 years ago and "it was night." He never came back, though he regretted what he had done. Where are you headed? Christ wants you back in the light of His presence, if you've strayed. And if you've stayed until now, think about that night into which Judas irretrievably slipped and then meditate upon the benefits of living in the light. Then, ask yourself the question, whom will I glorify today?

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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

NORMAN E. FULTZ, Rt. 29 Box 37, Kansas City, MO 64166 — On June 1, I began my third year of work with the Nashua church and anticipate a pleasant continuance. We have recently baptized three, and two were identified with us. One of those baptized, a 72-year old lady died less than three weeks after her birth into the kingdom. In June, we conducted a gospel meeting and vacation Bible school concurrently with Bill Fairchild teaching the adult class mornings and preaching in the meeting in the evenings. It was a busy and exhilarating week with the largest crowds the church here has experienced. Chairs had to be set out to accommodate the overflow. We continue to write a 24 column-inch monthly newspaper article

which is carried in a paper distributed free through the mail to every home in a large area surrounding our meeting place. We also continue to distribute to the members copies of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES. Don Truex will be with us in a meeting in September. It was my good pleasure to be with the Westside church in Aurora, IL in April and I look forward excitedly to meetings with New Hope near Big Clifty, KY (Aug.), Albuquerque, NM (Sept.), Christian Home near Morgantown, KY and Demott, IN (Oct.). Our meeting place is one of the closest to KCI Airport and less than a mile from the north loop of (I-435. In traveling this area, visit us.

STATEMENT FROM ITALIAN PREACHERS

To Whom It May Concern Among Brethren in the U.S.A. — On June 26 we met together trying to find, through common agreement, the solution to certain fellowship problems which we had, and about which many of you had knowledge. Well, we have talked, discussed and also clarified the aspects of the problem, solving also all the misunderstandings. We suffered because of that problem, as you all did and we hope to rejoice now in the hope of preparing a future which (will) be ever stronger and trusting in the Lord. We have prayed together, admitting our responsibilities with consequent repentance asking God and each other the right forgiveness. We are sure that our unity and our difficult work can only improve. We ask for your prayers and continuing concern in our work. Rome, June 25, 1988 (signed)

Gianni Berdini, Rudolfo Berdini, Stefano Corazza, Roberto Ton-delli, Valerio Marchi, Alessandro Corazza, Arrigo Corazza, Francesco Fosci.

RAY G. PILLION, 2188 Martens St. RR #7, Abbotsford, B.C., Canada V2S5W6 — We are presently conducting Lord's Day services in the Davy Crocket Motel in southeast Abbotsford. The opportunity is good here and we believe there is a harvest ready.

ALAN YEATER, 290 Warfield Blvd., Clarksville, TN 37043 — We have been encouraged by the spiritual development of the saints here. Last fall two elders were appointed. Now, two deacons are serving. We were known as the "University" congregation but have changed the name to Warfield Blvd. church to better identify with our new meeting place. Clarksville is the home of Fort Campbell and Austin Peay State University. Because of the transient nature of a considerable portion of the population, we are again requesting your help in encouraging saints and reaching the lost. Please notify us of any prospective students (or present ones) at APSU. The social and recreational enticements of institutional churches in Clarksville ensnare many young Christians. We want to contact these students and have them in our homes as soon as possible. Members of this congregation serve as faculty and staff at the university. Some of our young people are students there.

We are also reaching out to military personnel. Five military

SERMON BOOKS

God Hath Spoken by Irven Lee. The writings of Irven Lee have been among the most popular of those writings published by brethren. His *Good Homes in A Wicked World* and *Preaching In A Changing World* have enjoyed good circulation. We anticipate the same with his book of sermons entitled *God Hath Spoken*. 192 pages.

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Illustrated Gospel Sermons. Over 100 pages of outlines and charts designed with you in mind. Fifty subjects complete with outlines and charts.

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families presently worship with us. The military officers in the congregation are developing a letter to be distributed, along with our information packet, to all incoming personnel who list a preference for the church of Christ. We need your help with their address and needs as soon as they arrive. Phone (615) 647-4007 or 647-1324.

CONNIE W. ADAMS, P.O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109 — I thought it would be of general interest to make it known that James R. Cope, 301 Greencastle, Temple Terrace, FL 33617, is now in a position to hold several more weekend meetings (Friday night, two sessions on Saturday and three on Sunday). In addition to his much needed family series, he had excellent materials for series on "Bible Characters," "Studies in Acts," "A Look at New Testament Churches" and other needed studies. Brother Cope has always been a superior teacher of the Bible and brethren need the benefits of his years of study and experience. Many have been taught by him who have never seen or heard him personally. His tract "The One True Church" has been most popular with between 2 and 3 million copies circulated in three languages in the last 30 years. Some of the richest studies this writer ever had were in classes taught by James R. Cope.

UDEGE C. BAMALI, P.O. Box 164 Nbwasi, Imo State, Nigeria, West Africa — On Saturday, June 11, 1988, four elders and three deacons were appointed at Njimbeako Street church of Christ. People came from all parts of Nigeria for the occasion. E. J. Ebong and E. A. Akinyemi spoke to instruct the elders and the deacons as well as the church. At a nearby congregation, a six month training course for preachers is now in progress. Rejoice with us and pray for us.

LARRY R. DEVORE, P.O. Box 313, Medina, OH 44258 — On July 3rd, I began my second year with the good church in Medina. Since last report, three have been restored and one baptized (he was the grandson of a Baptist preacher). I am still short of needed support.

NEW WORK IN FLORENCE, SC

DON BRADY, 12780 Quail Roost Dr., Miami, FL 33177 — A new congregation began meeting in a private home in Florence, SC in mid-May, 1988. The nearest sound churches are at Sumter and Camden, both an hour or more away. Bill and Kathy Kaile recently moved to Florence from Ft. Lauderdale, joining spiritual forces with Kerry and Laura Gately (both doctors) who have spent much time the past two years teaching against the digressive practices in the area. Several in the area are showing an interest in the new work and are studying with these brethren. If you know anyone living in the area, please contact Billy Kaile, 2329 S. Clareview Dr., Florence, SC 29501, or Kerry Gately, 328 Chippenham Lane, Florence, SC 29501. Or phone (803) 662-6227 or 664-9567.

HUEY P. HARTSELL, P. O. Box 299, Burnet, TX 78611 — After three and a half very pleasant years with the Oaks-West church in Burnet, we will be moving near Cull man, AL July 1. I will follow Lynn Huggins in the work with the Beulah congregation. Brother Huggins is loved and appreciated for his seven years of faithful service there. He has moved to Lincoln, Nebraska to begin a new congregation. We are expecting an agreeable and profitable work at Beulah. Jack Holt will begin work at Oaks-West July 17. Please note our new address: Rt. 4, Box 2050, Vinemont, AL 35179.

BRETHREN DELIVERED FROM SENSELESS VIOLENCE

PAUL K. WILLIAMS, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — Nine Christians, five boys and four girls, paid \$8.50 bus fare each and joined their schoolmates for a trip to a rural school near Bulwer, a 3 hour drive by car from Eshowe. They enjoyed the Saturday when they watched soccer and netball. At 5 P.M. they boarded the two buses for the return trip when a small boy emptied a teargas canister into one of the buses. As the students piled out of the bus, stones started flying, and a pitched battle ensued which lasted from two to five hours. They were attacked by boys and men wielding knobkieries (walking sticks with heavy knobs on the ends), axes and bush knives. Stones were available for both sides. The individual stories told by the returning Christians were hair-raising. While this was going on, the church in Eshowe was having its regular Saturday evening service and we were praying for the safety of our brethren, little suspecting how much our prayers were needed. We are persuaded that God heard our prayers. After dark two taxis appeared on the scene of the violence. One

pretended to be a police car and escorted the bus away. One took a wounded teacher to a hospital, and ferried stranded Eshowe boys to the departing buses. No one was killed and the two wounded Eshowe people were not seriously hurt. When four of the boys were at services the following morning after arriving home at 4:30 that morning, we got the story and thanked God for his mercy. That night I gave a lesson on praying for our enemies, and I had the undivided attention of the audience! Later a teacher told me he was convinced that the violence was not political in origin.

But on June 3, our 50-year-old sister Sue Grabbelear was walking with her friend past the Standard Bank in Roodepoort (a municipality near Johannesburg) when a bomb exploded killing Sue's friend and three black men. Sue's right leg was blown off. She was taken to the Johannesburg Hospital trauma unit where the doctors battled until after midnight to save her. By then, brethren all over South Africa were praying for her. Probably no other event has so united us all in prayer. We praise God that her condition has steadily improved. Her leg was removed above the knee. There is fear that her other leg may be useless. She took a lot of shrapnel, but no vital organs were damaged. The prayers and concern of the church has sustained her and her three children and we have every hope for her eventual recovery.

Amidst all of this drama our work of preaching the gospel has continued with good results. Four have been baptized.

JAMES H. BAKER, JR., P.O. Box 44012, Philadelphia, PA 19144 — The church here is now four years old, having started from scratch in July, 1984. I was fearful back then that I had made a mistake in leaving the Miami Shores church in Florida to come here. Thanks be given to God, for now I'm sure it was the right move. We are at present 13 adults and 5 children. Satan has taken 5 from us. We have been blessed with our own rented storefront on a major street in the heart of the city. We try to have 3 or 4 classes a week with interested persons. We have 20 taking the John Hurt Bible course. We have also had a number of traveling Christians from all over the nation stopping by. One of the recent visitors was Clinton Hamilton of Ft. Lauderdale, FL who did a great job preaching for us. We invite all of you to worship with us when on the east coast. Our address is listed in this magazine.

JOHN SHADOWENS, Grand Junction, Colorado—This hub city on the western slope, a place of good hunting, fishing and scenic grandeur, is an ideal place to retire, but not from the Lord! The church meets at 491 Spam Road. We have 14 members. I am working full-time with the church. We are striving to grow, preach the word and remain faithful to God. There are three liberal churches in this city of 30,000. If you would like a challenge plus a great place to retire or visit, then come to this frontier area for gospel work.

RECENT DEATHS

CLEO N. BLUE passed away at Springfield, MO on June 26 at one P.M. He had been a faithful gospel preacher for almost half a century. He was well known to many in Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas where most of his years as a gospel preacher were spent. He is survived by his wife Addie, his companion for fifty-six years and a niece, nephew and several cousins. Memorial services were conducted in Morrilton, Arkansas by Tom Shiflett and Oscar Ellison.

It seemed especially appropriate that he was laid to rest in the cemetery at Morrilton, Arkansas. He was born and grew up on the hill overlooking the area. The present meeting house had been a school house where his education began. When it became a meeting place for brethren he preached in their first gospel meeting. He was buried beside his father and mother. His father, Joe Blue, was a well known pioneer preacher for many years. His life as a preacher and that of Cleo spanned almost a century of gospel preaching. Their faithful work will live on in the hearts and lives of those who responded to the gospel they preached.

JAMES D. BEECH, JR. departed this life on June 19 at the age of 45 after a long period of suffering which he had borne with uncommon grace. Jimmy was born in Tampa and grew up in a Christian home. Early in life he took an interest in spiritual things which led to his decision to dedicate his life to preaching the gospel. He prepared himself as best he could and did his first regular work at Center, Texas. He later preached in Magnolia, Arkansas and Madisonville, Texas. He and Betty, with their son Greg, then decided to go to

Australia where they lived at Wagga Wagga for three years. They moved then to Wayne, Michigan. While there a recurring ailment was diagnosed as muscular sclerosis. He continued preaching as long as he could, even when he had to sit in a chair to give a lesson. He accepted his condition with fortitude. It did not rob him of his cheerfulness, nor did he complain about it, or feel sorry for himself. Jimmy and his family moved back to Brandon, FL in about 1980 to be near his parents. In addition to his wife and son, he is survived by a daughter, Rachel. Memorial services were conducted by Earl Kimbrough on June 21. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Psa. 116:15).

FRED MOTLEY of Warner Robins, Georgia died suddenly of a massive heart attack on July 29. He was one of the elders of the Westside church in Warner Robins having served in that capacity for many years. He was a tower of strength during critical years in that area. He is survived by a wife and daughter. Services were conducted on August 1 by J. Wiley Adams, Bob Tuten and James Shear.

PREACHER NEEDED

ARCHER, FLORIDA— The church in Archer is in need of a full-time preacher. Archer is located 12 miles southwest of Gainesville. We are a small group, numbering 30 to 42 on Sunday and can supply \$1,000 a month support. For more information please write to P.O. Box 405, Archer, FL 32618.

**EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS
THE PASSING SCENE**

A casual observation of the passing scene as we travel about this country gives reason for reflection as to the attitudes and ideals of many of our citizens. All semblance of decorum seems to have been lost with a good many people. Men and women nearly everywhere in public places appear in shorts. More and more men and women appear in what we used to call men's undershirts. Cut-off tee shirts exposing the waist and belly button are often seen, and some have appeared that way at pot lucks where Christians gather. And aren't punk haircuts something to see? And there is the wet wash look. Does anyone seriously think it is attractive? Or is the motive more to repel than attract? More and more women (including many Christians) are cutting their hair shorter than most men have worn theirs for a long time, including short side-burns and being shaved up the back. Am I wrong, or does it appear to you that some of the fashion designers are anti-women and have palmed off fashions (loosely speaking) which make the wearer appear grotesque? We have emphasized "modest apparel" from 1 Tim. 2:9, but we also need to camp out awhile on "with shamefastness and sobriety."

WORLD-CLASS GOSSIPS

More harm is done by loose tongues than most of us will ever know. Relationships are severed (or badly damaged) by meddlesome tongue-waggers. Families are alienated, friendships shattered and churches divided by 14 carat, world-class gossips who carelessly elevate rumor to the rank of absolute fact. Before telling something it would be wise to get the facts straight, and then consider what would be the motive for passing on the information even if the facts are correct. Reputations which took years to build through faithfulness in teaching and practice in life can be severely crippled by rumor or innuendo. "Well, where there's smoke, there's bound to be fire." I wish whoever thought that up would try to build a fire with wet wood and without proper kindling in my fireplace! 111 tell you now it is possible to have a lot of smoke and absolutely no fire at all!

"He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears."

"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."

"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." (Prov. 26:17, 20, 22).

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)