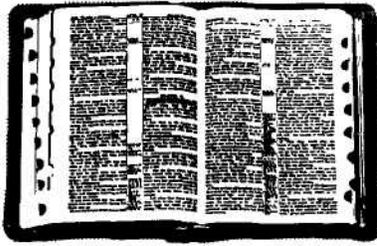


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



PROSELYTING DISCIPLES AWAY

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29, 30). The inspired apostle addressed the elders of the church in Ephesus whom he had called to Miletus (vs. 17). The warning involved the attempt of a false teacher who would come among them to deceive and mislead disciples, and even one or more of the elders would lure the disciples away after them.

There is a principle in this statement that has an application to some situations in the church today. That situation concerns the growing efforts to move Christians from one congregation to another in the pretense of building up the church. Some want to build a reputation as a great and powerful preacher who can command his place and financial reward. But this is a dishonorable and offensive way to try to build the membership of a congregation. Others have labored to increase the membership in the kingdom and the local church, and someone else persuades these disciples to leave that work and join another for no reason but to increase that membership at the expense of others. This process converts no one to Christ.

Several years ago James P. Miller wrote an article on "Sheep Stealing," in which he took to task those who were seducing members from the congregation where he was then preaching. That problem is still around and it

is not localized either in time or place.

The practice has a sinister motive: to reduce the membership of other congregations and pocket the proceeds for self-praise and glory. It has the same motive as one who lies and gossips about another; he hopes to reduce as much as possible the name and reputation of the other, and at the same time gain favor and position with his hearers. In my judgment, one who steals members from other congregations in the general area where he preaches, is an insensitive, self centered promoter who does not scruple to boast at the expense of others. One who secretly calls, writes and visits members of other congregations, with the express purpose of soliciting members for the congregation where he labors, is not building up the kingdom of Christ.

Of course, if a congregation supports and endorses false doctrine and practice, those members ought to be taught the truth, and they will leave when they are convinced that they cannot continue to serve God where they are. But efforts should be made to teach ALL members of congregations promoting false doctrines. Are not their souls as important as any other?

The work of an evangelist does not include interference in the affairs and work of congregations all over a given area. An evangelist is to edify the church, not move around members from one congregation to another. The work of an evangelist is to: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. ... but watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:2-5).

We have come to expect the business corporations of the world to use disreputable tactics to destroy one another and gain by base methods, but who would have thought that preachers of the gospel could conscientiously use such tactics to entice members of one congregation to the one where they labor and claim that they are causing the church to grow?

On the other hand, any Christian has the scriptural right to move from one place to another, and he may move his congregational membership from one place to another, if he thinks he is increasing his opportunities to learn and contribute to the work of the body of Christ.

But that is a far cry from a preacher or some zealous member seducing one away from the congregation where he is serving the Lord scripturally.

Some of the highly motivated "personal work" enthusiasts have a reputation for their ability to teach and direct their disciples to use any method to increase the membership of the congregation where they are. Some of it is high pressure sales, and some of it involves an unscriptural organization. "Personal work" that stresses converting sinners to Christ by the gospel of Christ, and only that, in leading them out of darkness into the light of truth, is important and essential and should be a part of every Christian's life. This is sound Bible study in homes and wherever people will listen. But transferring members from one congregation to another is not converting anyone to Christ, and is not increasing the church of Christ. Jesus said to teach, baptize, and teach (Matt. 28:18-20).

If it is a righteous thing to lure members from one congregation to another, by all means let all of us do it. Let us open the door for teaching and exhorting all evangelists to use all their efforts to persuade members of other congregations to leave and become a part of the congregation where they work. I will assure you of one thing: the material and social side of life will be emphasized far above all other interests. The large, beautiful church buildings will be promoted because they are an enticement to members of other congregations. Socials, food and frolic will be held forth as an encouragement for members to move from one place to another. Young people with the dating format and possible mate matching will be advertised as a means of encouraging the youth and parents of young people to leave one congregation to go to another.

One of the sad consequences of this operation is that the old, weak, poor, uncommitted, small talented and lazy members are not wanted. These are encouraged to go to other congregations. The only disciples they proselyte are those they believe will enhance their group, their reputation and glory. What a shame! Think on these things!

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Guest

Editorial

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WHO ARE THE SOUND?

To be sound is to be healthy. In the New Testament there are two Greek words (an adjective and a verb) translated "sound" and both have to do with bodily health. W.E. Vine renders the term **HUGIAINO** as — "to be healthy, sound in health." It is used in its **literal** sense in several passages including Luke 5:31 — "They that are in health have no need of a physician ..." But it is also used **metaphorically** to represent the condition of a man's character and teaching.

It is not difficult to know when the body is sound. Soundness occurs when every part is working according to its purpose and in harmony with every other **part**. Soundness is the absence of abnormalities; the absence of disease. However, it is entirely possible for one to think he is sound (in good health) when, in actuality, he is suffering from a hidden disease. To boast of soundness doesn't necessarily make it so. There's more to it than mere verbalization.

If I seek to be sound spiritually then my whole being must be brought into harmony with God's will **and** purpose. There must be a certain symmetry and balance to my spiritual development. At the same time, **there** must be an absence of any abnormal growths which threaten my spiritual health. For example, if I were to strengthen my right arm through years of weight-lifting and muscular conditioning to the point that I could crush the skull of a man with one glancing blow, while at the same time allowing my left arm to grow weak through non-use, it would not be soundness that I have experienced but abnormal growth.

It is easy to fall into the trap of abnormal growth. It is easy to develop strength in one area and neglect another. It is easy to gain the name of being very sound because of toughness along certain lines while allowing such things as character and personal integrity to remain undeveloped. Such is not soundness but abnormal growth.

There are some who excel in the arena of courage, boldness and the ability to defend the truth. Thank God for very one! We would all do well to keep our swords sharpened. And, yet, is it possible that some excel in boldness but are deficient in kindness and brotherly consideration? Can it be that some seek earnestly to contend for the faith but often fail to forbear?

The person in good spiritual-health knows the need for balanced development in every area. The "sound"

man is brave and firm but also meek **and** merciful. He **never** compromises God's truth, but seeks to yield in the **arena** of opinions and preferences for the sake of peace. If he fails in **any** of these areas he fails to be sound.

One of my favorite writers is R.L. Whiteside. About this subject, he said:

"More than fifty years ago persistent effort was begun to lead churches away from the New Testament way of work and worship, and much harm was done. Those who fell in love with the move — instrumental music in the worship, the various societies, etc., — called themselves Progressives. Many brethren opposed them on the ground that they had departed from sound doctrine; and so we began to hear such expressions as 'sound brethren,' 'sound preachers,' 'sound churches.' Too many took it for granted that opposition to innovations constituted soundness. **To be sound you must oppose many things, but you may oppose all innovations and still be unsound.**"

"... I would like to impress upon all that the requirement to be sound in the faith and doctrine is not fulfilled by simply opposing. A man may oppose every departure from the truth and still be unsound, simply because he fails to come up to the standard of his duty. The requirement covers the whole of life." (**Doctrinal Discourses**, pg. 273-274)

Good point! How often are we guilty of limiting "soundness" to selected points of doctrine? A church is viewed as "sound" if they oppose institutionalism and the social gospel, all the while making no effort towards corrective discipline (1 Cor. 5), loving one another (1 Thess. 4:9-10), and reaching the lost in the local area (Acts 11:19-26). A preacher is seen as "sound" because of his courage to defend against outside error while, at the same time, he fails in his duties at home or in his ability to mirror the attitudes and attributes of Jesus in his personal character. Could it be that we often (collectively and individually) boast of our "soundness" when in fact we show signs of ill-health and sickness?

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ..." (2 Tim. 4:3). Such is a potent warning that needs to remain fresh upon our minds. That's why Paul said to "retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13).

In his letter to Titus, Paul declared, "But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Read on. Under the above heading are then listed several personal duties and responsibilities which cover the whole spectrum of Christian conduct and behavior. If one is given to gossip, he is not sound but unsound. A woman who is not in subjection to her husband is not sound but is unsound. A man who fails to be temperate fails to be sound.

"... realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and **whatever else**

is contrary to sound teaching" (1 Tim. 1:9-10 — emphasis mine).

It should be our aim to be "sound." Let us seek to be sound congregationally as we pattern ourselves after the New Testament order. To fail to do so renders us unsound. But let us also pursue soundness in our personal lives and character. Am I really walking close to the example of Jesus? Do I know how to forbear, love and exclude bitterness from my life? Am I unusually suspicious and cynical of others and prone to blow things out of proportion? Do I render to another the benefit of the doubt or am I prone to harsh and unfair judgmentalism? Do I traffic in gossip and half-truths in order to prove a point or do I always seek to be fair and ethical? Strong questions. But the man in pursuit of soundness is not bothered by such confrontations.

It's so easy to label someone "sound" or "unsound" (and I'm not opposed at all to that designation!). Let's just realize that soundness involves spiritual growth and maturity in **all** areas of a Christian's responsibility before God. To fail in understanding this point will result in abnormal growths leading to an unhealthy spiritual condition. **Strive to be sound!**

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AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR READERS

Dear Readers:

The time has come to place some facts before you and appeal for your understanding and help. It is becoming increasingly difficult to operate this paper financially. Increased postal charges within recent months have added greatly to the problem. Printing cost have also increased since the last rate increase and we are expecting another increase. Just within the last five months, it has cost us nearly \$1,000 more **JUST TO MAIL** the paper than it did in the same time period last year. This does not take into account the increase in first class postage from 22 c to 25 c. All our statements are sent first class mail. Other costs have gradually risen.

We have done our best to hold prices down. We have not raised subscription rates since January, 1985. We have not raised advertising rates for the church ads since January, 1984. But while our costs of operation have mounted, our subscription list has gradually declined. Some of our readers are aging and many have passed away in recent years. Some who paid for lists of friends have had to discontinue that good work. We **add** new subscribers every month, but within the last year, we have lost more than we have gained.

We do not intend to operate the paper in the red. If there is not sufficient interest in what we are trying to do to sustain it, then we will let the paper die with as much dignity as possible.

As much as we regret to do it, as of January 1, 1989, the following rates will be in effect: Single subscriptions will be \$11 a year. The club rate will be \$9 per year for four or more. Bundles to one address and group subscriptions will be 12 for \$7.50 per month, or 24 for \$15.00 per month. Church ads will cost \$80 a year.

If we are to remain in business, we need present subscribers to remain with us and to help us increase our circulation. Everywhere we go, we meet people who tell us how much they appreciate the paper. We receive much mail to the same effect. While all of that encourages us, we really need your help in circulating **the** paper. Could you subscribe for your children who are away in college, or in military service? What about **that** young couple where you worship whom you would like to encourage? Could you afford to send it to a list of 12 friends **for** \$7.50 a month? We can bill you quarterly, **or** however you prefer.

Friends are valuable assets and this paper has **made** many friends over the years. We have made some enemies too. But if we ever needed our friends to stand with us, we need you **NOW**. If you appreciate **what** we are trying to do, then please stay with us and help us with new subscriptions if you can.

Sincerely,



Connie W. Adams, Editor

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

1021 Welford Dr.
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SIGN-LANGUAGE

QUESTION: *Is it scriptural for a church to hire a brother to translate the sermons of the preacher into sign-language for the deaf? A member opposes this because he says we cannot be sure whether the truth is being translated. Too, what about a woman sitting in the pew and translating the sermon by sign-language to a member of her family?*

ANSWER: The querist has two questions for consideration. The answer to both is: Yes, it is scriptural! The deaf need edification from the word of God as much as any other member. What if we attended a church comprised mainly of deaf people, and the preacher spoke exclusively in sign-language? Would not we need, and want, an interpreter? How would we like it if one of the deaf brethren opposed an interpreter for us on the basis that he wasn't sure the truth was being translated?

When preachers move to non-English speaking countries to evangelize, most of the time they need interpreters until they learn the language. Is not this the same in principle as having an interpreter for the deaf? How do we know the truth is being translated by a foreign interpreter, except by the competence of and the trust we have in the translator? Churches put their confidence in the evangelists they support in foreign fields that truth will be preached, and we ought to do the same with translators.

How do we who are not deaf know truth is being taught when the preacher speaks in plain English? By using our Bibles and proving all things (Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 Jn. 4:1). Why can't the deaf do the same thing? To oppose sign-language for the deaf for the reason given in the question above is to project all deaf people as being somewhat stupid; that those who hear have to decide whether the deaf are receiving the truth or not. This is getting close to self-righteous snobbery.

As to a woman sitting in the pew, translating a sermon to one of her family by sign-language, she has violated no New Testament principle. She is not exercising authority over men which 1 Tim. 2:12 prohibits. Quietly and subordinately, she is enabling a son or daughter or grandchild to receive the word of God. I wonder if a few brethren wouldn't complain if the woman wrote it down on paper instead of translating it by sign-language. Certainly, such activity should be in an area of the building where it would not distract others, or done in a manner that would not disturb others.

Paul states, "... seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (1 Cor. 14:12).

BREAD OF LIFE

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

Herschel E. Patton

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STUDIES IN FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY 2 Tim. 1

Second Timothy is evidently Paul's last letter, written from a Roman prison, shortly before his death. The letter begins with some **Personal Facts About Paul and Timothy (v. 1-5)**

Paul, as he often did, begins this letter with an affirmation of his apostleship. There were those who questioned his having the authority of an apostle, so he frequently affirmed and defended it (See 1 Cor. 9:1-2; 1:1). It was not something he had assumed, or even sought after, but a position for which he was selected and appointed by God. (See Acts 26:12-18; Gal. 1:11-20; 2:6). The mission God had for Paul was to make men see and understand "the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus."

The letter is written to Timothy, one highly commended, loved, and appreciated by the apostle. He is addressed as "my dearly beloved son." Timothy's natural parents had given him physical life, but it was Paul, on his first missionary tour, who converted Timothy, enabling him to experience life (spiritual) in Christ Jesus. In 1 Tim. 1:2 Paul refers to him as "my own son in the faith." The Corinthians, who had been begotten by Paul through the gospel (converted) had Paul as their father in this sense (1 Cor. 4:15).

Paul's great love for Timothy is declared as he prays for the grace, mercy, and peace of God and Christ to be with him. Every remembrance of Timothy called forth sincere prayers of thanksgiving to God for him night and day. Remembering, thinking about, or seeing Timothy gave Paul great joy, and the feeling was mutual. Timothy, evidently openly shed tears at their separation and in manifesting concern for Paul's plight, which was a touching remembrance for Paul. The basis for this affection was "the unfeigned faith" that was in Timothy, even going back to his mother and grandmother.

Exhortations to Endurance and Faithfulness (v. 6-14)

Let us remember that whatever is involved in endurance and faithfulness is essential to the preacher saving himself and those who hear (1 Tim. 4:16). Every saint engaged in trying to save self and others must look upon these exhortations as essentials to his success.

The first exhortation is to "stir up." With Timothy, it was "the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." In 1 Tim. 4:14 Timothy was told not to neglect "the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Some believe this "gift" in Timothy was a miraculous gift of the Spirit, bestowed by the laying on of an apostles hands. Timothy may have had such, but there is no record of such a bestowal, unless in these two passages, or of his using such a gift. This gift in Timothy had been given him "by prophecy" and the "laying on of Paul's hands and the presbytery." It could be neglected and stirred up. If you still have access to it, go back and read the previous article on 1 Timothy 4:14. There, I gave examples of being chosen and "put into the ministry" being spoken of as a gift, and of being sent out or appointed to an assigned task being accompanied by the laying on of hands. It is my belief that the "gift" of 1 Tim. 4:14 and 2 Tim. 1:6 is the position of Timothy as a minister of the gospel of Christ. He was given this charge (position) by prophecy. That is, the Holy Spirit authorized this appointment of Timothy. It was bestowed with great solemnity, by the laying on of Paul's hands and of the presbytery (Elders of Timothy's home congregation). It was a gift (position-responsibility) that he could neglect and stir up.

If this is the "gift" of these verses, then the charge to stir up and neglect not would not only apply to the young evangelist, Timothy, but to every saint engaged in teaching the word to save self and them that hear. Stirring up and neglecting not are essentials to success in this, the greatest of all works.

In discharging this responsibility, there will be occasions and circumstances that may cause fear, timidity, and doubts. God's ministers are to be men who will not succumb to such things. They, with strong faith, conviction, and love for souls must with clear minds (sound thinking) be unwavering (v. 7). We see this spirit manifested many times in the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 15:31-32; Gal. 2:4-5; Acts 17:16-17, 19-30). The true minister of **God** will not be deterred by little financial support, unpopularity, ridicule and slander, even the threat of severe persecution. If there is yielding, hesitation, or doubt manifested, the spirit of a faithful minister is absent.

Not only is Timothy told to stir up his gift and make manifest the faith, courage, and love of a faithful preacher of truth, but he is next told (v. 8) to "be **not** ashamed." Two things he is not to be ashamed of, **the** testimony of our Lord (gospel), and of Paul, a prisoner.

Paul, himself, is an example for Timothy, and all who preach the gospel, of not being ashamed of it. He plainly declared he was not ashamed of the gospel, and told why — "It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). There is nothing in the gospel to be ashamed of. It's aim is the salvation of lost men. The facts of the gospel make this possible and the preaching of it makes it available to all.

A brief synopsis of the power of the gospel to save and how it does is given in verses 9-10. God does save us through the gospel, and the preaching of it, by His grace.

The saving is by God, and the calling (holy because it is of God and calls men to righteousness) is through preaching it.

This salvation is not through, or the result of, our works (works which we have done — Tit. 3:5), but "according to his own purpose and grace." God's purpose and grace is something that was eternally purposed — "before the world began." Paul wrote to the Ephesians about this "mystery" that was divinely made known to the apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:9-11). It involved the appearing of Christ, his death, and resurrection, whereby he abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. Read Paul's description of the gospel he preached, and it's effect in 1 Cor. 15:1-4.

Concerning this gospel, Paul says he was appointed a preacher and apostle, particularly a teacher of the Gentiles (v. 11). He was an example to Timothy, and to all, faithfully preaching the gospel in the midst of difficulty and persecution. It is something worth suffering for. Timothy, and every preacher of the gospel, needs to be exhorted to "be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel (v. 8). Paul's imprisonment at the time of his writing this letter, because of faithfulness to his appointment, was not something to be ashamed of, on his or Timothy's part, or anyone else. Faith in the Lord and the consequent hope is enough to banish all fear, timidity, and doubt so that the preacher of the gospel may faithfully persevere with confidence of reward in "that day" (v. 12).

The charge given to Timothy in verse 13 is to "hold fast." The thing he is to hold fast is "the form of sound words" which thou hast heard of me." Paul had delivered nothing but sound doctrine—the truth of God. He received it directly from the Lord and was divinely appointed an apostle of it (Gal. 1:11-16). The things Timothy had heard (learned) from Paul, he was assured of (2 Tim. 3:14), and could be nothing other than "sound words" (doctrine). Timothy, and every preacher of the word must make sure he holds fast this form of sound words if he is to be successful in saving himself and others. The good thing committed unto Timothy was sound doctrine and the privilege and responsibility to preach it (v. 14). The Holy Spirit in him would be a force or power in his keeping, holding fast, or being faithful to his work.

Present Situation (v. 15-18)

The remaining verses of this chapter reflects upon Paul's present situation. He was deserted by "all they which are in Asia," including two false teachers by the names of Phygellus and Hermogenes. Yet, there was one household — of Onesiphorus — that Paul says "oft refreshed me," being "not ashamed of my chains." This brother diligently sought out Paul, in Rome and ministered unto him, as he also did in Ephesus. When Paul prays that "he might find mercy of the Lord in that day" (v. 18), he was not indicating that, in spite of his ministering, he had sins for which God's mercy would be needed in the judgment. The context suggests that the mercy implored is the reward of the Christian's faith and works, available to all faithful Christians by God's mercy.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR YOUNG, FOLK?

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One doesn't have to read statistics from a professionally conducted census to know that many young people who are "raised in the church" are being lost to the cause of Christ. Often by the upper teen years, youth's spiritual interest is practically nil — some of the youth having at one time obeyed the gospel, others not so. If it hasn't happened where you're a member, visit other places and observe the make-up of the congregation. Then make inquiry of the members. It is alarming to see children brought up among Christians be completely lost to the cause of Christ by the time they have reached young adulthood, right at the time when they should really begin to mean so much to the work of the kingdom. It is of no small concern to preachers, to elders, and to godly saints in general. It has been a matter of great concern to me for several years, having seen many from congregations with which I was working "drop out," and feeling a sense of total helplessness to do anything to prevent it; all appeals having fallen on deaf ears. And that is to say nothing of the many among my own relation who either departed the faith or who never obeyed the gospel and who now seem untouchable.

What's happening to them? A bit later I want to offer a few, perhaps simplistic to some, thoughts as to what is happening to them.

Often the preacher or the elders, or both, catch a lot of "flack." "He's preaching way over their heads." "He doesn't make it interesting enough for young people." "They don't identify with him." The elders are not planning enough youth programs." Etc. And by "youth programs," they don't mean opportunities to study and learn and apply God's word, but occasions of fun and frolic.

Granted that it is possible that one's preaching may fall short in many areas, but it is not likely, I venture, to be the cause of the wholesale dropping out of a segment of people. Admittedly, there may be exceptions. **And** while agreeing that elders may not always adequately fulfill their responsibility as "shepherds of the flock of God," a failure to "provide programs for youth" so as to "keep them involved" should not be charged against them. At least, if we are really candid about it, these are not really what is happening to our young folk.

You have perhaps seen circulated the results of a survey reportedly made by several congregations. The results showed a definite relationship between **the** degree of active involvement of the parents in the local church and the percentage of their youth who remained

faithful. 93% of the children remained faithful where both parents were faithful and active in the local work. Where only one parent was faithful, 73% of the children remained faithful. And where both parents were irregular, only 6% of the children remain faithful. One may question whether the survey was "scientifically conducted" or otherwise find fault with it, but we must surely admit that such results as those reported reflect cause for concern. It certainly suggests that much rides on family relationships, attitudes, and responsibilities. A few passages of scripture impressing this truth are: Deut. 6:4-15; Psa. 78; Prov. 3:1-4, 11-12; 13:1; 23:13-14; Eph. 6:1-4, etc. And these address only a few areas of those attitudes and responsibilities.

Some Suggestions as to What is Happening

Permissiveness is happening to youth. In many instances, parents have abdicated their God-given role. They set no firm guidelines, have no definite rules of the house, and often allow themselves to be manipulated. Parents are often literally afraid to have firm rules, afraid of the child rebelling. They don't know that love is not some kind of namby-pamby attitude, but that there must be a certain toughness to love, amply shown in the book of Proverbs. It doesn't mean being roguish, tyrannical, or unmerciful in the demands it makes. But youth need guidance. They need someone to tell them "how far," some "cans" and "can'ts" with good sound "whys." And in some instances the "why" may be simply "because I said so."

Work is happening to youth. In many instances young people are pushed and shoved into the "job market" without due consideration as to how the job will interfere with their worship, study, or influences they'll face. None of us want our children to grow up to be lazy-good-for-nothings. We want them to "learn the value of the dollar," to know that, at least for most of us, "money doesn't grow on trees." But often that part-time job, which may be taking far too much of their time, is during hours of worship on Lord's Day or during mid-week Bible study and every night of a gospel meeting. And then the parents, having allowed, maybe even encouraged it, or in some instances demanded it, wonder why their child no longer is interested in spiritual things.

Materialism is happening to youth. Not only are they being shoved into the work arena to make their "spending money" or to "buy some wheels," but they see parents who are often more committed to providing "things" than they are to living for the Lord. Frequently the parents are recreation crazed, and allow recreational activity to keep them from services of worship and periods of Bible study, or they often put their work ahead of worship, especially if "overtime pay" is involved.

Humanism is happening to youth. Like an octopus with its many tentacles, humanism is attacking from many directions, approaching from various sources. From very tender years, humanism's eroding influences bombard our young people incessantly; and often parents are unaware of it, and in many instances cannot be roused to a sense of concern when told of those influences. Evolution is only one of humanism's ten-

tacles, but it is a powerful one. How can one who is constantly told that he is but the higher form of lower life fail to ultimately act the part? It is bound to dilute or erode away spiritual influences unless strong teaching is given to the contrary. "Value clarification" advocates teach youth there are no absolutes, no real definitive standard of right or wrong. This being true, what is to be expected but that he should eventually cast aside the "old fogey" ideas of parents, preachers, Bible class teachers, and elders?

Hypocrisy is happening to youth. Children are very incisive, easily able to discern a sham. When they repeatedly see hypocritical behavior on the part of adults who are in some authority over them, it has its effect. Elders, preachers, parents, policemen, governmental officials advocating one thing while practicing another send forth uncertain sounds to youth. Especially in spiritual matters, if they see no real devotion, no depth of spiritual life, it affects them.

RESULTS OF LOSING OUR YOUNG FOLK

Their souls are being lost unless they can be regained (Lk. 13:3, 5). Salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10) — to those who get into (Gal. 3:26-27), live in (1 Jn. 2:6) and die in Him (Rev. 14:13).

Additionally, the church is being sapped of its vitality. Congregations that are composed almost entirely of "senior citizens" often are extremely difficult to stir up, to "provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). (This is not intended as any disrespect for those "seniors." I'm among the number.) But real zeal and spiritual activity often comes from those who are younger. Oh, how greatly, they are needed!

This perhaps only "touches the hem of the garment," but I believe these matters strike at some "tap root" causes. And I suggest that they are not unrelated to the "survey results" noted early in this article. The question must be continually explored and remedies sought.

"PREACH THE TEXT"

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My dad has often told the story of the time he, as a young preacher, was to preach a sermon during a meeting. In addition to a good crowd, sitting in the audience were about fifteen fellow preachers. He was "sweating bullets" and badly needed a word of encouragement. It wasn't long before Floyd Thompson, who was so important to my dad's development as a preacher (and, indirectly, my own), came and sat beside him and said simply, "just preach the text." My dad did, and got along fine. I sincerely believe that if brother Thompson were still with us he would be compelled to say the same thing to a lot of my fellow preachers, undoubtedly with even more urgency.

I'm concerned about the lack of open Bibles among Christians listening to preachers and among preachers who are preaching. While it is not my aim to judge anyone, I am very concerned with what I perceive to be an approach to preaching (and listening) which, more and more, seems to place the word of God in the background. I've heard some sermons recently which illustrate the point. In one, I was not required to open a Bible for the first 20 minutes; in another, one verse was referred to, sort of as a "launching pad," and then the Bible was closed from that point on. I heard another "sermon" in which the preacher (who had a degree in psychology) first expressed his opinion about certain problems in our relationship with God, then quoted psychological theories to validate his opinion, then threw in a little Bible, presumably to validate the psychology. If these are examples of "preaching the text," I must admit that I'm very worried about the future of preaching!

We need a fresh reminder of the lesson of Nehemiah 8, where Ezra stood in the pulpit (v. 4) and OPENED THE BOOK (v. 5), reading distinctly from it and helped them to understand what the BOOK said (v. 8). If that does not describe our function as "preachers of the word," then I'm at a loss as to what I'm supposed to be doing as a full-time gospel preacher and teacher.

Of course, I'm not at all sure the problem is all in the pulpit. In fact, I'm pretty well convinced it is not. I preached a meeting recently in which the majority of people did not have a Bible in their possession. Since I was attempting to present an exposition of one of the minor prophets, needless to say, I was at a disadvantage. I cannot pretend to understand why people of God would enter a building, presumably to hear the word of God preached, and not have a Bible with them. What is

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going through a person's mind? What are they expecting to hear? What do they **want** to hear? Platitudes? Maxims? Jokes?

God said through Amos, many years ago, that there would be a "famine in the land, not of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). Such a famine came and the people of Israel suffered the spiritual consequences. There is no such famine now, except when it is self-imposed. In too many places and in the sermons of too many preachers (one is too many), such a famine exists. It extends to the pew and people are beginning to get along quite well without the word of God... after all, if we hear only opinions, we have a choice to accept them or reject them, don't we? "My opinion is surely as good as his, though perhaps not as eloquent."

Perhaps I'm sounding an alarm which is not needed (though I know many others who share my concern). Jeremiah said to beware of those who cry "peace, **peace** when there is no peace" (4:10). These are just my observations—but if they ring true, in your experience, I'd like to make a couple of short suggestions. To those who occupy the pews each week and listen to preaching, **demand** (yes, **demand**) Bible preaching — accept no substitutes. In addition, bring your Bibles, open them up, take notes, listen. Challenge the preacher to present the word of God as the only solution to every problem he presents. We need to be challenged, checked and, sometimes, corrected. And, to my fellow preachers, let's "just preach the text" (2 Tim. 4:2).

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST



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TACTICS

The outcome of many battles, even wars, has been determined by tactics, and not by sheer strength or the advantage of superior armament.

The church's mission to advance and defend the cause of truth is compared to a warfare. In fact, it is a warfare, though a spiritual one (2 Cor. 10:4).

I recall hearing brother Frank Puckett say one time concerning this warfare with digression, "We let them out-general us." Some brethren have been aware of the true issues in every conflict, but others don't realize they have been "out-generaled" until it is too late.

In the great digression of the late 1800's and the early 1900's, the main issue became instrumental music — not because it deserved to be, but because the advocated of error wanted it that way, and we allowed it.

Missionary societies were an issue, to be sure, but the main battle was pitched on the sentimental issue of the organ. Evidence of this is still seen today.

Some think that the only difference between the churches of Christ and the Christian Church is the instrument of music. Sadly, some churches of Christ have corrupted their identity to the point where this conclusion is valid. This condition is a result of tactics.

The instrument has been emphasized to the point where some brethren think that as long as we have the right name on the building and no piano inside, that it must be a true church of Christ. As a result, all some brethren need to do in order to be a full-fledge Christian Church is to change the name and put in a piano. They already have everything else.

The principles of establishing scriptural authority have long since been covered in the tactical dust created by digressive brethren.

Some brethren failed to see that the "orphan home" issue was only a red herring, a feint on the part of the college-in-the-budget advocates to divert our attention from the real issue. And, some well-meaning brethren on both sides of the issue were duped. The liberals did the advance work of the "ultra-liberals" by allowing orphans to become the sentimental issue.

Those who wanted the college in the budget of the church knew that brethren generally were not ready for that idea. But, the college advocates knew that the homes and schools would "stand or fall together," so they just sat back and waited.

Brethren finally found out that the church wasn't in Jas. 1:27, and that there were few, if any, orphans in the

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"orphans homes" among us. They also learned (too late), that some homes and schools were included in the same operation, and truly did stand or fall together. Then, some homes changed their names and methods (the home wasn't a "method" after all), to emphasize "family-type" care instead of "institutional care."

Even the issue of whether a home should be under elders or a board of directors threw some off a trail for a while.

But, by this time, churches were supporting the pre-school, the kindergarten, the grade school, the junior high, the high school, and the college.

Some of the "conservative liberals" or "neo-antis" (as the "ultra-liberals" call them), are still out there wandering around in the dust of battle waving their arms and pens and wondering what ran over them. Some day they may realize that the college express, the sponsoring church, the missionary society, the instrument of music and a host of other things went by them while they were preoccupied with "orphan" homes.

In my judgment, we are allowing the same sort of tactics to divert us from the real issues in other areas.

We have allowed the battle over general benevolence to be pitched at Gal. 6:10 and 2 Cor. 9:13, and especially on the italicized word "men" (KJV). It has not yet been proven that benevolence is even the main consideration of Gal. 6:10, much less corporate benevolence on the part of the church.

The theme of Gal. 6:1-10 is fulfilling the law of Christ by bearing one another's burdens (v. 2). The thought even originates back in Gal. 5:14ff. There are many times when we have opportunity to "do good" where benevolence is not even a consideration.

The term "unto all" in 2 Cor. 9:13 must be applied in the light of other passages which treat on the same class, kind, or group, i.e., believers. References to benevolence in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 2, 4, and 6), Judaea (Acts 11:27-30), and the seven references to the Jerusalem collection (Rom. 15; 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Cor. 16,1,2), must have pre-eminence over the italicized "men" of 2 Cor. 9:13.

Even such passages as Jas. 1:5 and other passages which treat on the alien sinner's relationship to God would pre-empt the conclusion that the church is obligated to engage in general benevolence toward those not saints.

Another area where we have been "out-generaled" concerns whether or not a thing is supported "out of the church treasury."

While this matter is important, and needs to be circumscribed by the scriptures, there are other ways in which the church can support a thing besides making a direct contribution from its treasury.

The church bus could go get the Methodist choir, let them perform and be fed in the "fellowship hall," and return them to the Methodist Church without ever making a direct contribution to the Methodist Church out of the treasury. After a thing has been directly supported in other ways, it is only a formality to then use the church treasury.

If you hear that the enemy without is attacking at a

certain point on the perimeter, or that subversives are operating within, check it out by all means. But let's not marshall all our forces in one area until we are certain that is where the battle needs to be pitched. It may be just a diversionary tactic on the part of an adversary to divert our attention from the real thrust.

And, when we are engaged in fighting "the good fight of faith" even at the right time and place, let us not be oblivious to danger in other areas. The Ephesians seemed to remember part of this advice (Acts 20:28-31), but forgot the rest of it (Rev. 2:1-6).

It is not only important that we have the right cause and the right armor, but let us watch that others do not "out-general" us.

DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE AND COURAGE: A Parallel Between Ezra and Us

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Ezra is a character we often overlook in our study of the Old Testament, but he deserves our attention as one who had great courage in doing a terribly hard job. Maybe he is overlooked because much the same job needs to be done in our time and we do not like to think about it. He had the unenviable job of telling many of the children of Israel that their marriages were not right in God's sight and ending them was demanded. I fear that all too many among our brethren today do not have the courage to fulfill such a task towards those who are living in adultery.

In Ezra 9, the situation is brought to the attention of Ezra. Those around him tell Ezra that the people had married foreigners thus violating the will of God. He mourns at the news and sits down confounded for a long time. It brought great agony of mind for him to know that his brethren had transgressed that law of God and stood in jeopardy for such.

In this state of mind, he prays fervently to God. His opening words are, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up unto the heavens" (Ezra 9:6). It was no small matter in Ezra's estimation that the people had unlawful marriages. It was seen as an enormous sin against God. Ezra even refers to it as "our great guilt" (Ezra 9:13). In concluding the prayer, Ezra acknowledges that the present condition would cause God to consume them without leaving a remnant (Ezra 9:14-15). Notice that he did not say God would only consume those in the unlawful marriages, but the whole nation who tolerated such! There was no doubt that someone needed to help correct the situation before terrible consequences ensued.

In Ezra 10, Shecaniah came with a message which was both hopeful and horrifying. The hope was found in convincing the people to admit their sin and put away the unlawful relationships as repentance would demand (Ezra 10:2-3). The horrifying part was the charge to Ezra, "Arise, for this matter belongeth unto thee ...; be of good courage and do it" (Ezra 10:4). Things could not change with the wave of a magic wand, a strong wish, or even a fervent prayer alone. Someone of courage would have to stand up and preach an unpopular and heartbreaking message which showed the sin and pointed the way of right. Ezra was the one suited to the task. Because of his influence as a leader of the people, the matter belonged to him. Shecaniah does not seem to be passing the buck, but is encouraging Ezra to act for the good of God's people as the one who could best do the job.

Ezra delivers the message to the people: "Ye have trespassed, and have married foreign women, to increase the guilt of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto Jehovah, the God of your fathers, and do his pleasure; and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the foreign women" (Ezra 10:10-11). The people did acknowledge their sin and acted as repentance has always demanded, **ceasing the sin**. It was not an easy task for "some of them had wives by whom they had children" (Ezra 10:44). Several times during the episode, Ezra shows the emotional turmoil this task brought, but he did it anyway. God's law demanded such and failure to preach the message assured punishment from God. He loved God and the people too much to shun his duty. Oh how we need men with the courage of Ezra!

The situation which presents itself today is not identical to that of Ezra's time. There is no prohibition on the nationality of those whom we may marry. But there is law regarding that which constitutes an acceptable marriage in God's sight today. Jesus sets forward the very clear ideal of one woman for one man in marriage for life in Matthew 19:3-8. The one exception is stated with equal clarity in verse 9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." That law is being violated by multitudes in our day and the violators are increasingly finding their way into churches across the land **without ceasing the sin**. They may be a different brand of unlawful marriages than Ezra saw, but the common factor is that both are unlawful. Would any dare to argue that God would look with greater favor on sexual impurity in our time than racial or cultural impurity in Ezra's time? Both violate God's commandments, both are sin, and both bring the punishment of God!

We have those who are named among our brethren who preach the guilty party may remarry and be acceptable to God without severing the unlawful union. We have some who say that God's law regarding divorce and remarriage does not apply until one is a Christian. Never mind the fact that Jesus said it had been in effect "**from the beginning**" (Mt. 19:4,8), they say it is only law

for the "kingdom." Some say that when you become a Christian the past unlawful marriages are cleansed along with your sins and you can stay with your present mate regardless of how many you have had before. Isn't it amazing how some try to get around the Bible teaching about repentance? Repentance says we must cease **the sinful practice**, not **change the definition** of sin. Some say 1 Corinthians 7:15 gives the deserted believer a right to divorce their unbelieving mate and remarry even though adultery has not occurred. If they can find an exception to the "except" of Matthew 19:9, how long will it take them to figure an exception to the "except" of John 3:3? With teaching like this being done, it is no wonder that people in these situations are found in churches throughout the country. We ought to hang our heads in shame and blush over these sins as did Ezra of old. We too should confess that our "iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up unto the heavens."

Instead, many today are excusing away such false teaching and sinful practices as matters of "private conscience." Among those of us who call ourselves "Gospel preachers" we see a hesitancy to label false teaching and sin in this area for what it is. Excuses and convenient reasoning do not change one thing — the teachers and practitioners of such error stand in jeopardy of eternal damnation while we refuse to face them with their error! Love for the Lord, His truth and the souls of people should constrain us to take a stand. May God help us to have the courage to face those in such jeopardy with the error of their ways regardless of who they are or the hardship it brings unto us. Oh how we need men with the courage of Ezra!

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Things Most Certainly Believed

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One of the most noticeable areas of change, for the better, to be sure, among the people of God over the past nearly forty years of my preaching life, is in preacher support. This is certainly understandable because monetary values, prices for goods and services, wages and resultant accumulations have all made for the affluent present. Recognizing our improvements in this area of preacher support is not to completely exonerate failures and shortcomings in many areas and among many congregations. While I recognize the sensitive nature of this area of study, even to the danger of being judged self-serving, let me offer what is hoped will be some profitable considerations.

Our premise is clearly scriptural, preachers are to be supported. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). Pay for the laborer in the work of the gospel is as logical and practical as payment for the soldier, planter of the vineyard, feeder of a flock, or oxen in the plowing of a field (cf. 1 Cor. 9:7-9). Some of the practical areas of support of the preacher (judgment calls, if you will) are variable and the variations where agreeable to the principles are justified. However, may I offer for consideration some of these overlooked practical facets of preacher support.

Surely, we are agreed that a stable relationship between the congregation and the preacher is vital to productivity. Communication is essential to understanding and discussion to this end ought to certainly precede every working relationship in the beginning. Wages, cost of living increase, fringe benefits including medical and hospitalization coverage, social security payments and various other things ought to be dealt with up front.

In regard to wages, consider this. A wage figure of \$600 per week in 1987 with a cost of living index of 5% becomes \$630 in 1988. This is not a \$30 raise in fact, but a keeping pace in buying power. What \$600 bought in 1987 it takes \$630 to buy in 1988. If these factors are not applied in an escalating economy it becomes plain to see that a couple of years can easily erode a respectable wage of \$600 to the buying power of \$540.

In the day of escalating medical and hospital costs with extended illness quite common, what is the responsibility of the congregation when the preacher is beset by a lengthy or even terminal illness? When he becomes non-functional or the function is limited, how long is the church obligated to pay his wages? **Or**, for

that matter, is there an obligation? One church with which I am acquainted had addressed this possibility up front with their preacher and has arrived at this commendable program. In the case of extended illness they are committed to pay the preacher for six months full wages. The next six months is to be at half wages making for some obligation for one year. Their reasoning for the time frame is that social security will take over by then and any future obligation on the part of the church, (they readily admitting they have a continuing responsibility) will be treated as the church's responsibility to a needy saint.

The congregation above has also had the wisdom and foresight to see that the outside preaching activities of their preacher are not a financial drain for him. At the end of the calendar year if his meeting or outside the congregation preaching work has left him in the "red" this is taken care of. That is an arrangement in addition to maintaining the regular wage on a weekly basis whether the preacher is doing local work or outside meeting and teaching work.

Fluctuating medical insurance premiums from one locality to another makes hospitalization insurance a variable. Major medical coverage is a must and congregations would do well to include this in their support package. After all, for them, it may be the most economical measure in the face of catastrophic illness on the part of the preacher. The importance of this facet of support for the preacher is obvious.

Preachers are staying longer in places of their chosen local work than in decades past. This is good and healthy in most cases. One of the reasons for this is home ownership. Rather than the church owning a residence, where the preacher must live and pay rent via salary decrease because he must consider the house in his wages, preachers are buying their own houses. Coming out of a period where living in the preacher house was a foregone conclusion, the first move into home ownership can be a struggle. But with an appreciation in real estate values, even with a static market, this allows for a cushion and a residence for old age among preachers that in the past were hard pressed. Congregations need to recognize the going practice among corporations as key personnel is moved and be aware of relocation expenses as well as the base cost of moving. It is not unheard of among some employers to guarantee no loss in the sale of real estate due to move.

Someone may be ready to conclude that I am working for a cushy situation for every preacher. For the most part, the good and faithful preacher deserves every good thing the brethren will provide. But what we intend in this article is to open the eyes of those who have for various reasons become oblivious to the practical. Allow this summarization. **Base wages** adequately provided with built in cost of living increases in keeping with national index figures. **Hospitalization insurance** either provided or allowance made in keeping with existing rates for locality of residence. **Extended illness** is a possibility better considered beforehand than after the need arises. I commend the provisions mentioned in the early part of the article as being workable, compassion-

ate and an understanding solution among brethren. **Social security** must enter the picture either as an addition or a decrease to base wages. Quite possibly I have overlooked something, but touching these areas is not usually done and is sorely needed.

Contractual formality is not necessary between brethren as they work together in the preacher-congregation relationship. However, a clear understanding of the expectations, monetary and otherwise, on both sides of the relationship is vital. Without entering into a discussion of semantics, whatever you want to call the arrangements made, it needs to be clear, specific and exact that minimal misunderstanding develop. Hopefully, we have succeeded in stimulating productive thinking and action in this sensitive area and that all will profit therefrom.

**"GIVING GOLIATH HIS DUE":
THE PHILISTINES IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND
BIBLE HISTORY**

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"Giving Goliath His Due" is a report on the Philistines in archaeology and Bible history, which appeared in the 29 August 1988 **Time Magazine** (pp. 52-53). It begins,

History has not been kind to the Philistines. Exemplified by such figures as the hulking Goliath and the treacherous Delilah, they are depicted in the Bible as thieves and warmongering aliens. The ancient Egyptians branded them pirates and marauders.

We are told that recent archaeological work at Philistine Ekron reveals "one of the most highly civilized peoples of their time. They were successful industrialists and merchants, skilled producers of pottery and metal tools, sophisticated architects and town planners." After commenting on the Philistines' religion, government, agricultural life, and diet, the author concludes,

As Hebrew University's Dothan puts it, "The Philistines need no longer bear the burden of biblical scorn." After 3,000 years, Goliath's people are vindicated at last.

The Philistines are mentioned in Genesis, Exodus, and Joshua, and are often discussed as having a significant role in the historical records of Judges through 2 Chronicles. The prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, and Zechariah condemn the Philistines for their pride and decadence. Biblical history shows the Philistines just as skilled, shrewd, and sophisticated as modern archaeologists say they were. Archaeology confirms and illuminates the biblical record on this matter, just as it has done over and over again on other matters of historical detail.

The *Time* article tries to peddle the ridiculous assumption that since archaeologists find evidence of skill and sophistication among the Philistines, the Bible account of Philistine violence and moral decay is in doubt. Modern man, like the Philistines before him, is deluded with the idea that if people are "smart" and "sophisticated" they are not sinful and shameful. Some of the shrewdest and most sophisticated people in history have been the most wicked and vile. "Moral progress" to some people is "progress" in beating the danger of disease while living a life of sexual immorality. Skill and industry to some people include the ability to lie, cheat, and steal, and to "get away with it." We are slow to learn that scientific advances do not guarantee moral and spiritual advances. Perhaps scholars will report in the year 5,000 sifting the remains of music, art, literature, industry, and science from Nazi Germany. The report will begin,

History has not been kind to the Nazis. Exemplified by such figures as the arrogant Adolf Hitler and his treacherous band of cronies, they are depicted in ancient annals as aggressors and warmongers. The ancient Americans branded them pirates and marauders.

Recent archaeological work at Berlin reveals "one of the most highly civilized peoples of their time." After a survey of the trappings of civilization and sophistication, the author may conclude,

As Dr. Top Scholar at Hebrew University puts it, "Nazi Germany need no longer bear the burden of Jewish and world scorn." After 3,000 years, Hitler's people are vindicated at last.

Yes, it is possible to be both skillful and sinful. Archaeology says the Philistines were skillful. The Bible says they were both skillful and sinful. Archaeology and Bible history are not at odds here. Archaeology confirms the Bible record without contradicting a single detail recorded in the Bible.

The Bible is accurate, right, and true when it addresses historical detail and when it addresses my sin and God's provision of a Savior. Those who love the truth are drawn to Christ by "the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:15). He forgives our sins by means of his own blood when we believe in him enough to repent of our sins, to confess his name, and to be immersed in water (Rom. 6:3-4; 10:8-10). Jesus invites you to come to him as he says with outstretched arms, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32).

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Springfield, MO 65804

Jesus told the Jews, **"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"** (John 8:44). Jesus said that these Jews were more like the devil than Abraham whom they claimed as their father. They obviously lived more like devil than like Abraham.

In a comedy routine years ago Flip Wilson said, "The devil made me do it," and most of us laughed at him. But what he said wasn't strictly true. There is no doubt that the devil wants us to sin; to serve him. Jesus told Peter, "behold, Satan **hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat**" (Luke 22:31). And it was Peter who later wrote at the direction of the Holy Spirit, **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"** (1 Peter 5:8). And while Satan cannot make us sin, he continues to tempt and to deceive and to use every way within his power to influence us for evil. In the beginning of our study we noted that Jesus identified Satan as **"a liar, and the father of it."** Well, Satan is still telling lies that are deceiving men and leading them to destruction. Please look at a few of his lies with me.

YE SHALL NOT DIE — The first recorded lie of the devil occurred in the garden of Eden. God had already told Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **"for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"** (Gen. 2:17). Along comes the devil and talks with Eve, and tells her, **"Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil"** (Gen. 3:4-5). Some have contended that Satan didn't really lie to Eve here, but I believe that he did. Though they did not die physically right on-the-spot, Adam and Eve died in their relationship to God, for sin always separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2; Ezek 18:4; Eph. 2:1; etc.). It made no difference that Eve believed Satan; the consequences were the same. She and Adam had disobeyed God, and they died. Don't be fooled by Satan into believing the same lie that a little sin won't hurt you, that such is just good clean fun.

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION — The theory of evolution says that man evolved from lower forms of life. Further, the theory of evolution has no answer for the origin of life itself. This is frequently explained away by

"the big bang theory" and like nonsense. The effect of the theory of evolution however is something quite different. If man is not made by God, and in the image of God, then there is no one who can judge us; no one to set standards for us to live by. Also, man cannot be regarded as any better than the animals except that he has evolved to a higher level. Satan would love for you to believe the theory of evolution rather than the statement of Genesis 1:27, **"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them."** The theory of evolution is just another lie of the devil to deceive men and lead us to eternal destruction.

SECULAR HUMANISM — Very much akin to the theory of evolution is secular humanism. It sounds so good on its face, that we should seek only what is good for man, what lifts man up, etc. The problem with that is that secular humanism denies the existence of God, and the creation made by God. Again, the purpose is to deny accountability on the part of man to anyone higher than himself. Our children are being fed bits and pieces of this lie of the devil in our public schools. All of this is in spite of the fact that God said, **"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness** (Romans 6:16). We serve whomever we obey, and we will give an answer for that, for Paul also wrote: **"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God"** (Romans 14:12). Somehow we must counteract this lie of the devil and be sure that we recognize, and that our children understand that we are answerable to God.

NO RIGHTS OR WRONGS IN SEX — Sex is not bad or dirty or wrong, when kept in the confines of God's arrangement, marriage. But one of the lies of the devil today is that all sex is good, and that there are no "rights" or "wrongs." This idea has been around for a long time, but Joseph Fletcher, in his book "Situation Ethics" told the whole world just to do the "loving thing" and not to be bound by some antiquated code of ethics. Our world is filled with "sex," and not just in the bedroom, but on television, in movies, in books and magazines. God gave us the sexual urge, but He regulated it to the marriage relationship. Can we really believe that God will not judge or condemn those who refuse His warnings to "flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18), or **"nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband"** (1 Cor. 7:2); or **"marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge"** (Heb. 13:4).

Don't listen to the lies of the devil. He will lead you to destruction if you will let him. Rather let's **"trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths"** (Prov. 3:5-6).

READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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

DON GIVENS, 555 University Ave. #3207, Honolulu, Hawaii 96826 — We have now completed three years in Hawaii working with the Leeward church in Waipahu on the island of Oahu. These years have been enjoyable, and the Lord willing, my wife and I desire to remain here working in the gospel. To those brethren planning to visit Hawaii, please be informed that the Leeward congregation is the **only** non-institutional church in this state. (The Moanalua church listed in some of the old directories, no longer exists.) Our building is located 17 miles west of the tourist district of Waikiki. Therefore, it is essential that all tourists make adequate plans to worship with us, taking this distance in consideration. The Honolulu city bus goes to Waipahu, but it will take you one and a half hours each way. The best way is to plan on renting a car to drive to Waipahu. A taxi is very expensive. We have from 13-18 visitors every Sunday, and it is therefore impossible for us to supply transportation. Our building is about 45 minutes from Waikiki by car. Directions to the building will be found in the yellow pages of your phone book in your hotel. Honolulu is a large city of 750,000 population. Our Bible class is at 9 A.M. with worship at 10 A.M. and 6 P.M. Come visit us in the Aloha state.

PATRICK ANDREWS, 1650 Paradise Hill Rd., Clarksville, TN 37043—The South Clarksville church has a mimeograph machine we need to sell. If you are interested, please call me for details at (615) 645-7723.

LEWIS-LANGFORD DEBATE

TOMMY L. McCLURE, 3311 Longview Rd., Antioch, CA 94509 — On December 12 and 13, 1988, beginning at 7:30 P.M., Jack W. Langford of Ft. Worth, Texas will affirm: "The Scriptures teach that baptism by, with or in the Holy Spirit to the penitent believer is for the remission of sins and placement into Christ and his body, the church, without any other acts of obedience." Harry L. Lewis, Evansville, IN will deny. Place: Placer High School Auditorium, 275 Orange Ave., Auburn, California.

On December 15 and 16, at 7:30 P.M., Harry L. Lewis will affirm: "The Scriptures teach that baptism (immersion) in water is in order to receive remission of past sins for the penitent, alien sinner." Jack W. Langford will deny. Place: Veteran's Memorial Building, 6th and E. Sts., Antioch, CA.

Langford's doctrine is not the usual denominational type. According to him, there is no such thing as water baptism for sinners today; cases of such in the Gospels and Acts were merely carry-overs from the law of Moses during "the period of transition" from the Old to the New; the "one baptism" for today is spiritual baptism, he avers. He is a "Quakerized" dispensationalist, a slick-tongued orator, an experienced debater, a "sarcastic nice guy," and loathes water baptism and the church of Christ. Harry L. Lewis is also an experienced debater, well prepared and highly qualified. This may well be the debate of the decade with sectarians.

Lodging in Auburn (are code 916), includes: **The Auburn Inn (800) 272-1444**, **Best Western Golden Key (800) 528-1234**, **The Auburn Hotel 885-8132**, **Elmwood Motel 885-5186**. Motels in Antioch (area code 415), descending price scale, are: **Heritage Inn 778-2000**, **All Seasons Inn 754-6600**, **Astro Motel 757-6100**; **Motel < 427-1600**.

Our radio program (A Program of Bible Truth) will be heard on Radio Station KPLA, 770 AM dial, at 7:45 A.M. each Sunday.

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!

APPEAL FOR A FAMILY IN CRISIS

WARREN E. BERKLEY, P.O. Box 113, Highlands, TX 77562 — In the spring of 1985, brother Luther White was diagnosed as a victim of cancer (multiple myeloma). Despite pain, tremendous financial burdens, and periodic side effects from the treatment, brother White continued to operate his concrete construction business, maintaining his insurance but receiving little personal salary. In the fall of '87, his brethren at the Wallisville Rd. church of Christ began benevolent assistance for him and his family. This was started after all other (family) resources were exhausted. After taking that step, other churches in the Houston and southeast Texas area responded with extraordinary generosity. These funds have helped sustain the White family, and throughout the past 10 months, brother White has continued to work.

Now (August, '88), brother White is no longer able to work. He faces the threat of insurance cancellation. And, may I add, that during the past two years, his wife has had major surgery, and his teenage daughter wears a heart pacemaker. **Medical bills now owed are in excess of \$250,000.** It is time to broaden the appeal for help. All three members of the White family are faithful members of the Wallisville Rd. church. The relatives have done all they can; the local church is doing all it can; area churches have been helping; Sister White works full-time. Hence, the only other avenue of approach left is this appeal to churches and individuals throughout the nation.

Contributions may be sent to: Wallisville Rd. Church of Christ, P.O. Box 113, Highlands, TX 77562. (Mark checks: "White Benevolence"). All contributions will be acknowledged the same day they are received. For more information you may contact me at (713) 426-7760 or 426-8034.

OBITUARY

CHARLES L. MORTON of Ratcliff, Arkansas — "It is with deep sadness that I learned of the untimely death of Charles L. Morton, faithful and able gospel preacher, and a trusted, beloved personal friend of many years. His death resulted from an accident, which usually would not have been serious at all — he stumbled and fell, hitting his head and resulting in a blood clot, requiring brain surgery. Being a diabetic further complicated matters. From the time of the accident until his death, Charles never regained consciousness. Other blood clots and complications followed. He was in the intensive care unit for the entirety of his hospitalization at Fort Smith, AR." (Paul C. Keller in PAUSE -PONDER-PROFIT, Paragould, AR)

Funeral services were conducted by Harold Turner and Mike Pittman. His preaching carried him to Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, Minnesota, Alaska and Arkansas. Mike Pittman reported that between 1976 and 1983, over forty articles from brother Morton appeared in **THE PRECEPTOR**, though most of these were not submitted by him personally. As Pittman said "They were short, clear, and to the point."

Brother Keller's report also indicates that brother Morton had paid high insurance premiums for years, only to have the company declare itself insolvent, defaulting on payments owed, and forcing not only the loss of premiums paid but also the accumulation of high medical bills. His widow and children are left with medical bills in excess of \$50,000, according to brother Keller. Our sympathies are expressed to his wife, Sylvia and children. She may be addressed at Rt. 1, Box 233, Ratcliff, AR 72951.

PREACHERS NEEDED

VALPARAISO, FLORIDA — The Twin Cities church, 92 Eastview Ave. (32580) is looking for a preacher. We are a small congregation of 20 members. We own our building. Outside support may be needed. Phone 892-4736 or 678-4629.

KAHOKA, MISSOURI — The Westside church, which meets at 671 W. Thompson St. (63445) is seeking a second man to locate here in N.E. Missouri to work with Lonnie Garrison in preaching and teaching the gospel. There are 17 members, most of whom are women. But there is much to do. It is 100 miles in all directions to another faithful work. The work is challenging for either a younger or older man. Only serious inquiries need apply. Contact Lonnie Garrison at (816) 727-3285 or 727-3006.

**POET'S CORNER
SONG OF THE LAWLESS
(For those Who Disdain Bible Authority)**

Free! FREE from God's Law,
O Blessed condition,
I can sin all I want,
And still have remission!

OUT with rules and regulations!
OUT with laws and stipulations!
We want NO NEGATIVES, let us make clear,
Unless it be the ones WE like to hear.

Give us thrills, chills, and scratch our itching ears,
Watch us become more sectarian all through the years.
No more long and hard Bible study,
We think that is much too fuddy-duddy.

Give us fun, food, and frolic; over that we'll drool,
But give us Book, Chapter, Verse, and we'll call you a fool.
Give us church dinners, and over them we'll slobber,
But give us sound doctrine, and on it we'll clobber.

Give us emotional services, and well shout HALLELUJAH!
Ask for our Bible authority, and well say "What's it to ya?"
We are full of love, and of sweetness we boast
But tell us we're wrong, and YOU we will ROAST!

Shame, shame on those strict Christians,
Who follow God's commandments right through.
We want NONE of those old restrictions,
OUR HEROES ARE NADAB AND ABIHU! —
Don Givens

PREACHER AVAILABLE

DAVID JOYNER, 1655 Hwy 18, Medon, TN 38356 — I am 37 years old, married with two young children and have been preaching for 10 years. I have done evangelistic work in several states. References can be supplied. I would like a full-time, self-supporting work soon. Call (901) 427-8298.

NEWS ITEMS AND STS

The fact that an item appears as news in this paper does not mean that the **paper** or the **editor** knows all the details surrounding such a report, nor does it imply endorsement of any service mentioned, nor activity described. We **have tried to avoid** items which could be construed as commercials for business enterprises. At times we have carried items of general information which we felt would be of interest or use to readers. In the **July, 1988** issue of this paper a news item appeared under the heading of "Project Help." Since that item appeared, planned seminars in both Louisville, KY and Tampa, FL have been advertised in letters to preachers in those areas, making reference to the news item in **this paper in July**. We have requested that no further reference be made to this paper in future advertisements and have been assured that this request will be respected.

One of the partners of "Project Help" is Glen Crowe. We quote here a news story which appeared in the Louisville, KY newspaper:

**CHURCH INVESTMENT PROMOTER
NAMED IN FRAUD INDICTMENT**

"For two years, Osybon Glen Crowe traveled to Churches of Christ around the country, promoting his 'Christian' investment business and quoting the Bible to underscore his claims, say those familiar with the now-defunct Ministers Investment Corp.

"Many — including Ruth Connell, who heard Crowe speak at a church in Conway, N.H. — invested money with Crowe — a Church

of Christ minister then based in Tompkinsville, KY.

"But Connell became one of about 300 investors who lost their money when Crowe's business collapsed in 1983, said her lawyer, Charles English Jr. of Bowling Green.

"She's devastated," said English, whose client claims a **loss of \$141,000**. 'It's a very sad story — she lost her whole life savings.'

"Crowe, who now lives in Lebanon, Tenn., was indicted yesterday by a federal grand jury in Louisville and charged with fraud in connection with his business, which allegedly took in about \$1.4 million." (COURIER-JOURNAL, November 17, 1987, p. A1).

**EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS
HOW TO TREAT YOUR WIFE**

An older sister in Port Arthur, Texas told us something which every married man needs to consider. She said "If a man has enough horse sense to treat his wife like a thoroughbred, she will never turn into a nag." Good advice. Are you listening, fellows?

CATHOLIC RELICS

Every time I go to Italy, I am astounded all over again at the absurdity of some of the legends which the Roman Catholic Church palms off on its adherents. For instance, in the city of Rome, there are two separate Catholic Churches each of which claims to have the skeletal head of John the Baptist among the relics. You did not know that John the Baptist had two heads?

While in Italy in May of this year, we visited the Church of Three Fountains, located on the outskirts of Rome. This is the legendary site of the execution of the apostle Paul. The story goes that when the axe fell and severed Paul's head from his body, that his head bounced three times and that at each place where his head struck the ground, a fountain burst forth, hence the Church of the Three Fountains. As my friends, Roberto Tondelli, is fond of saying, "Incredible"!

ELDERS AND FINANCIAL RECORDS

For sometime, the Sixth and Izzard church (a large institutional church) in Little Rock, Arkansas, has been in legal battle over the right of members to examine financial records of the congregation, including salaries of preachers and staff and a \$600,000 Polish Relief Fund and how it was distributed. One of the deacons, himself an attorney, took a leading part in the conflict against the elders. A lower court ruled that since the congregation is incorporated under the laws of the State of Arkansas, it was subject to the laws which involve financial disclosure to members of incorporations. The elders were ordered to make the records available. They refused to do so and the case was appealed to the Arkansas Supreme Court which has now ruled that it was a church matter and not subject to court action. One of the Justices issued a strong dissent in which he said the court had "mollycoddled the dominant faction" in this church dispute. The whole affair is sad. Elders have a God-given right to lead a flock, but not to "lord it over" the flock (1 Pet. 5:2-4). You would think that devout men would take care in "providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Cor. 8:21). People will not forever follow leaders whom they do not trust. A proper flow of information is essential to such trust. Elders everywhere would do well to remember this principle.

JUST TO WARM YOU HEART

The first Sunday we were in Italy in May, I preached at Aprilia, about 40 miles from Rome, where Rudolfo Berdini preaches. That afternoon we witnessed the baptism of a 50-year-old man who was baptized by his son (who is fast developing into a gospel preacher). The next night we saw this new Christian and his wife at a meeting in Latina. His wife said to my wife "Last night I was so happy I could not sleep. I kept looking at my husband and saying to myself I have a husband who is a Christian, I have a husband who is a Christian." I am sure there are some sisters who read these lines who can understand just how she felt.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	277
RESTORATIONS	65
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	