

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



FOR WHAT ARE WE PREPARING?

This country is full of people who are busy providing and preparing for something, but what is it? In the process of this preparation for something in the future, they are losing their souls. Money plays a vital role in the building of new barns in which to bestow their goods for the future. That makes money the most important commodity sought after, and most people are after as much of it as they can get. There is very little importance to how they get it, just so they can get more and more. Several high ranking political figures have recently been toppled from their positions of power because of their greed for money. Even the ones who brought their downfall are guilty of the same things.

Jesus taught a lesson in the form of a parable, recorded in Luke 12: 16-21, in which he pictures a man who gives all his talents and time preparing for this life by way of wealth. He gave no thought to the life which is to come. When he reached the point in preparation for this life, when he thought he was secure, he said to himself: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." This, I think, is the goal of most preparation today. Men will work hard to build a house in which to live. They will provide comfortable surroundings for their families and themselves. They will labor and save to get an education for themselves and their children. They will work and save to buy an automobile, boat, sports equipment, good clothes, and lots of fun and pleasure. They will accumulate

estates for later life and put their trust in that which is laid up for a "rainy day." All of it for this life of a few short years, and when this is done they think they are safe and all is well. But suddenly they face death and eternity. There is no real lasting security in earthly things, yet these are the objectives of the great majority of people on earth today. All here is vanity and vexation of spirit.

To what does the average person look forward in eternity? After the man in the parable had assured himself that he could now enjoy life because he has been successful in preparing for his life here, God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" What a terrifying sentence! What a great miscalculation! What a horrifying realization! All his work for nothing. He had spent all his effort in providing for this life, and when he was ready to enjoy the fruits of his labors, his life is about to end. What would happen to all his work? What good was all the preparation for this life now that he was going to die? How many millions are now in the same situation as this poor man.

As a conclusion to this parable, and the lesson which the Lord wants men to get: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Every man and woman who emphasizes preparation for the comforts and pleasures of this life and ignores preparation for eternity is in the class with this man who lost all. The day will come, and it may be sooner than you think, when your life will be required. Then what will happen to all those things which you prepared for this life? More importantly, what will you do about the failure to prepare for the judgment and for eternity?

It is right to provide for those things we need in this life, but it is wrong to push into second or third place the things of the Spirit. The most important preparation before us now is not the needs for the present, but for the time when we shall all appear before the Lord to account for the lives we have spent on the earth. When you put "making a living" before "serving the Lord" you are preparing for the present and not for eternity. No argument can change that. When you put "having a good time" before "obeying God" you are making provisions for this life, and are not rich toward God.

Preparation for eternal life requires a faithful and constant study of God's word, an obedient life of worship and work for the Lord, and a faithful and regular attendance to all opportunities for public worship and edifying. Do not be a fool, as Jesus said this man was, but make your preparation for eternal life.

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Editorial

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EDITORIAL STEW

Carnal Weapons

Paul did not wage spiritual war with carnal weapons. He said "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds)" (2 Cor. 10: 3-4). His enemies at Corinth had resorted to carnal weapons in their attempts to discredit him. Paul was willing to defend his apostolic work, but not with the use of carnal tactics.

All of us could learn a needed lesson from this. It is one thing to contend for a principle of truth and it is another to resort to misrepresentation, innuendo and half truths. In recent months material which has appeared in this paper has been misrepresented in a church bulletin from the northwest. Half of an editorial was presented with the format of the editorial page of this paper with no indication that only a portion of the article was given. Another article was reprinted out of this paper with my editorial note omitted. Then, another article was reprinted with a note stating that Donnie Rader had included this article while I was in Norway, and leaving the implication that it would not have gotten by me otherwise. The truth is, I had had every article for that issue already set in type before going to Norway and Donnie certainly did not try to slip something by me. Really folks, we can do better than this. We respect the right of others to disagree with what we have to say and certainly know that everyone will not agree with all we have to say. We have tried to fairly represent those with whom we disagree and must confess to disappointment on the part of those who resort to carnal weapons in spiritual battles.

H. E. Phillips' Mother

With sadness we report the death of the mother of H. E. Phillips. She was in her 92nd year when she passed away in a Clearwater, Florida hospital. She was a special lady. What a legacy she has left behind! The faithfulness of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, whose lives have reached out to touch and bless multitudes, speak eloquently in tribute to her and to her husband who preceded her in death. Our heartfelt love and sympathy are extended to brother Phillips and all the family.

Donnie Rader to Alabama

Donnie Rader and his family are moving to Lexington, Alabama to work with the good church there. They

begin there on December 10. Brother Rader has worked at Manslick Road in Louisville, where we attend, for nine years. He was only 20 years of age when he came to work here. His work has been superior. I told someone recently that he is 29 going on 45. His knowledge of the word is rich and full and he expresses it both orally and in writing, with power, conviction and persuasion. He knows what he believes and why he believes it. He is not ashamed nor afraid to teach the truth on any subject. Donnie and his wife, Joan, will always have a special place in my heart. When my first wife died, they stepped in to take on the office work for the paper. It was not an easy time but they worked tirelessly to provide continuity to the business affairs of the paper and we did not miss a single issue. Donnie writes a column and our readers are familiar with the excellent material he produces. On two occasions he has edited the paper for a month each time to give me a breather. Not only will they be missed at Manslick Road and in the Louisville area, but I shall personally miss him and his family. He will continue to write for the paper and help in a number of ways. We wish for him a profitable work in Lexington, Alabama and hope that his family will be happy in the new location.

No-Class Doctrine in Nigeria

Several brethren in Nigeria have contacted me within the last year requesting materials to use in combatting the no-Bible class doctrine which some are pressing now in that country. There are many good churches and some able preachers in Nigeria. A number of faithful men from the USA have preached there at different times. Allan Martin and Bill Beasley were recently there for a few weeks before going on to India. SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES goes to a number of the native preachers there and we hear from some of them all along. I. O. AKU wrote me recently urging us to pay them a visit and preach among them. Nothing would please me more, though circumstances are not favorable to that end just now. I hope that several good brethren will be able to visit and work with them on a short term basis. If any of you have some material which would help combat the no-class doctrine, why not write to him: I. O. AKU, P. O. Box 12587, Umungasi Aba, IMO State, Nigeria, West Africa.

New Appearance in January

We are adding color to the front and back pages of STS with the January, 1990 issue. Otherwise our basic format will be the same. We hope you like the new look. We will continue to present material from good men for your study.

Meetings for 1990

At present the following meetings are scheduled for 1990. We would be pleased to greet many of our readers.

- | | |
|-------|---------------------------------|
| March | — Central City, Kentucky (5-11) |
| | Riverdale, Maryland (18-23) |
| April | — Round Hill, Kentucky (1-6) |
| | Westfield, Indiana (9-15) |

- May — W. Main St., Barnesville, Ohio (exact date to be set)
Loudon, Tennessee (exact date to be set)
- June — Chiefland, Florida (exact date to be set)
Hillview, Nashville, Tennessee (17- 22) July
— Hickory Grove, Kettle, Kentucky (exact date to be set)
- August — Lakeview, Hendersonville, Tennessee (5-10)
- Walnut Lane, Springfield, Missouri (20-26)
- September — St. Peters, Missouri (9-14)
Oak Ridge, Tennessee (24-30)
- October — Golden, Colorado (14-19)
- San Bernardino, California (21-26) Fresno, California (Oct. 28-Nov. 2) November — Lang Road, Houston, Texas (5-11)
- Seffner, Florida (18-23)

Home For The Winter

We look forward to being home through the winter. The elders at Manslick Road have asked me to preach here during these three months and I have gladly agreed to do so. Because of the extra load of preaching, I will only have one extra class this winter. It will meet each Friday morning at 10 and will study the theme: TROUBLED OVER MANY THINGS. We look forward to a few quiet evenings by the fireplace. This is one of the simpler joys of life and provides balm for the spirit.

Religious Supply Center

The folks at Religious Supply Center, 4001 Preston Hwy., Louisville, KY 40213 continue to provide efficient service for all your literature, books, maps and communion supply needs. They have a large inventory and friendly people who are concerned for your satisfaction. Marie Ricks has now retired and with her husband, has moved to the country a few miles from Hopkinsville, Kentucky. But David, Phyllis, Wimpy, Mike and Wendy are still on hand to fill your orders. While it seldom is necessary anymore, we remind you to order books and supplies from the bookstore and keep paper business separate. They are two separate businesses. But we are always glad to recommend the bookstore to our acquaintances. Their toll free number is: 1-800-626-5348.

A Little Too Sweet

Solomon said "It is not good to eat too much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory" (Prov. 25: 27). A little honey is good to the taste and probably good for many things, but an overabundance can make you sick. It is hard not to think of this when confronted with those whose mannerisms are just a little too sweet. It is like trying to eat a whole bucket of honey.

All of this reminds me of a preacher who reported an incident in which he was in a meeting in Tennessee and was given a quart of freshly made sorghum molasses. He had to fly back to Texas and decided to pack the sorghum in his suitcase. When he claimed his luggage, he saw this brown, sticky substance oozing from his suitcase. He opened it to find everything stuck together, including

sermon notes and pages of his Bible. He said he decided right then that anytime he was given something to eat, he would either refuse it, or else sit down right there and eat it all.

"Long Sermons, Or..."

Some of us have justifiably been charged at times with preaching longer than was necessary to drive home the point. But, once I was accused of preaching over an hour when actually I spoke 45 minutes. You see, we sang four of those two-page-spread songs, every verse. Then we had announcements for over 10 minutes and a prayer that was about 15 minutes, and lengthy concluding remarks which half-soled the sermon. Now, I'll take my lumps for how long I preach, but please don't hang me with long songs, long prayers and announcements for which I am not responsible. Can anyone else identify with this problem?

Thanks To Our Readers

We want our readers to know that we do not take you for granted. Your business is much appreciated. Many have been readers ever since the early years of this paper's existence, though many have joined us more recently. In either case we thank you for subscribing and for reading what we have to say. Always measure whatever is taught here, or elsewhere, by the Scriptures. Tell your friends about the paper. It would make a nice gift for a friend, new Christian, son or daughter. Many of the younger generation have been started as readers of good material because of the thoughtfulness of others.

Billing

Every now and then some reader wonders why we don't put a renewal date on the address label. Others want us to insert a bill in the paper. We have found that we have a much higher rate of renewals by sending a bill with first class postage. The rate of return more than justifies the expense. While some would renew from such a label arrangement, many would never notice it. When we started publishing this paper we resolved to treat it in as businesslike manner as possible. Thanks for the various suggestions, but that is how we are going to do it. Nobody will misunderstand when it is time to renew when they get a bill.

Thanks to Jane Ashbrook

Our office work is efficiently and faithfully done by Jane Ashbrook. The office is organized better than it ever has been and that part of our operation runs smoothly with very few errors. She keeps all this up to date whether we are at home or gone, as we are much of the time. Jane is the wife of Lee Ashbrook, one of the elders at Manslick Road in Louisville, and the daughter of A. C. and Hallie Grider. We are fortunate to have her excellent services.

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ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

If you've been studying along with us this year in Acts, you have by now been impressed with the growth, development and commitment of the local church at Antioch. Here is a living demonstration of what God aims for every congregation to be. From their enthusiastic beginning in chapter 11 to their evangelistic commitment in chapter 13, everything about this group is exemplary. Our study continues...

After seeing their sensitivity to divine will and their willingness to let Barnabus and Saul go on their first preaching journey (13: 2-3), we now aim the spotlight on yet another commendable characteristic. In verse 4 we learn that the preaching journey begins in Cyprus and verse 5 adds — "And when they reached Salamis, they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; **and they also had John as their helper**" (emphasis mine — w. a.). Apparently there had been another preacher working at Antioch who was not mentioned among the five listed in 13: 1. His name? John Mark.

But back up to 12: 25. There we read, "And Barnabus and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark." Apparently John Mark was brought from Jerusalem to Antioch to work with the church in order that he might gain the necessary experience which would help him develop as a preacher of the gospel. And now as the first journey begins, Mark is asked to travel with and assist Barnabus and Saul (13: 5).

A First Century Preacher—Training Program

The Antioch church understood the absolute necessity of doing its part in teaching and training young men to preach. How often do we preach the all-sufficiency of the local church in edification and rightfully point out that the responsibility for training young men belongs to the church and is not to be delegated to a school... but how often do we actually do it?

This is not a knock against formal education. The fact is, I would encourage anyone who wanted to preach to get some higher education if at all possible. Gaining information in the classroom, fine tuning communication skills, getting a firm grasp of grammar and the English language, learning to exegete passages and studying the finer points of hermeneutics, Greek and restoration history all have their place and will help any

man who seeks to preach. Yet even with all of these advantages, nothing takes the place of personal, practical experience. Nothing.

The Antioch congregation gave John Mark the opportunity to come in as a young man and gain practical experience that would prove invaluable throughout his life as a preacher. Every preacher soon realizes (sometimes the hard way!) that learning Greek and Hebrew, developing homiletical skills and researching the facts of reformation history does not always meet the needs of real people in a real world. It's like the story I heard about where one fellow "tried out" at a place and during his talk with the men was asked, "Bro. , do you know any Greek?" He replied with hesitation, thinking that his answer would probably end his chances of being asked to move. "No," he said, "I never had the opportunity to study much Greek..." The questioning brother responded, "Good! You're just the man we've been lookin' for. The last preacher we had spoke more Greek than he did English!") Hmmmm. There's a lesson there

Preaching is about people! (Mark 12: 37; Matt. 10: 16). It's about working with elders... learning to take advice... getting along with folks... writing... visiting ... encouraging... comforting... confronting... It's all of that and more. It's working with people in a hundred different situations. Take a good long look at the preach-ing work of Jesus. He teaches us two principles that we must never forget: (1) people are the only reason for preaching, and (2) no one cares how much we know until they know how much we care!

Those principles cannot be absorbed by means of textbooks or classroom lectures. They come by practical experience and "on the job training." As I look back on a brief eleven years of preaching, I'm thankful for three churches who gave me exactly that. Three churches who for three summers invested their time, financial resources and (most of all) their patience to help me grow as a preacher. The service they rendered to me was invaluable. I shall never forget them. Yes, I think I know what John Mark felt when he reflected back on Antioch. It's a feeling of appreciation that never goes away.

What I am saying is this: **THE LOCAL CHURCH SHOULD WORK TOWARDS THE GOAL OF TRAINING YOUNG MEN TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.** Now, not every church can do that at a given time and not every older preacher is cut out to be a good role model. But those who can, should. And those who can't should work in that direction.

And many are. Nothing has encouraged me these last few years as much as learning of more and more churches fulfilling their responsibility in this area. Some are bringing in a young man for the summer while others are opting for longer commitments to those who are out of school and desiring a place to begin. Sure it cost a lot of money. But the life-long return more than makes it worthwhile. There is nothing a local church can do that will prove as profitable.

Guidelines and Goals

Whether working with a young man for a summer or for a longer period of time there needs to be some

guidelines and goals suitable to each specific situation. Good communication at the very start is essential in any situation. Both young preacher and congregation need to be informed as to the particulars of what is expected of each. There are, I believe, five major areas that need to be emphasized in any such program of work. They are: (1) the disciplining of time, (2) studying, (3) preaching and teaching, (4) writing, and (5) relating to people in different situations. Some of these obviously overlap but all are essential for a young man to have a practical learning experience.

Although I have not asked them, I feel confident that the following men would be glad to share their advice and insight along these lines. All three have had a lot of experience working with young men and their counsel would surely be prudent. They are: Harold Comer, 1200 Nashville Hwy., Columbia, TN 38401; Wayne Chappell, 521 Cumberland St., Florence, AL 35630; L. A. Stauffer, 948 S. Geyer Rd., St. Louis, MO 63122. Also, I have a three page outline especially designed for a summer program that I would be glad to send to anyone interested.

I am confident that John Mark did not go to work with Paul, Barnabus and the Antioch church without some goals and guidelines. Undoubtedly he knew his role and what was expected of him. And undoubtedly he could, like others today, point back to that experience as a key period in his life.

I wonder... I wonder how many young John Marks slip through the cracks and give up on life's greatest work all because they didn't receive the needed guidance and encouragement at the most critical time. Yes, it is the responsibility of the local church to train preachers. Antioch knew that. She did her part. So are some today.

ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

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Louisville, Kentucky 40219



SOCIAL DRINKING (PART 1)

Drinking and drunkenness is a problem nearly as old as man. Gen. 9 records the story of Noah's drunkenness. Ten chapters later we read of Lot doing the same.

We all know that drunkenness is a sin, but what about social drinking? What about drinking responsibly? What's wrong with an occasional beer or wine? Surely you are well aware that such is not only practiced, but defended by some Christians.

Let's carefully consider that social drinking is a sin for the following reasons.

It Is Drunkenness

1. The Bible condemns drunkenness. The apostle Paul wrote, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess..." (Eph. 5: 18). In listing the works of the flesh that causes one not to inherit the kingdom of God, the same writer mentions drunkenness (Gal. 5: 19-21; cf. 1 Cor. 6: 9-11).

2. Social drinking is drunkenness. The word translated "drunk" "signifies to make drunk, or to grow drunk (an inceptive word, marking the process of the state) to become intoxicated, Lk. 12: 45; Eph. 5: 18; 1 Thess. 5: 7" (W. E. Vine, Vol. I, p. 343). Bullinger says it means "to grow drunk (marking the beginning...)"

1 Thess. 5: 6-9 presents a contrast of being "sober" or being "drunken." The word translated "sober" means "to be free from the influence of intoxicants" (W. E. Vine, Vol. IV, p. 44). To be free from the influence of intoxicants would be to not drink. In this passage the only alternative to not drinking is drunkenness. So, you either don't drink or you are guilty of drunkenness.

Alcohol in any amount weakens one's inhibitions and he thus loses his ability to think and reason clearly. Howard Pyle of the National Safety Council (in 1970's) said, "Everyone loses some self-control and clearness of mind when even small amounts of alcohol are taken..." (*Today's Health*, Dec. 1962). He further said that a few drinks impair accuracy of steering and slows down decision making. He also added that just one or two drinks makes the chance of an accident twice as high. Thus, one who drinks socially (even one or two drinks) is drunk to some degree!

3. Social drinking leads to a greater state of drunkenness. All who are alcoholics or drunkards started with the first drink. Many (if not all) started as social drinkers. One example is the case of M. Norvel Young who was arrested in Sept. 1975 for drunken driving. He later said that it all started in the late 1960's by having a drink after dinner to just relax. Gradually it

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got out of hand.

It Is Strong Drink

1. Strong drink is condemned in the Bible. The Proverb writer said, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20: 1).

2. Any of our drinks today are strong by comparison.

It is generally agreed that the wines of Palestine reached a maximum of 5 to 8 percent alcohol. Some may put it as high as 7 to 10 percent. Furthermore, there were no distilled beverages since that process did not begin until the 13th century.

When we compare the alcoholic content of some beverages today, they must be put in the category of **strong** drink. A report from the International Narcotic Research Foundation (appearing in **Teenage Christian**, 1961 and reprinted in **The Voice of West End**, March 1, 1964) states that **distilled** beverages (whiskey, gin, brandy, etc.) contain 45% to 50% alcohol. **Malt** beverages (beer and ale) contain much less, though still strong according to the wines of the Bible day. Beer has 4% to 6%. Ale has about 10%. **Wines** usually have 10% to 14% alcohol. Some that are fortified have as much as 20% or more.

No matter what type of alcoholic beverage you may drink, it will be the strong drink that the Bible condemns.

It Is Harmful

1. Drinking is harmful to the body.

a. Alcohol is a poison. Former Surgeon General Dr. Parran said, "Alcohol is the major cause of insanity and poisoning from it causes more deaths than from all our most infectious diseases" (as quoted by Wilson Adams in Guideposts, Sept. 25, 1983). The very fact that one becomes **intoxicated** (toxic = poison) from alcoholic drinks would suggest that it is a poison and harmful to the body.

b. Alcohol is a narcotic—a drug. Dr. Haven Emerson of Columbia University said, "Alcohol is one of the group of drugs classed as narcotics, whose dominant action is a depression of function of all forms of living tissue" (as quoted by T. O'Neal in **Walking In Truth**, Oct. 1976). Dr. Harris Isbell, of the Research Branch of the United States Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, KY, said, "Statistically, alcohol is the most important of all addicting, depressant drugs" (*ibid.*) The International Narcotic Research Foundation reports that Beer contains **lupulin** which is a narcotic. "It is an interesting observation that BEER'S LUPULIN comes from the HOP PLANT which the science of botany classifies as belonging to the same family (MORACEAE) as does the HEMP PLANT, from which is derived the MARIJUANA cigarette with its Cannabinol" (International Narcotic Research Foundation).

c. Alcohol damages the brain. A **Reader's Digest** article (June 1970) entitled "Alcohol and Your Brain—Some News for Social Drinkers" stated that there is now strong evidence that there is no safe level of alcohol below which alcohol fails to damage and destroy groups of brain cells. The article pointed out that the only difference in a heavy drinker and the social drinker is

one of the degree of damage. I like what Thomas Edison said, "I have better use for my brain than to poison it with alcohol. To put alcohol in the brain is like putting sand in the bearings of an engine. "

2. It is a sin to harm the body. We may think that our bodies are our own to do with as we please. To the contrary, listen to the apostle Paul, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6: 19-20).

In our next article we will see that social drinking is condemned (without reference to how much one drinks), how social drinking influences others and some of the arguments made to justify social drinking.

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WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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BREAKING OF BREAD

QUESTION: Was the breaking of bread in Acts 20: 7 a common meal? What about v. 11?

ANSWER: No, the breaking of bread in Acts 20: 7 was not a common meal, but it was the Lord's Supper. W. E. Vine states, "of the breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper, Matt. 26: 26; Mark 14: 22; Luke 22: 19; Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 10: 16; 11: 24." "Break bread" in Acts 20: 7 has the same connotation as it does in Acts 2: 42, namely, the Lord's Supper.

However, "breaking bread" in v. 11 seems to indicate a common meal. After Paul restored life to Eutychus, Luke records, "When he (Paul) therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed." No one broke bread, according to the text, except Paul. But in v. 7, the disciples came together to break bread and Paul preached unto them. All ate in v. 7, but only Paul ate, it appears, in v. 11.

The assembly is broken up by Eutychus falling out of the window. Subsequent to that, they come back up and Paul talked a long while, even till day break. Notice that Paul "preached" in vv. 7, 9, but the "talked" in v. 11. The word "talked" means to "converse with, talk with" (Thayer, p. 444). Vincent says, "It denotes a more familiar and confidential intercourse than **discussed**, in ver. 7" (**Word Studies in the New Testament**, Vol. 1, p. 559). Lenski states, "He ate in due time and then spent the time until dawn, still quite a space of time... in conversation — Luke purposely changes from 'to discourse' which he has used in both v. 7 and 9. One may even guess what the conversation was about — the miracle which all had witnessed was in the minds of all" (Acts of Apostles, p. 831). So, there seems to be a termination of the assembly in v. 9, but an informal meeting till day break in v. 11. Luke and companions had departed earlier (v. 13)

The word "eaten" in v. 11 is from the Greek word **geuo**, meaning, "to take food, eat: absol., Acts 10: 10; 20: 11" (Thayer, p. 114). In all other passages it is always used to mean a common meal. Hence, we conclude that Paul broke bread and ate for physical nourishment as they did at Jerusalem in Acts 2: 46. If the first day of the week (v. 7) was Roman time, then the Lord's Supper was observed on the Lord's day (Sunday), but Paul ate the food in v. 11 on Monday morning. If it was Jewish time, the Lord's Supper was

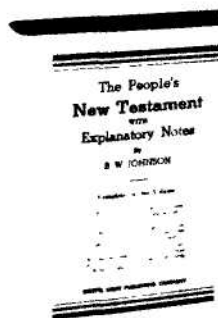
observed on the Lord's day, and Paul ate a common meal on Sunday, sometime after midnight.

Obviously, the food Paul ate was totally separate from the assembly of the church in v. 7. A common meal eaten in such assembly would have been in direct violation of 1 Cor. 11: 21-22. Church functions and social functions are not to be mixed. Several brethren have not learned this as they have the church building kitchens and dining halls in which to eat.

J. W. McGarvey, and others, take the position that the breaking of bread in both vv. 7 and 11 was the Lord's Supper. He wrote in regard to v. 11, "They returned to the upper chamber, where lights were still burning, and where the elements of the Lord's supper were as yet undistributed... and this followed the commemoration of the Lord's death" (New **Commentary on Acts**, Vol. 2, p. 181). McGarvey contended they were keeping Jewish time, the first day beginning immediately after the Jewish Sabbath that ended at sunset on Saturday. McGarvey may be correct in his view on v. 11. We cannot be absolutely sure. We can know for sure, however, that Acts 20: 7 is the Lord's Supper, the same as in Acts 2: 42, and we are to partake of it on the first day of every week.

The "breaking of bread" by the disciples at Troas occurred once a week. "And upon the first day of week, **WHEN** (emph. mine) the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." If this was a common meal, they were sparse eaters, eating just once a week. I imagine they had to eat more often than that—at least I do. Plainly, it was the Lord's Supper!

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PHILEMON

Introduction

Paul, evidently, wrote this short letter to Philemon during his first imprisonment in Rome. Timothy joins Paul in writing this letter. Apphia and Archippus are also addressed. Apphia is thought to be Philemon's wife and Archippus, son, who was a preacher in Colosse (Col. 4: 17). Philemon was, evidently, a resident of Colosse. In the beginning of the letter, Paul referred to himself as "a prisoner of Christ," Timothy as "a brother," Philemon as "our dearly beloved and fellow laborer," Apphia as "beloved," and Archippus as "our fellow soldier" (v. 1-3). The letter deals with faithful brothers in the Lord.

The letter was written concerning a slave of Philemon, named Onesimus, who had gone to Rome as an escapist. In Rome Paul had converted Onesimus and writes Philemon to receive his slave back, "not as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved." In the letter, Paul sets forth principles that should govern Christians in their relations to each other, and the concern and action of a servant of God for those he converts. Paul exemplifies the concern and actions one who converts others should manifest toward his converts in order that both might please God and be saved. From this standpoint, this letter to Philemon blends with the theme of Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus—"Saving thyself and them that hear thee." The action of the apostle in this Philemon-Onesimus episode, and the instruction he gave, emphasizes essentials to salvation for all saints in every age. A history of this incident is not important, but how Paul acted, and the instruction he gave, is important to faithfulness for all Christians.

Paul Expresses Gratitude For Philemon (v. 4-7)

Paul was a praying man and often gave thanks for Philemon in his prayers (v. 4). Philemon was most likely a convert of Paul (v. 19), and being concerned for, and much in prayer for one's convert should characterize every teacher of the Word.

The thing that gave Paul grounds for rejoicing and thanking God for Philemon was his faith, love and fellowship in the Lord and "toward all saints" (v. 5-7). Philemon was a member of the congregation at Colosse; a man with a living faith who not only showed his love for the Lord but also constantly "refreshed the hearts of the saints." Not only did Paul have grounds for giving thanks to God for Philemon, but saints everywhere had grounds to do likewise.

Every saint should seek to be a credit to the Lord and

to others, **and** those who are should be praised and mentioned in the prayers of others. The living faith of Philemon involved entertainment of saints (hospitality), service to all saints, and knowledge of every good thing—graces that are sadly lacking in many professed Christians today. A sobering question for all of us is, do fellow Christians have grounds for expressing gratitude for and giving thanks to God for me?

Our Rights (v. 8-9)

Before writing Philemon as to what he should do about his run-away slave, who was now a Christian, Paul speaks of a right of his that he was foregoing in dealing with this situation. In this Paul was an example of an ethical principle that Philemon and all saints should follow.

Paul was an apostle, endowed with all the authority and rights of an apostle. In speaking of his rights in his letter to the Corinthians, he said we (apostles) have a right to "eat and drink, lead about a wife, to forbear working" (1 Cor. 9: 4-6). Paul, however, sometimes felt it best to forgo, or not assert his rights. In the matter of Philemon and Onesimus, Paul could have used his authority (right) as an apostle to demand that Philemon receive back his slave. Yet, for love's sake, the apostle chose to exercise his right to forgo his right to demand, and in tenderness and love "beseech thee."

Paul mentions two factors for this action—(1) Being Paul the aged, and (2) Being now a prisoner of Jesus Christ (v. 9). Paul was probably about 55 years of age at this time, which many would not consider an "aged" person. He was old enough, however, to be considered among the elders, and considering Paul's extensive labours and dedicated service as an apostle, he certainly deserved the submissive respect that elders (older, wise, experienced men) should have. The fact that Paul was at this time a prisoner (mentioned twice in this letter—v. 1, 9), himself in need of mercy, would suggest to Philemon that Paul was, in a sense, like the slave, Onesimus, and help persuade Philemon to yield to Paul's request. So, the elderly, experienced apostle who, as a prisoner, could fully relate to the slave, was willing to forgo his right to command Philemon, and use his right to beseech in love and tenderness. What a wonderful example Paul here gives of a teacher dealing with his converts and Christians dealing with one another!

Trouble has often come because some insist upon their right to do or say certain things, which may, indeed, be a lawful right. But, a Christian also has the right to give up his lawful right, and often does, in order to preserve peace and promote the welfare of others. Of course, a Christian is never justified in giving up his right (obligation) to stand for truth (the faith), but in our dealings with one another in numerous matters, Christians need to exercise their Christian liberty to give up certain rights for the sake of love and peace. This is the thing Paul did in this text and was asking Philemon to do.

The Transforming Power of Christianity (v. 10-16)

Onesimus became a different man when he was converted. In some way, Onesimus came in contact with

Paul while the apostle was a prisoner in Rome and was converted to Christ, enabling Paul to speak of him as "my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds" (v. 10).

Paul said he was beseeching Philemon for Onesimus which suggests that both felt it was right for the slave to return to his master. Becoming a Christian caused Onesimus to change his desire to flee from his master to a desire to return. He also changed from unprofitableness to profitableness (v. 1). The nature of his unprofitableness to Philemon, other than his running away, is not stated. Some have speculated from verse 18 that he stole from his master. Regardless of this, the fact is that whereas he was unprofitable, as a Christian he would be profitable as a slave and as a helper to Paul and the cause of Christ.

There is great power in the gospel of Christ to transform lives. This case is an example. The gospel has changed many worthless citizens into good, upright citizens, worthless fathers and mothers into worthy parents, and worthless husbands into faithful, dutiful husbands, etc.

Both Paul and Onesimus felt that returning of the run-away slave, and forgiving and receiving back by Philemon was necessary to fulfilling the principles of Christ (vs. 12-16).

Slavery, itself, is not a situation that following the principles of Christianity would establish, but eventually abolish. The gospel of Christ does not permit men to own and control others as chattel. Obedience to the gospel does not set a slave free from a master—from duties and responsibilities to which he is committed. It, on the other hand, sets forth principles of dealing with one another for both slaves and masters (Eph. 6: 5-9); Tit. 2: 9-10). Ultimately, following the principles of Christianity would abolish slavery.

While Onesimus, in obeying the gospel, had obtained freedom from the bondage of sin, he did not have freedom from all obligations in the various relationships of life. Giving up his ill-gained freedom from slavery and returning to his master, with a mutual reconciliation between brothers in Christ was a part of the change that becoming a Christian demanded, and that Paul was trying to bring about. This principle would demand that unfaithful husbands, who abandon wife and children for another, if they decide to become Christians, must turn from their illegal acquisitions and be reconciled in their original commitment. Being baptized into Christ does not wash away previous commitments and obligations.

Onesimus, after his conversion, was very profitable to Paul there in Rome and would continue to be so, but regardless of Paul's desire and need for him, this principle of restoration and reconciliation was paramount. Paul loved both Philemon and Onesimus, his sons in the gospel, and could forget about his own wishes and desires and urge what was right and best for his children in the faith. Paul's concern for the conscience and fellow-ship on the part of his converts is an example for all who are active in leading others to Christ. Teaching, beseeching, and being a proper example of right and truth is as important to one's eternal salvation as leading them

to obey the gospel. The change that begins with one's becoming a Christian must manifest itself throughout one's remaining life (Ref. 2: 10). This, "fathers in the gospel" must ever teach and emphasize if they are to be successful in "saving thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4: 16).

Philemon's Receiving Responsibility (v. 17-21)

It was as much Philemon's responsibility to receive Onesimus as it was for Onesimus to return to his master. The slave was to return and prove himself a profitable servant and Philemon was to receive him "no longer as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved" (v. 17).

Paul argues that if Philemon accepted him as a partner (one with whom he had fellowship in the Lord), then accept Onesimus on the same basis—a brother in the Lord. If there was the matter of previous injury or debt standing in the way of Philemon accepting his servant back, Paul says "put it on my account—I will repay it" (v. 18-19). Here is another statement that shows what the preacher is willing to do and sacrifice for his convert. However, Paul reminds Philemon of what he owed him (converted and brought him into all the spiritual blessings in Christ); a debt that Philemon, evidently, was seeking to pay but would never get it liquidated. He would do well to follow his "father in the gospel" in sacrificing for a brother in the Lord.

Philemon's proper response in this matter would give Paul great joy, and fully justify the confidence he had in Philemon to always do the right thing (v. 20-21).

Conclusion (v. 22-25)

As Paul closes this letter, he expresses confidence in his being released from prison when he requests that Philemon "prepare me also a lodging; for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." He next makes mention of others, fellow workers, who sent greetings to those at Colosse. Epaphras, a fellow prisoner, called a "fellow-servant" in Col. 1: 7; Mark, atone time unfaithful to Paul (Acts 13: 13; 15: 36-41) but later fully redeemed himself (2 Tim. 4: 11); Aristarchus had accompanied Paul in returning from Macedonia (Acts 19: 29) to Jerusalem (Acts. 20: 4) and was with Paul when taken prisoner and went to Rome with him, either as a fellow prisoner or voluntarily; Demas, a companion of Paul in Rome, but who evidently forsook Paul after the second imprisonment (Col. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 4: 11); Luke, Paul's usual traveling companion, the beloved physician, who wrote Acts of Apostles and the Gospel of Luke (Col. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 4: 11).

The letter closes with a prayer that Philemon, Apthia, Archippus, and the church in Philemon's house might ever have in their hearts the favor of Christ and a fullness of all the blessings that being in Christ brings.

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APOSTASY—SAME OLD SONG

God knew that when his people began to prosper in the land of Canaan, that they would be "lifted up" in their own hearts, and forget the commandments of their God (Deut. 8: 10-20).

God also knew that his people would have to first dethrone him in their hearts and lives before they embarked upon their course into idolatry and apostasy, by replacing God with an earthly king (Deut. 17: 14-20). This is why God later told Samuel, "... for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. 8: 7).

In other words, God's people would have to change the form of government, or organization, before they could even begin to do the other things which they were bent on doing. Of course, they needed an excuse, so they used Samuel's sons as an excuse for changing the system (1 Sam. 8: 5).

Sound familiar? Well, it should, for it is the same old song to which apostasy always marches. Maybe a slight change in the lyrics or the tune, but still the same old song. "The church isn't doing anything, so lets change the system." Or, "It is better to do something wrong than to do nothing." Or, "I like the way we are doing it better than the way you are not doing it. "

It makes no difference even if the church is doing something (what Christ has authorized), or if those following the head of the church are doing as much or more than those who resort to human organizations and reasoning. When God's people get restless and become discontent with God's commandments, they will find a way to depart from God, even if they have to sing the same old song that is as old as apostasy itself.

In the first great departure from the faith, the organization of the church had to be corrupted and breached before brethren could do the other things which they wanted to do. So it has ever been, and shall be.

Christ is "head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1: 22), or "the chief Shepherd" (1 Pet. 5: 4). On earth, the highest and only expression of authority in Christ's church are elders over the local church (Phil. 1: 1; 1 Pet. 5: 1-3). The qualifications for this office prove that the Holy Spirit is not just talking about "older" men with reference to elders.

This is why Paul warned the elders at Ephesus to be

on guard against those "grievous wolves" from the outside, and those on the inside "of your own selves... speaking perverse things..." (Acts 20: 28-30). True to Paul's warning, the oversight of the church was first corrupted with: presiding elders," "metropolitan bishops," and finally, the universal elder, bishop, or "pope. "

In the next great apostasy of the 1800's, the organization of the church was first corrupted with the missionary societies supplanting the work of the local churches, with their elders. This began in 1849, followed by corruption in worship (instrumental music), in 1859. As long as the organization of the church remains sound and strong, false doctrine and false practice can be kept out of the worship, the work, and mission of the church. Once the authority is corrupted or changed, anything can be introduced.

In the next apostasy which came to a head in the 1950's the same old song was sung, and the autonomy of local congregations and elders was supplanted by the "sponsoring church" and "sponsoring elders" and "sponsoring homes." When we reject the organization which Christ placed over his church on earth, we reject Christ as head of the church, just as Israel rejected God as their king. We may give lip service to divine authority, even as the Samaritans "feared the Lord and served their own gods..." (2 Ki. 17: 33). But not those who claim to do things "in the name of Christ" are justified, but those who actually do his will (Mt. 7: 21-23).

Now comes another apostasy of the 1980's, and of what proportions it shall be when compared to other apostasies, I know not. But I do know that the same old song is being sung by its song leaders.

First, you have to change the organization and structure of the local congregation, which was given by Christ, the head of the church. Do away with the office and qualifications of elders. Eliminate the treasury with which the local congregation does its work. Dissolve the assemblies of the local church.

It matters not that the preachers who undermine the authority of elders and up speaking with authority reminiscent of the "evangelistic authority" of a few decades ago. And, it matters not that even though the treasury of the church is dissolved, these preachers still find a way to get money to support the song they want to sing. Too, even though they trade the public assemblies of the church for satellite assemblies on a smaller, impromptu basis, the preachers still need some convenient outlet for their doctrines and practices. As their movement continues to grow, watch for their assemblies which they say are not really assemblies to grow also. Then, the leader(s) of the apostasy can usurp the authority of elders (unofficially and informally, of course).

But the key to a successful apostasy, in any century, is to first undermine organization with its duly constituted authority, be it God, judges, Christ, elders acting on behalf of the chief Shepherd, or just the local congregation acting and moving under orders from the head of the church.

The lyrics or the melody may be changed in a few places, but if you listen closely, you will hear the unmistakable strains of Apostasy's theme song.

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—Donnie V. Rader

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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FRED A. SHEWMAKER, 1101 S. W. Dorchester St., Lucie, FL 34983—Fort Pierce is located on the east coast about halfway between West Palm Beach and Melbourne, Florida. The church began here through a number of coincidental circumstances. A brother moved to Ft. Pierce from Miami. Another brother from California moved to Vero Beach. A couple in Stuart with three small children had recently been baptized while on a visit to Arkansas and were attending at West Palm Beach. Steve Willis, who then preached at Eau Gallie, brought these folks together and thus the church was formed.

Services were first held in the house of Paul Rogers. Later they were conducted in a rented house behind a shopping area at 4131 S. U. S. 1. At present the church meets in a building at the southwest corner of the same shopping area. If you plan to retire to Florida, or should winter in this area, please consider the church at Fort Pierce. Grover Stevens of Lubbock, Texas is to be with us in a meeting Feb. 4-9, 1990. All are welcome.

MRS. OSCAR SMITH, 2411 Tannehill Dr., Houston, Texas 77008—I wish to sell the library of my late husband, Oscar Smith, Jr. There are between 500-600 books, including some old and rare books owned by his father, Oscar Smith, Sr. Some books date back to 1823. They are in good shape with few exceptions. A list is available.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

STEFANO CORAZZA reports the baptism of four at Udine, Italy. Two of these were aged women and two were young men who are sons of members there. Membership there is now 21 with attendance of about 30. The church has a new rented location which is better suited to their needs. **MIKE ROSSER** of Brea, California recently visited the work there.

PAUL WILLIAMS in South Africa reports four baptisms in his last two monthly reports. There is a great deal of activity going on among the churches in that country. A recent tent meeting in Middleburg,

Cape, a farming town, drew over 150, filling the tent to overflowing. Two men preached at each service and then answered questions.

FERNANDO VENEGAS reports three more baptisms in Mendoza, Argentina. Two of these had been listening to the daily radio program. There are 26 enrolled in a correspondence course. **TOM HOLLEY** is now working in Mendoza along with brother Venegas.

JOHN HUMPHRIES is again in India to work with the local preachers in training classes and preaching in as many places as possible.

RODY GUMPAD CALLED FROM THE Philippines to tell of a typhoon which hit Luzon and which caused much damage. His sister and father-in-law were killed and one of his children was hospitalized with injuries. Several of the members lost their homes and goods.

PREACHERS NEEDED

PORT WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA—The church here needs a mature and experienced man to work with us. We are small in number. We want someone who will give us book, chapter and verse. We are located in the panhandle of northwest Florida, the most beautiful part of the state. Growth potential here is great. Anyone interested may call H. N. Eubanks (904) 243-3603, or Pat Patterson (904) 862-8563, or write: Northside Church of Christ, 520 Mary Esther Cut-Off, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548.

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BILL WATKINS, 202 Castile Circle, Panama City, FL 32413—This 50-year-old preacher with several years of preaching experience desires to relocate. Call (904) 236-1414.

TO WARM THE HEART WHAT ONE TEENAGER CAN DO

Tim Wadlington died of cancer on September 8 at the age of 17. I attended his funeral at Eddyville, KY. He attended services at Suwanee, near the Kentucky Lake/Lake Barkley area where he and other teenagers published a bulletin called **THE RIVER OF LIFE**. I knew Tim from summer camp and he had preached for me in Owensboro on one occasion. I had known the Wadlington family for over 20 years. During the past three months the Suwanee congregation has had 12 baptisms—people with whom Tim had studied. Satan gained nothing by Tim's death. Four of those obeyed the gospel the night before the funeral while Tim's body was at the funeral home. His influence was also felt in the Bartlett, Tennessee church where 10 baptisms occurred recently. The Wadlington family worshipped there while Tim was receiving treatment at St. Jude's Children's Hospital. He also left a list of people he had talked to or was making plans to contact.

Tim was a bright boy. He was a 1989 honor graduate, Beta Club president and a member of Who's Who Among American High School Students. His plans to attend Florida College this fall were prevented by the cancer. But his first love was the Lord and he was a great example for young and old. He did more in 17 years than many of us do in 70. "And he being dead, yet speaketh" (Heb. 11: 4).

Tim will be missed by his loved ones and in the ranks of gospel preachers. As I reflect on lessons learned from Tim, I think of the following:

- (1) It is possible for a teenager to be a faithful, active Christian in this world of sin and corruption. He did not use his youth as an excuse.
- (2) It is not how long you live but what you do with your life that matters.
- (3) Instead of giving in to peer pressure, sometimes we have to go against the flow. And we can, both young and old.
- (4) Instead of withdrawing from society and feeling sorry for himself, he placed greater value on others.
- (5) In a sense we are all terminal and we need to realize the urgency of preaching the gospel now.

What about your prospect list? Dick Blackford, **THE LAMPLIGHTER**, Tuckerman, Arkansas

THOMAS H. ICARD, GOSPEL PREACHER AT REST

The November issue of STS carried a brief notice of the sudden

death of the editor's brother-in-law, Thomas H. Icard who preached for the church at Richlands, Virginia. Tom left us at the untimely age of 48, 10 days short of his 49th birthday. He was converted at Hillsboro, Ohio while a teenager, by Lloyd and Gwen Barker. He encountered much opposition at home but remained faithful through it all. Lloyd Barker and Bill Pierce encouraged him in his first attempts at preaching. He attended Florida College where he met my sister, Glenda. They were later married and moved to Hillsboro, Ohio where Tom had a good job for a printing company. He began to preach by Sunday appointment at Neville on the Ohio River and also preached some for the church at Winchester, Ohio. His desire to preach the gospel predominated and they sold their nice house and moved to Wellsburg, West Virginia for his first full time work. He remained there for about five years and the work did well. Then they moved a few miles north to Tomlinson Run, PA (just across the WV line near Weirton, where they labored for seven years with the largest congregation in the state. Great good was done.

From there they moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia to help a struggling work. The church at Tomlinson Run continued to help in support. At this place the work was difficult and financial times were hard. In order to survive, Glenda had to work part of the time and Tom did some part time work with handicapped people who came to love him dearly. The doctrine of Charles A. Holt was brought in by means of a family there which had the **EXAMINER** sent to all the members. Tom did his homework, learned what this was about and did all he could to contain the damage. But great damage was done.

Upon leaving Virginia Beach, they moved to Richlands, in the mountainous western tip of Virginia where again they had to have outside support. The church there was making progress. Fourteen were baptized there in the last year or so. Tom had home studies going for miles around. The small church at Richlands badly needs a mature preacher of the gospel to work with these good brethren.

Tom went quietly about his work. He always sold himself short and felt that others could do the work better than he. This was not false modesty, but reflected the genuine humility of the man. He was good to his family, including our parents who loved him as a son. He was like a brother to Wiley and me. Their three children, Howard, Jim and Patti, are all faithful Christians. In recent years Tom did an increasing amount of meeting work, always acquitting himself capably. His preparation was thorough. His office reflects a man of studious habits and orderliness. His many overhead charts were of professional quality.

The ranks of gospel preachers are thinning and I don't see as many young men preparing themselves to enter the list as once was the case. Somehow we have to turn this around. Men like Tom Icard are badly needed. Since his death, we have learned from so many of his impact upon their lives. His memory is sweet, not only to our family, but to so many whose lives touched his and who were made better because of it. The prospects of Heaven grow dearer all the time.

—Editor

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